

# **UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITIES FOR CLIMATE ACTION: AN ASSESSMENT OF FOOD SYSTEMS IN NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCs)**

*UN FOOD SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS DIALOGUE FOR MEMBER STATE CONVENORS  
THE PROMISING ROLE OF FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION FOR BOLD CLIMATE ACTION: EVIDENCE AND PRACTICE*

31 August 2022

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

- **OBJECTIVE:** To develop an Assessment Framework as a tool to identify opportunities for better integration of food systems within Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) — climate action plans required by the Paris Agreement — and to apply it to the NDCs of 14 countries.
- **WHY:** Integrating food systems in climate action is critical to delivering on interconnected ecological, biodiversity, health, economic, social, and cultural goals. Taking a food systems approach results in a diversity of context-specific solutions for food production, distribution, consumption, and waste.
- **METHODOLOGY:**
  - 14 countries selected based on geographical and economic balance, mitigation potential, adaptation needs and food security concerns, and climate negotiating blocks. Countries assessed: Bangladesh, Canada, China, Colombia, Egypt, the European Union (with a focus on national climate policies from France, Germany, and Spain), Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, the UK, the US, and Vanuatu.
  - Analysis based on NDCs submitted but also consider broader key food systems policies
  - Complemented by interviews with 5-10 in-country policymakers, advocates, sectoral experts to develop a comprehensive view of the challenges, ambitions, and needs in each selected country



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## ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

The Global Alliance for the Future of Food (GA) is a strategic alliance of philanthropic foundations working together and with others to transform global food systems now and for future generations. In 2021, the GA commissioned Climate Focus and Solidaridad to develop an Assessment Framework for integrating positive food systems transformation into countries' NDCs.

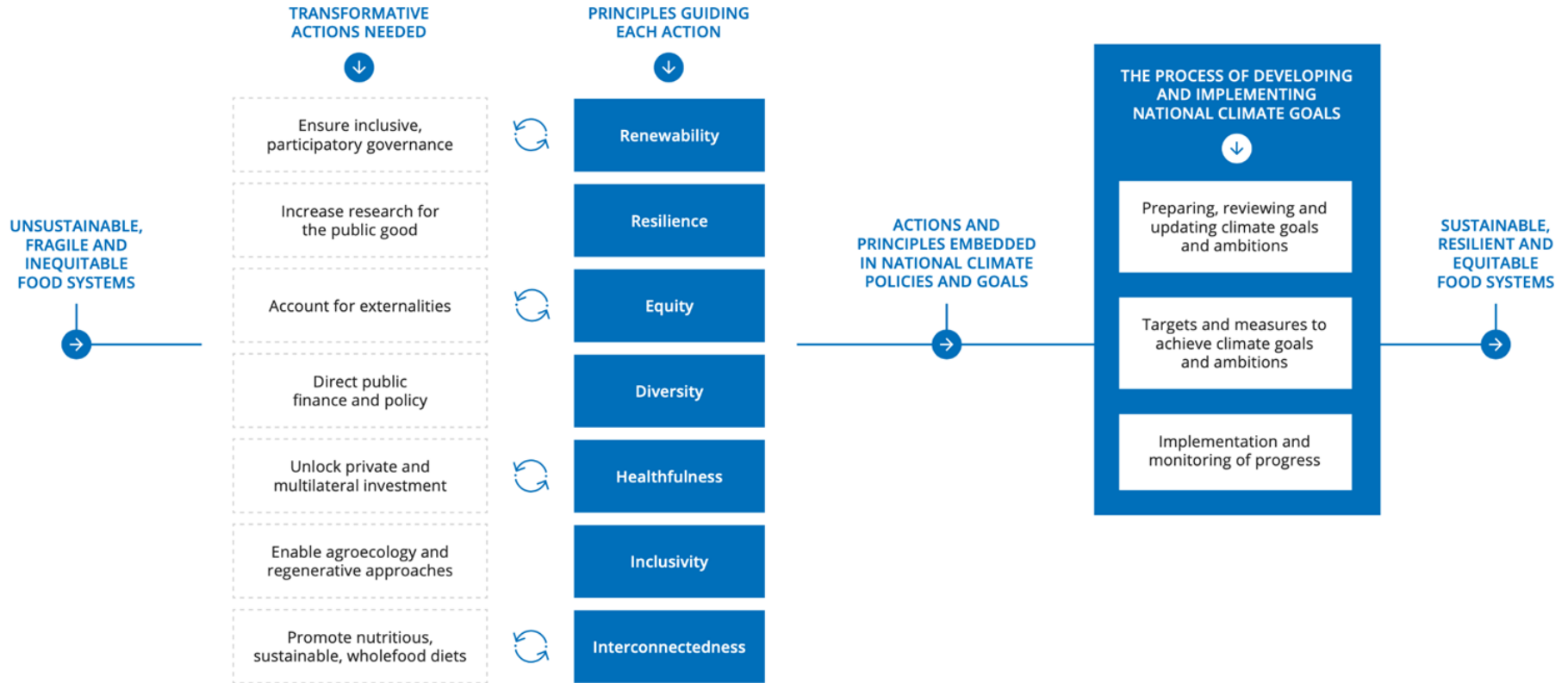


[Climate Focus](#) is a pioneering international advisory company and think tank that provides advice to governments and multilateral organizations, non-governmental and philanthropic organizations, and to companies across the globe. We support our clients with shaping and navigating through international and domestic climate policies, accessing climate finance, and engaging with new climate mechanisms and cooperative approaches.

## Solidaridad

[Solidaridad](#) is an international civil society organization with over 50 years of experience in developing solutions to make communities more resilient — from our early roots supporting repressed communities in Latin America to our current work fostering more sustainable supply chains. We currently work in over 40 countries, on five continents, through eight independently supervised regional offices.

# SCOPE OF THE NDC ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK



# WHICH COUNTRIES DID WE ASSESS?

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**CRITERIA/COUNTRY\* \*\***

United Kingdom   Colombia   Bangladesh   United States   Vanuatu   Kenya   France\*\*\*   Germany\*\*\*   Spain\*\*\*   South Africa   China   Canada   Egypt   Senegal

**NDC DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Criteria	United Kingdom	Colombia	Bangladesh	United States	Vanuatu	Kenya	France***	Germany***	Spain***	South Africa	China	Canada	Egypt	Senegal
Coordination mechanism in place	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	●
Cross-ministerial collaboration	◐	●	◐	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	◐	◐	●	●
Consultation with food systems experts and other key stakeholders	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	○	◐	○	◐
Development of targets based on holistic food systems research	○	◐	◐	◐	○	◐	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

\* The table does not intend to offer a comparison across countries, as each country is unique in its national circumstances and policy environment. As such, the scoring has been based on the specific national context, taking account of barriers and opportunities for transforming respective national food systems. The results are derived from the Individual Country Assessments and the scope has been largely limited to the country's respective NDCs.

**CRITERIA/COUNTRY\* \*\***

United Kingdom   Colombia   Bangladesh   United States   Vanuatu   Kenya   France\*\*\*   Germany\*\*\*   Spain\*\*\*   South Africa   China   Canada   Egypt   Senegal

**CONTENT OF NDCs**

Alignment with existing and forthcoming food system policies



Accounting for food systems' emissions



Agroecology and regenerative approaches



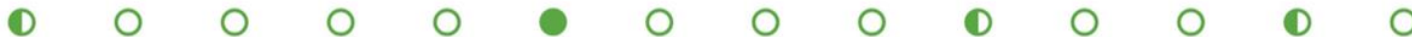
Conservation and regeneration of valuable ecosystems



**CRITERIA/COUNTRY\*\* \*\***

United Kingdom   Colombia   Bangladesh   United States   Vanuatu   Kenya   France\*\*\*   Germany\*\*\*   Spain\*\*\*   South Africa   China   Canada   Egypt   Senegal

Promotion of sustainable fisheries and aquacultures



Shift to healthy and sustainable diets



Promotion of climate and food systems resilience



Reduction of food loss and waste



Gender responsiveness



Engagement with farmers, local communities and indigenous Peoples



Creation of quality food systems job



Recognition of positive and negative food systems externalities, including economic, social &amp; health co-benefits





CRITERIA/COUNTRY\* \*\*

United Kingdom Colombia Bangladesh United States Vanuatu Kenya France\*\*\* Germany\*\*\* Spain\*\*\* South Africa China Canada Egypt Senegal

**NDC IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

Criteria	United Kingdom	Colombia	Bangladesh	United States	Vanuatu	Kenya	France***	Germany***	Spain***	South Africa	China	Canada	Egypt	Senegal
Participatory and collaborative implementation process	●	●	◐	●	○	●	◐	●	●	●	○	●	◐	◐
Participatory and transparent monitoring mechanism informed by food systems research	◐	◐	◐	○	◐	●	○	●	●	○	●	○	○	◐
Vehicles to direct public and private finance to food systems	◐	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	○	◐

\* The above table does not intend to offer a comparison across countries, as each country is unique in its national circumstances and policy environment. As such, the scoring has been based on the specific national context, taking account of barriers and opportunities for transforming respective national food systems.

\*\* The results presented above are derived from the Individual Country Assessments. The scope per assessment has been largely limited to the country's respective NDCs.

\*\*\* For Germany, France and Spain, our assessment is largely based on these countries' National Energy and Climate Plans – complemented by insights from the EU NDC.

● Yes   ◐ Partially   ○ No   ● Insufficient Information Available

## KEY FINDINGS

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NDCs focused largely on supply-side aspects of food systems, with other areas and components of food systems being frequently overlooked



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Highlighted the importance of food systems' resilience in light of changing climate patterns and more frequent extreme weather events



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Majority of the NDCs assessed were spearheaded by the environment ministry and benefited from some level of cross-ministerial coordinations and subnational engagement



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Significant differences in the extent to which the NDC construction processes were deemed to be gender inclusive



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While the NDCs assessed indicated alignment with existing and forthcoming food systems policies, certain inconsistencies persist



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None of the countries assessed sufficiently address ineffective, inequitable and harmful agricultural subsidies

# KEY INSIGHTS: GOVERNANCE & JUST TRANSITIONS

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*Enabling an equitable, inclusive “just transition” for those working in food systems and who are most vulnerable to climate impacts – Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, workers, and others — requires processes and policy platforms built on transparency that enhance the participation of these groups in policy-making and implementation.*

- Most NDCs assessed did not provide details on the development process: difficult to assess if the process was inclusive and participatory, how stakeholder inputs were considered
- Food systems stakeholders, and in particular marginalized communities, were not frequently consulted, leading to knowledge and evidence gaps and compounding structural inequities.
- Few of the development and implementation processes meaningfully engaged with ministries, regional governments and local public officials.
- Engagement with non-governmental stakeholders such as private sector actors, smallholder farmers, women, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and civil society is similarly limited.

*When the costs and benefits of food systems transformations are not distributed equally across society, transitioning towards more sustainable and healthier food systems will likely involve social trade-offs.*

- Most NDCs assessed lacked quantification of implementation costs, which are crucial to unlock external funding.
- NDCs which emphasized the potential for green jobs were not linked to food systems.

# KEY INSIGHTS: PRODUCTION

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*Locally-led, context-specific “nature-positive” solutions contribute to GHG emissions mitigation while ensuring a strong role for local institutions, communities, smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and women; ensuring the protection and expansion of rights; and improving food security and health.*

- Majority of the NDCs assessed promote some aspect of agroecology, regenerative approaches and “nature-positive” solutions.

*Redirecting public sector finance and fiscal policy away from harmful food and farming practices towards regenerative, ecologically-beneficial forms of farming supports resilient livelihoods and healthy communities.*

- All of the NDCs assessed lack concrete efforts to redirect public resources away from carbon-intensive farming and towards more diverse and regenerative approaches.

*Determining how livestock production fits in a resilient and healthy food system, with appreciation for contextually dependent factors, is critical given its significant climate and ecological footprint.*

- Some NDCs included measures to improve the sustainability of livestock production.

*Reducing and repurposing food loss and waste are central to mitigating climate change as well as delivering ecological, health, economic, and social co-benefits by reducing cropland area, contributing to food security, and, overall, cutting GHG emissions.*

- Few of the NDCs assessed include efforts to address food loss and waste.

# KEY INSIGHTS: CONSUMPTION & DIETS

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*When public support and the policy environment incentivizes land-use intensive food production and high levels of animal protein consumption, isolated efforts to increase the production of healthy and sustainable food will be insufficient to catalyze a shift toward sustainable food systems.*

- None of the NDCs assessed considered food systems emissions in a systematic way.
- Most NDCs assessed omitted the potential of diet shifts and neglected food loss and waste.
- None of the NDCs assessed put forward measures to reduce the consumption of animal protein.
- None of the NDCs assessed fully account for emissions associated with food imports, particularly those related to deforestation and the conversion of ecosystems.

# KEY INSIGHTS: HEALTH CO- BENEFITS

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*Promoting nutritious, whole-food diets underpinned by sustainable, diversified food production adapted to local ecosystems and sociocultural contexts can deliver multiple health co-benefits.*

- All assessed countries face nutritional and health-related challenges linked to food.
- In all assessed countries, a shift to sustainable and healthy diets can reduce the prevalence of obesity and overweight, as well as address undernourishment and food insecurity. These benefits also imply reduced healthcare expenses and economic benefits.
- None of the assessed countries explicitly included consultations with health & nutrition experts, missing opportunity to maximize these health co-benefits.



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# PACKAGE OF MATERIALS

1. Untapped Opportunities for Climate Action: An Assessment of Food Systems in Nationally Determined Contributions: A summary report providing a synthesis of the 14 country assessments with recommendations and priority actions for policymakers and climate policy advisors
2. A Practical Guide to Assessing Food Systems in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): A guide with a framework designed to enable users to take a food systems approach to developing future NDCs and implementing climate policies.
3. A set of 14 country assessments examining the latest NDCs of 14 countries from around the world, outlining areas of improvement and opportunity
4. Confronting the climate crisis with food systems transformation: Stories of action from 14 countries, which provides a catalogue of global case studies that complement the suite of materials for policymakers, advisors, and advocates of climate action.

**DOWNLOAD HERE:** <https://futureoffood.org/insights/untapped-opportunities-for-climate-action-food-systems-in-nationally-determined-contributions/>

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## THANK YOU!