

## **Press Conference 1 December 2023 TAPP Coalition:**

### **Why G77/SIDS Should Address Meat Overconsumption in OECD/China: Asking for CO2-meat taxes for the Loss & Damage Fund**

#### **Speech by Jeroom Remmers, director TAPP Coalition**

##### **Lack of attention for Meat**

We are here at the Climate Conference of the United Nations to talk about how we can save our planet from increasing climate change in the next decades. It has now become clear, that although countries have made promises to reduce their climate footprint, we are not nearly doing enough. Recent IPCC reports have shown that countries do not adhere to their Nationally Determined Contributions, and that we are not even close to reaching the climate goals set out in the Paris Agreement in 2015.

If we want to reach the goals we set out together, to keep the earth below a 2 degrees increase of temperature, then more drastic change is needed. These drastic changes, however, have often been ignored in the official declarations of COP28. We all know that meat consumption is disastrous for the climate, and decreasing it should be one of our main goals.

However, the problem of meat consumption is not a priority for international climate policies and measures to reduce meat consumption are also heavily underrepresented in the Nationally Determined Contributions.<sup>i</sup> This is a surprising fact, especially considering that the previous COP27 president, and the last IPCC report both recognised the issue of meat consumption reduction and urged the world to implement measures.<sup>ii iii</sup>

Food and agriculture action now finally are a Presidency Flagship priority for the United Arab Emirates COP28 presidency. But unfortunately they too avoid the elephant in the room: meat consumption and production. Today at 13.30 hour, the COP28

Presidency will launch the *Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action (in the A Waha Theatre here in the blue zone)*. – But this Declaration does not mention the word ‘meat’ so we miss the greatest opportunities for climate action in agriculture and food, if this is again ignored. It is similar to ignoring coal production in the energy sector and forget this harmful energy product should be phased out or reduced for climate reasons.

Today I will argue that we should stop excluding meat from the discussion, and I will call on all Small Island Development States and all members of G77, to join me, in demanding meat consumption reduction measures in the countries that consume it the most. Today a letter to climate ministers from rich OECD countries and China will be sent to urge them to start policies to reduce meat consumption, including fiscal incentives or emission trading schemes for agri/food. Two years ago I initiated an open letter to the Presidents of the 50 countries that eat most meat, asking for carbon pricing meat and dairy. This letter was cosigned by 5000 companies and NGO’s from over 100 countries, and can be read at the website [futurefoodprice.org](http://futurefoodprice.org). The letter is still very relevant.

### **Global unequal Meat Consumption**

Global meat consumption has doubled since 1990<sup>iv</sup> (Statista), to a staggering 315 million tons in 2021. Furthermore, the global herd size will increase with approximately 40% until 2050.<sup>v</sup> These prospects of increasing meat consumption are directly in line with the Paris Agreement goal of net zero emissions by 2050.

Meat consumption is however not evenly distributed. Meat consumption on average is 26.6 kg per capita/year in developing countries, and 68.6 kg per capita/year in developed countries.<sup>vi</sup> This discrepancy becomes even clearer when comparing the meat consumption in OECD countries and China compared to the world wide average. The meat consumption is considerably higher in

OECD countries (71.4 kg/capita)<sup>vii</sup> and China (61.89 kg/capita)<sup>viii</sup> than the world-wide average (42.26 kg/capita).<sup>ix</sup> This means that the OECD and China, while only making up around 35% of the world population, eat 60.64% of the world's meat.<sup>x</sup>

### **The Effects of Meat Consumption**

To illustrate the necessity for Climate Action against meat consumption and production, we need to talk about the effects it has on the world.

Food Systems in total cause around 33% of all global GHG-emissions according to the UN.<sup>xi</sup> Of these emissions, around 60% are caused by meat and dairy consumption globally.<sup>xii</sup>

This number only increases when looking at high-income countries, such as countries in the European Union, where meat and dairy cause 80% of the climate footprint in diets. This impact is similar to other countries of the OECD, such as the United States.<sup>xiii</sup>

When we look beyond greenhouse gas emissions the picture does not get any better. Not only is meat consumption disastrous for the methane and CO<sub>2</sub> levels in our atmosphere, the livestock sector is also a key driver of land-use change and biodiversity loss. The consumption of meat costs our earth 13 billion hectares of forest area annually.<sup>xiv</sup> Not only does this further hurt our chances to reduce the effects of climate change, it also has detrimental effects on water, soil, and biodiversity.<sup>xv</sup>

Lastly, not only do these amounts of meat consumption have disastrous effects on the health of our planet, meat consumption levels in OECD countries and China are in most cases above limits of global and national dietary health guidelines (e.g. EAT)<sup>xvi</sup>.

### **The Disproportionate Effects of Climate Change on G77 and Small Island Developing States.**

Thus it is clear that, similarly to other causes climate change, meat consumption is unequally spread around the globe. A small part of the global population accounts for the majority of the world's meat

consumption. While this is already bad enough on its own, the effects of climate change disproportionately affect the countries that cause it the least.

Small island developing states (SIDS) and G77 low income countries in Africa and Asia suffer most from these effects in the forms of severe climate change, loss of harvests, sea level rise and deforestation.<sup>xvii</sup> Furthermore, it are these countries that do not have the means to adapt to climate change as well as high income countries.

### **Loss & Damage Fund.**

The case is therefore clear. To ensure just and equal climate action, meat consumption needs to be addressed, reduced, and spread more evenly across the globe. I therefore urge Small Island Development States and all states belonging to the G77 to sign our resolution which urges COP28, the OECD-Countries and China to take measures to reduce meat consumption.

COP28 can only be successful if It:

1. Includes meat consumption reduction policies in the center of programs for reducing emissions before 2030 (e.g. Methane Pledge), mitigation, climate finance, Loss and Damage, retail and meat industry pledges, especially in OECD countries and China
2. Includes meat consumption reduction policies in the climate-health ministerial at COP28, since reducing the (over)consumption of meat in OECD countries and China has public health co-benefits.
3. Includes global and national meat consumption reduction commitments for OECD and China, and the need for carbon pricing mechanisms for meat production or consumption in the

COP28 Head of State and government-level declaration for Food Systems, Agriculture, and Climate Action.

4. Asks the OECD, the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, G20, China and the EU Commission to lead the way towards harmonized carbon pricing in food-systems starting with meat and a High Level Committee on Carbon Pricing Agri-Food Systems.

Furthermore, to ensure that members of the G77 and Small Island States can adapt to climate change, the Loss and Damage Fund was created. We propose that the revenue that a global carbon pricing of food-systems should at least partially be used to fund 15-20% of climate finance for the Loss and Damage Fund.

As signatories of our resolution, countries want to give a clear signal to consider not to sign any COP28 agreement unless concrete actions are taken or will be committed before, or during COP28 to address these issues. By highlighting the connection between overconsumption of meat and the global climate crisis, we seek to generate a sense of urgency and promote collaborative action among all states. The first signatory of our Resolution is the Republic of Congo. We thank this country for its leadership and hope more countries will follow to co-sign the letter.

Tomorrow at 15.15 h I organized a side event with the Global Head of Sustainability of Unilever about the need for carbon pricing in agri-food systems. We will speak about the recent report presented 13<sup>th</sup> November by the EU Commission about a new ETS system for agri-food systems, to apply the polluter pays principle in agriculture. Please visit this event at the Food4Climate Pavillion , area B7, building 89. Tomorrow 10.30 h I will also give another press conference about CO2 labeling of food at COP28 and CO2 pricing of food examples in Europe. Most welcome!

**Thanks for your attention. If you have any questions, the floor is yours**

More information: <https://tappcoalition.eu> or [info@tappcoalitie.nl](mailto:info@tappcoalitie.nl)  
Jeroom Remmers, director TAPP Coalition 0031 6 22407712

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<sup>i</sup> Framework Convention on Climate Change, “Summary report following the third meeting of the technical dialogue of the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement”, 15 August 2023,

<sup>ii</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change,” United Nations, 2022, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/>, p 153-157.

<sup>iii</sup> COP27, “Round table on “Food Security””, The Sharm El-Sheikh Climate Implementation Summit, 7 november 2022, <https://cop27.eg/assets/files/days/COP27%20FOOD%20SECURITY-DOC-01-EGY-10-22-EN.pdf>, p 2.

<sup>iv</sup> Global meat consumption by type | Statista. (2023, September 19). Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/274522/global-per-capita-consumption-of-meat/#:~:text=The%20per%20capita%20consumption%20of,is%20only%20about%2034.1%20kilograms>.

<sup>v</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, “Food and Agriculture Projections to 2050 | Global Perspectives Studies”, 2018, <https://www.fao.org/global-perspectives-studies/food-agriculture-projections-to-2050/en/>.

<sup>vi</sup> Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Friends of the Earth Europe, and BUND, “Meat Atlas 2021: Facts and Figures about the Animals We Eat”, 2021, <https://eu.boell.org/en/MeatAtlas>, p 13

<sup>vii</sup> The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Meat consumption”, OECD Data, 2021, <https://data.oecd.org/agroutput/meat-consumption.html>.

<sup>viii</sup> H Ritchie, “Per Capita Meat Consumption by Type,” Our World in Data, 2020,

[https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/per-capita-meat-consumption-by-type-kilograms-per-year?facet=entity&country=OWID\\_WRL~OWID\\_EU27~OWID\\_NAM~CHN](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/per-capita-meat-consumption-by-type-kilograms-per-year?facet=entity&country=OWID_WRL~OWID_EU27~OWID_NAM~CHN).

<sup>ix</sup> H Ritchie, “Per Capita Meat Consumption by Type,” Our World in Data, 2020.

<sup>x</sup> Own Calculation, based on <https://data.oecd.org/agroutput/meat-consumption.htm>

<sup>xi</sup> United Nations, “Food and Climate Change: Healthy Diets for a Healthier Planet | United Nations,” 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/food>.

<sup>xii</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, “Tackling Climate Change Through Livestock: Key Facts and Findings,” 2013, <https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/197623/icode/>.

<sup>xiii</sup> European Court of Auditors, “Special Report: Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Climate,” 2016, <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eca/special-reports/cap-and-climate-16-2021/en/>

<sup>xiv</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, “Livestock and Landscapes,” n.d., <https://www.fao.org/3/ar591e/ar591e.pdf>

<sup>xv</sup> Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, “Livestock and Landscapes,” n.d., <https://www.fao.org/3/ar591e/ar591e.pdf>

<sup>xvi</sup> Sheila A. Wiseman et al., “Future Food: Sustainable Diets for Healthy People and a Healthy Planet,” *International Journal of Nutrology* 12, no. 01 (September 1, 2019): 023–028, <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-0039-1695714>.

<sup>xvii</sup> The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Poverty and Climate Change”, 2010, <https://www.oecd.org/env/cc/2502872.pdf>.