Feeding the Future in the Sahel

> Proactive action and the transformation of food systems to protect children and other vulnerable groups from climate shocks

KEY MESSAGES

Friday 13 November 2026, 11.15 am – 12.45 pm (Türkiye time)

In the Sahel, climate shocks are no longer isolated events: droughts, heatwaves and floods have become structural challenges for food systems. Children – particularly during the first 1,000 days of life – pregnant and breastfeeding women, older people and people with disabilities bear the heaviest burden.

Waiting for a crisis to strike costs more in terms of human lives, development gains and resources. Anticipating means protecting people before the shock hits.

The Sahel is not coming to COP31 merely to highlight its vulnerability: it is bringing proven solutions that need to be supported and scaled up for greater impact.

The CCRS is proposing a regional framework to make preparedness a cornerstone of climate action in the Sahel, and calls on its partners to commit to the 'Antalya Appeal'.

1 Climate shocks that have become structural

The Sahel is one of the regions most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, heatwaves, recurrent floods, land degradation and increasingly erratic rainfall are taking a heavy toll on food systems, livelihoods and the nutritional security of local populations.

Their frequency and intensity now make them structural challenges. Smallholder farmers, agro-pastoralists and transhumant herders are on the front line, as their livelihoods depend on regular rainfall and access to pasture and water. When harvests and incomes collapse, children's nutritional, health and educational situations deteriorate rapidly.

2 Anticipating rather than reacting

Traditional crisis response mechanisms often come into play only after the shock has occurred, when losses have already been incurred. Proactive action changes this approach: it enables action to be taken on the basis of forecasts and thresholds defined in advance, to protect populations, livelihoods and essential social services before the impacts become fully apparent.

In the Sahel, the conditions are in place to scale up efforts:

- **early warnings and climate information** produced by specialised regional and sub-regional organisations and by national, regional and international research centres and institutes;
- **the on-the-ground experience of United Nations agencies**, which have a long-standing presence in Sahel countries, in the areas of proactive action, adaptive social protection, nutrition and the transformation of food systems;
- **social protection systems** that can be made adaptive and activated before a shock occurs;
- **national frameworks** within which anticipatory action can be embedded: food and nutrition security strategies, crisis response plans, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

What is lacking is pre-arranged, predictable and accessible funding that can be mobilised before a crisis, rather than after.







3 The CCRS: national ownership and regional cooperation

Operating under the auspices of the African Union, the Sahel Climate Commission has a mandate to promote and coordinate climate change resilience initiatives in the region, and to mobilise the resources necessary for their implementation.

For the CCRS, proactive action must complement public policies and strengthen the capacities of states, rather than replace them. As climate risks transcend borders, the Commission, in collaboration with continental institutions, facilitates dialogue between its member states, technical and financial partners, and specialised institutions. To this end, it draws on the Climate Investment Plan for the Sahel Region (PIC-RS), the Sahel Climate Resilience Fund and its accreditation process with the Green Climate Fund.

At COP31, the leading global climate diplomacy forum, the CCRS intends to speak on behalf of the Sahel in support of its member states: highlighting the region's challenges, but above all the solutions it is developing, which deserve to be supported and promoted to maximise their impact.

4 The side event at COP31

Organisers	Sahel Climate Commission (CCRS), in partnership with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)
Strategic supporting partners	African Union Commission (ARBE), ECA, United Nations agencies (UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, FAO), the European Union, the AfDB and BOAD
Date and time	Friday, 13 November 2026, from 11.15 am to 12.45 pm (Türkiye time, UTC+3)
Venue	Africa Pavilion / Regional Pavilion – COP31, Antalya (Türkiye)
Format	Hybrid (in-person and live stream), 90 minutes
Moderator	The Executive Secretary of the CCRS
Participants	CCRS Member States, the African Union Commission (ARBE), AUDA-NEPAD, ECA, United Nations agencies, regional and sub-regional organisations, financial institutions and donors, civil society organisations, local authorities and other non-state development organisations

Agenda

Opening remarks	AUDA-NEPAD Director General; CCRS Executive Secretary; official opening by the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Djibouti.
High-Level Panel 1: Political and institutional leadership	**Moderator:** Mr Harsen Nyambe (AU-ARBE). Speakers: ECA Executive Secretary; African Union Commissioner for ARBE; President of the AfDB.
High-Level Panel 2: Operational actors	**Moderator:** Dr Cosmas Milton Obote Ochieng (ECA). Speakers: UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, BOAD, AGRHYMET Regional Centre (CILSS) and civil society.
Discussion with participants	Dialogue with delegations, technical and financial partners, and participants in the room and online.
Antalya Call and closing	Reading of the Call by AUDA-NEPAD; closing by the Minister of Djibouti, with support from the AUDA-NEPAD Director General and the CCRS Executive Secretary.

5 What we aim to achieve in Antalya

- **An « Antalya Call for Proactive Action in the Sahel »**, championed by the CCRS, AUDA-NEPAD and their partners;
- **a joint** CCRS–AUDA-NEPAD **Policy Brief** with strategic partners;
- **a cooperation roadmap** for the gradual scaling up of early warning mechanisms;
- **funding avenues identified** for regional and national programmes;
- **the first partners mobilised** in preparation for the Niamey donor roundtable on funding for conditional scenarios in the National Contribution Documents (NCDs).

6 From Antalya to Niamey: a continuing momentum

The side event forms part of the CCRS's resource mobilisation agenda. Its conclusions will inform the donors' roundtable on funding the conditional scenarios of the NDCs for countries in the Sahel region, scheduled to take place in Niamey from 7 to 9 September 2027 at the initiative of the CCRS, which will undertake consultations with its partners for this purpose, notably AUDA-NEPAD, the ECA, United Nations agencies and other potential partners.

Proactive measures and the resilience of food systems – which fall largely within the conditional components of the NDCs – will feature among the priorities presented to partners. Antalya is thus the first step in the advocacy campaign leading up to Niamey.

Oct–Nov 2026	Consultations with Member States, AUDA-NEPAD, the African Union Commission, the ECA, UN agencies and technical and financial partners, on the sidelines of regional and international meetings preceding COP31 as set out in the CCRS agenda
13 Nov 2026	Side event 'Feeding the Future in the Sahel' and the Antalya Call (COP31)
June 2027	Technical meeting to validate the project portfolio
Sept. 2027	Donor roundtable in Niamey, 7–9 September

7 What we expect from our partners

Join the Antalya Call

- **Take part** in the side event and make a concrete contribution to the Antalya Call;
- **Support** pre-arranged funding mechanisms for proactive action in the Sahel;
- **Support** the integration of preparedness into Member States' National Action Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and social protection systems;
- **Take** part in the 2027 Niamey round table and the scaling up of proven solutions.

> **To ensure that anticipation is no longer an exceptional response, but a fundamental pillar of climate action and resilience in the Sahel.**

Supporting partners

unicef for every child · WFP World Food Programme · UNDP · BOAD Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement · giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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