Title: Environmental Analyses to Inform Transitions to Sustainable Diets in Developing Countries: a Component of the EATS Project

Human diets are among the principal drivers of both human health and environmental change. A major barrier in moving toward more “sustainable diets” is defining clear intervention points that will provide a net-positive systemic influence across sectors. This challenge is exemplified by the ambiguous objectives and lack of clear policy guidance among the numerous diet-related Sustainable Development Goals. Further, the segregation of data collection, analysis and related decision making within sectoral silos often prevents dissemination and application of information across sectors. The Entry points to Advance Transitions towards Sustainable diets (EATS) Project aims to address these challenges by considering the research question: how can existing data be leveraged to effectively shift multiple axes of food systems toward enhancing the sustainability of diets? In this presentation, we focus on analyses from two case study countries – Vietnam and Kenya – that provide an often-overlooked perspective on how consumer food choices affect environmental impact from food production. We combine FAOSTAT Food Balance Sheet data with datasets on environmental impact of commodity food production – greenhouse gas emissions, non-renewable energy demand, water use – to provide trends in demand-driven food system impacts. Economic prosperity in Vietnam in recent decades has led to increases in meat consumption and, in turn, amplified increases in diet level environmental impacts. Mild levels of beef consumption in Vietnam have now overcome the most popular meat, pork, as the dominant source of greenhouse gas emissions. This emphasizes the effect that otherwise unremarkable changes in diet can have on food system environmental impacts such as greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, historically consistent levels of dairy and beef in Kenya dominate diet-level environmental impacts, reflecting cultural preferences. The data integration developed here sets the stage for analyses of policy-relevant dietary shifts. The results serve as an example of the types of data packages that we anticipate will promote a more systems-based approach to diet-related Sustainable Development Goal policy and indicator design and implementation.