



IPES-Food (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems)
COP27 PRESS REACTION
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COP27 REACTION - AGRICULTURE IS IN THE CLIMATE TENT BUT SMALL-SCALE FARMERS LEFT OUT

20 NOVEMBER, SHARM EL SHEIKH - As climate talks came to a close in Sharm El Sheikh, a significant deal has been reached to integrate agriculture into the UNFCCC, the UN's climate action body, for the first time. After lengthy talks, governments signed off on the 'Koronivia' package,[1] putting an end to the neglect of food and farming issues in the UN climate agreement, and allowing greater action to tackle the forgotten emissions from industrial agriculture.

However, it's disappointing that Koronivia negotiators did not agree to include 'sustainable food systems' - meaning that wider issues like food waste and loss, nutrition, healthy sustainable diets, and resilient supply chains will continue to be left out of the UN climate agreement and unfunded. Even more dismaying, across COP27, small-scale farmers have been left outside the tent, and the solutions they propose, such as diverse and resilient 'agroecological' food and farming, deleted as a potential solution for adaptation to climate change, despite compelling evidence of its benefits.[2]

Sustainable food systems have been a hot topic of COP27. For the first time, over 200 events, four pavilions, and a day dedicated to agriculture and adaptation have given due airtime to the 1/3 of greenhouse gases that come from industrial emissions-intensive food systems.

Nevertheless, the number of delegates representing big agribusiness has reportedly more than doubled.[3] Many food and farming initiatives announced at COP, such as AIM4C, fell short of the fundamental transformation of food systems needed to secure a 1.5°C future, effectively perpetuating reliance on fossil fuels and input-intensive monocultures. This COP will also expand carbon markets and offsets into land and farming, risking land competition, people's land tenure rights, and carbon removals that are highly uncertain. Lastly, small-scale farmers' demands for climate finance to support adaptation to climate change and create truly long-term resilience have gone largely unmet.

Mamadou Goita, panel expert with IPES-Food and Executive Director of the Institute for Research and Promotion of Alternatives in Development (IRPAD), said:

"The industrial food system is responsible for over a third of global warming emissions - and now finally the UN climate talks are recognising that. It's a significant step to see the UN climate agreement will begin to target greater action to tackle the enormous emissions from industrial agriculture and provide funding to make agriculture more resilient to climate change. But if actions are not incorporated across the whole food system, from food waste and loss to sustainable supply chains and healthy diets, we will fail to meet the world's great food and climate challenges."

Million Belay, panel expert with IPES-Food and coordinator of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa, said:

"Small-scale farmers are being hit first and worst by climate change. They struggled to have their voices heard at COP27, amongst the record high agribusiness lobbyists, and the extortionate expense. They demanded support and climate finance for diverse and resilient agroecological food systems to help adapt to the floods and droughts they are facing - but they leave with very little. World leaders must not leave Africa's producers to their own fate."

Lim Li Ching, panel expert with IPES-Food, and Senior Researcher at Third World Network said:

"Despite all the green buzzwords, COP27 has seen a number of initiatives simply doling out more support to big agribusinesses and their large-scale extractive model of industrial agriculture that's causing climate change. Small-scale farmers have done little to cause the climate crisis but their needs and solutions are being crowded out."

Notes:

[1] <https://unfccc.int/documents/622325>

The 'joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security' concludes that the UNFCCC will incorporate 'work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security'. Adaptation is 'recognised' as 'priority for vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous peoples and small-scale farmers'.

[2] https://ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/AgroecologyClimateInfo.pdf

[3]

<https://www.desmog.com/2022/11/18/big-agribusiness-delegates-double-cop27>

[4] Facts on industrial agriculture and climate impacts:

- Even if we were to stop all other emissions right now, our food systems emissions alone would soon push global warming beyond the 1.5°C Paris target ([Science.org](#))
- 1.5°C of global warming risks crop failure of some staple crops like maize in major food producing countries. While increased heatwaves, droughts and floods from climate change are already exposing millions of people to acute food insecurity ([IPCC](#))
- Industrial food systems are a primary driver of climate change. They contribute to around 1/3rd of global anthropogenic GHG emissions, with food/livestock production, fertilizer use, deforestation, transport and food waste as the main drivers ([Nature](#))
- Net-zero climate pledges are relying on unrealistic amounts of land-based carbon removal. The total area of land needed to meet projected biological carbon removal in national climate pledges is almost 1.2 billion hectares – equivalent to current global cropland. ([Landgap.org](#))