ACTION AGAINST HUNGER



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Feeding the Transition: Agroecology and the Right to Food

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION AT COP31

Our main asks to governments

COP31 in Antalya (9-20 November 2026), hosted by Türkiye with Australia as a president of negotiations, is presented as an “implementation COP”. But these implementations will have to happen in a hostile context : aid cuts, weakened trust in multilateralism, and gridlock at the June SB64s talks on Adaptation and Mitigation. Yet, COP31 also brings real hope. In Belém, Parties agreed to develop a just transition mechanism. Antalya must turn this promise into a reality that delivers climate justice for workers, communities and countries, and food systems must be at its heart.

1 **COP31 must establish the Belem-Antalya Mechanism (BAM) for just transitions, and make it work for agriculture and food systems.** Parties should set up a governance inclusive of rightsholders, and create a Transitional Committee so that it is fully operational by COP32. Its resource mobilisation function should help scale up public, grant-based finance for agroecology, redirect existing flows including harmful agricultural subsidies, and ensure that non-debt finance reaches local actors in need.

2 **Agroecology must be recognised as the just transition and adaptation pathway for food systems.** It reduces farmers’ dependence on imported fertilisers and fuel, and builds resilience to shocks such as the current El Niño. The Global Goal on Adaptation must deliver the means to scale it up based on the actual needs, backed by the Belem commitment to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035.

3 **Those who produce, process and sell food must drive the transition, with their rights guaranteed.** Peasant farmers, farmworkers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, Indigenous Peoples, informal food workers, women and youth need to be fully included in the governance of the BAM and their autonomous organisation must be respected. The mechanism must uphold their right to adequate and nutritious food, UNDROP[1], UNDRIP[2] and Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

4 **Climate finance must be predictable, accessible and locally led, with lower access barriers for fragile and conflict-affected contexts**, and systematic integration of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition. Its success should be measured through contribution to resilience, inclusive development, decent livelihoods and long-term local capacity.

5 **COP31 must adopt a conflict of interest policy, and build one into the BAM from day one.** Fossil fuel and agro-industrial interests can’t shape a mechanism that is meant to protect those harmed by their business models. This requires public declarations of interest, and no governance roles for fossil fuel and agribusiness lobbies.

1. UNDROP – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in rural areas.
2. UNDRIP - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



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Ayak Manyaut, 34, is the leader of the Mother to Mother group at Mabior Atuot, Warrap. She grows and harvests onions. South Sudan.

Introduction



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In partnership with Action Against Hunger and the Isiolo County Government's Department of Agriculture, the Habsa Women have embraced horticultural farming—a sustainable solution to the problems of food insecurity, dietary diversity, and livelihood diversification. Kenya.

Since COP30, the climate crisis has kept striking those who did the least to cause it. In August 2026, flash floods and debris flows along Nepal's Trishuli River left thousands dead or missing, in one of the deadliest Himalayan flood on record. Extreme heat now threatens the livelihoods of more than 1.2 billion people who depend on agriculture[3], and an El Niño event of historic intensity is set to impact food security in 2027, with droughts already hitting farmers in Sri Lanka, Southern Africa and Central America.

In 2025, 645 million people faced chronic hunger and, for the first time, Africa was home to the largest number of them, 309 million.[4] Depending on how long higher energy and fertiliser prices keep food inflation high, 510 to 520 million people may still face hunger until 2030. For the first time, two famines were confirmed in the same year, in parts of Gaza and Sudan, and the risk persists in 2026[5]. Conflict and weather extremes increasingly combine, while international solidarity funding keeps falling.

At the same time, food systems remain responsible for around a third of global greenhouse gas emissions, and 3.8 billion people live in households whose main financial income depend on agriculture and food systems. A transition in this sector cannot be limited to cutting emissions without looking at it through a social lens. It must bring real change and social justice for the people who produce our food, and realise the right to adequate food and nutrition for all.

3. 2025 Extreme Heat and Agriculture Report, FAO–WMO joint report
4. 2026 edition of The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI), UN-Nutrition
5. 2026 Global Report on Food Crises, FAO, WFP, Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC)

El Niño and anticipatory action

Action against Hunger has a dedicated unit with expertise in emergency preparedness, proactive measures, and emergency response. Strengthening our capacity to act before, during, and after crises is now imperative in the face of the climate crisis, and funding these efforts, for the countries historically responsible, is a matter of climate justice.

One emblematic phenomena illustrating this reality is El Niño. This phenomenon, amplified by climate disruption, results from abnormal warming of the surface waters of the tropical Pacific. From the beginning of the year until at least mid-2027, a Super El Niño is disrupting global climate patterns. It can simultaneously cause severe droughts in some regions, extreme rainfall in others, population displacement, and a significant worsening of hunger.

The World Food Programme projects at least 49 million more people into acute food insecurity by end-2027 across 45 countries. Even if anticipatory action frameworks are active or finalised in 15 priority countries with USD 54M allocated, including Madagascar, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi in Southern Africa and Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Nepal in Asia, significant funding gaps remain and the pace must accelerate.

For Southern and East Africa the window to act ahead of the rainy season by safeguarding livestock, protecting harvests, and reinforcing flood protection infrastructure is already closing. For Sahel and South Asia monsoon contexts it has closed. Now to mitigate the impact with water harvesting, small-scale food production, income support so households can stockpile before peak prices, or health-system readiness (in context with flooding / high river flow the risk of cholera exposure increases), local actors are already mobilised and monitoring the situation with several early warning systems too. They need flexible, grants-based funding at scale to prevent a sharp rise of hunger in the coming months.



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The Antohamadinika district, a low-income neighborhood regarded as one of the most disadvantaged and unsanitary areas in Antananarivo. Madagascar.

Opportunities for action at COP31

I. ENSURING A JUST TRANSITION IN FOOD SYSTEMS

COP30 established the Belém Adaptation Indicators and called for adaptation finance to triple by 2035. Yet, SB64 failed to agree on the Global Goal on Adaptation, particularly its means of implementation, while societies and economies continue to absorb escalating climate shocks. These impacts also disrupt children's education, food and nutrition security, health and safety.

Antalya needs to set a clear signal that food systems transformation and agroecology are central to achieving climate goals. Building on the human rights language anchored in the Belém text, agroecology and the right to food have to be at the centre of the Belém-Antalya Mechanism, the adaptation negotiations, and the Sharm El Sheikh joint work on Agriculture.

Elevate agroecology as the just transition pathway for food systems

Agroecology is the priority pathway for a just transition and for adaptation in food systems. It reduces dependence on imported fertiliser and fuels, restores soils that withstand climate shocks and keeps local seeds systems, knowledge and value in the hands of small-scale producers. It also saves lives. Pesticide self-poisoning accounts for 14 to 20% of suicides worldwide, mostly in low- and middle-income countries where small-scale farming gives easy access to highly hazardous pesticides, and banning just a few of them in Bangladesh, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka led to sharp falls in overall suicide rates.[6] Agroecology is a holistic[7], rights-based approach that cannot be equated with labels that maintain input dependence, reduce rightsholders' control over food systems or threaten food sovereignty. The key messages captured in Bonn already recognise its potential to address farmers' vulnerability, and COP31 must strengthen this language, as well as conclude the Global Goal on Adaptation with means of implementation that will contribute to fund agroecology on the ground.

Name who the transition is for

In rural economies, the transition is lived first by peasants and family farmers, agricultural and migrant workers (35 times more likely to die from occupational heat exposure[8]), pastoralists, artisanal fishers, Indigenous Peoples, informal food workers, women and rural youth, groups largely named in the key messages from the food systems dialogue in the Just Transition Work Programme captured in Bonn. Their autonomous forms of organisation must be fully integrated in the BAM's Assembly and governance.

Put human rights at the core of the mechanism

The Belém decision commits to respect, promote and fulfill human rights, the BAM must thus center the right to adequate food, UNDROP, UNDRIP, secure land tenure, decent work and universal social protection. These commitments were hard won in Belém, and any decision in Antalya that weakens them would be a step backwards. The BAM should also recognise that a transition is not only an economic process. Changing how people farm, fish or herd unsettles their livelihoods, practices and identities, in communities where food insecurity and climate shocks already weigh on mental health. Community-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), alongside social protection, is part of what makes a transition just: it helps the people concerned experience the change as legitimate and sustain it over time.

6. WHO, New study highlights cost-effectiveness of bans on pesticides as a suicide prevention strategy, 17 December 2020
7. Holistic approaches recognize that food systems are shaped by interconnected ecological, social and economic dimensions; effective and equitable solutions therefore need to address environmental sustainability, gender equality and social inclusion together. FAO, What is Agroecology? Agroecology Knowledge Hub
8. 2025 Extreme Heat and Agriculture Report, FAO–WMO joint report

Make the transition gender-transformative

Women produce much of the world's food but control a very small portion of the land, have little access to funds and decision-making power. The Belém Gender Action Plan covers decent work, care and socially just transitions, and the key messages captured in Bonn call for gender-responsive approaches. The BAM should go further and be gender-transformative, by aligning transitions with secured women's land rights[9], systematising gender-disaggregated data, supporting care and social protection policies, and resources reaching women's organisations directly.

II. TACKLING GROWING CLIMATE-RELATED HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Over 80% of people facing severe food insecurity live in protracted crises driven mainly by conflict, increasingly compounded by weather extremes[10]. Meanwhile, aid is collapsing : according to preliminary OECD data, official development assistance fell by 23.1% in 2025, the largest drop on record, and humanitarian aid by 35.8%.[11]

Prevent climate-related malnutrition

Humanitarian funding and anticipatory action must be upheld, more than ever : Action Against Hunger's MERIAM model now predicts acute malnutrition thresholds up to 12 months ahead with over 90% accuracy in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan, so crises can be anticipated. Prevention also depends on caregivers' mental health. In developing countries, children of mothers with depressive symptoms have 40 to 50% higher odds of being underweight or stunted.[12] Climate and humanitarian finance for nutrition should therefore cover psychosocial support for caregivers, as Action Against Hunger does in its integrated programmes. COP31 Parties should also take stock of the Belém Declaration on Hunger's pledge to expand social protection coverage, by two percentage points a year. The tripling of adaptation finance and the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3 trillion dollars must be able to reach fragile and conflict-affected states, with lower access barriers, no debt burdens, and conflict-sensitive delivery.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is fundamental to prevent malnutrition. Most diseases in crisis contexts are linked to unsafe water and inadequate sanitation, which also compromise nutrient absorption. Extreme weather events contaminate water sources, and destroy sanitation systems. After the August 2026 floods in Nepal, more than 10 000 households needed emergency shelter, and damaged water and sanitation infrastructure raised fears of waterborne diseases.

Climate finance, including adaptation finance under the GGA, must systematically integrate the protection and rehabilitation of WASH services, recognising their central role in preventing malnutrition and strengthening community resilience.

Enable meaningful participation for those affected by the climate crisis

Many affected communities do not have adequate access to UNFCCC negotiations, and cannot meaningfully participate in decisions about their future livelihoods and safety. Calls for more inclusive decision-making must be heard and implemented, while corporate influence must be curtailed.[13]

A conflict of interest policy must exist to protect the transition and not turn COP31 into a space for greenwashing by fossil fuel and agroindustrial private interests. This is why we push for a UNFCCC-wide accountability framework, and prevention of conflicts of interest policy (which should also apply to the newly established BAM for Just Transition).

9. CFS guidelines on gender equality, CFS guidelines on Land Tenure
10. 2026 Global Report on Food Crises, FAO
11. Official development assistance (ODA) in 2025, by members of the Development Assistance Committee (preliminary data)
12. Surkan P.J. et al., Maternal depression and early childhood growth in developing countries: systematic review and meta-analysis, Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 2011, 89(8): 607-615 (pooled odds ratios of 1.5 for underweight and 1.4 for stunting).
13. CAN, DCJ, YOUNGO, WGC and others, the COP we need, urgent call to reform climate talks.

Case study

Locally led, participatory approaches that combine adaptation, livelihoods and nutrition are exactly the kind of climate action that needs to be supported. COP31 must also contribute to bringing political signals in favor of them.

Farming through drought, floods and conflict in Somalia

Somalia faces intersecting crises, such as recurrent drought, conflict and displacement, and more recently, threat of El Niño-related floods.

In response, through our projects and partners in Somalia, producers are able to protect assets and adjust agricultural schedules to mitigate risks through timely dissemination of alerts. The use of a Multiple-Use Water Services/ IWRM approach ensures that domestic, livestock, and agricultural needs are balanced, while transboundary cooperation in regions like the Mandera Triangle and Karamoja cluster strengthens resource governance and promotes peace under climate stress.

Through MERIAM 2.0, Action Against Hunger also helps forecast acute malnutrition up to 12 months ahead in Somalia and neighbouring countries, so that nutrition services can be prepared before crises peak. The deployment of portable solar irrigation systems and locally produced neem-tree biopesticides in Somalia reduces water stress and dependency on chemical inputs, promoting environmentally friendly agricultural practices.

Initiatives such as these show that agroecology and anticipation can keep food production going even in the most fragile contexts. Yet, food aid is expected to reach only 1.3% of people in need in Somalia between October and December.



Pepper farm. Somalia.

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Case study

Building climate-resilient livelihoods in Central America's Dry Corridor

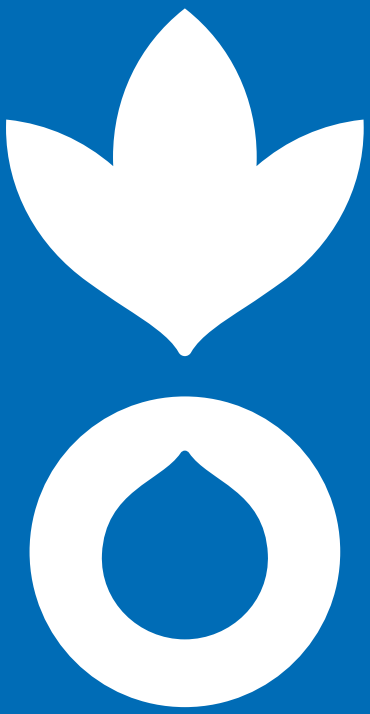
The Central America's Dry Corridor stretches across parts of Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. More than 10 million people live there, and 80% of its small-scale producers are poor. In 2026, a powerful El Niño has brought the worst drought in living memory for many families. In Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, more than three quarters of surveyed maize-growing households reported losing between 75% to 100% of their crop.

In response, Action Against Hunger and its partners work across the Dry Corridor to build climate-resilient, low-carbon livelihoods with a gender-transformative and rights-based approach. The programme strengthens cooperatives and local institutions so they can scale up climate-resilient agriculture, efficient water management and fair access to markets. In Guatemala, rainwater harvesting and micro-irrigation help families to keep producing through the dry season, while easing pressure on water resources.

At regional level, Action Against Hunger's PREDISAN food and nutrition security monitoring system combines multiple data sources with predictive analytics to anticipate climate shocks. It issues early warnings, identifies priority areas and the most vulnerable groups, and guides both anticipatory action and locally led adaptation. In 2023, Action against Hunger and the World Food Programme used PREDISAN to map how El Niño was changing weather patterns and affecting communities across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Initiatives such as these show that resilient food systems are built by producer organisations themselves when given appropriate support and information. Yet, producers and small-scale farmers are still waiting for the scaled grants-based finance that climate negotiations have promised. As the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on agriculture comes to an end, and the Belém-Antalya Mechanism takes shape, governments in COP31 can give agroecological transitions led by producers and small scale-farmers both a dedicated space in negotiations and the means to scale up.

Action Against Hunger will be in Antalya with its partners to bring the realities of the communities it works with into the negotiations. We will support every step towards a mechanism that delivers for food producers and food systems workers, and towards a strong future for agroecology in the transition.



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Created in 1979, our Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) – Action Against Hunger – is fighting against hunger and malnutrition in the world, in more than 52 countries with over 7100 staff. Its aim is to save lives and eradicate hunger through the prevention, detection, and treatment of malnutrition, in particular during and after emergency situations caused by conflicts and natural disasters. Action Against Hunger advocates to tackle the root causes of hunger and malnutrition: conflicts, the climate crisis, and inequalities.