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CLIMATE AND HEALTH – CODE RED FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

Despite reductions in poverty and increasing global food production, for the past five years the number of people suffering from undernutrition has been increasing. Various explanations have been proposed, but there is increasing concern that climate change may be one reason why food insecurity has started to worsen.

The links between climate change, food security, and health is the focus of a keynote address by Professor Elizabeth J Z Robinson, Director of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics to the Australasian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES) Conference, being held from 7-11 February. AARES is the pre-eminent society promoting research relevant to Australasia in agricultural, environmental, food, and resource economics and agribusiness.

“As countries grow economically, as climate change becomes a reality, and as global markets become more integrated, key ‘breadbasket’ countries, including Australia, are more vulnerable to harvest shocks and the concept of food security has become increasingly nuanced,” said Professor Robinson, who leads Working Group One of the *Lancet Countdown*, an international collaboration that independently monitors the health consequences of a changing climate.

“In the past we observed reductions in poverty going hand in hand with reductions in undernutrition. However, since 2017, global food production has been increasing and poverty rates falling, yet the proportion and number of people across the globe suffering from undernutrition has started to increase.”

In her presentation, Professor Robinson explores how climate change has changed how we track, calculate, and communicate the links between climate, food security, and health.

“It is possible to determine the extent to which the changing climate is already worsening food security and child health, and to what extent it will continue to do so in the future while emissions continue to rise.”

“The increasingly negative impacts of climate change on health provide a clear imperative for accelerated action with regards to climate change mitigation, that focuses on the health of people and the planet; but the reality is also that countries need to adapt to a world already feeling the negative effects of a changing climate. Better targeted safety nets, whether cash or food; efforts to build resilience across food supply chains, including attention to storage; and agricultural and health services interventions, will all be needed.”

“As academics, we can combine climate, agricultural, and health data to provide evidence as to the impact of climate change on health – but what we need is for policy makers to act with respect to both mitigation and adaptation,” she concluded.

In addition to distinguished [keynote speakers](#), there are over 120 contributed papers across a broad range of energy, agriculture, development and environment issues. The full contributed paper program is available [here](#).