



**Climate Action Network**  
Submission to the Sharm-el-Sheik joint work on  
implementation of action on Agriculture and Food Security  
March 2023

Climate Action Network (CAN) is a global network of more than 1,900 civil society organisations in over 130 countries driving collective and sustainable action to fight the climate crisis and to achieve social and racial justice.

## **1. Lessons from the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA)**

Agriculture is the basis of livelihood for at least 2.6 billion people on the planet. 48% of the global population live in households linked to agrifood systems-based livelihoods<sup>1</sup>. In much of the Global South, women make up almost half of the agricultural workforce. However, even though our ability to nourish ourselves depends on those who work the land, many small-scale food producers, e.g. peasants, small and medium-scale farmers, Indigenous Peoples, seasonal and migrant workers, agricultural labourers, pastoralists, and fisherfolk endure hunger, poverty and systemic marginalisation. These challenges are particularly acute for women farmers.

To achieve its objectives of protecting food security and livelihoods, and addressing the climate crisis, work on agriculture and food security in the UNFCCC must build upon the successes of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA), including its *efforts to ensure inclusiveness and participation of civil society Observers in the organisation of its work*.

The KJWA has been a participatory and inclusive space in the UNFCCC, demonstrating that voices most directly impacted by the climate crisis in agriculture must be heard. The pride and appreciation expressed by Parties for keynote presentations made by women smallholder farmers from Zambia and Malawi in the workshops on soils and nutrient management, respectively, are important markers for the work ahead. Such interventions from frontline communities provide powerful insights and can help ground forthcoming discussions in the reality that food producers and workers face.

KJWA has led the way in institutionalising panel discussions with Observer organisations, creating opportunities for Observers to ask questions to speakers, and to make interventions. The next phase of this work must continue to build upon this fruitful and collaborative approach.

This is particularly critical given that many observer organisations represent or work directly with Indigenous Peoples, farming communities and other small-scale food producers. They have extensive expertise regarding on ground-realities, and interact with policy and science. Observer organisations provided extremely valuable insights for the KJWA and this should continue in the new programme.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/cc4337en/cc4337en.pdf>

## **2. Guiding principles & objectives for the new joint work on agriculture and food security**

- Ensuring food security<sup>2</sup> and nutrition through sustainable and healthy diets must be a key objective of adaptation strategies in relation to agriculture. Mitigation strategies must ensure that the right to food is not violated, but progressively realised.
- Recognition of Human Rights frameworks (UNDROP, UNDRIP, ICESCR, ICCPR, CEDAW etc.), the human right to adequate food and nutrition, and other connected rights, including the rights of women, Indigenous Peoples, workers, peasants and other small-scale food producers must provide the parameters for food system transformation. A future food system that is not anchored in human rights will do as much harm, if not more, as the current predominant food production model.
- Adaptation in agriculture must also be a clear priority for the new joint work. The Paris Agreement calls for adaptation action to be gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent, focused on vulnerable groups such as small-scale farmers and communities, while also ensuring ecosystems integrity.
- Equitable mitigation strategies within food systems (covering the full emissions life-cycle, and including the production of inputs), must also be a focus for the new joint work, aiming at those that result in co-benefits for adaptation, food security and nutrition, and climate justice, as outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land (SRCCL).
- Promote the transition to agroecology at the national and local level, including through the development of supportive policies and incentives, capacity building, training and gender-responsive extension services, and the sharing of experiences and success stories.
- Enhance the participation of small-scale food producers, particularly from the Global South, in discussions that establish thematic priorities, policy options and implementation approaches, highlighting the involvement of farmer-led organisations, Indigenous Peoples and grassroots groups.
- The new joint work must make a particular effort to mainstream awareness of, and strategies for, gender-responsiveness and equity throughout all elements of the work. No climate action in agriculture should be blind to, or reinforce gender inequalities. Climate change adaptation policies and actions in agriculture give a particular opportunity to address widespread gender inequalities and to transform existing power structures in the agricultural sector.
- To ensure the effectiveness of the new joint work on agriculture and food security under the UNFCCC, Parties must be guided by the objective of equitable and absolute (total) emission

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<sup>2</sup> Dimensions of food security include: availability, access, utilisation, stability, **agency and sustainability** <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2021.102164>

reductions across the full GHG life-cycle. This means that reduced “intensity” or increased “efficiency” per kilo of food is not an acceptable objective by itself, as this can often create perverse incentives to increase production and increase total emissions.

- A holistic and systemic approach to addressing agriculture and food security in the context of climate change is paramount to deliver sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems that enable people and nature to prosper within planetary boundaries. Building on the demands and rights of small-scale food producers, it is key that agroecology is made the cornerstone of this transformation. Agroecology will significantly benefit people’s health and the planet through producing healthy food, protecting biodiversity and the environment, while further developing traditional knowledge and transforming cultural and social relationships.
- Sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems must include sustainable food production, nutrition and dietary shifts towards less resource intensive food production and consumption, as well as the reduction of food loss and waste.
- The new joint work must recognise and build upon workstreams and policy products endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). The CFS is the foremost inclusive intergovernmental forum dedicated to food security issues, counting on participation by the Rome Based Agencies, other UN agencies, financial institutions, research institutes, private sector and civil society and Indigenous Peoples, with priority voice for most affected constituencies, who are also on the frontlines of the climate crisis. It deliberates within a human rights framework, focusing on the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food, with the support of a dedicated High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) that plays the role of a science/policy interface. Parties and stakeholders should also draw from reports by the HLPE as scientific basis informing the new joint work.
- The new joint work on agriculture and food security should be aligned with and help deliver target 10 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which calls on governments to increase agroecological approaches to achieve food security and maintain nature’s contribution to people. The new joint work on agriculture and food security should also enhance collaboration with the CBD with the goal of better integrating climate change adaptation and emissions reductions with ecosystem integrity, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land use and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities over their traditional territories.
- Prevention of conflicts of interest: the work programme should be mindful of and draw on the current SBI process to develop criteria for the avoidance of “Conflicts of Interest”, particularly when inviting presenters and views for the workshops. This will help to ensure (and prevent any risks to) the integrity, legitimacy and effectiveness of the joint programme and the UNFCCC.
- The new work programme must ensure active participation and inclusion of Observer organisations - particularly those representing and working with communities on the ground - in presentations, panel discussions, participation in Q&A sessions, interventions, and submissions throughout workshops and subsequent discussions.

### 3. Proposals for elements of the joint work

#### a) *Proposed workshop topics which take forward elements of Paragraph 14 [Decision -/CP.27](#)*

1) Workshop on **gender**. In many parts of the world women make up nearly half of the agricultural workforce, and face particular challenges due to climate change. Yet they are systematically disadvantaged by policies which are gender-blind or gender-biased, and tend to assume that men are the default farmers. Women are also often custodians of seeds, natural resources and of various locally-led adaptation strategies. It is of critical importance that the new joint work significantly strengthens its gender analysis, draws on linkages with the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (GAP), and integrates this across many areas of implementation, to make sure that policies and actions on the ground really meet the needs and priorities of women smallholder farmers, and food security as a whole, in the face of the climate crisis.

2) Workshop on **holistic and agroecological approaches to agriculture**<sup>3</sup>. It is now widely recognised, including by the IPCC<sup>4</sup>, the CFS<sup>5</sup> and the CBD<sup>6</sup>, that a shift towards agroecological approaches is urgently required. Agroecology is the only transformative model that *takes into consideration regional, national and local circumstances, in order to deliver a range of multiple benefits, such as adaptation, adaptation co-benefits and mitigation, recognizing that adaptation is a priority for vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous peoples and small-scale farmers*. By strengthening the organic matter, water-carrying capacity and natural fertility of soils, and spreading risk through crop diversification, agroecology is a highly effective adaptation strategy. Furthermore, agroecology avoids emissions associated with the fossil-fuel intensive production of synthetic fertilisers<sup>7</sup>, the nitrous oxide and major loss of soil carbon associated with their application on soils, and the emissions associated with production and application of pesticides. Agroecology also provides numerous benefits to human, plant, and animal health, animal welfare, and biodiversity. It encourages farmers to diversify and retain more of their income and complex farming knowledge, and is particularly beneficial for smallholder and women farmers who do not have the money to buy expensive inputs. As the current war in Ukraine has triggered escalating prices for synthetic nitrogen fertilisers, agroecology is an especially apt solution for farmers around the world at this time.

3) Workshop on **strategies for equitable and absolute emission reductions related to nitrous oxide and methane**. Nitrous oxide and methane are a major contributor of agriculture's emissions profile, however they have not so far been a major focus of KJWA's analysis and discourse, as well as the key role of healthy soils and peat land regeneration for mitigation. The climate impact and mitigation

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<sup>3</sup> See "Ten elements of Agroecology" as defined by FAO, and "13 Principles of Agroecology" as defined by HLPE of the UN Committee on World Food Security.

<sup>4</sup> AR6 WGII "Agroecological principles and practices, ecosystem-based management in fisheries and aquaculture, and other approaches that work with natural processes support food security, nutrition, health and well-being, livelihoods and biodiversity, sustainability and ecosystem services (high confidence)."

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-cbd-press-release-final-19dec2022>

<sup>7</sup> *Environmental Defense Fund does not agree with the position that the term Agro ecology equates to no use of synthetic fertilizer and believes fertilizer can be a necessary component of global food production while recognizing that its current excessive and ill-applied use leads to global nitrogen pollution.*

strategies around N<sub>2</sub>O from N fertilisers and CH<sub>4</sub> from intensive animal production and consumption, require extensive debate within this platform. Reductions in N<sub>2</sub>O and CH<sub>4</sub> emissions will deliver corresponding reductions in ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) emissions, with integrated benefits for air quality, public health and biodiversity.

4) Workshop on strategies for **mitigation relating to land use and deforestation**, the need for and strategies for ecological restoration of marginal lands, and for stopping the expansion of agricultural lands into natural ecosystems as well as the conversion of land to industrial agriculture and other extractive activities. Agriculture's indirect emissions contribution through driving deforestation and cultivation changes of pasture lands, which may include a range of social, policy and trade factors, need to be better understood. The impact of distribution of land (land concentration) on climate change mitigation and adaptation needs broader attention.

5) Workshop on **food systems transformation, food loss and waste, and equitable approaches to sustainable consumption**. It is clear that addressing the climate crisis or preventing irreversible biodiversity loss will not be possible without transforming the global food system. According to the HLPE, "a food system gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the output of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes"<sup>8</sup>.

The current system, dominated by corporate concentration that has led to high input intensive industrial scale production and global value chains, is a major driver of greenhouse gas emissions, ecosystem degradation, deforestation as well as social impacts. A systemic and holistic approach will be required to transform food systems, one that addresses a transition away from an extractive, exploitative and polluting form of agricultural production and also nutrition, dietary shifts, production of inputs and their unintended effects on climate change and land consolidation, as well as food loss and waste. This workshop should cover the different components of food systems, both on production and consumption, with a particular focus on input production, the consequences of consolidation and concentration of land, resources and food supply chains on food security and farmers' livelihoods, food loss and waste, as well as healthy nutrition and diets. It should also explore how a holistic, integrated approach to transforming food systems can help in delivering the objectives of the Convention and the joint work on agriculture and food security.

There is huge potential to significantly reduce food loss and waste, providing significant contributions to both food security, farmers' livelihoods and equitable emission reduction. Short food supply chains and local, sustainable food systems including territorial markets have the potential to support local small-scale producers and encourage community involvement and citizen awareness and foster low-waste food environments, e.g. due to the reduction of overpackaging, selling fresh produce loose and removing date labels, stimulating community involvement in local agriculture and food production; encouraging public and private actors to develop food waste prevention activities hand in hand; and raising awareness and educating about the value of food.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/i7846e/i7846e.pdf>

6) Workshop on **youth and workers' rights in the agrarian environment**. In order to maintain and attract youth into the farming sector, greater emphasis is needed on the importance of the range of youth aspirations for food systems work, diversifying food systems, and more diverse educational opportunities, workers rights, living wages and right to health and safety at work, among other things - and less focus solely on the narrow issues of digital & technological innovation, jobs and entrepreneurship, which currently dominate discourse on Youth and agriculture. Ensuring an enabling environment for youth engagement and employment requires that States comply with their respective international obligations to combat climate change, realising the right of peasants and Indigenous Peoples to contribute to the design and implementation of national and local climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, including through the use of agroecological practices and traditional knowledge.

7) Workshop on **financing and implementation for smallholder and agroecological farming**. There is a need to shift public support, including climate finance, overseas development aid (ODA) and national budgets, for a reconversion of industrialised agriculture towards agroecological systems that provide healthy food, livelihood security and multiple climate benefits. This means a transformation of the overarching principles and vision to govern the financing of agriculture. Currently, the transition towards agroecology is under-funded, even though it delivers multiple benefits aligned with SDGs.

8) Workshop on **just transitions in agriculture**. Climate action in agriculture must take account of the impact of changes on farmers and communities, their roles and the support required. There is already deep inequality in food systems, including exploitation and low incomes, barriers for women farmers, concentration of land and wealth, and rising hunger. These must be addressed through participatory just transition processes which centre the perspectives and needs of vulnerable and marginalised communities, particularly farmers and farm workers. A workshop to unpack what a "just transition" in agriculture means, and how to deliver it in effective and socially-responsive ways, would be a valuable process within the new work program on agriculture.

9) Workshop on **agrometeorology for anticipatory action**, drawing on the increasing number of examples of agromet services that deliver increased productivity, reduced direct loss & damage as well that from e.g. climate-enhanced pest and disease occurrence. This would assess the initiative landscape, from the GFCS to early warning systems to Regional Climate Outlook Forums, including opportunities for increasing access through innovative and inclusive digital technologies which take into account smallholder food producers' rights, needs and aspirations. Particular focus would include the changing demands on agromet services as farmers and herders transition to more resilient, knowledge-intensive approaches such as agroecology. The workshop would develop a roadmap to delivering user-led CIS for all small-scale farmers and herders by 2030, consistent with the UNSG's Early Warnings for All by 2030 initiative.

***b) Proposed ways forward for implementation***

- **Parties should establish an effective governance for** the Sharm-el-Sheik joint work on Implementation of action on Agriculture and Food Security, including the elaboration of an **Action Plan**, and the delivery of that Action Plan.

- **Channel existing and scaled-up climate finance** to support small-scale food producers with a focus on Indigenous Peoples and local communities, women, and youth, especially those that are initiating a transition towards agroecology.
- **Encourage implementation** by providing recommendations for national policies, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and food policies, with food security and the realisation of the right to food as a primary objective, that are in line with other UN bodies such as the CFS.
- **Mobilise technical and capacity-building support** for small-scale food producers by providing recommendations and guidance for agricultural extension services, particularly in agroecological approaches. Such training and support must be proactively gender-responsive, and not exclude women.
- **Encourage social organisation and greater participation** in decision making by food producers and consumers, with a focus on the most vulnerable and marginalised.
- **Build further consensus** around key topics such as agroecology and gender analysis by holding thematic workshops in conjunction with the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and formally introducing the HLPE's climate policy recommendations on agriculture into the UNFCCC.
- **Facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience** among different stakeholders, including farmers, researchers, policy makers, and civil society groups, on the implementation of agroecological practices.
- **Continue building an integrated and inclusive governance.** The Joint Work should be led by representatives from Parties, observer organisations, farmers' groups and Indigenous Peoples with a mandate to oversee the implementation of the joint work and ensure inclusivity and transparency in decision-making processes.
- **Conduct regular evaluations** that ensure effectiveness and efficiency in achieving objectives, and that any necessary adjustments be made based on the findings of these evaluations. Develop monitoring tools and mechanisms, mile stones and road maps to monitor implementation.

#### **4. Proposals for the Sharm el Sheik online portal (Doc .CP/27, Para 18)**

a) Key existing portals and resources should be referenced, accessible and used within the Sharm el Sheik online portal including:

- [Access Agriculture](#) is an award-winning online information resource dedicated to improved rural livelihoods and sustainable food systems in the Global South. Its mission is to promote agroecological principles through capacity development and South - South exchange of quality farmer-to-farmer training in local languages.
- [Agroecology Coalition](#) is a global coalition of countries, farmer organisations, UN agencies, research agencies and civil society organisations promoting agroecology as an essential solution for the transformation of food systems towards healthy, resilient, equitable and sustainable systems.

- [IPES Food](#) is a diverse and independent panel of experts guided by new ways of thinking about research, sustainability and food systems. It values cutting edge science while recognizing the importance of experiential, indigenous and traditional knowledge.
- [AgroEcology Fund](#) is a multi-donor fund that supports just and sustainable food systems.
- [The Oakland Institute](#) is a leading policy think-tank focusing on issues including sustainable food systems, land rights, the food price and climate crises.
- [International Land Coalition](#) is a global alliance of civil society and intergovernmental organisations working together to put people at the centre of land governance. The shared goal of ILC's 300+ members is to realise land governance for and with people at country level, responding to the needs and protecting the rights of women, men and communities who live on and from the land.
- [FAO Global Hub on Indigenous Food System](#) brings together Indigenous and non-indigenous experts, scientists and researchers to establish a knowledge-dialogue that will gather evidence-based contributions on Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems.
- [FAO Agroecology Knowledge Hub](#) provides a starting point to organise the existing knowledge on agroecology, collecting articles, videos, case studies, books and other important material in one place. The objective is to support policy-makers, farmers, researchers and other relevant stakeholders through knowledge exchange and knowledge transfer (including the [Scaling up Agroecology Initiative](#)).
- [La Via Campesina](#) is a movement of movements and the global voice of peasants who feed the world, bringing together millions of landless workers, indigenous people, pastoralists, fishers, migrant farmworkers, small and medium-size farmers, rural women and peasant youth from around the world.
- [Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa](#) works across 40 networks covering 50 countries, and is a broad alliance of different civil society actors that are part of the struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology in Africa.
- [Agroecology Europe](#) supports agroecological research, education and training; shares and disseminates agroecological knowledge; promotes agroecology in the farming and food sectors and in society.
- [HLPE Report #14 - Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition](#) describes the 13 principles of agroecology, transition pathways and other key issues for the transformation needed to build a sustainable, climate resilient food system.
- [International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability](#), an open-access research journal advancing understanding and practice of agricultural sustainability and transformation, agroecology, and related technologies, processes and policies.
- [Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition](#), an initiative of public interest CSOs and social movements - peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists, landless people, consumers, urban people living in poverty, agricultural and food workers, women, youth, and indigenous peoples - that recognize the need to act jointly for the realisation of the right to adequate food and nutrition.
- [International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty \(IPC\)](#), an autonomous and self-organised global platform of small-scale food producers and rural workers organisations and grass root/community based social movements to advance the Food Sovereignty agenda at the global and regional level.

b) The portal should be open to upload publications also from Indigenous and grassroots knowledge (non-academic research, reflecting experiences from the ground).