**09th December 2022**

**Dear Excellencies,**

The Anglican Consultative Council is delighted to be invited to provide input in response to the letter of 4th October 2022 actioning Resolution 50/9 on Human Rights and Climate Change.

The Anglican Consultative Council is one of the instruments for the global Anglican Communion, a network of 85 million Christians in the Anglican tradition across the world. The average Anglican is a woman, living in Africa on less than $4 a day, struggling to face the challenges caused by climate change.

This report contains information from Anglican agencies across the world[[1]](#footnote-1). Our reach is global because our people are global (we have a presence in more than 165 countries) – yet while we seek to reach communities in most need, we often lack funds and major partners to help us fight climate change and food deprivation.

We welcome partnerships to work with faith organisations like ourselves, as the mid-term strategy of the UN Environment Programme has committed to doing[[2]](#footnote-2).

**1. Please describe through concrete examples and stories how climate change is affecting the full realization of the right to adequate food in your country.**

In **Africa,** the impact of climate change has led to longer droughts and reduced the production of maize, beans, rice, wheat and tubers. These foods are staples to the diet of the continent and thus, when they fail, millions are exposed. Compounding this, food seed and fertiliser prices are all rising, reducing peoples’ ability to be self-sufficient. Experts fear for the lean season, as the situation is already bad and can only get worse.

The **Horn of Africa** is particularly suffering: the region’s drylands are in their fifth consecutive season of below-average rainfall, making vulnerable 50 million people. This is causing livestock deaths, crop failures, conflict over scarce water supplies, as well as mental health challenges[[3]](#footnote-3).

**Malawi** is experiencing less rainfall and more drought, causing crop failure. This is compounded by extensive deforestation and logging, as well as the growing of non-native crops that are impoverishing soils[[4]](#footnote-4). Last year, between March and October 2021, **Madagascar** experienced its worst drought in 40 years, causing severe food insecurity for this island nation.

**Asian** countries such as **Sri Lanka, Pakistan** and **India** are already in crisis, with many households reducing food consumption to just two meals a day. More extreme weather events have had a large negative impact on food production: at the height of recent flooding, 33% of Pakistan was underwater, resulting in destroyed harvests and topsoil erosion.

**Pacific** countries are more self-sufficient and resilient to changes in international trade, but not when it comes to a changing climate. Seasons have altered and this is affecting planting and harvesting, leading to reduced food yields and higher crop losses. In **Melanesia** (**Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia**), climate change has caused seasons to change and extreme weather events to increase, leading to the destruction of crops from more floods and cyclones[[5]](#footnote-5). Rising sea levels are salinating farmland, rendering it unusable, and increasing dependence on imported food.

Our churches in the Middle East are reporting that there is a huge impending crisis coming across the region, though particularly for **Egypt, Lebanon** and **Yemen**[[6]](#footnote-6). The consequences of other international events have added to the long-term food supply problems caused by **climate change,** and the results are more water shortages, furthering desertification, and thus greater hardship meeting domestic food production demands. The result of this is likely to be **significant** **social unrest** and political **instability** in a region where there are already high tensions[[7]](#footnote-7).

**2. Please share a summary of any relevant data that captures how climate change adversely affects the full realization of the right to food, taking into account discrimination, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.**

We have noted and observed an increase in **gender-based violence**. As food costs rise, women have been blamed for failing to provide the same levels of food as previously, and subject to domestic violence. Women and girls are **taking greater risks** when forced to walk further distances to collect firewood and water as rivers dry up, exposing them to potential rape, kidnap and other forms of harm.

While we monitor scientific and news reports, our churches primarily respond to the situations around them. We take action against climate change because we live in and experience its consequences.

**3. Please describe any specific measure, including public policies, legislation, practices or strategies that your Government has undertaken, in compliance with applicable international human rights law, to promote an approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as loss and damage, that ensures the full and effective enjoyment of the right to food. Please also note and identify any relevant mechanisms for ensuring accountability for these commitments including their means of implementation.**

As our constituency is global, we maintain a global overview in terms of governmental responses. We note the crucial importance of ensuring accountability for commitments by UN Member States on climate change adaptation and mitigation and on climate financing. We welcome the establishment of a loss and damage financing facility at COP27 and remain committed to advocating for its effective funding and implementation.

**4. Please describe any mechanisms and tools that are in place to measure and monitor the impacts of climate change on the full realization of the right to food.**

As in our response to Question 2, because members of the Anglican Communion live in the communities affected, we respond to the situations around us.

**5. Please identify and share examples of promising practices and challenges in the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of the full realization of the right to food in the context of the adverse effects of climate change.**

Across the world, the Anglican Communion has been acting to help and support those struggling to access food. Our work shows the **capability of faith communities**, and underlines how important it is to **work with churches and other faith institutions**.

We have **school feeding programmes** in Anglican schools in Sri Lanka, Kenya and Zimbabwe, helping to combat malnutrition in children during climate-induced droughts.

Across the **Caribbean** and **Africa,** we have been working to **reorientate communities** to accept and **utilise locally available food**. This work involves returning communities to **traditional** **crops** that are **more suited to local conditions** in order to reduce dependence on imported food. Local crops are more resilient to climate change, and have evolved to fit into local ecosystems.

As an example, traditional small grain crops such as sorghum and millet – both **drought** **resistant** – are being reintroduced to replace the water-hungry maize crops introduced for global markets. Despite the clear advantages of indigenous crops, we have had to **re-educate** people on how to farm local produce, as well as show them that native foods are nutritionally excellent.

In **Malawi** we have been helping to combat bad practices by **providing training** to **grow** and **preserve** food and seed as well as **building savings and loans societies** for local people. This collaboration is **increasing local reinvestment** and **building resilience** to climate disasters[[8]](#footnote-8). We have also worked to **protect existing ecosystems** and **encourage the diversification** of the local economy, making people less dependent on one food source[[9]](#footnote-9).

The church in **Tanzania** has worked to train people with farming skills but also encourage greater **collaborative effort** and the **sharing of best practice**. The results of this have seen food security increase[[10]](#footnote-10). In **Burundi,** the Anglican church has been providing skills training to improve rice yields and worked to **build resilience infrastructure such as anti-erosion trenches**, as well as planting **trees to reduce soil wastage**[[11]](#footnote-11).

In **Sri Lanka,** as families have been cutting back on meals, the Anglican Church (alongside partners like Christian Aid), has been working to **guarantee one hot meal per day** to children attending Anglican schools and day-care centres. Churches have also been **teaching** (via in-person training and online webinars) **gardening skills** adapted to fit both rural and urban contexts. **Church land is being used** to demonstrate how manioc (cassava) can be farmed to replace imported foodstuffs.

In **Melanesia** our resilience work has seen the distribution of **salt-water tolerant seedlings** to deal with increased flooding, better education of farmers to work with changing seasons, and the **construction of safer, stronger and raised nurseries** to withstand storms[[12]](#footnote-12).

In **Papua New Guinea**, we are working with communities to use **fast-growing crops** such as sweet potatoes rather than crops that take longer. We have also been **encouraging the use of small spaces**, showing how small gardens can grow traditional local foods. In this, agricultural departments and research institutes have partnered with us.

In **Polynesia,** the Anglican Church has also been **using its land** to grow food in communal gardens, as well as **investing in supporting people’s livelihoods.** **Tools are provided** in the gardens and **resilient crops grown** to meet needs and model what is possible.

In the **Middle East,** some Anglican-linked NGOs have introduced **hydroponic** and **aquaponic** technologies to enable refugees to grow fruits and vegetables in small garden spaces despite living in arid desert conditions.

Anglican Churches in **Myanmar,** the **Philippines** and **Tanzania** are **creating grain and seed banks** in **local communities** to consolidate and store grain gathered during harvest that can later be used or sold in times when there is more difficulty. Seed is also kept back for planting in the next season. The reserves and mutual support provided by the groups involved in these projects have **fostered resilience** that has made the communities more resistant to crises. The creation of **savings groups** has provided a useful mechanism for the distribution of cash to those in need in the wider community, as well as proving important in getting information to people.

Teaching and building **resilience** has been a major area of work we have pushed globally. The Anglican Alliance has created a Resilience Course for churches and communities experiencing climate-change induced struggles for food, and this is helping to guide adaptation initiatives across the world[[13]](#footnote-13).

**6. Please include examples and promising practices and challenges that highlight international and multilateral cooperation and approaches that promote the full realization of the right to food.**

The feedback here shows how the Anglican Communion is adopting and utilising its networks and connections that stretch into the heart of even the most remote communities. The Communion has global capabilities and reach, but we **do not have sufficient funding. We can deliver aid**, **technical support** and **resources** to the world’s poorest people, but **we need donors to partner and work with us to do that.**

The examples listed under Question 5 above highlight many examples of international and multilateral cooperation, particularly the use of hydroponic and aquaponic solutions, which use sustainable natural recycling processes to provide permanent and secure sources of food. Our churches in **Burundi** have also enjoyed fruitful cooperation with **UNICEF**, helping to provide major health care[[14]](#footnote-14).

Anglican Missions in the **Pacific** region are campaigning for an **increase in overseas development aid** from the government of New Zealand. This is an example of international regional cooperation to highlight the good a rich state can do to its neighbours.

In **Sri Lanka,** the Anglican Church is pressuring the government to **prioritise food** supplies and to allocate appropriate budgetary resources for this aim. Across **Africa,** churches are asking for sustained school feeding programmes to avert malnutrition, and supplementary programmes for children under 23 months of age, who are at high risk of stunted growth and wasting.

**7. Please provide any additional information you believe would be useful to support climate action that promotes the full realization of the right to food.**

There are many **gender issues:** although women do the bulk of food growing work, many gender ‘norms’ restrict their ability to purchase land (especially limiting the options for widows), ability to open bank accounts or access credit (denying the chance to improve land/purchase irrigation equipment) and mean that in times of shortage it is boys who receive more food than girls. Fishing also has gendered work patterns: women do much unpaid work, such as near-shore fishing with hand nets, collecting bait, fixing nets, and managing accounts. Their income opportunities are thus greatly limited compared to the men’s labour.

To counter reduced rainfall and secure the right to food, investment needs to increase in **irrigated agriculture** in developing countries that are dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Governments and other stakeholders should also create **loss and damage funds** to be used for food distribution to victims of climate disasters.

**New technology** alongside **lifestyle changes** will improve the **efficiency** of food production and consumption. It is important to use everything we have better, and curb wastage and loss.

1. Including the Anglican Board of Mission in Australia; the Anglican Alliance (UK); the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (Canada); Episcopal Relief & Development (USA), and the Anglican Communion Environmental Network (global) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Engaging with faith-based organization | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](https://www.unep.org/resources/policy-and-strategy/engaging-faith-based-organization) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We are thankful to the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and Dr Rachel Mash, member of the UNEP Faith for Earth Interfaith Women’s Council, for providing information on current challenges being faced [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.stmaryswimbledon.org/about/mission/malawi/foodsecurity.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://anglicanalliance.org/grass-roots-anglicans-responses-to-food-insecurity-heard-at-the-un/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [The growing global food crisis – Anglican concerns and responses - Anglican Alliance](https://anglicanalliance.org/the-growing-global-food-crisis-anglican-concerns-and-responses/) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [Egypt's farmers fear rising social tensions over scarce water | Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/egypts-farmers-fear-rising-social-tensions-over-scarce-water-2022-10-31/) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.stmaryswimbledon.org/about/mission/malawi/foodsecurity.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <http://www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/advocacy-funded/climate-change-resilience-food-security-malawi/> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://anglicanalliance.org/project/food-security/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://anglicanaid.org.au/projects/gitega-food-security/>; <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2018/05/anglican-church-of-burundi-helps-improve-rice-growing-techniques.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://anglicanalliance.org/grass-roots-anglicans-responses-to-food-insecurity-heard-at-the-un/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://anglicanalliance.org/relief/resilience-course/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2018/05/anglican-church-of-burundi-helps-improve-rice-growing-techniques.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)