2023 IN SUMMARY

From ongoing food security threats to escalating global debt, an intricate web of challenges continued to strain the world’s ability to ensure sustainable and equitable access to food for all in 2023. These developments underlined the need for rapid analysis of emerging threats to sustainable and equitable food systems, and the urgency of building pathways towards more resilient food systems – challenges that IPES-Food continued to address on multiple fronts.

As the global food security crisis deepened, timely short-form interventions from IPES-Food helped to make sense of the numbers, scrutinizing corporate price-gouging and calling out false solutions, as well as engaging early and critically with an emerging FAO Roadmap on aligning food systems with hunger and climate goals. As the siege of Gaza unfolded in October, IPES-Food condemned the weaponization of food and its devastating impacts on hunger.

In parallel, IPES-Food sounded the alarm on the often-overlooked global debt crisis with a Special Report in March 2023 that cast a spotlight on the interconnected challenges of debt, hunger, and unsustainable food systems.

Meanwhile, a surge in corporate-led initiatives in 2023 continued to ramp up the threats of food system capture, and a shift towards ‘multi-stakeholderism’ in food system governance. In April, IPES-Food released Who’s Tipping the Scales, the culmination of three years of work on global governance, identifying a path towards more democratic governance and corporate accountability.

And while food and agriculture finally captured the attention of the climate world at COP28, it did so in a context of rampant greenwashing. IPES-Food was a leading voice in and around the climate COP for a third year running, providing quick and comprehensive reaction to the Emirates Climate Declaration, defending meaningful decarbonization pathways, and championing the vital role of local food policies through a report showcasing the pioneering efforts of Glasgow Food & Climate Declaration signatories.

Concluding a three-year strategic period, IPES-Food also seized opportunities to build communities of practice, from co-hosting a major public conference in central London to convening strategic collaborations with civil society organizations and movements around the crucial topics of Land and Territorial Markets – on which IPES-Food will be publishing in 2024.

Through a combination of timely analysis and broad engagement, IPES-Food therefore cemented its role as as a leading advocate of food system reform. This was notably reflected in IPES-Food featuring in 850+ pieces of media coverage around the world and over 700 academic citations over the course of the year.

IPES-Food finished the year with renewal of its panel and adoption of a new 3-year strategy (2024-2026), paving the way for an impactful 2024 as we double down on our mission to catalyze the transformation towards towards diverse, equitable and resilient food systems for all.
Although food price volatility somewhat abated in 2023, food insecurity remained high. Efforts to profit from the ongoing food security crisis remained rampant, as corporate influence over the political agenda continued to grow. Over 2023, IPES-Food continued to provide thought leadership on food security by closely monitoring global market and policy developments and through a number of targeted interventions in global and regional debates:

- Throughout the year, IPES-Food panel members continued to present the findings of the 2022 food crisis report, Another Perfect Storm, including at a side event at the 51st Committee on World Food Security (see recording and summary).

- Upon the release of the FAO’s annual progress report on hunger (‘SOFI’) in July 2023, rapid comment from IPES-Food – including a press release and an op-ed in IPS – helped to underscore the severity of the status quo and emphasize the fundamental shortcomings of global food systems. This response yielded an interview with Democracy Now and over a dozen media articles, including in Le Monde and El País.

- Suspension of the Black Sea Grain Deal in July provoked renewed food price and food security concerns. IPES-Food provided rapid analysis of the implications of these developments in a press release, yielding an interview on BBC World News and coverage in a number of media, including Food Navigator USA and the EU Observer.

- An Op-ed for Project Syndicate, The Hunger Profiteers, by two IPES-Food panel members scrutinized price-gouging by fertilizer giants and grain traders, tapping into widespread concern over ‘greedflation’ and underlining the risks of corporate consolidation. The timely piece was widely shared and cited, including in an UNCTAD review on trade and development. Ongoing scrutiny of these issues by IPES-Food contributed to the European Parliament pushing for tighter restrictions on food commodity speculation (the ‘MIFID’ package).
• As the EU’s Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategy faced a growing backlash, hard-hitting op-eds by IPES-Food panel members – in the context of ‘grain gluts’ and debate around the Nature Restoration laws – helped to question misleading narratives and to emphasize the inextricability of food security and sustainability. IPES-Food also contributed to ongoing efforts to defend the EU Farm to Fork strategy through opening remarks at a strategic gathering of French civil society partners in advance of the Rencontres de l’Alimentation Durable, the co-signature of open letters with EU Food Policy Coalition partners, and the initiation of a new Coalition workstream on narrative building to be taken forward in 2024.

• In an op-ed for Al Jazeera, IPES-Food highlighted the promise and potential pitfalls in Brazil’s rebooted anti-hunger policies. With over 25K direct views and over 100 shares on social media, the piece brought global attention to these regional developments, underlining the power of integrated policy interventions in a context of rising global food insecurity.

• As the siege of Gaza unfolded from October onwards, IPES-Food provided rapid analysis of the situation through a widely-shared statement, condemning the weaponization of food and its devastating impacts on food security. The statement, receiving over 20K direct views and 150 shares, reiterated the right to food as a fundamental and universal human right. Analysis was shared through a presentation at a seminar convened by Brazilian research institute PENSSAN.
1.2 Sounding the alarm on the global debt crisis and the vicious cycle of debt, hunger, and unsustainable food systems

Over 2022, the global food price crisis added fuel to the fire of a rising debt crisis in the global South. Despite debt repayments threatening the solvency and food security of the world's poorest countries, this crisis has been regularly overlooked and its links to global food systems systematically ignored. In March 2023, IPES-Food sounded the alarm on the debt crisis through a Special Report, Breaking the Cycle of Unsustainable Food Systems, Hunger and Debt. The resulting coverage and rollout activities through the year succeeded in bringing attention to this topic and highlighting the links between unsustainable food systems and unsustainable debt:

- The Special Report was launched in three languages with a 2-page brief for policymakers, coinciding with the Least Developed Countries’ Summit held in Doha in March. At the Summit, the brief was presented to plenary and circulated by allies (see below). A brief animated video released in June was viewed over 2K times on its release date, coinciding with the Paris Summit for a New Global Financial Pact.

- The report was shared through original tweets and social media posts by a number of influential partners and amplifiers, including Oxfam International (830K), Food Nature Climate (42k), Future World News (15k), Marion Nestle (139.5K), and the Third World Network.

- Global media coverage of the report included pieces by Food Tank, the Nation, Modern Ghana, Down to Earth, the New Humanitarian, and a podcast interview with Slow Food.

- IPES-Food members shared report findings with decision-makers, through presentations at the LDC Conference in Doha, the 1st Eastern Africa Agroecology
IPES-Food remained a key critical voice at the intersection of food and climate during and following COP28, accumulating over 200 media hits, including coverage in over 30+ major publications. In particular, IPES-Food provided a quick and comprehensive reaction to the Emirates Climate Declaration through a press release picked up in the Guardian, the Times of India, the Economic Times, Reuters, the Daily Mail, and a number of other global outlets.

The report’s findings were also brought to civil society partners through a keynote to the World Church Groups’ Online Consultation on Converging Food and Debt Crises, and a keynote for a global research seminar, Future of Food: Global Perspectives on Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems Transformation.

2. CLIMATE

2.1. Pushing for a meaningful pathway to decarbonize food systems at COP28

Climate change was a key thread across IPES-Food’s work in 2023, especially as food systems took center stage in discussions at COP28:

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- Over 2023, IPES-Food also worked closely with partners to support and scrutinize the FAO’s development of a global roadmap to align food systems with hunger and climate goals (‘Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold’). IPES-Food closely tracked the process and raised concerns regarding transparency and methodological concerns through a letter sent to FAO in November. Comments on Part 1 of the the Roadmap released at COP28 yielded media coverage in Le Monde, La Vanguardia, the Guardian, the Financial Times, Público, and Politico.
Phasing out fossil fuels proved a key battleground at COP28, with food systems emerging as a key sector in this regard. Through the year, IPES-Food built its capacity and established itself as a voice on the link between food and fossil fuels. This included taking part in the first International Strategy Meeting on Agrochemicals and Fossil Fuels in Berlin hosted by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Panta Rhea Foundation, and the Center for International Environmental Law, and curating a ‘resource hub’ to support further collaboration post-Berlin. IPES-Food also worked closely with the Global Alliance on the Future of Food (GAFF) around COP28 as they presented key data from their report on fossil fuels and food systems, which referenced IPES-Food’s own research. These initiatives have set the stage for IPES-Food to take on a more prominent position on this subject in 2024 through a forthcoming podcast and comprehensive report.

IPES-Food also continued to advocate for placing agroecology at the heart of efforts to build climate-resilient food systems, making the case for agroecological transformation through a number of high-level presentations to policymakers and civil society audiences, including at a Swiss government-led CFS side event on Innovations for Climate-Friendly Food Systems, a European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) hearing on the implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security, and a panel discussion with European Commission personnel on agroecology, research, and innovation at the TP Organics Innovation Days. IPES-Food also joined forces with Biovision, GAFF, and other partners to deliver an open letter and policy brief on agroecology as a transformative opportunity for the three Rio Conventions.
2.2. Highlighting the importance of climate action via local food policies

While food systems have finally become part of the global climate agenda, ambition is regularly lacking and the role of local authorities frequently overlooked. Since launching the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration at COP26, IPES-Food has continued to amplify the contributions of subnational governments to food and climate action. In the lead up to COP28, IPES-Food released *From Plate to Planet*, a report providing a snapshot of the progress made by cities and regions in addressing climate change through food. Tapping into the momentum on food in the climate agenda, the report also made a hard-hitting call for national governments to build on local efforts and place food systems at the heart of their climate pledges:

- The report was presented at a COP28 presidency event, ‘Cities Leading the Way on Sustainable Food and Climate’, at a European Economic and Social Committee discussion on Fostering the climate and food convergence in COP negotiations, and to the Slow Food Youth network ahead of their FlashCOP campaign at a dialogue entitled ‘How to Advocate for Climate Demands to Policymakers’.

- Available in English, French and Spanish, the report was presented to signatories and partners of the Glasgow Declaration in November, marking the conclusion of three years of extensive collaboration and solidifying the community of practice created through this project.

- The report was covered by a number of media across various formats, including the 8.9 TV channel, the Farm Gate Podcast, a Food Tank op-ed, a Slow Food podcast, and a number of media articles, including in the National Observer, the Times of India, Green Queen, and a several local media outlets.
Since the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, IPES-Food has closely examined global governance and the influence of corporations on decision-making within the food system. This analysis culminated in the release of *Who’s tipping the Scales*, the final report in a three-part series focusing on global governance. Released in April 2023, the report offers a brief history of corporate capture of food systems and detailed analysis of the current mechanisms used by private actors to influence decision-making processes. The report sparked widespread interest and cemented IPES-Food’s leading role in analyzing food systems governance:

- Available in 3 languages, the report was launched at a virtual side event of the 4th Global Conference of the One Planet network’s Sustainable Food Systems Programme (10YFP), and explored in a follow-up interview for the 10YFP Network. In its first week, the report was rapidly picked up by a number media outlets, including the Irish Mirror, Carbon Brief, Down to Earth, and Buzz.

- On the first day of its release, the report made over 20K impressions on social media, and was widely shared by partners including the Global Alliance for the Future of Food (14.6K), FIAN International (10.7K), the Landworkers’ Alliance (12.6K), and AFSA (10.5K).

- The report findings were presented at a range of policy fora, including a WWF-led event at COP28, "Empowering agents of transformation" and a side event at CFS51 co-organized by IPES-Food, the CSIPM, GAFF, and the Government of Mexico, entitled "Human rights-based food governance".

- IPES-Food presented early findings of the report to academic and civil society audiences in January 2023 through presentations at the City University food policy conference, and subsequently at the AESOP4Food MOOC on food systems reform, and a keynote at the Oxford Real Farming Conference.

- Report findings anchored the convening of interactive strategy discussions with civil society partners, which will be further developed in 2024. These included back-to-back webinars convened by IPES-Food with civil society partners in July 2023 on "Multistakeholderism vs Multilateralism" (200+ in attendance) and on “Multistakeholderism and the corporate capture of global food governance” (170+ in attendance).
4. REACHING NEW AUDIENCES AND BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

4.1 Extinction or Regeneration Conference

In May 2023, IPES-Food joined forces with Compassion in World Farming to co-convene a major public conference in central London: Extinction or Regeneration 2023. Building on the landmark Extinction and Livestock conference in 2017, the May 2023 event was organized to discuss ways to transform food systems for people, animals, and the planet. Featuring panel discussions and interactive workshops, the conference brought IPES-Food’s work on agroecology, climate resilience, food system governance and more to over 700 in-person and online delegates from over 41 countries. Some 370k participants also tuned in to watch in China via a live stream on a number of Government websites.

- IPES-Food contributed throughout the conference with a number of interventions, including keynotes on food crisis and social equity (O. De Schutter), corporate concentration (J. Clapp), biodiversity and regeneration (S. Chomba), and the need for radical change (R. Patel). IPES-Food also organized and intervened in breakout sessions on agroecology (N. Wiebe & N. Jacobs), financing (B. Agarwal & J. Clapp), food democracy (M. Anderson), and food justice (S. Guttal & N. Pita).

- Building on the success of sharing our vision for food systems transformation with diverse audiences across research, policy-making, civil society, and the private sector, IPES-Food is committed to continue expanding our outreach and bringing our analysis to even more audiences in 2024.
4.2 Building a shared vision across food movements

Over 2023, capacity-building and alliance-building continued to be a key priority to build deep and wide-ranging collaborations to strengthen people-led food systems.

- To mark World Food Day 2023, IPES-Food, ETC-Group and A Growing Culture launched a series of practical resources for civil society organisations and movements working towards food systems transformation. Building on a landmark 2021 report, the Long Food Project platform was launched to share easy-to-find publications, dialogue summaries, and resources relating to the collective transformation of the food system.

- Resources included a new set of tools to facilitate critical reflection for groups engaged in the struggle to regain power over the food chain and a new summary report encouraging the food movement to think decades ahead and collectively plan for the future.

Drawing on the reach of its diverse panel of experts, dialogues and consultations were systemically built into IPES-Food's working methods over 2023, providing regionalized analysis and bringing these realities together to build a more nuanced picture of global food systems:

- 3 regional dialogues on 'territorial markets' and supply chains as more resilient alternatives to global value chains and commodity markets. Held online in North America/Turtle Island, South and South East Asia, and Latin America, these discussion served to enhance information-sharing on 'territorial markets' around the world, consider what can be done to strengthen them, and discuss related questions including the role of peasant food webs and informal/semi-formal food chains in feeding the world. A comprehensive report on Territorial Markets will be published in Q2 2024.
3 regional dialogues to understand the drivers of growing land inequality and declining access to land for smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and women, and to share approaches to create space for food sovereignty. Held online with participants from North America/Turtle Island, South and South East Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, these discussions will contribute to the analysis on land inequality to be published by IPES-Food in Q2 2024.

4.3 Improving communication tools

Throughout the year, IPES-Food worked to develop new communication tools to amplify its messages and extend its reach to diverse audiences:

- A new video series showcased 9 IPES-Food experts discussing some of the biggest challenges and debates in food systems, from climate action to greenwashing, responsible consumerism to financial speculation, indigenous peoples’ rights to corporate power.

- In Q4 2023, IPES-Food initiated the development of a new website to enhance user experience through improved navigation, easier access to reports and resources, broader language support, and full compliance with accessibility standards. IPES-Food’s new website will be launched in Q1 2024.

- A Wikipedia page on IPES-Food now provides accurate and accessible information about the organization’s mission, activities, and impact.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT IN 2023

- 18.4K followers (8.5% increase from 2022)
- 3.1K followers (24% increase)
- 9.2K followers (104% increase)