

NİLÜFER ONE HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

FINAL DECLARATION

3 Nov 2023, BAOB Auditorium



Hosted by Nilüfer Municipality, in cooperation with the Bursa One Health Platform, the Nilüfer One Health Symposium was held within the scope of World One Health Day. Under the theme "Equal, Accessible, and Healthy Food for All," the strong interaction between human, animal, and environmental health, and specifically the issues of food security and safety, were discussed.

1. The One Health Approach and Its Importance

One Health is the collaborative effort of multiple disciplines working locally, nationally, and globally to attain optimal health for people, animals, and the environment.

- 1.1. Human health is not independent of environmental health and the health of other living beings; therefore, the necessity of viewing the subject with a holistic approach has been better understood after the pandemic experience.
- 1.2. With disciplines that have been working separately since the 1800s realizing the strong interaction between the environment, humans, and animals, the need for intersectoral collaboration has emerged.
- 1.3. The One Health approach covers issues such as zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and food safety, as well as global threats like the climate crisis, unplanned urbanization, social justice, and poverty.
- 1.4. In the context of One Health, it must be accepted that all living beings have the right to health; processes that center solely on humans should be avoided.

2. Food Security and Safety (Concepts)

Some concepts regarding food are closely linked but focus on different aspects: **Food Safety** means that the consumed food is free from all kinds of physical, chemical, and biological hazards that could be harmful to health from production to the table, and thus does not cause any health problems for the consumer. **Safe Food** which is closely related to this concept, emphasizes the food's compliance with these safety and quality standards and its fitness for consumption. **Food Security**, the most comprehensive concept, means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic **access to** sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain an active and healthy life. In summary, while Food Safety is about the food on the plate not harming us, Food Security is about having sufficient and safe food on our plates at all times. Safe Food lies at the center of the One Health approach.

2.1. Food Safety (Detailed Overview)

This refers to the entirety of measures aimed at preventing and removing potential physical, chemical, biological, and all other types of harm in foods from production to consumption.

It is essential that the consumed food does not lead to any health problems. Hygiene, contamination, incorrect cooking methods, and improper storage conditions pose dangers in terms of food safety. More than 90% of foodborne diseases seen in humans originate from

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animal-based foods. It is estimated that approximately 600 million cases of foodborne diseases occur annually worldwide.

2.2. Food Security (Detailed Overview)

According to the definition by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); it is the situation when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain an active and healthy life.

2.2.1. Fundamental Elements of Food Security (FAO)

2.2.1.1. Availability: The presence of sufficient food for all people at all times.

2.2.1.2. Accessibility: Everyone having physical and economic access to existing food.

2.2.1.3. Stability: Sustainable food management and production.

2.2.1.4. Utilization: Individuals receiving sufficient energy and nutrients, and the body utilizing the nutrients in the best way possible.

In 2022, 735 million people worldwide faced hunger or malnutrition. The most significant factors deepening global hunger are the climate crisis, conflicts, economic shocks, and the effects of the pandemic.

3. The Situation in Turkey and Bursa

3.1. Global Food Security Index

Turkey is regressing in the Global Food Security Index rankings; between 2012-2021, its growth in the food security index remained slower than that of upper-middle-income countries. While Turkey ranked 49th in the index in 2022, it was 36th just 10 years ago.

3.2. Food Security Problems in Türkiye Approximately 18% of the population (14.8 million) is undernourished. Increases in food prices reduce consumers' purchasing power regarding the quantity and quality of food, thereby increasing food reliability risks. Increasing food poisoning cases, constantly changing agricultural and food policies, excessive input use in agricultural production, unconscious consumption of water resources, destruction of forests/pastures, increasing dependence on imports, and unfair income distribution point to food security problems.

3.3. Overview of Bursa Agriculture

3.3.1. Reduction in Agricultural Lands: Between 2006 and 2022, 47.692,20 hectares of agricultural land in Bursa were excluded from agricultural use, and a large portion of these lands was transformed into settlements and industrial areas.

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3.3.2. Uncultivated Lands: Approximately 25% (about 94.700 ha) of Bursa's agricultural land assets are left fallow or remain empty without being cultivated. Reasons for this include; lands not being of economic operating size, ownership issues, the young population not staying in villages, high agricultural input costs, lack of irrigation investments, and agricultural lands being viewed as investment tools.

3.3.3. Irrigation Problems: Approximately 40% of irrigable land in Bursa has still not attained irrigation infrastructure. Across Turkey, 68% of agricultural irrigation water is managed through open irrigation systems, which highlights the need for water conservation.

3.3.4. Decline in the Number of Farmers: When Farmer Registration System (ÇKS) records are examined, the total number of enterprises fell from 97,061 in 2016 to 73,779 in 2022, indicating that farmers are abandoning production.

4. Key Takeaways and Recommendations

4.1. Holistic Approach: Health policies should be created by adopting the One Health approach, strengthening the collaboration of different professional groups and prioritizing a preventive health system over a curative one.

4.2. Agricultural Policies:

4.2.1. In accordance with Agricultural Law No. 5488, the resources allocated to agriculture from the budget should be increased to at least 1% of the Gross National Product.

4.2.2. Agricultural support should be determined at the beginning of the production season, taking input costs into account and guaranteeing that the farmer engages in profitable production.

4.2.3. Policies that enable producers to earn while producing and encourage young people to stay in villages should be implemented.

4.3. Land Management and Usage of Water:

4.3.1. Land consolidation efforts must be completed rapidly, economic operational integrity must be ensured, and the exclusion of lands from agricultural use must be prevented.

4.3.2. Agricultural irrigation investments should be increased, and water savings should be achieved by promoting pressurized irrigation systems (drip, sprinkler).

4.4. Intersectoral Collaboration: Food security is a process that requires not only local or national efforts but also global cooperation. Increasing cooperation, communication, and coordination among all sectors (human, animal, environment) should be encouraged.

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4.5. Education: It is crucial to ensure the correct information and education of the public and sector components.

As Nilüfer Municipality has demonstrated with this symposium, a healthy life is possible by protecting our soil, air, and water—that is, by taking into account all components of the One Health approach.

Compliers:

- Veterinarian Melike Baysal, Chamber President, Bursa Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons
- Mehmet Can Yılmaz, Nilüfer Municipality Climate Change and Zero Waste Directorate, Healthy Cities Project Coordinator (also the Turkish-English translator of this declaration)