

Submission on the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on the Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security

March 2023

Joint Submission to the Subsidiary Bodies at their 58th Session on elements of the joint work referred to in paragraphs 14-15 of FCCC/CP/2022/L.4, including views on topics for the workshops referred to in paragraph 15(b) above.

This submission has been prepared by CAFOD, JENA, CIDSE, Caritas Internationalis, Caritas Africa and SCIAF, and endorsed by: AFSA, IPES-Food, Trocaire, DKA, FOCSIV, Fastenaktion, Broederlijk Delen, Catholic Relief Services, Ubinig, The National Alliance for Agroecology the Gambia, Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement, Centre for Minority Rights Development, Biowatch South Africa, VSF Suisse, Eastern and Southern Africa small-scale Farmers Forum.

Summary

Proposed workshop topics to take forward elements of paragraph 14:

This submission is proposing the following thematic workshops:

- Workshop on agroecology
- Workshop on aquatic and blue foods
- Workshop on financing sustainable food systems
- Workshop on women's rights in food systems

Proposed governance structure to take forward elements of paragraph 14 & 15:

The Joint Work must be moved beyond an agenda item towards a more formal setting under the UNFCCC, agree on a clear roadmap before COP28, establish a steering committee of at least 50% women and with representatives from small-scale food producing networks and indigenous peoples organisations, be supported by a secretariat, establish a formal working agreement with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), function on the basis of human rights frameworks, and be adequately funded and annually evaluated.

The undersigned organisations would like to submit our views on the elements of the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on the implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security, as outlined in paragraphs 14-15 of FCCC/CP/2022/L.4.

1. PROPOSED WORKSHOP TOPICS TO TAKE FORWARD ELEMENTS OF PARAGRAPH 14

We welcome the recognition in the joint work of the critical role of the agriculture sector in both contributing to and being impacted by climate change, and the importance of a holistic approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities in this sector, as per paragraph 14(a). We also welcome the opportunity to include the following future topics as per paragraph 14 and hold in-session workshops on these as per paragraph 15(b):

A. Agroecology

Agroecology is a holistic approach to agriculture and food systems that considers the interactions between plants, animals, and the environment, and aims to promote sustainable and resilient food systems. Unlike other food approaches, **agroecology focuses on long-term outcomes, such as climate mitigation and adaptation**, the health and well-being of the entire ecosystem, as well as strong and equitable social structures. Agroecology follows specific principles and elements endorsed by the FAO, providing a framework for evaluating the sustainability, resilience, and productivity of food systems. The IPCC Assessment Report 6¹ also reports with high confidence that “adoption of agroecology principles and practices will be highly beneficial to maintaining healthy, productive food systems under climate change”.

Agroecology is ecologically sound, socially just, and enhances the productivity and resilience of farming systems, and it offers the right holistic approach to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change, and to promoting sustainable and equitable food systems. Agroecology also came out prominently during the discussions of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA). In this context, **we recommend a future thematic workshop on “the role of agroecology in climate action”** to look at the following elements:

- Identify and present evidence of the potential that agroecology has as an approach for climate adaptation and mitigation. Include case studies from different regions of the world where agroecology has been successfully implemented, with particular focus on the global south.
- Provide an in-depth review of how to integrate the FAO’s 10 agroecological elements² across climate action, with special emphasis on the elements around “Culture and Food Traditions”, “Synergies”, “Co-creation and sharing of knowledge”, and “Responsible Governance”.
- Discuss existing policies and institutional frameworks that support the adoption of agroecology at the national and local level. This must include policies and mechanisms to mobilise resources that support small-scale food producers, invest in agroecological research and development, support agroecological training, and the creation of agroecological markets.
- Explore how agroecology addresses farmer-led technologies and innovation for climate action, with a special focus on the role of indigenous knowledge. This should include innovations in soil health, water management, seed systems and biodiversity conservation in line with the 13 HLPE agroecological principles³.
- Include concrete options on how women and girls can be supported in the use of agroecological approaches and identify the barriers they may face.
- The workshop must ensure and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience among different stakeholders, especially small-scale food producers and indigenous people, but also researchers and academics, policy makers, and civil society groups, on the implementation

¹ [AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023 \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6-synthesis-report/)

² <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/overview/overview10elements/en/>

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

of agroecological practices that promote low-input and local context specific solutions favourable for climate action.

- The outcomes of the workshop should be made available on the online platform, as per paragraph 16. The platform should be designed to facilitate and continue the exchange between farmers on agroecological practices and approaches.

B. Aquatic and blue foods

Blue foods, including marine and freshwater fisheries and aquaculture are a crucial consideration for achieving the food security objective under Article 2 of the Convention, play a very significant role in the global food system, and are highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. There is also a pronounced need for capacity building and financial and technical support for climate change adaptation and mitigation in blue food systems, especially in developing countries. **We thus recommend a future workshop on the role of blue food systems in climate action** that is consistent with the principles of agroecology and addresses the following themes:

- The impacts of climate change on aquatic food systems and food security
- The role of small-scale aquatic food producers in shaping climate resilience: adaptive capacity, needs, and solutions;
- Localising and decarbonising aquatic food systems for climate change mitigation with co-benefits for adaptation and sustainable development.

C. Financing Sustainable Food Systems Transformation

There is an urgent need to shift public and private climate finance towards sustainable food systems transformation. Despite the multiple benefits from agroecology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to cope with climate change, it is still underfunded⁴. Financial flows should increasingly support sustainable food systems transformation by funding the development of territorial markets, facilitating farmer-led education and training, supporting farmer-managed seed systems, strengthening small-scale food producers' adaptive capacity and resilience, and investing into farmer-led research and development programmes. Moreover, climate finance should consider holistic principles and approaches to finance food systems in the context of climate change.

In this context **we recommend a thematic workshop on “Financing Sustainable Food Systems Transformation”** to look at the following elements:

- Identify financial needs for sustainable food system transformation by consulting with finance experts, agroecological experts and small-scale food producers. Priority should be given to voices from the global south, especially women.
- Invite experts from organisations that are already engaged in providing financial support for agroecology and have developed ways to effectively assess agroecological investments (e.g Agroecology Fund, IFAD, Biovision, Agroecology Coalition, Coventry University's Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, among others).

⁴ [Finance for agroecology: more just than a dream? – CIDSE](#)

- Identify options to redirect harmful agricultural subsidies and other ways of public support towards agroecology and sustainable food systems.
- Lay out concrete policy and technical pathways needed for increased climate finance to support small-scale food producers achieve adaptation goals at national level.
- Based on the previous points, engage in discussion with global, regional and national financial entities to develop means to support locally-led approaches for the transformation of food systems

The online portal, as per paragraph 16. should be used for small-scale food producers’ organisations to access and use information regarding funds that support their work on agroecology and food system transformation.

D. Ensuring equality and women’s rights in food systems

Women represent almost half of the workforce in the agriculture sector in different parts of the globe. However, they face discrimination, challenges and constraints, such as the lack of access to natural resources and funds, seeds management, livestock management, and others.⁵ This jeopardises the full realisation of a fair and sustainable food system. In particular, access to and control over land is a key issue for many women farmers around the world. Women are also underrepresented in decision-making and food system governance. The main roots of this inequality lie in discriminatory social norms, policies and legal frameworks and patriarchal structures.

In this context, **we recommend a future thematic workshop on “Ensuring equality and women’s rights in food systems”**. The workshop should focus on discussing policies and actions on the ground that support the needs and priorities of women small-scale food producers in the face of the climate crisis. It should also include the following elements:

- Invite experts to explore the root causes of discrimination based on sex in food systems, and include approaches that show how to effectively address these as part of climate action.
- Organise presentations and sessions on solutions and best practices from grassroots and farmers organisations to realise women’s rights and empower women.
- Discuss means, such as policies, resources and funds, to reinforce organisations working on the realisation of women’s right in food systems

Based on the outcomes of this workshop, the online portal as per paragraph 16 should be used for small-scale food producers’ organisations to access information regarding positive experiences, best practices and supportive policies for the realisation of women’s rights and equality in food systems.

2. PROPOSED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

With regard to the governance structure of the four-year Sharm el-Sheikh joint work (SSJW) on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security, decision FCCC/CP/2022/L.4, we recommend the following:

⁵ [Women in agriculture | Reduce Rural Poverty | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/)

- That the SSJW is moved beyond an agenda item under the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs) towards a more formal discussion setting under the UNFCCC. We think this point is key in order to avoid limiting the discussions to the SBs, and to ensure the process fulfils its mandate to coordinate and monitor implementation more effectively across the UNFCCC and the UN System.
- That Parties agreed on a clear roadmap for the SSJW before COP28.
- That the SSJW be led by a steering committee comprising representatives from Parties, observer organisations, small-scale food producing organisations, indigenous people, relevant international organisations such as the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), with a mandate to oversee the implementation of the SSJW and ensure inclusivity and transparency in decision-making processes.
- That the steering committee be made up of at least 50% women.
- That the SSJW be supported by a secretariat responsible for coordinating activities, providing technical and logistical support, and facilitating communication and cooperation among stakeholders.
- That the SSJW established a formal linkage with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the world's highest food governance body, for the purposes of support on policy guidance and implementation pursuant to paragraph 14(c) of FCCC/CP/2022/L.4.
- That the SSJW functioned on the basis of Human Rights frameworks (UNDROP, UNDRIP, ICESCR, ICCPR, CEDAW etc⁶). 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.
- That the SSJW be funded through a combination of direct contributions from Parties, as well as voluntary contributions from observer organisations and other sources without compromising the integrity of its decisions. This should include transparent and clear accountability and implementation mechanisms.
- That the SSJW be evaluated annually to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency in achieving its objectives, and that any necessary adjustments be made based on the findings of these evaluations.

We believe that by adopting this governance structure and prioritising the promotion of agroecological practices, the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on agriculture and food security can make a meaningful contribution to the implementation of the UNFCCC and help to advance the development of more sustainable and equitable food systems that can help address climate change challenges related to agriculture and food security

Thank you for considering our views.

⁶ And dynamics such as the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 UNDEFF: [Home | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/)

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This submission has been endorsed by:

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