**Questionnaire in relation to Human Rights Council resolution 50/9**

**on human rights and climate change**

Inputs from Barcelona, Spain (Observatori de Drets Econòmics, Socials, Culturals i Ambientals)

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.**

The IPCC indicates that the Mediterranean, and Spain as a country belonging to this geographical enclave, is considered the epicenter of climate change[[1]](#footnote-2). The technical specialists of the Spanish Ministry of Ecological Transition, in the National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change 2021-2030 (PNACC)[[2]](#footnote-3), foresee the different possible scenarios we face if the escalation of emissions is not reversed soon.

Spain has already risen 1.7ºC since the pre-industrial era, a value higher than the global warming scenario, which is 1.1ºC. This summer 2022, our country has suffered alarming heat waves, and these are expected to be twice as long and twice as intense in the future. As the PNACC mentions, "The proportion of hot days is expected to increase by almost 50% for the most pessimistic emissions scenario." On the other hand, according to the State Meteorological Agency (AEMET), summer has already lengthened by an average of nine days per decade[[3]](#footnote-4). It now lasts 5 weeks longer than in the 1980s. With this progression, by the middle of the century it could last about five months. In this scenario, the most affected regions would be the interior of the peninsula and the east.

In Catalonia, the Meteorological Service of Catalonia (Meteocat) has made official that 2022 has been the hottest year for more than a hundred years[[4]](#footnote-5), having more than 120 days with a maximum temperature equal to or higher than 30 degrees.

On the other hand, climate change brings with it a greater aridity of the land. In recent decades, semi-arid land has increased approximately by 30,000km2, around 6% of the country's surface area. This hydrological year 2021-2022 has been the third driest since records have been kept in the last 61 years[[5]](#footnote-6). Accumulated rainfall in Spain from October 1, 2021 to September 30 was 25% below normal. Currently, 15.7% of the territory is in an emergency scenario due to severe water shortages, in addition, 21.5% is on alert.

In Catalonia, during November 2022 the Catalan Water Agency has declared a drought alert, applying water restrictions for the first time since 2008 for agricultural, livestock, industrial and recreational uses[[6]](#footnote-7). The alert extends to 514 municipalities, a territory representing a population of 6.7 million inhabitants. After two years with a lack of rainfall, the reserves of the reservoirs of the internal basins are at 33% of their capacity.

All these changes mean and will mean great losses in the agri-food production of the country, and consequently, in the realization of the right to adequate food in Spain. The Coordinating Committee of Farmers and Ranchers Organizations in Spain (COAG) estimates that every year 6% of agri-food production is lost due to the effects of climate change[[7]](#footnote-8). According to this COAG study, the greatest losses would be associated with increased water stress in crops, due to increased evapotranspiration caused by higher temperatures and lower rainfall. This decrease would be accompanied by a higher frequency of droughts, up to 5 and 10 times more frequent if 1.5°C or 2°C is exceeded. In addition, rainfall would be more intense, leading to erosion of croplands, and concentrated over time, making water less usable for agricultural activity. This damage could be further increased by a higher incidence of pests and diseases, which in the case of wheat would lead to an increase in losses of up to 60% compared to current levels.

On the other hand, global warming could cause physiological alterations if certain thresholds are exceeded, causing damage to nutritional and organoleptic quality as well as to productivity. An increase in temperature accompanied by a decrease in available humidity would have direct consequences both on rainfed agriculture (as they would not be compensated by the stimulating effect of CO2 on photosynthesis) and on irrigated agriculture (if current growing conditions were maintained, net irrigation needs would increase while available water reserves would decrease).

1. **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.**

Climate change has profound impacts on a large number of human rights, such as the right to food. On the one hand, it causes serious losses in food production and, on the other hand, it causes physiological changes that affect the nutritional and organoleptic quality of food.

The loss of production and the increase in the cost of agricultural resources and inputs related to their scarcity make crops more expensive, resulting in a rise in the price of the final product. This increase in price will jeopardize the food security of many people, threatening accessibility, availability, adequacy, sustainability, non-discrimination, and equality.

It should be noted that in Spain there is a poverty rate of 21.7%[[8]](#footnote-9). These people will be the most affected in terms of food accessibility, due to price increases, especially in the case of local products which, again referring to the cost of production, are usually even more expensive. In turn, this difficulty in accessing food will jeopardize the adequate food and nutrition of these people with lower economic resources.

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.**

Here, an excerpt from the Observatori DESC 2021 Social Rights Yearbook[[9]](#footnote-10) with some additions on climate change mitigation measures in agriculture:

State level:

The Government of Spain approved, in February 2019, the Strategic Framework for Energy and Climate through which "measures to facilitate the shift towards a sustainable and competitive economic model that contributes to curb climate change" were put in place. This Strategic Framework is structured in three pillars, which have been approved since 2019 to date:

1. Plan Nacional Integrado de Energía y Clima (approved 2021)
2. Ley de Cambio Climático (approved in May 2021)
3. Estrategia de Transición Justa (approved in 2020).

Even with the slow pace of legislation on climate issues in Spain, following the approval of the Declaration of Climate and Environmental Emergency in Spain by the Council of Ministers of the Government (January 2020) [[10]](#footnote-11), some of the processes for the approval of climate policies have been accelerated. The following is an explanation of the legislative developments in 2021 in reference to the pillars of the Strategic Energy and Climate Framework.

Regarding measures to mitigate climate change in agriculture and livestock farming in Spain we find:

1. Royal Decree 147/2014, of March 7, which regulates the direct granting of aid under the Plan to Boost the Environment for the renewal of agricultural tractors 2. <<PIMA Tierra>>
2. Royal Decree 987/2008, of June 13, establishing regulatory bases for the granting of subsidies for certain projects to improve the environmental management of pig farms.
3. Royal Decree 261/1996, of February 16, 1996, on the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.
4. White Paper on Agriculture and Rural Development.

Catalan level:

In Catalonia, the Catalan Climate Change Law (Law 16/2017), approved on August 1, 2017, by the Parliament of Catalonia and which adopts the bases derived from the European Union legislation, is already in place.

Although it has been 5 years since the law was approved, in the past 2021 there were some decrees that modify the law. Among others, specifically, on October 26, 2021, the decree Law 24/2021 on the acceleration of the deployment of distributed and participated renewable energies was approved, which among other actions, creates the Social Dialogue Table of Renewable Energies. In addition, on April 22, 2021, the first package of programs and projects to be financed through the Climate Fund was approved. Eleven programs and projects amounting to 7.9 million euros have been selected and will be developed over the next few years.

Another delay in climate matters in Catalonia is the implementation of the Catalan Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change, which would cover the period 2021-2023. According to the Climate Change Law, the ESCAC30 will be the strategic reference framework for adaptation to climate change in Catalonia. Given that 2021 was the first year of implementation of the strategy, it should have been published earlier.

This strategy is still in the participatory process.

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.**

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.**

First, at the national, regional, autonomous, regional, and municipal levels, there are agroecological consumer cooperatives to supply food products to the population. These cooperatives are making great strides towards a more sustainable agri-food sector and a value chain with zero net carbon emissions. Considering that agriculture and land management in general play a central role in climate change adaptation and mitigation, agri-consumer cooperatives are a climate-resilient practice that ensures the right to food.

On the other hand, there are farmers' markets, which supply the population without intermediaries. The products are their own and usually km0 and organic, promoting more equitable links between the countryside and the city, which favors food security and rural development in the country, in addition to mitigating climate change in terms of the impact of food. The benefit is threefold: the farming sectors improve their income as they mitigate and adapt to climate change, and consumers have greater access to fresh, quality and proximity food.

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.**

**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.**

1. "The countries of the Mediterranean arc will suffer particularly intensely from the impacts" (IPCC 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/cambio-climatico/temas/impactos-vulnerabilidad-y-adaptacion/pnacc-2021-2030_tcm30-512163.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://www.aemet.es/ca/noticias/2022/09/rueda_de_prensa_estacional_septiembre_2022> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://twitter.com/meteocat/status/1585987139015090177?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1585987139015090177%7Ctwgr%5Ed034523de6cf38544fa31220f3fce9419122329a%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ccma.cat%2Fel-temps%2Flestiu-mes-llarg-de-la-historia-a-catalunya%2Fnoticia%2F3193042%2F> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://www.aemet.es/documentos/es/serviciosclimaticos/vigilancia_clima/resumen_precipitaciones/resumen_precipitaciones.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://web.gencat.cat/ca/actualitat/detall/Samplien-les-restriccions-per-sequera> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. <https://coag.com.es/Informe_Impactos_Cambio_Climatico_en_la_Agricultura.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. <https://www.ine.es/prensa/ecv_2021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. <http://observatoriodesc.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/anuari_drets_socials_2021_odesc_0.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. La Moncloa. 21/01/2020. Climate emergency declared [Council of Ministers] (n. d.). La Moncloa. Available at: https://www.lamoncloa. gob.es/consejodeministros/Paginas/enlaces/210120-enlace-clima.aspx. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)