

# Global Food Security and Climate Change

PREPARED TO CARE



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

In the last two decades, global efforts have lifted 200 million people out of hunger and reduced chronic malnutrition in the world's children from 40% to 26%. However, more than 800 million people are undernourished today.

While violent conflict is still the main driver of global hunger, extreme weather induced by climate change is a growing factor in hunger and malnutrition. According to a [study](#) by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, natural disasters cost the agricultural sectors of developing countries an estimated \$96 billion in livestock production and damaged or lost crops between 2005 and 2015. Drought, which affects farmers in all parts of the globe (north, south, east and west), was a leading cause. Agriculture accounted for 83% of all drought-related losses documented by the study, with a price tag of \$29 billion.

*Mindful of the health and wellbeing of Creation in a time of disasters intensified by climate change, this ELCA Advocacy resource series invites reflection on being #PreparedToCare.*

*Do you have a personal experience or impression that connects?*

*What are strengths of your congregation in this area?*

*How might you make a difference in your community?*



*Be part of the ELCA Advocacy network. Sign up for news and Action Alerts at impactful moments from [elca.org/advocacy/signup](http://elca.org/advocacy/signup).*

## What does this mean?

**Food availability** Changes in climatic conditions affect production of some staple crops and reduce crop quality and quantity.

**Food access** Food availability issues increase food prices and lower agricultural output, which means lower incomes, especially for small-scale farmers. Under these conditions, the poorest people — who already spend most of their income on food — sacrifice additional income and other assets to meet their nutritional requirements, or they resort to poor coping strategies.

**Food utilization** Reduced availability of and access to food affects calorie intake, compromising people's nutrition and health. Lack of proper nutrition creates cycles of disease and hunger.

*“Give thanks for people who work the land and oceans to feed themselves and the world; pray for people living in regions suffering from drought, soil unable to sustain agriculture and changing climate, and ask God to help us find ways to exercise generosity with our resources and food while working together for appropriate and lasting solutions to agricultural problems and hunger.”*

Prayer Ventures, September 2018

# Faith reflections and policy decisions

As the U.S. and other countries work to reduce hunger globally, we must accelerate the process of mitigating and adapting to climate variability and extremes. This will help strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of food systems.

“The principles of participation, solidarity, sufficiency, and sustainability will shape our advocacy — in neighborhoods and regions, nationally and internationally. Our advocacy will continue in partnership, ecumenically and with others who share our concern for the environment.”

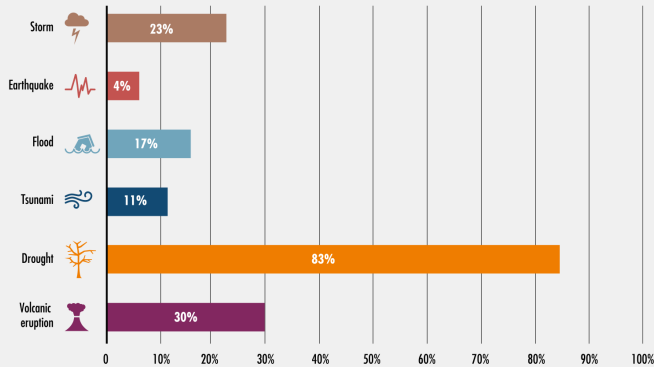
ELCA Social Statement: “Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice,” 1993

Small-scale farmers are vital to this process. In addition to building our capacity for mitigation and adaptation, policymakers must ensure that small-scale farmers — especially women and youth — have access to and control over resources such as land, water, seeds and credit.

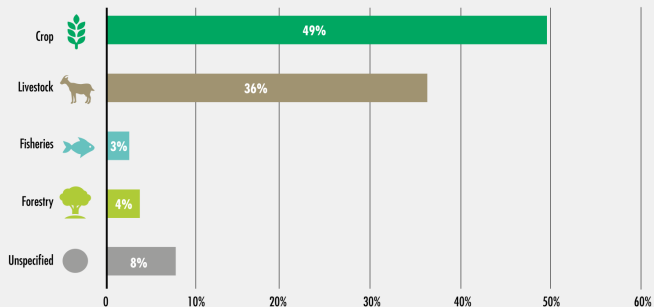
In these conversations with policymakers, our unique Lutheran voice is informed by our experiences farming and partnering with farmers and hunger ministries around the world. We must continue to affirm effective initiatives that do not deplete the earth, which sustains us all, and we must seek new ways to reduce the injustices of hunger and poverty.

FIGURE 30  
CROP AND LIVESTOCK SUB-SECTORS INCUR THE HIGHEST DAMAGES AND LOSSES IN AGRICULTURE DUE TO CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTERS, OF WHICH DROUGHT IS THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE, 2006–2016

**A) DAMAGE AND LOSS IN AGRICULTURE AS SHARE OF TOTAL DAMAGE AND LOSS ACROSS ALL SECTORS BY TYPE OF HAZARD**



**B) DAMAGE AND LOSS IN AGRICULTURE BY AGRICULTURAL SUB-SECTOR, PERCENTAGE SHARE OF TOTAL**



NOTES: FAO, based on Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNA), 2006–2016. The sectors of fisheries, aquaculture and forestry often are under-reported. Impact of disasters on forestry is generally acknowledged in assessments, although rarely quantified in monetary terms.  
SOURCE: FAO. 2018. *The impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security 2017*. Rome.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- 80 percent of farmland in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa is cultivated by small-scale farmers.
- Small-scale farmers support approximately 2 billion people worldwide.

“Farming at any scale is a business. When small farms are successful, the extra cash generated can help transform moribund rural areas into vibrant, rural economies. When rural economies are strong, they result in higher demand for locally produced goods and services. This, in turn, leads to growth and higher employment in non-farm businesses...”

Source: [Food Sustainability Index](#)

"[The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#)," Figure 30 from 2018 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at [fao.org](#)