FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

Food security refers to the availability of food and one's access to it. A household is considered food-secure when its occupants do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. According to the World Resources Institute, global per capita food production has been increasing substantially for the past several decades. In 2006, MSNBC reported that globally, the number of people who are overweight has surpassed the number who is undernourished - the world had more than one billion people who were overweight, and an estimated 800 million who were undernourished. According to a 2004 article from the BBC, China, the world's most populous country, is suffering from an obesity epidemic. In India, the second-most populous country in the world, 30 million people have been added to the ranks of the hungry since the mid-1990s and 46% of children are underweight. In developing countries, often 70% or more of the population lives in rural areas. In that context, agricultural development among smallholder farmers and landless people provides a livelihood for people allowing them the opportunity to stay in their communities. In many areas of the world, land ownership is not available, thus, people who want or need to farm to make a living have little incentive to improve the land. Climate change may affect food systems in several ways ranging from direct effects on crop production (e.g. changes in rainfall leading to drought or flooding, or warmer or cooler temperatures leading to changes in the length of growing season), to changes in markets, food prices and supply chain infrastructure. The relative importance of climate change for food security differs between regions. For example, in southern Africa, climate is among the most frequently cited drivers of food insecurity because it acts both as an underlying, ongoing issue and as a short-lived shock. The low ability to cope with shocks and to mitigate long-term stresses means that coping strategies that might be available in other regions are unavailable or inappropriate. In other regions, though, such as parts of the Indo-Gangetic Plain of India, other drivers, such as labour issues and the availability and quality of ground water for irrigation, rank higher than the direct effects of climate change as factors influencing food security. Climate change may affect the food security system in many ways.

- Climate change will act as a multiplier of existing threats to food security: By 2050, the risk of hunger is projected to increase by 10 – 20 %, and child malnutrition is anticipated to be 20 % higher compared to a no-climate change scenario.
- Achieving food security under a changing climate requires substantial increases in food production on the one hand, as well as improved access to adequate and nutritious food and capacities to cope with the risks posed by climate change on the other hand.
- Governments must be assisted in enhancing food production and access, scaling up social protection systems and improving their ability to prepare for and respond to disasters.
- Community-based development processes need to be fostered in order to enable the poorest and most vulnerable to build sustainable and climate resilient livelihoods and move out of chronic poverty and food insecurity.
- The humanitarian community must get prepared for more extreme weather events and protecting the already food insecure better by strengthening both crisis response and crisis prevention.

KEYWORDS: Food Security, Climate Change, Food Availability, Food Accessibility, Food Utilization