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Access to sufficient and clean freshwater is essential for all life. Water is also essential for food systems functioning, but its role has not been adequately recognized. This is particularly worrisome as climate change, mediated through changes in the timing, quantity and quality of water, will increasingly affect all facets of food systems, from production to preparation and utilization. To address these growing challenges—and avoid that water systems starve food systems—and food systems drain water systems—we propose seven intervention areas that can help overcome siloed SDG 2 and SDG 6 development for more resilient and sustainable food and water systems. These include 1) retain water-dependent ecosystems, their functions and services; 2) improve agricultural water management; 3) reduce water and food losses beyond the farmgate; 4) coordinate water with nutrition and health interventions; 5) increase the environmental sustainability of food systems; 6) explicitly address social inequities; and 7) improve data quality and monitoring for water-food system linkages. These inter-linked interventions could support mutually reinforcing water and food and nutrition securities while strengthening ecosystem health. We commit to advance these areas as part of CGIAR NEXUS Gains with partners in East and southern Africa and South Asia.