



FAMILY FARMERS EMPOWERMENT AND PROTECTION

THE CATALYTIC SOLUTION TO CLIMATE STATE OF EMERGENCY

This document is part of a participatory process involving the World Rural Forum member organizations, mainly AFA, COPROFAM, ESAFF, PDRR, PIFON, PROPAC, and UNMAGRI. It is focused on collecting the main challenges and solutions provided by family farmers' organizations to address climate state of emergency, in the framework of the roadmap to COP28 and the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028.

The document summarises the key agreed messages from the various organisations and regions, and provides data and evidence to support them.

This is a living document, which will progress with input from the organisations, lessons learned along the way, and recommendations of key stakeholders.



#FAMILYFARMING
#COP28UAE

Just a **0,3%**
of international climate
funds to protect global
food security from
climate crisis

NEW REPORT

**“Untapped Potential: An analysis of
international public climate finance flows
to sustainable agriculture and family
farmers”**



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INTRODUCTION

Frequent and intense drought, floods, tropical cyclones, storms, heat waves, rising sea levels, melting glaciers and warming oceans are destroying livelihoods and communities, whole countries are about to disappear and are displacing millions of family farmers living in coastal areas.

This State of Emergency is changing food production patterns and destroying crops. The climate crisis affects all areas of life, economy and environment. It is causing increased poverty and migration¹; pushing 122 million people into hunger since 2019²; leading to financial losses and diminishing capital of family farmers³; and provoking severe environmental consequences such as degradation, erosion and reduction of soil fertility and nutrient content, water problems, rampant loss of biodiversity due to intensive use of natural resources or high levels of greenhouse gas emissions⁴. At the same time, all of these impacts lead to a worsening of the global climate situation. Causes and consequences need to be simultaneously addressed as a matter of urgency.

The damage and impacts of the climate crisis in family farmers are dramatic, threatening the world's food systems and biodiversity. In particular, smallholder farmers and their families are especially vulnerable because they have few assets to fall back on and limited capacity to recover from extreme weather events. Exposure to these shocks seriously threatens their livelihoods and jeopardises their key role in global food security

This is an urgent Statement that moves from understanding the facts to making commitments and implementing them (moving from "why" to "how"). This encompasses 3 key messages and demands.

¹ www.undp.org/blog/climate-change-and-rise-poverty

² FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2023. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023. Urbanization, agrifood systems transformation and healthy diets across the rural-urban continuum*. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3017en>

³ [newclimateeconomy.report/2018](#)

⁴ IPCC, 2023: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 1-34, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

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CALL FOR RECOGNITION OF THE CATALYTIC ROLE OF FAMILY FARMING IN CLIMATE ACTION, FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION AND BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

With over 2.5 billion people across the world depending on Family Farming⁵ and approximately 600 million family-run farms worldwide⁶, Family Farmers present the most promising prospects for achieving food transformation towards more sustainable, resilient, socially and culturally appropriate and nutrition-sensitive food systems, encompassing production systems and food governance.

Family farmers are already playing a crucial role addressing the climate crisis, both in adaptation and mitigation. They demonstrate in their own farms through resilient and agroecological approaches, growing a wider variety of local crops, mixing crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries, reducing chemical inputs, and building strong connections to local markets. These practices enhance biodiversity protection and increase global resilience to climate change.

In addition, Family farmers are critical to food security and nutrition in their own countries and around the globe. Family farmers produce over 80 % of the world's food in value terms⁷. In regions such as Africa and Asia, farms of less than five hectares produce 90% of food calories consumed and in Sub-Saharan Africa farms of this size produce around half of food calories⁸.

They are key to global supply chains. Farms of less than five hectares located in developing countries account for more than half of the global production of nine staple crops - rice, peanut, cassava, millet, wheat, potato, maize, barley and rye⁹.

Recognizing the strategic role of Family Farming, the United Nations General Assembly declared in 2019 the United Nations Decade for Family Farming 2019-2028 (UNDF) as a central instrument to unlock its transformative potential¹⁰.

⁵ FAO. 2014. *State of the World's Food and Agriculture*. Rome, Italy.

^{6, 7, 8} www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1395127/icode/

⁹ iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/11/12/124010/pdf

¹⁰ United Nations Decade for Family Farming 2019-2028 www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/

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CALL FOR ENSURING AN ENABLING POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND THE PARTICIPATION OF FAMILY FARMERS IN CLIMATE

The participation of Family Farmers' organizations in climate negotiations has been largely overlooked, often sidelined from critical discussions. A sustainable future needs an enabling policy environment and the active participation of family farmers in climate and biodiversity policy discussions at national, regional and global levels, as well as in the debate on the structure of the Loss and Damage Fund.

This is not “about” family farmers but “with” family farmers: Food systems face immense challenges amidst the climate state of emergency. Current debates focus on addressing climate urgency by converting these food systems into sustainable, resilient, and inclusive structures within the context of the climate emergency. It is crucial, then, that the key actors, the family farmers, are at the centre of the decision-making processes.

Comprehensive public policies unlocking the potential and knowledge of family farmers, including those related to land rights, water, seeds, soil health, agrochemicals and other pollutants reduction, crop diversification, and sustainable and agroecological practices, are imperative. Also key are the availability of qualified human resources and adequate budgets for policies, and the promotion of associative and cooperative organisation of Family Farming.

Women represent almost half of the agricultural workforce in developing economies¹¹. Women diversify sources of income and ensure food security, nutrition and well-being in society; and play a central role in the management of natural resources and the production, processing, preservation and marketing of food. However, gender disparities persist in land ownership and resource access, among others, and climate crisis further amplifies these inequities, heightening women's vulnerability. At the same time, the effects of climate crisis can deepen these existing gender inequalities¹². Inclusive and equitable policies and their implementation with dedicated funds are essential in overcoming these barriers.

¹¹ FAO. 2023. The status of women in agrifood systems. Rome. doi.org/10.4060/cc5343en

¹² www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/explainer/2022/02/explainer-how-gender-inequality-and-climate-change-are-interconnected

¹³ Foro Rural Mundial, 2021. Estudio sobre las políticas públicas dedicadas a la juventud rural. Vitoria, España.

Stimulating the role of young family farmers and rural youth in general is crucial. The massive exodus from rural to urban areas driven by climate crisis calls for a strategic approach to rural depopulation¹³. It is imperative that public policies, programs and funds prioritise the needs of young family farmers, creating an environment where family farming becomes a sustainable, profitable endeavour that fosters personal growth, well-being, and a high quality of life. In addition, rural youth have an invaluable potential to incorporate innovations and new technologies, which will contribute to the modernisation of the countryside and the efficiency of the agricultural sector. This injection of new ideas and approaches not only increases productivity, but also ensures the sector's adaptability to constantly evolving challenges. Generational renewal is not an option, but an urgent necessity to ensure a prosperous and sustainable future in rural areas..

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CALL FOR PROPORTIONAL ACCESS TO CLIMATE FUNDS

Family farming, involving one third of the world's population¹⁴ and 600 million family-run farms worldwide¹⁵, and produces around 80% of the world's food in value terms¹⁶. Farms of less than two hectares produce 35% of food supply in just 24% of croplands. Yet, this pivotal role is vastly underrepresented in international climate funding, with just a 0.3%¹⁷ allocated in 2021. Commitment and action do not match the magnitude of the damage caused by the climate crisis on family farmers. This flagrant disparity underlines the urgency of action.

Family farmer organisations have the expertise, infrastructure and determination to promote climate resilience, but the existing architecture of international funding falls short. Aligning these funds with the specific needs of family farmer organisations and bolstering their technical and administrative capacities is paramount.

Direct and tailored financial support is essential in accelerating family farming resilience and realising its full potential in building sustainable and climate-resilient food systems.

The very worst impacts of climate change on family farms in the most vulnerable countries must be compensated by the Loss and Damage Fund..

¹⁴ FAO. 2014. State of the World's Food and Agriculture. Rome, Italy.

¹⁵ <https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1395127/icode/>

¹⁶ FAO. 2021. Which farms feed the world and has farmland become more concentrated? Rome, Italy. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2021.105455>

¹⁷ https://www.ruralforum.org/en/download/untapped_potential/

LET US WORK TOGETHER

La The gravity of this State of Emergency necessitates a united front. The magnitude of the crisis demands collaboration between family farming organisations, governments, donors, and non-state actors. This collaborative effort and nexus thinking must extend to the different sectors and departments inside the local, national, regional and global governing bodies, and connect with existing multi-stakeholder platforms, including the National Family Farming Committees. The aim should be to promote comprehensive policy interventions that simultaneously address climate resiliency, sustainable food systems, equitable rural livelihoods and biodiversity protection, contributing to the 2030 Agenda. It is imperative the recognition, support, and the amplification of family farmers' efforts in the fight for a sustainable and resilient future.

In addition, data must be ensured to guide this common strategy. Therefore, investing together in improving the collection of national data on production, farm size, types of products, production techniques or contributions to mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis would provide greater certainty of the great contribution of family farming to curbing this crisis.

In conclusion, the sharp imbalance between family farmers' immense contributions, responsible of 80 % of the world's food in value terms, and the mere 0.3% of climate funds they receive is a glaring imbalance that will never bring us near the solutions we need. The three key messages of this Statement resonate with urgency, highlighting the far-reaching impacts of the climate crisis on Family Farming, from livelihoods to food systems. The central call to action is unequivocal: we must transition from understanding 'why' to implementing 'how,' empowering family farmers with comprehensive policies and resources and recognizing the indispensable roles of women and youth in the fight. Furthermore, the gravity of this State of Emergency demands family farmers-centred decision-making processes and a united front, with collaboration between family farming organizations, governments, donors, and non-state actors. It is high time to recognize, support, and amplify the tireless efforts of family farmers in the pursuit of a sustainable and resilient future for all.



8 Dec

Strengthening land tenure rights of smallholder farmers for sustainable food systems and climate resilience

9:30h (EAU)



B7 - 89
Food & Agriculture Pavilion

#FamilyFarming
#AgriFoodPavilion

AFA, COPROFAM, IFAD, ILC, WRF

10 Dec

Farmers and Traditional Producers at the Heart of Food Systems Transformation

9h (EAU)



B8
WCAS Theatre Presidency

#FamilyFarming
#COP28UAE

FAFO and Family Farmers' Organisations

11 Dec

Connecting family farmers and consumers to tackle food and climate crises

12:30h (EAU)



B7 - 89
Food Systems Pavilion

#FamilyFarming
#ActiononFood

Consumers International and WRF

12 Dec

Climate resilient and sustainable policies and practices to empower women and young farmers

11h (EAU)



B7 - 89
Food & Agriculture Pavilion

#FamilyFarming
#AgriFoodPavilion

FAO, WFO and WRF