

Thematic Session on "Climate resilience of agri-food systems"

Concept note

Context

Our food systems currently face a double-sided onslaught. They are strained by the impacts of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the resulting strain on food supply for many countries in the southern hemisphere. The EU, as a long standing and reliable partner for countries around the world, is working to ensure global food security and build resilient food systems¹. It has allocated €600 million of the European Development Fund to finance immediate humanitarian food aid, food production and resilience of food systems in the most vulnerable countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP).²

At the same time, the impacts of climate change are being felt more and more by farmers both in Africa and Europe, negatively impacting water availability, productivity, soil health and increasing frequency and impact of extreme weather events³. Climate change is already having pervasive impacts on people, the planet and prosperity. Temperatures have repeatedly broken long-term records in recent years. The last five years were the hottest on record, with heatwaves, droughts, and wildfires across Europe and in other regions of the planet.

Extreme climatic events are a testimony to us that climate change, as well as biodiversity loss and resource scarcity, are ever-growing risks to food security that are not going away. Solutions are urgently needed to help farmers and land managers tackle climate risks. The boundaries of today's biogeographical regions will shift poleward and uphill, changing vegetation patterns and ecosystems, and triggering major shifts in forests and farmland. Trees and crops may not be able to keep up with such changes, especially when suitable habitats are fragmented. We need resilient and sustainable agriculture that is productive, improves rural livelihoods, preserves biodiversity, and maintains healthy, fertile soils.

The EU has recently reformed its common agriculture policy (CAP) in line with its overall climate commitments to further enhance its sustainability and reduce its climatic impact, while safeguarding food security and livelihoods of EU farmers. Nine out of ten objectives of the CAP are linked to climate and the environment, including measures to increase protection of

¹ [EU actions to enhance global food security \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/e300497/1679132123/1679132123_en.pdf)

² [Food security: EU allocates funds to the most vulnerable African, Caribbean and Pacific countries hit by food crisis - World | ReliefWeb](https://www.reliefweb.org/news/food-security-eu-allocates-funds-to-the-most-vulnerable-african-caribbean-and-pacific-countries-hit-by-food-crisis-world-reliefweb)

³ [IPCC AR6 WGII Chapter05.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wgii/chapter05/)

permanent grasslands, peatlands and wetlands and specific eco-schemes that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.⁴

At COP27, food security was high on the agenda of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) discussions, which resulted in a new COP decision, establishing a four-year work programme on implementation of climate action in agricultural systems, with a prominent focus on food security⁵.

The results of the KJWA gathered a large collection of best practices, improved the knowledge of suitable approaches for different geographic and climatic conditions, updated the knowledge base and finally produced valuable information on how to access existing funds and other means of implementation that are available from Constituted Bodies and Mechanisms under the Climate Change Convention.

It also identified certain gaps and issues that further work is needed on. One example is the issue of improving access to existing climate finance for projects involving small holder farmers in developing countries and especially for women farmers.

Future work on agriculture at UNFCCC will focus on implementing the results of the Koronivia Roadmap and increase collaboration with actors outside the climate change convention to achieve greater efficiency when trying to access existing finance and other means. This will also include work on sustainable food systems. In its recently published submission to the UNFCCC⁶ the EU stresses the need for better consideration of food systems in relation to climate change.

To kickstart this collaboration, the outcomes of this session will help demonstrate that the AU and EU are actively engaging and making use of the results obtained during the climate negotiations, which would thus encourage other parties to follow this example.

In a globalized world, food systems are heavily intertwined and climatic impacts are felt around the globe. International collaboration is therefore not only needed but also the only way to find a global solution to a global problem.

Objectives

1. Discussing commitment/proposals/interest by EU and AU for improving the climate resilience of agrifood systems
2. Jointly assessing the interconnections between African and European food systems, and launching a process for more effectively exploiting the opportunities of African and European food strategies to jointly contribute to achieving the United Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) and Paris Agreement goals

⁴ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/sustainability/environmental-sustainability/climate-change_en#newcap

⁵ <https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/agriculture>

⁶ <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/Documents/202303271131---SE-2023-03-27%20EU%20submission%20on%20SSH%20Joint%20Work.pdf>

3. Jointly supporting this integrated food & climate approach at upcoming international meetings (COP28, UNFSS stocktake)

Panellists

Chair

- Luis Planas Puchades, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Spain

Moderator

- Ron Hartman, Director for Global Engagement, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Speakers

- Martin Frick, Director, World Food Programme
- Ana Maria Loboguerrero Rodriguez, Research Director for Climate Action at the Alliance of Bioversity International and International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CGIAR)
- Christopher Ian Brett, Lead Agribusiness Specialist in the Global Agricultural Practice of the World Bank
- Kaveh Zahedi, Director, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Kolyang Palebele, President, PanAfrican Farmers Organisation (PAFO)
- Kati Partanen, Member of the Board of Directors, World Farmers Organisation (WFO) and Member of the Board, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (MTK), Finland