



**SMALL-SCALE FARMERS' CALL TO THE 2021 UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP26) SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN SCOTLAND, UNITED KINGDOM, BETWEEN 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER AND 12<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

# **NO CLIMATE RESILIENCE WITHOUT AGROECOLOGY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY**

OCTOBER 2021

## Preamble

The 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) hosted by the UK in partnership with Italy, will take place from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow, UK. The summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Parties will review the progress made in the fight against the climate crisis after the Paris Agreement signed in 2015, where nationally determined contribution targets were presented by parties for reducing emissions. The summit is further set to focus on rapid reduction of global emissions, and climate finance among others. Countries will make new commitments in the fight against climate change amid rising calls for stronger action to limit the global temperature rise.

Small-scale farmers therefore must be at the heart of the Global Climate Crisis Negotiations given the impact that climate change makes on agriculture and the livelihood of small-scale farmers especially women in the rural areas of Uganda. The pests, vectors, diseases, floods, landslides, lightening, and prolonged droughts sparked by climate change across Uganda coupled with the pandemics bring to light the emergency of climate crisis facing the planet at the time of the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), COP26.

ESAFF Uganda together with partners consulted small-scale farmers from different districts in Uganda through a comprehensive process, informing the development of the calls in this paper to the COP26. The draft paper was further shared with small-scale farmer leaders for further assessment and scrutiny. These calls were developed while noting that small-scale farmers especially women are increasingly struggling with droughts, floods, hunger, disease, and a fragile ecosystem.

This paper's main objective is to call on the UNFCCC to recognise that agroecology achieves climate justice with proven serious solutions to climate crisis crucial for climate mitigation and adaptation. Noting that agriculture is a strong pillar in the economy of Uganda, this paper also focuses on calling for urgent investment to build a climate-resilient economy based on agroecology to achieve social, environmental, and economic justice.

## Climate Change Impact on Small-scale Farmers;

Climate change is worsening poverty and vulnerability of small-scale farmers especially women in Uganda. More small-scale farmers are sensitive to impacts of climate change.

### ***Small-scale farmers highlighted the following impacts;***

1. Droughts affected close to 2.4 million people between 2004 and 2017, and drought conditions in 2010 and 2011 caused an estimated loss and damage value of \$1.2 billion, equivalent to 7.5% of Uganda's 2010 gross domestic product<sup>1</sup>.
2. Reduction on the length and intensity of the rainy season is becoming increasingly unpredictable, and the use of irrigation facilities remains limited due to high operation costs, limited extension services and problems regarding irrigation management.
3. Rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns are increasing soil erosion and increase growing difficulties for many crops as well as shorten growing seasons. Rising temperatures are increasing suitable conditions for crop diseases and pest infestations such as blast and bacterial leaf blight in rice, aflatoxin and necrosis in maize, fungal and viral diseases in banana and beans, and coffee rust in coffee trees.
4. The drought has as well led to death of many livestock especially in pastoralist areas as animal search for water grass, this endangers the beef trade and industry, reduction of revenues to the governments from this sector.
5. When there is increased level of water in our major lakes and rivers the lives of fisher folks are affected drastically and on a number of occasions when temperatures in water rises the living creature conditions are disturbed there could be a reduction of oxygen and this affects the lives of fish and sea weeds which are very use full in the medicine industry that's why we saw fish floating on many of lakes, this leads to big losses the fishing industry and government because it contributes 3% to the national GDP and 12% to the agriculture sector GDP, this industry is worthy \$ 703.7 million annually<sup>2</sup>.
6. Major export crops like coffee and tea also seeing a reduction in yields leading to combined economic losses of about US\$1.4 billion in mid-century. Climate-induced losses are expected to range from 10–50% yield losses, with the potential to reduce foreign exchange earnings of Uganda by \$15–\$80 million per year<sup>3</sup>.
7. Climate change has decreased growth in agricultural yields which would affect very many small-scale farmers and the national food security in general. The climate crisis is expected to push more than 100 million people in the developing world below the poverty line by 2030<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> IFRC (2021): Effective Law and Policy for Addressing Child Protection in Disaster Risk Management

<sup>2</sup> FAO (2018): Impacts of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank Group (2020): Climate Risk Profile: Uganda

<sup>4</sup> FAO (2017): The future of food and agriculture – Trends and challenges. Rome.

## The Actions by Small-scale Farmers in Building Resilience and Addressing the Climate Crisis;

Small-scale farmers can no longer wait for the debate to conclude to find adequate responses to climate change, which drastically affects small-scale farmers' livelihoods, despite having limited access to resources, and support from the government. Small-scale farmers are practicing technologies rooted in agroecology and food sovereignty.

### ***Among the practices are;***

1. Small-scale farmers are building a firm foundation for seed sovereignty through seed sharing and exchange hence upholding the farmer managed seed system. In their effort to build seed sovereignty, farmers gather traditional seeds, multiply, select and store in community seed banks.
2. Small-scale farmers are employing agroecological farming techniques that assist in address climate change as well as improving yields and earnings. These practices also reduce dependence on off-farm materials.
3. Small-scale farmers are leading in actively influencing policies and practices that are focused on addressing climate change and upscaling agroecology in Uganda and beyond.

## Why Agroecology should be Central at the COP 26;

Agroecology is key to small-scale farmers because it strengthens livelihoods and fosters collective actions to addressing the climate crisis.

### ***Since climate change has greatly affected agriculture, Agroecology should be central at the COP 26 because;***

1. Agroecology is people centred. Unlike the other forms of agriculture, agroecology involves everyone, and indigenous knowledge is recognized.
2. Agroecology protects the ecosystem and restore the biodiversity. Agroecology doesn't destroy the ecosystem like how industrialized agriculture behaves. Land, water, forest, and the atmosphere are well protected.
3. Agroecology has the explicit goal of strengthening the sustainability of all parts of the food system, from the seed and the soil to the table, including ecological knowledge, economic viability, and social justice.
4. Agroecology is gender sensitive. Women and men are alike. No discrimination in the practice. It also emphasises the importance of local knowledge, farmer empowerment, and socio-economic regulations. Agroecology can address gender inequality.
5. Agroecology is the best answer to climate change because it employs agricultural methods, such as diversification of crops, conservation tillage, green manures, natural fertilisers, biological pest control, rainwater harvesting, and production of crops and livestock in ways that store carbon and protects natural resources.
6. Agroecology produces healthy food since small-scale farmers don't use any chemicals hence contributing to healthy community and healthy population.
7. Agroecology is also cost effective and sustainable yet profitable. Small-scale farmers use available natural resources which have little or no cost yet the profit from selling the product are most times high.

## Small-scale Farmers' Call to the COP 26;

***Based on the deliberations, small-scale farmers emphases that Agroecology achieves climate, social and ecological justices, hence making the following calls to the Parties of the UNFCCC at COP26;***

1. Address the current financial limitations which is affecting the implementation of policies and programs that are focused on addressing climate change in an ecological friendly manner. We call on parties to desist from funding climate change policies and programs that don't protect food sovereignty in Uganda. We stress that funding should be with shorter timeframes since commitments towards emission reduction and climate finance is urgent.
2. Parties should urgently prioritize climate information access, sustainable and adaptive food systems rooted in agroecological systems.
3. Parties should focus on prioritization of adaptation in Uganda's programs of action in Nationally Determined Contribution.
4. Because of the proven evidence, focus should be on transition to agroecology with increased recognition and support for agroecology within UNFCCC and other international fora as the best solution for the climate and food system crises.
5. Parties should support the domestication of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) which set platforms for voices from rural communities to be heard. When implemented- UNDROP would be key in addressing the economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions of climate change and human rights.
6. Align awarding criteria and procedures of financial mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund to small-scale farmers and their organizations so that farmer organisations can access available funding given their capacity to mobilizing small-scale farmers especially women and youths and building workable grassroot climate adaptation and mitigation measures.
7. Parties should purposefully invest resources both technical and financial in research on agroecological approaches like resilient agricultural practices that are being nurtured by small-scale farmers. These approaches respect traditional knowledge and promote food sovereignty.
8. Parties should create a direct platform to the UNFCCC that actively involve small-scale farmers especially women as a special group that experience the daily impact of the decisions and actions by policy makers and implementers on climate change.
9. Parties should further strengthen youth capacity through empowering youth to access skills development to create business opportunities in areas that protect and restore ecosystems. This will play a big role in supporting 's climate and sustainable development ambitions.
10. Parties should adopt models that also involve the next generation like school children in the discussion at COP because they are the custodians of the future.

## Endorsement

This paper was endorsed by small-scale farmers representatives (Leaders of ESAFF district chapters) from 30 districts under the ESAFF Uganda umbrella during a dialogue organized in Kampala, Uganda on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021.



*Signed for and on behalf of small-scale farmers;*

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