

INTERNATIONAL



# Issues and Options: The Future of Agriculture and Food Security Discussions Under the UNFCCC

Discussion paper

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This paper presents issues and options on the future of agriculture and food security discussions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The four-year Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security is due to be considered at the 31<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties (*COP31*). Parties have an opportunity to continue the SJWA, launch another joint work program, establish a new work program/agenda item, or advance ambition on agriculture outside of the negotiations. Parties could also usefully consider how the agriculture and food security processes and discussions can be linked to the 2<sup>nd</sup> global stocktake, which will begin at *COP31*.

Established at the 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (*COP27*), the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security (*SJWA*) is a four-year initiative due to conclude at *COP31*. The Subsidiary Bodies (*SBs*) will report to *COP31* on the progress and outcomes of the *SJWA*. This provides Parties with an opportunity to consider how to advance discussions and future work on climate action in agriculture and food security.

Options for Parties to consider could include:

- continuing the *SJWA*
- concluding the *SJWA*
- launching a dialogue series
- agreeing to a new agenda item/work program
- establishing a new constituted body
- creating a *COP31* Presidency Initiative
- promoting or encouraging engagement of agriculture experts in existing UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (*UNFCCC*) workstreams.

If Parties decide to conclude the *SJWA* and not launch another process at *COP31*, climate action on agriculture and food security will continue under the Global Climate Action Agenda (*GCAA*) through the work of non-Party stakeholders (*NPS*).

If Parties were to decide to continue some version of the *SJWA*, they should consider explicitly linking that work to food systems and just transition. The term “food systems” has previously raised concerns largely due to its broad definition, which encompasses areas such as energy and waste. Parties could also consider working toward implementing the 2030 the first global stocktake (*GST1*) agriculture and food targets and aligning the new work to conclude in 2030.<sup>1</sup>

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### Questions for consideration

- Should Parties continue the SJWA, or should a new process be launched?
- Whether under an extended SJWA or a new process, what should be the focus of work?
- Should Parties explicitly link any future work to food systems? What would the benefits or drawbacks be in doing so?

## A. Context

1. Climate change poses a multifaceted challenge to global food systems by exacerbating food insecurity, increasing the vulnerability of agricultural systems to extreme weather events, and accelerating biodiversity loss. Agriculture contributes about 10–12 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and is responsible for around 90 percent of global deforestation.<sup>2</sup> Transitioning to climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural practices is essential not only for ensuring long-term food security but also for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.<sup>3</sup>

### Agriculture Negotiations

2. Parties to the UNFCCC have recognized the sector’s dual role as a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and as a key provider of food security. They have also discussed agriculture and climate change issues for more than a decade. At COP23 (2017), Parties launched a four-year joint work named the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture to address challenges at the intersection of agriculture and climate change.<sup>4</sup> The Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture focused on both mitigation and adaptation strategies, including soil and nutrient management, livestock emissions, water use, and the socioeconomic dimensions of food security. It provided a platform for Parties that included observers and stakeholders, raised the visibility of issues related to agriculture, food security and climate change, developed technical guidance, and explored climate-resilient agricultural practices.<sup>5</sup>
3. At COP27 (2022), Parties established the SJWA, a four-year initiative under the SBs, to discuss increasing ambition for implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security. It currently provides a platform for Parties to share knowledge, mobilize finance, and coordinate strategies to ensure that agriculture contributes effectively to global climate goals while safeguarding food security.<sup>6</sup> The SJWA builds on earlier work by focusing on implementation, scaling up climate-resilient agricultural practices and enhancing both adaptation and mitigation efforts in the sector.
4. To date, the SJWA has held two workshops,<sup>7</sup> produced an annual synthesis report,<sup>8</sup> and launched an online portal.<sup>9</sup> The Sharm el-Sheikh online portal is a platform for Parties, organizations, and observers for sharing practical examples, experiences, and solutions to support the implementation of climate action in agriculture and food security under the SJWA. The SJWA serves as a platform and dedicated space for capacity building and discussion on the implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security.



5. At the conclusion of the SJWA's four-year work at COP31, the SBs will report to COP31 on its progress and outcomes. Parties will need to consider whether to launch another joint work or to agree to something new. This discussion paper includes several considerations for Parties.
6. At SB64 (June 2026), Parties will need to prepare to report on the progress and outcomes of the SJWA and lay the groundwork for a decision at COP31. Sustained and enhanced ambition for climate-resilient agriculture is crucial to ensure that adaptation, mitigation, and food security strategies remain central to the UNFCCC agenda so that they are effectively integrated into broader negotiation outcomes.

## The Global Stocktake and Agriculture

7. The COP28 GST decision sets out a number of key transformational global targets and signals to Parties to: (i) inform their next nationally determined contributions (**NDCs**) and (ii) enhance implementation and international cooperation. The GST outcome includes a call to Parties to achieve the UAE Framework on Global Climate Resilience (**UAE Framework**) adaptation target under "attaining climate-resilient food and agricultural production and supply; distribution of food and increasing sustainable and regenerative production; and equitable access to adequate food and nutrition for all, as well as to implement and integrate multi-sectoral solutions like sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems" by 2030.<sup>10</sup>
8. Notably, the term food systems is referenced in relation to the GST signal on agriculture but not in the SJWA. Food systems encompass the full range of actors and the interconnected, value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal (including loss and waste) of food derived from agriculture (including livestock), forestry, fisheries, and related industries. Food systems also account for the broader economic, social, and environmental contexts in which they operate.<sup>11</sup>
9. Axis 3 of the GCAA is focused on "Transforming Agriculture and Food Systems," aligned with paragraphs 28, 55, and 63 from the GST1 decision.<sup>12</sup> The work of international cooperative initiatives under this axis are now more closely linked to the negotiations and could play an important role in GST2. Examples of some initiatives include: the resilient agriculture investment for net-zero land degradation (**RAIZ**) accelerator to restore degraded farmland; the U.S. \$5 billion smallholder-led restoration plan in Africa; investments exceeding U.S. \$9 billion in regenerative landscapes; Together for the Expansion of Resilient and Restorative Agroforestry and Agroecology (**TERRA**) for agroecology and agroforestry; agricultural methane reduction programs; digital and AI tools for farmers; aquatic food system initiatives and plans to accelerate healthy, sustainable diets and food loss reduction; and climate-aligned finance and policies. These initiatives emphasize coordinated, equitable, and scalable approaches to transform food systems and enhance climate resilience.<sup>13</sup>

## B. Issues

10. One issue is the approach to potential new work. There are sensitivities related to the implementation of climate action in agriculture and food security under the UNFCCC. These relate to the need to balance food security requirements and agricultural emissions responsibilities across developed and developing country Parties, including trade considerations.
11. A second issue is that Parties hold strongly divergent views on the term "food systems," which has implications for the options outlined below. These challenges are compounded by institutional silos, as many agriculture negotiators are based in national agriculture ministries and are not always well integrated with the national ministries responsible for engaging in the UNFCCC negotiations.
12. Parties will need to consider how to effectively follow up on the targets and signals for GST1, enhance international cooperation, and ensure an ambitious GST2 outcome on agriculture and food security.

## C. Options

13. Possible options for future work once the SJWA concludes are presented below. They are not mutually exclusive and are listed in no particular order.
14. Consideration should also be given to whether to expand the mandate to include food systems or just transition and if this would be included in the scope of such an item.

### Negotiated Outcomes

#### 15. Option 1: Launch a New SB Joint Work/Continue SJWA:

- Parties could consider establishing a new joint work under the SBs related to climate action on agriculture and food security, or they could continue the SJWA. Consideration should be given to the increasingly crowded SB agendas.
- A dedicated joint work under the SBs would allow for continued discussions on climate action on agriculture and food security at the technical level. Parties could consider explicitly linking the joint work to food systems and just transition. The June 2025 workshop under the SJWA included food systems (“Workshop on systemic and holistic approaches to implementation of climate action on agriculture, food systems this does not preclude other approaches and food security, understanding, cooperation and integration into plans”).<sup>14</sup>
- However, if Parties expand or change the scope of future work, it would require launching a new joint work. To launch a joint work under the SBs, Parties would need adopt a COP, CMA, or a joint decision at COP31.

#### 16. Option 2: Agree to A New Agenda Item/Work Program:

- Parties could request a formal agenda item or work program under the CMA or COP on climate action on agriculture and food security. Consideration should be given to crowded CMA and COP agendas and the fact that the COP/CMA only meet once a year while the SBs meet twice a year.
- However, if it were to meet more than once a year, Parties would need to define additional intersessional meetings. In elevating climate action on agriculture and food security beyond technical work at the SBs, Parties should consider its scope, aim (e.g., if it would serve as a platform for dialogue and knowledge-sharing), and potential outcomes (e.g., decisions that may carry political weight).
- Agriculture ministers do not have a large presence at COPs, which could complicate a situation in which a decision was elevated to the ministerial level.

#### 17. Option 3: Establish a Constituted Body:

- Parties could establish a constituted body on climate action, agriculture, and food security under the UNFCCC. A constituted body is a specialized body with limited membership to support Parties and the intergovernmental process.<sup>15</sup>
- Parties would need to consider the potential overlap with existing constituted bodies such as the Adaptation Committee. Parties would also need to determine which governing body would manage the work (CMA, COP, or both).
- Consideration should further be given to the costs associated with starting/launching a new constituted body, particularly in the context of current UNFCCC budget constraints.

#### 18. Option 4: Launch an SB/CMA/COP Dialogue on Agriculture:

- Parties could convene dedicated dialogues on climate action in agriculture and food security under either the SBs or COP/CMA (if under the CMA/COP, any high-level dialogue would require the presence of agriculture ministers).

- In doing so, they could draw on the Oceans and Climate Change Dialogue or the Mountains and Climate Change Dialogue as examples if under the SBs only.

## Non-Negotiated Outcomes

### 19. Create a COP31 Presidency-led Initiative:

- The COP31 President-Designate stated in his first letter that Türkiye's priorities for the COP31 Action Agenda include supporting food security and developing sustainable agricultural systems.<sup>16</sup>
- The COP31 Presidency could consider gathering support for and leading on an initiative, such as a roadmap on agriculture, food security, and food systems similar to the COP30 Presidency roadmaps on halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation and on transitioning away from fossil fuels.
- Such an initiative could advance targeted solutions, foster collaboration, and accelerate implementation of climate-resilient and sustainable practices in agriculture and food systems. It could also highlight and build on ongoing work under the GCAA.
- Consideration could be given whether the COP30 Presidency or COP32 (Ethiopia) Presidency would be interested in supporting a multi-presidency initiative.

### 20. Promoting or Encouraging Engagement of Agriculture Experts Across Existing UNFCCC Workstreams:

- To address siloed approaches to agriculture and food security in existing workstreams, Parties could strengthen links between national agriculture and environment ministries.
- This would ensure negotiators with technical agriculture knowledge are included in UNFCCC delegations, facilitate cross-workstream dialogues to share insights and align approaches, and support capacity-building initiatives to enable developing countries to effectively deploy agriculture experts.
- These measures could help break down silos, enhance informed decision-making, and strengthen the operationalization of agriculture-related climate action.

## GST2 Considerations

21. Parties could also consider working toward the achievement of the GST1 2030 agriculture and food targets and, in that context, aligning any new work beyond the close of the current SJWA to conclude in 2030. Achieving agriculture-related signals or targets from GST1 will require a coordinated and integrated approach across workstreams, institutions, and levels of implementation.
22. Additional discussions on agriculture and food security could further add value to these efforts as Parties explore how to advance cooperation and integration across climate action, agriculture, and food security for GST2, which could potentially set out future targets and signals.
23. Any new GST target or signal should take into account existing frameworks, including the UAE Framework and the Belém Adaptation Indicators, which already contain agriculture-related targets and indicators. Parties could consider how renewed or new joint work on climate action on agriculture and food security could be accounted for in GST2, which starts at COP31.

## D. C2ES Resources

- Modalities for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sharm El- Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Workshop (February 2026), <https://www.c2es.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/20260129-C2ES-Sharm-el-Sheikh-joint-work-on-agriculture-2nd-workshop-SB64.pdf>
- Modalities for the first Sharm El-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Workshop (February 2025), <https://www.c2es.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/20250227-C2ES-Sharm-el-Sheikh-joint-work-on-agriculture-submission.pdf>
- Enhancing International Cooperation for Sustainable Agriculture and Resilient Food Systems (October 2024), <https://www.c2es.org/document/enhancing-action-cooperation-for-sustainable-agriculture-resilient-food-systems/>



## E. Annex

### Agriculture and Workstreams Under the UNFCCC

1. Given the cross-cutting nature of UNFCCC workstreams, several work programs and events intersect with agriculture and food security. One is the UAE Framework, adopted at COP28. This framework underscores the need for systemic and holistic approaches to agriculture. Target 9(b) of the UAE Framework (“attaining climate-resilient food and agricultural production and supply and distribution of food, as well as increasing sustainable and regenerative production and equitable access to adequate food and nutrition for all”) urges Parties to prioritize sustainable, climate-resilient agriculture to achieve global climate resilience by 2030.<sup>17</sup> Adopted at COP30, the Belém Adaptation Indicators include five indicators related to target 9(b).<sup>18</sup> Parties will need to further define follow-up processes and technical work agreed to at COP30 to further clarify and operationalize the indicators at SB64.<sup>19</sup>
2. A second is the 2025 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance. The Forum was focused on advancing climate finance for sustainable food systems and agriculture by addressing inter-linkages and regional contexts, scaling up investment for resilience and climate action, strengthening policy coherence, mobilizing diverse financial instruments, and enhancing institutional and technical capacity to improve access to finance.<sup>20</sup>
3. A third was the fifth dialogue under the UAE Just Transition Work Programme. This dialogue was held at the end of April 2026 and focused on “just transition pathways for holistic approaches to food security, including with a focus on agriculture and oceans, in the context of element (c), paragraph 2 of decision 3/CMA.5.”<sup>21</sup>

### COP30 Outcomes

4. The Subsidiary Bodies for Scientific and Technical Advice (**SBSTA**) and Subsidiary Bodies for Implementation (**SBI**) agreed to continue discussions on the SJWA at SB64 and to draft conclusions on systemic and holistic approaches to implementing climate action on agriculture, food systems, and food security, including their understanding, cooperation, and integration into plans. Parties were not able to agree on outcomes of the workshop from SB62. The draft conclusions from SB63 note this in a footnote. The draft conclusions will be considered at SB64.<sup>22</sup>
5. At COP30, the Climate High-Level Champions (**CHLC**) launched the GCAA five-year plan. Earlier in 2025, the GCAA was aligned with the targets and signals from GST1 and operationalized through international cooperative initiatives (**ICIs**) participating in “activation groups.”<sup>23</sup> Axis 3 highlights growing momentum across agriculture, food, and land-use systems. The findings from the final report from COP30 show that emissions intensity is declining in some areas, policy integration is strengthening, and private sector engagement is increasing. Efforts to restore land, strengthen food systems, and ensure equitable access to nutrition are critical for building resilience.<sup>24</sup>

## F. References

- <sup>1</sup> Center for Climate and Energy Solutions [hereinafter C2ES], *Enhancing Action and Cooperation for Sustainable Agriculture and Resilient Food Systems* (Washington, DC: C2ES, October 2024), <https://www.c2es.org/document/enhancing-action-cooperation-for-sustainable-agriculture-resilient-food-systems/>.
- <sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [hereinafter IPCC], *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability Chapter 5 (Working Group II Contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report)*, (Geneva, Switzerland: 2022, IPCC), <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>. Food and Agriculture Organization [hereinafter FAO], *The State of the World's Forests 2020: Forests, biodiversity and people* (Rome, Italy: 2020, FAO), <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/d0f20c1c-7760-4d94-86c3-d1e770a17db0>.
- <sup>3</sup> FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2022*.
- <sup>4</sup> UN Framework Convention on Climate Change [hereinafter UNFCCC], *Koronivia joint work on agriculture*, Decision 4/CP.23, ¶ 1 (February 8, 2018), <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/2017/cop23/eng/11a01.pdf>.
- <sup>5</sup> "Koronivia joint work on agriculture," UNFCCC, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/agriculture/KJWA>.
- <sup>6</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security*, Decision 3/CP.27 ¶ 14 (March 17, 2023), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2022\\_10a01\\_E.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2022_10a01_E.pdf).
- <sup>7</sup> The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (**SBSTA**) and Subsidiary Body for Implementation (**SBI**) requested the UNFCCC Secretariat to hold in-session workshops under the SJWA. At SB62 (2025), the SBs held a workshop for Parties on systemic and holistic approaches to implementation of climate action on agriculture, food systems and food security, understanding, cooperation and integration into plans. At SB64 (2026), the SBs will hold a workshop on aims to share views on the progress, challenges, and opportunities related to identifying needs and accessing means of implementation for climate action in agriculture and food security including sharing best practices. UNFCCC, *Report of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice on its sixtieth session, held in Bonn from 3 to 13 June 2024*, FCCC/SBSTA/2024/7, ¶¶ 61, 114 (July 30, 2024), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbsta2024\\_07E.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sbsta2024_07E.pdf).
- <sup>8</sup> UNFCCC, *Work undertaken by constituted bodies and financial and other entities under the Convention, as well as by relevant international organizations, on activities related to the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security Annual synthesis report by the secretariat* (Bonn, Germany: UNFCCC, March 25, 2026), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb2026\\_01E.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb2026_01E.pdf).
- <sup>9</sup> "Sharm el-Sheikh Online Portal," UNFCCC, accessed April 2, 2026, <https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/agriculture/sharm-el-sheikh-online-portal>.
- <sup>10</sup> UNFCCC, *Outcome of the first global stocktake*, Decision 1/CMA.5, ¶ 55 (December 13, 2023), <https://unfccc.int/documents/637073>.
- <sup>11</sup> IPCC, *Special Report on Climate Change and Land, Chapter 5 Food Security*, (Geneva, Switzerland: 2019, IPCC) <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/chapter/chapter-5/>.
- <sup>12</sup> UNFCCC, *Global Mutirão: Uniting humanity in a global mobilization against climate change*, Decision 1/CMA.7, ¶ 40 (March 30, 2026), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2025\\_19\\_a01.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2025_19_a01.pdf). UNFCCC, *Outcome of the first global stocktake*, Decision 1/CMA.5, ¶¶ 28, 55, 63.
- <sup>13</sup> UNFCCC, *OUTCOMES REPORT Global Climate Action Agenda at COP 30* (November 21, 2025), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/COP30%20Action%20Agenda\\_Final%20Report\\_1.docx.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/COP30%20Action%20Agenda_Final%20Report_1.docx.pdf) (Advanced Unedited Version).
- <sup>14</sup> "Workshop on systemic and holistic approaches to implementation of climate action on agriculture, food systems (this does not preclude other approaches) and food security, understanding, cooperation and integration into plans," UNFCCC, June 17, 2025, <https://unfccc.int/event/workshop-on-systemic-and-holistic-approaches-to-implementation-of-climate-action-on-agriculture-food>.
- <sup>15</sup> "Constituted Bodies," UNFCCC, accessed April 20, 2026, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies>.
- <sup>16</sup> Murat Kurum, "First Letter from COP31 President-Designate," (UNFCCC, April 13, 2026), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Letter%20from%20COP%2031%20President%20Designate\\_13April2026.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Letter%20from%20COP%2031%20President%20Designate_13April2026.pdf).

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- <sup>17</sup> UNFCCC, *Global goal on adaptation*, Decision 2/CMA.5, ¶¶ 9-10 (March 15, 2024), <https://unfccc.int/documents/637073>.
- <sup>18</sup> UNFCCC, *Global goal on adaptation*, Decision 12/CMA.7 (March 30, 2026), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2025\\_19\\_a02.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2025_19_a02.pdf).
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- <sup>20</sup> "2025 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance," UNFCCC, accessed April 2, 2026, <https://unfccc.int/event/2025-forum-of-the-standing-committee-on-finance>.
- <sup>21</sup> "United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme Latest News," UNFCCC, accessed April 2, 2026, [https://unfccc.int/topics/just-transition/united-arab-emirates-just-transition-work-programme#tab\\_home](https://unfccc.int/topics/just-transition/united-arab-emirates-just-transition-work-programme#tab_home).
- <sup>22</sup> UNFCCC, *Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security Draft conclusions proposed by the Chairs*, FCCC/SB/2025/L.5 (November 14, 2025), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb2025\\_L05E.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb2025_L05E.pdf).
- <sup>23</sup> "COP30," Climate Action, accessed April 2, 2026, <https://climateaction.unfccc.int/CopsAndSummits/COP30>.
- <sup>24</sup> UNFCCC, *OUTCOMES REPORT: Global Climate Action Agenda at COP 30*.