Declaration on the Transition Towards Sustainable, Diversified and Low-Emitting Food Systems

Proposed for adoption at COP31, Antalya, Turkey, 2026

We, the Parties to this Declaration, united by our commitment to the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the principles of international law governing states' obligations to prevent significant harm, and noting that this Declaration addresses the overconsumption of high-emitting foods[1], principally ruminant meat and dairy, and calls not for the elimination of animal-source foods but for a gradual, equitable shift sufficient to bring food-system emissions within 1.5°C-compatible pathways:

I. Scientific and Legal Foundation

1. Recognize that food systems account for approximately one-third of global anthropogenic GHG emissions; that food-system emissions alone could preclude achieving the 1.5°C target even if fossil fuel emissions were eliminated;
2. Further recognize that reductions in livestock methane have particular urgency: methane's shorter atmospheric lifespan means that cutting livestock methane can lower atmospheric concentrations and slow near-term warming more quickly than CO2 reductions alone, while complementing, not replacing, rapid fossil-fuel phase-out, and that addressing agricultural methane is therefore central to the commitments already undertaken by 159 states under the Global Methane Pledge;
3. Affirm that the customary international obligation of all states to exercise stringent due diligence to prevent significant harm to the climate system and other parts of the environment applies to methane and nitrous oxide from livestock and agriculture, just as it applies to fossil fuel emissions, reinforced by the Paris Agreement, UNCLOS, and international human rights law;
4. Affirm that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities applies fully to this transition: high-income states with high per-capita consumption of high-emitting foods bear primary responsibility to lead; low-income countries and communities that engage in sustainable extensive livestock production, including the approximately 60 per cent of rural households in low- and middle-income countries dependent on livestock, have differentiated obligations and must not be required to reduce nutritionally necessary animal-source foods;
5. Build upon outcomes of the Koronivia joint work on agriculture and the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security (UNFCCC), the Global Methane Pledge, the COP28 Declaration on Food and Agriculture, the commitments made in the CBD Biodiversity Summits, UN Food System Summits and outcomes of the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation and the School Meals Coalition.

II. Commitment to Action

6. Invite Parties to consider, in accordance with their national circumstances and consistent with the right to adequate food and food sovereignty, and with the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, small-scale farmers and fishers:
   (a) Developing national food system transformation strategies, including plant-based protein action plans, protein diversification targets, and sustainable dietary guidelines,

[1]This Declaration addresses overconsumption above levels of dietary guidelines of high-emitting foods.

and integrating these into NDCs, National Adaptation Plans, and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies;

(b) Aligning public procurement, institutional food services, and national dietary guidelines with the best available science on sustainable and healthy diets;

(c) Improving and scaling up school meal programmes globally, with the aim of ensuring that every child can receive a healthy, nutritious meal in school by 2030;

(d) Exploring and, where appropriate, implementing fiscal instruments, including analysis of the case for GHG emission pricing on high-emitting food production, review of subsidies that incentivise overproduction of high-emitting foods, and true-cost accounting frameworks or roadmaps that help to reduce the full environmental and health costs of food, with appropriate differentiation between industrial and smallholder contexts, and measures to keep healthy food affordable;

(e) Introducing consumer information measures, including GHG emission labelling of food products, and public awareness campaigns;

(f) Creating enabling environments for plant-rich food systems and diverse protein sources, including local crops and sustainably managed aquatic foods, through research, innovation, traditional knowledge and targeted producer support;

(g) Mobilising accessible finance, technology and capacity-building for developing countries, in particular Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, to implement these measures;

7. Call upon all signatories to the Global Methane Pledge to strengthen their methane reduction commitments in the agricultural sector and to include quantified livestock methane targets in their next NDCs where livestock emissions are significant, with support for developing countries;

III. **Institutional Follow-Through**

8. Request the UNFCCC Secretariat to include on the agenda of COP32 and subsequent COPs a standing item on the transition towards sustainable, diversified and low-emitting food systems, and to prepare a synthesis report on Parties' food-system transformation actions, including demand-side measures, fiscal instruments, and livestock methane targets, for consideration at COP33;

9. Welcome an initiative to convene a dedicated international conference in 2027 on transitioning towards sustainable, diversified food systems, as a platform to advance implementation and mobilise finance in the period leading to the next global stocktake;

10. Decide to remain seized of this matter.

Signatories