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# ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE

POLICY ACTION AGAINST HUNGER FRANCE

## 2022 - 2025

**ACTION AGAINST HUNGER FRANCE**  
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have contributed to the development of this Action Against Hunger France policy. This document offers minimum standards in addition of Action Against Hunger Network Framework.

This Action Against Hunger France policy was developed in collaboration with Eduardo Sánchez Jacob and Rudy Martínez, with coordination from Mayte Valdez, Cross-cutting Themes Manager from AAH-Spain, and Camille Evain, Energy and Environment Advisor from AAH-France. We extend a special thanks to main contributors Didier Vergès, Prevention and Disaster Resilience Advisor; Jean Lapègue, Water Access Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Senior Advisor; Pierre-Marie Goimard, WASH Technical Advisor for Middle East; Cyril Lekiefs, Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) Advisor; Pauline Verriere, Advocacy Officer FSL; and Pascal Revault, Director for Expertise and Advocacy.

The 2014 Action Against Hunger International Network (ACFIN) Water, Sanitation and Health Environmental policy will be updated using elements from this policy. That policy will focus on:

- Mainstreaming environmental issues across WASH projects.
- Standing as a platform to develop technical strategies that protect, recover and preserve our environment.
- Proposing standard approaches according to implementation contexts.
- Emphasizing the priority of environmental education and capacity building to increase environmental awareness amongst program participants and to ensure sustainable self-management going forward.

## MOTIVATION AND CONTEXT

The year 2020 delivered the hottest global average temperature to date, making the last six years the warmest on record, including an average temperature approximately 1.25°C above that of the period from 1850 to 1900<sup>1</sup>. Extreme weather events damage infrastructure and can impede access to health and care facilities, placing pregnant women and infants most at risk<sup>2</sup>. Climate change, now manifest in any number of ways around the world, has become a climate crisis. Furthermore, human behavior has never before threatened wildlife the way it does today. The global biomass of wild mammals, for example, has fallen by 82%, while three-quarters of the world's land surface is significantly altered and 66% of its ocean area is experiencing increasing cumulative impacts<sup>3</sup> that exacerbate a growing environmental crisis.

Not only are the environmental and climate crises accelerating, but they also are reinforcing each other in the process. Climate change, for example, is a direct driver of the environmental crisis, yielding a decline in biodiversity and ecosystem services by compounding the negative effect of other drivers and non-climatic stressors<sup>4</sup>. Climate and environment are also linked by related actions and solutions Action Against Hunger is implementing on the ground. It is impossible, for instance, to produce hydroelectricity without also affecting aquatic fauna and flora. So human interventions in the environment also carry repercussions for our climate and vice versa. Those effects spill directly into the global food security and nutrition challenges that our programs combat around the globe.

In 2020, more than 700 million people around the world suffered from hunger<sup>5</sup>. Stunting, in particular, affected 149 million children younger than 5, with 47 million suffering from wasting, and 14 million from severe wasting<sup>6</sup>. Climate and environmental crises exacerbate hunger by directly compromising health, increasing the number of food-borne, waterborne<sup>7</sup>, vector-borne and air-borne diseases, or large zoonosis outbreaks, such as malaria (Martens 1995), dengue (Patz 1998), diarrhoea (Kolstad 2011) and Cholera (Pascual 2000). Hunger carries with it many other health implications that undercut an individual's quality of life – or that even lead to death. (Patz 2005, McMichael 2006, Costello 2009).

Given the internationally recognized climate and environmental emergencies and their connection to malnutrition, Action Against Hunger programs must adopt a climate and environmental approach by transforming our relationship with ecosystems and recognizing their value as going beyond the services they provide. This approach builds our understanding around key environmental problems and challenges us to confront them responsibly. The second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) aims to eradicate hunger and to put an end to all forms of malnutrition by 2030. Doing so requires us to address the climate crisis, along with other pressing issues such as gender inequity, and to implement humanitarian and development practices that respect the environment, even as they aid in the fight against the climate crisis and, ultimately, promote food security in all reaches of the globe.

The global community increasingly views safeguarding the human right to a safe, clean, healthy environment as a state obligation, evidenced in the constitutions of more than 100 countries. Beyond mere legal frameworks, donor requirements, or overarching societal pressures, however, we believe the integration of environmental aspects into our work is a moral obligation as well. Indeed, we find it essential in our fight against hunger to practice and model environmental responsibility, particularly with regard to climate change.

1. Climate Change Service of the European agency, Copernicus  
2. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6551034\\_Health\\_Concerns\\_of\\_Women\\_and\\_Infants\\_in\\_Times\\_of\\_Natural\\_Disasters\\_Lessons\\_Learned\\_from\\_Hurricane\\_Katrina](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6551034_Health_Concerns_of_Women_and_Infants_in_Times_of_Natural_Disasters_Lessons_Learned_from_Hurricane_Katrina)  
3. IPBES Report on biodiversity and ecosystem services, 2019  
4. Non climatic stressors such as land and sea-use change, overexploitation of resources, pollution and invasive alien species - Ibid  
5. FAO - SOFI report 2021 – State of Food Security in the world  
6. WHO Level and Trends on Child Malnutrition 2020  
7. Climate Change Impacts on Waterborne Diseases: Moving Toward Designing Interventions, Karen Levy and Al, 2018

The climate crisis both directly and indirectly affects a wide range of SDGs – from health, food security, and employment, to livelihoods, gender equality, education, housing, poverty and mobility. Climate change reinforces existing inequalities at multiple levels: In the face of climate shocks that destroy agricultural production, for example, poor people may have no alternative but to reduce food consumption, withdraw their children from school or sell productive assets on which their recovery depends. Women, who represent the majority of the world's poor and are less represented in decision-making processes and labor markets, are most affected. The feminization of poverty, therefore, may only worsen. Given the likelihood of climate change to increase malnutrition and health issues as well as social inequalities, Action Against Hunger is committed to being at the forefront in the fight against hunger by adopting and advancing a gender lens through which we design and implement an approach that respects both the climate and the environment.

Driven by land-use, exploitation and pollution, among other factors, the environmental crisis reduces biodiversity and ecosystems functions such as food production and access to clean water. These functions and services are linked to the achievement of several of the SDGs, and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity<sup>8</sup> cannot be achieved without transformative change.

This policy outlines our commitments to tackling climate change and environmental degradation, establishing core principles and minimum standards to guide our interventions. It incorporates global and local perspectives that protect the local environment and identify and mitigate environmental risks. The minimum standards enable Action Against Hunger to monitor and evaluate our progress. We are committed to integrating climate crisis issues into our strategic planning as well as into our management system at all levels.

As a basic principle, there are no restrictions or limitations on the sectors in which this policy can be implemented. Thus, the geographical scope of the policy is global. The social, economic, political and ecological dimensions of each programmatic intervention must be operationalized to ensure coherence. References cited in this policy come from: The Rio Declaration (June 1992), The Agreement of Paris, the European Union, and the United Nations, namely UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) and UN Environment/OCHA Joint Unit (JEU)<sup>9</sup> for emergency response, and the World Health Organization (WHO) guidance for climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable healthcare facilities<sup>10</sup>.

8. Long-Term Strategic Directions To The 2050 Vision For Biodiversity  
9. <https://www.unocha.org/themes/environmental-dimensions-emergencies>  
10. WHO Guidance for Climate Resilient and Environmentally Sustainable Health Care Facilities 2020

# COMMITMENT

## COMMITMENT 1 – ASSESS AND ADDRESS

**Action Against Hunger account for our environmental impact and outline our methods of working in the context of a surging climate crisis.**

### PRINCIPLE 1.1: Know and reduce our carbon footprint

In the coming years, the climate crisis will be the most significant threat to international development, as it increases the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, such as droughts, cyclones and floods, that will only produce more humanitarian emergencies and displace growing numbers of people. It will exacerbate existing inequalities, particularly affecting food-vulnerable groups and persons suffering from undernutrition.

Most human activities have a carbon footprint, and the only way to avoid worsening our impact on the climate is to be aware of our own greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to reduce them, according to the trajectory laid out in the Paris Agreement.

This policy supports the objective of the Paris Agreement to maintain the global average temperature within a 2°C increase over pre-industrial levels by limiting the increase to 1.5°C and transitioning to a carbon-neutral society by 2050.

To address the climate crisis, we commit to ambitious targets for reducing GHG emissions in the medium term, as well as conserving and enhancing, as appropriate<sup>11</sup>, sinks and reservoirs of GHG. We account for the potential negative impact of dedicated carbon offsetting<sup>12</sup> programs on land-use change and will always prefer reduction in GHG over offsetting measures, which are reserved for necessary emissions linked to our mandate.

#### MINIMUM STANDARDS:

- The carbon footprint for each of Action Against Hunger's mission is calculated using an internationally accepted methodology and considers a wide scope of elements, including energy, transportation, supplies, equipment, and information and communication technologies.
- The principle of "Net Zero Emission by 2050" is reflected in our strategic planning, and the trajectory to reduce GHG emissions is compatible with this principle, but it also minimizes recovery through offsetting measures.
- Our offices design and implement a plan for GHG reduction of -50% by 2030<sup>13</sup>, with a firm schedule, measures and resources.
- We manage and reduce our energy consumption, opting for the use of renewable energy in our offices in the midterm and progressively improving the efficiency of AAH's vehicle fleet. By 2025, we will review our transportation and mobility strategy with this standard in mind.
- Products using refrigerant fluids with high environmental impact (CFC & HCFC) are progressively phased out of use.

11. In particular when social co-benefits, as well as for food security, nutrition or biodiversity are demonstrated.

12. Also called compensation, understood as any kind of measure and action with an expected long term benefit by GHG emission avoiding or carbon sequestration.

13. Network commitment is to reduce GHG emission according the target of Paris agreement, each headquarters remain free to defined it own objectives and trajectory of reduction. The target of -50% by 2030 is the target defined for Action Against Hunger France.

### PRINCIPLE 1.2: The environmental impact of our projects are assessed and environmental rights respected.

It is understood that a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to fully realizing a wide range of human rights, including the right to life, health, food, water and sanitation. Assessing the potential environmental impacts of our operations will ensure that these rights are respected, even in worst-case scenarios.

Simple tools are applied for an environmental assessment of our interventions and risk detection. When we identify projects<sup>14</sup> with potentially high impact, we conduct an Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA). We ensure the participation of local populations so they can assert their place-based knowledge and voice their environmental concerns. We ensure adequate participation of women and minority groups in order to capture their specific knowledge and needs in these consultations and integrate gender and protection analyses specific to the environment.

#### MINIMUM STANDARDS:

- All projects utilize an environment marker.
- Using a simplified tool, all projects integrate an environmental impact assessment.
- High environmental risk projects systematically undergo an EIA, giving particular attention to local populations and vulnerable groups.
- We protect and respect environmental rights and ensure that specific environmental regulations, if available, are applied to our interventions in countries with high environmental risks.
- We support and strengthen climate resilience and sustainable healthcare facilities and health systems.

### PRINCIPLE 1.3: Interlinkages between our core mandate and climate crisis are studied and our means of working for a climate against hunger outlined.

As climate change aggravates humanitarian crises, bridging the humanitarian development gap becomes increasingly important. It is necessary to have an accurate knowledge of the interactions of the environment and climate with vulnerable populations who depend on the natural environment and its services. Acknowledging that the reason women and girls are more vulnerable to climate change is often socially constructed due to their different social status and the roles traditionally attributed to them, we pay special attention to gender and other inequalities. From this analysis, we define our way of working both for dedicated interventions and for a mainstreamed approach that will reduce and mitigate our negative impact, while maximizing our positive impact.

#### MINIMUM STANDARDS:

- We identify our challenges, strengths and weaknesses in our intervention contexts in the face of the adaptation and mitigation of climate crisis.
- We define our niche and role in the fight against hunger under a climate-, environment- and gender-sensitive approach.

14. Project identified as high-risk by the simplified tool used for all projects.

## COMMITMENT 2 – TAKE ACTION AND PROMOTE

### Action Against Hunger promote environmentally friendly actions at the forefront in the fight against hunger

#### PRINCIPLE 2.1: Caring for natural resources and their management.

Action Against Hunger is committed to incorporating an environmental component into the supply chain and within our program design to mitigate our potential negative impact on resources, including energy, minerals, water, soil and biodiversity. We will encourage and promote sustainable resource management and agroecology, including agroforestry and other soil recarbonization practices, in order to maximize the positive impacts of our operations.

We will adhere to this principle in our logistics management and program design to minimize the quantity of waste produced, prioritizing the reduction of materials and equipment used, reusing materials necessary for our operations (by refurbishing, sharing, selling, donating, or internal reuse), and recycling those that cannot be reduced or reused. Residual waste treatment adhere to local regulations and laws, WHO standards if higher, and to more environmentally respectful measures if available. We pay special attention to hazardous waste.

We recognize that the environmental impact of materials or equipment is generated at all stages of a product's life<sup>15</sup>, from raw material extraction to material processing, manufacture, distribution, use, repair and maintenance, and disposal or recycling. Action Against Hunger is committed to accounting for these aspects as we procure products and services, and undertake supply chain operations.

Our commitments also extend to reducing the use of materials by extending the lifespan of equipment and limiting equipment renewal, prioritizing those of more sustainable origin or with environmental labels (paper, ecological, electronic labels) and those that generate less waste or are more easily managed (e.g. avoid plastics, hazardous waste). We are careful in our practices, usages and services, ensuring that we not limit or reduce the life span of equipment, or push that equipment to early renewal.

#### MINIMUM STANDARDS:

- We consider the link between the environment and some groups' livelihoods and connection with nature, with a special focus on gender and diversity.
- We redesign projects and tactics as necessary to prevent the contamination of aquifers, water bodies, soil or air, or to deplete local natural resources.
- Our offices follow a proper waste-management system as well as ensure that a dedicated system to detect and manage hazardous waste exists.
- We integrate into AAH's supply chain management criteria inspired by the international standard for sustainable procurement, such as the European Union's Green Public Procurement (GPP) or ISO 20400. These criteria will be incorporated in tenders and requests for equipment or services.
- Good environmental practices for suppliers, good use of equipment and services, and good travel and mobility practices are shared, while associated best practices are adopted.
- We monitor the consumption of key resources such as energy (fuel, gas, wood, and electricity), water, vehicles, computer equipment, telecommunications.

#### PRINCIPLE 2.2: The availability of and access to early warning systems and disaster risk information will be increased so we can anticipate and reshape our programming, as needed, using a climate-sensitive approach.

Environmental and climate disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity, so it is important that we promote surveillance mechanisms and early-warning systems in areas vulnerable to climate variability. We adopt the concept of Early Warning Early Action for translating warnings into anticipatory actions that can reduce the impact of specific disaster events.

We encourage multi-sectoral surveillance to ensure a far-reaching, global assessment of the determinants of hunger, including natural and human-induced hazards. We promote the use of integrated surveillance and climate-informed early-warning systems, integrating them into our projects and our response to the climate crisis, prevent undernutrition, and improve natural resource management. In doing so, we will consult with local leaders and account for the voices of other community stakeholders.

#### MINIMUM STANDARDS:

- We increase our predictive capacity through research and innovation, exploring data linkages and emerging technologies, particularly in areas of high exposure to the climate crisis.
- We promote research and innovation around early warning systems, exploring data linkages and innovative technologies<sup>16</sup>.
- We anticipate our actions in the face of disaster events and advocate for this window of opportunity amongst our stakeholders.

#### PRINCIPLE 2.3: We define and develop adapted actions to overcome the consequences of the climate crisis on hunger.

Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction are cross-sectoral topics, and it is essential that public policy related to agriculture, food security, nutrition, health, rural development, water and sanitation, and economic development fully account for them, offering a coherent set of policies that enable inclusive development and nutrition for all.

Timely and well-designed adaptation actions can mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis on the livelihoods of the most vulnerable through preparedness and risk reduction. Principles must be developed to ensure that funding for adaptation reaches those who need it most, strengthening their livelihoods and building their capacity to confront the adverse effects of the climate crisis.

Action Against Hunger emphasizes the need for ambitious mitigation, as a changing climate can jeopardize health and access to basic services such as water, sanitation, food security and nutrition. Nonetheless, mitigation actions should never be deployed in a way that threatens local communities' livelihoods and food security, or that otherwise impairs the quality of care we deliver. We must promote social protection – accounting for social inequities – in order to avoid exclusion, particularly in vulnerable populations.

Communities worldwide face degraded natural environments, including land erosion and desertification, soil salinity, loss of biodiversity and water scarcity due to frequent climate shocks and stresses. These devastating consequences negatively affect soil fertility, pasture availability and the ability to irrigate crops. In addition to

15. As defined by ISO 14 040

16. e.g. link between hydroclimatic factors and health & undernutrition conditions and prevalence, and/or continuous studies on different impact climate crisis can have on different categories of people, including women and girls' elderly, people with disabilities, etc.

adaptive and mitigative actions, Action Against Hunger further develop specific actions aimed at restoring degraded environments by implementing responsible natural resource management, such as land restoration and afforestation, holistic management, etc.

Because climate change may exacerbate existing power differentials, it is critical for us to adopt a gender equality perspective in strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation. Women's participation and leadership in environmental initiatives is essential, as it not only enables us to harness women's knowledge and skills, but it also offers the opportunity to empower women and to ensure that the existing power inequalities are redressed.

A meaningful engagement of women can also ensure that their specific needs are taken into account in program design and implementation. We believe blending men's and women's knowledge, skills and capabilities will ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of our adaptation and mitigation initiatives<sup>17</sup>.

#### **MINIMUM STANDARDS:**

- We define our strategy to confront and overcome the effects of the climate crisis on hunger for the world's most vulnerable groups, particularly undernourished children, women, the elderly, the poorest households and those living with disabilities.
- We define a set of actions and adapted measures according to our expertise, building resilience, reducing needs and supporting sustainable livelihoods and resilient water resources in preparation for future shocks.
- At all levels where our projects are developed, we will involve all the actors, including vulnerable people – particularly women and marginalized groups – in planning, budgeting and shaping policies that build resilience and enhance mitigation capacities.
- We increase the coverage of basic services with environmentally responsible measures and strategies
- We include in our programs awareness-raising and behavioral-change components that respect and promote a sustainable environment.

## **COMMITMENT 3 – TRANSFORM AND COMMUNICATE**

**Action Against Hunger is committed to transparent, responsible transformation in the face of the climate crisis.**

**PRINCIPLE 3.1: We tackle the climate and environmental crises by advocating for preventive, sustainable, resilient and fair actions.**

The climate crisis, environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources – coupled with the impact of climate emergencies – have deep consequences as drivers of hunger, negatively affecting biodiversity and water access on which food systems rely.

Action Against Hunger is committed to urging decision makers and stakeholders at all levels to modify their policies and practices, if needed, to sustain their action in the fight against hunger.

Based on facts, research and research-action, we advocate for preventive, adaptive and mitigative actions and reductions, natural-resources protection and sustainable management, to protect people, particularly those vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurities, from the threats of climate emergencies. We advocate for a resilient and sustainable access to services such as global health, water and sanitation, nutrition and food security for all.

We adapt our actions to complement differing cultural contexts, traditional knowledge and know-how, as we promote sustainable systems and gender equalities with local communities, accounting for individuals' beliefs and their relationship with the surrounding ecosystem.

We support Initiatives that rely on integrated, systemic and unified approaches to healthcare for interdependent living communities within the ecosystem, including humans and the diversity of species.

#### **MINIMUM STANDARDS:**

- We define our advocacy strategy in addressing the climate, biodiversity and environmental crises as consistent with a human rights-based approach.
- We tackle the climate and environmental crisis by promoting preventive, adaptive and mitigative actions, integrating innovative technologies and information management systems with traditional knowledge, know-how and innovation, and accounting for individuals' and communities' relationship with the surrounding ecosystem.
- We collaborate closely with our partners from civil society and communities, to advocate for policy change, without overlooking the private sector or public institutions from affected countries and international donors.
- We support the transformation of food systems in our advocacy work and in our operations.

17. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/gender-and-science/cross-cutting-issues/climate-change-and-gender-equality/>

### **PRINCIPLE 3.2: We transform relationships with our stakeholders.**

Environmental challenges require the collective mobilization of *all* actors, as in some contexts, environmental efforts of a single actor may limit or be limited by those of others. Environment and Climate Networking must be reinforced, including through local engagement and particularly by women-led organizations.

We invite all of our stakeholders (program participants, public and private donors, employees and collaborators, the humanitarian community, governments and public institutions, partners, media, competitors, the general public and suppliers) to align with our environmental policy, informing, supporting and modelling practices having a low environmental impact. We encourage the environmental performance of our stakeholders and seek high environmental standards for that performance. We exchange with and learn from stakeholders using best practices.

For our non-commercial stakeholders, we offer training and resources to facilitate compliance. We raise awareness and incidence measures when potential high environmental risks or impacts are detected. We inform beneficiaries of donations about product contents and how best to manage them after use or if broken.

#### **MINIMUM STANDARDS:**

- In engaging with stakeholders, including in all related documents and templates, we make this policy clear and seek their alignment if they have lower environmental practices or less ambitious commitments.
- We inform stakeholders when we detect high-risk or high-impact environmental issues.
- Projects involving a donation of electric or electronic devices or products with potential environmental impact administer a survey of local e-waste management systems and of awareness messages to program participants concerning repairs or end-of-life for devices and products.

### **PRINCIPLE 3.3: We invest in capacities and systems in order to systematize our climate and environmental awareness and to report on our progress.**

Our employees shall have the basic knowledge to incorporate environmental dimensions into their work, and specialists are available within the organization to support specific or more complex issues. Our workforce become familiar with the environmental policy and the minimum standards to ensure effective implementation of these principles.

We incorporate an environmental component into the most important processes, including all phases of the project cycle: purchasing, training, recruitment, information systems, accountability, studies, research and incidence, and annual strategy and country strategy development.

Annually, we document our environmental performance and the progress we are making in our fight against hunger, both within the context of the climate crisis.

#### **MINIMUM STANDARDS:**

- We provide continuous training to our staff and teach new hires to mainstream environmental and climate aspects in our projects, operations and work practices.
- We mainstream an environmental dimension across all organizational procedures.
- We measure and publish our environmental impact and performance.
- We annually report our progress in the fight against hunger in the context of the climate crisis.

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