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.

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 migration\(^1\); pushing 122 million people into hunger since 2019\(^2\); leading to financial losses and diminishing capital of family farmers\(^3\); 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 emissions\(^4\). 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.

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3. newclimateeconomy.report/2018
6. 10.1088/1748-9326/11/12/124010/pdf
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 economies. 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 inequalities. Inclusive and equitable policies and their implementation with dedicated funds are essential in overcoming these barriers.

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 depopulation. 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.

Family farming, involving one third of the world’s population and 600 million family-run farms worldwide, and produces around 80% of the world’s food in value terms. 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% 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.
LET US WORK TOGETHER

La The gravity of this State of Emergency necessitates 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.