



53rd Session of the Human Rights Council Interactive Dialogue with the UN Secretary-General

July 4, 2023

Thank you.

On behalf of the Center for International Environmental Law, we would like to welcome the Secretary General's report on the right to food and climate change.

As the report importantly outlines, the food sector contributes greatly to climate change. The current industrial food production systems are deeply intertwined with the fossil fuel industry. The production of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides from fossil fuels and their consequent use for agricultural soils release greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere. Moreover, continued overuse of pesticides and fertilizers might impair the soil's own ability to absorb and sequester carbon.

When discussing climate change and the right to food, another dimension that shall not be overlooked are the potential impacts of geoengineering technologies on the right to food. Highly speculative and risky approaches to counter some of the effects of climate change, like solar radiation modification, have the potential to disrupt weather patterns on a large regional scale, with unforeseeable consequences on food production, ecosystems, and livelihoods. Large-scale carbon removal technologies on land or in the oceans can also threaten ecosystems and food security.

In order to tackle climate change - along with other planetary crises - States must rapidly end reliance on fossil fuels without relying on unproven technologies. It is imperative to transition to resilient and regenerative agricultural models that will enhance food and energy sovereignty while protecting human rights. In this context, as the report importantly recommends, States must protect land and environmental human rights defenders – including Indigenous Peoples, local and rural communities.