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27 May 2025

Subject: Urgent Need for COP30 to deliver for a Just Transition in Food and Agriculture

Your Excellencies,

We, the undersigned UNFCCC constituencies, write to urge the COP30 Presidency to ensure that a Just Transition package at COP30 includes and facilitates a just transition in agriculture and food systems.

To be truly comprehensive, the Just Transition package under COP30 must include agriculture and food systems. Agriculture and food systems account as the second-largest contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions¹, with agriculture and food production accounting for at least 15% of all fossil fuel used annually². A just transition in the energy sector will not be possible without a just transition in the food and agriculture sector. One transformation cannot be tackled without the other, they are deeply connected, yet food and agriculture remains one of the most under-addressed sectors in climate negotiations. At the same time, progress toward ensuring the right to adequate food for all has stalled, and in many regions, hunger is rising. Ignoring agriculture in the Just Transition narrative risks leaving behind the immense share of people globally who depend on this sector for their livelihoods, many of whom are among the most vulnerable to climate impacts³. A meaningful Just Transition must support a shift away from extractive and emissions-intensive agricultural models towards equitable, climate-resilient, humane and agroecological food systems that nourish people and the planet.

Given Brazil's leadership in global climate diplomacy and its significant role in food production, forest and biodiversity protection and Indigenous land stewardship, COP30 presents a unique opportunity

to address the vital connections between the right to food and a range of interrelated issues, including human rights, the rights of small-scale food producers and Indigenous Peoples, land use, animal welfare, climate change, and social justice.

The recent letters from the COP30 Presidency underscores Brazil's commitment to cooperation, multilateralism and unity, which are important in the current global scenario. It also reinforces a Global South perspective which we welcome, particularly through its emphasis on adaptation and finance as key roadmaps with specific targets and a proposed leadership structure that seeks to be innovative and collaborative. The focus on integrating climate, biodiversity and desertification agendas aligns with the importance of coherence and achieving multiple goals through synergistic actions. However, while deforestation and biodiversity are mentioned, agriculture and food systems remain absent.

The latest findings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) emphasise that agriculture and food systems contribute up to 37% of global greenhouse gas emissions¹, with industrial agriculture being a major driver of deforestation, land degradation, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse. At the same time, climate change threatens the food security and livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations. Almost 4 billion people rely on agriculture for income and sustenance⁴, including smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, herders, fishers, and other rural communities. Women, who make up 38.5% of the agricultural workforce, are often disproportionately affected due to systemic marginalisation and limited access to resources. Children are also amongst the most vulnerable to the effect of climate change, with 1 in 5 children stunted⁵, as climate-related shocks intensify food insecurity and malnutrition. Young farmers, and farm workers, although key for implementation of sustainable practices, face barriers such as access to land, funding and adequate training. Without transformative action, food-related emissions alone could exceed the 1.5°C carbon budget, exacerbating climate risks for those least responsible for the crisis.⁶

Indigenous Peoples, in particular, are frontline defenders of the world's remaining intact ecosystems, stewarding 80% of global biodiversity while facing disproportionate climate impacts.⁷ Indigenous Peoples' and traditional food systems have sustained their communities for generations, maintaining biodiversity and ensuring food security through sustainable practices.⁸ Yet land grabs, deforestation and expansion of industrial agriculture continue to threaten their rights, territories and ways of life. COP30 must elevate their voices and integrate their knowledge into climate solutions.

Over the years, agriculture has primarily been addressed through Joint Work, starting with the Koronivia process and now the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security. Various pledges and declarations have also aimed to highlight the sector's importance. While these efforts have laid a crucial foundation for integrating agriculture into climate adaptation and mitigation discussions, agriculture and food systems still remain sidelined in decisions. This is despite mounting evidence that a just transition in agriculture and food systems is essential in building climate resilience, especially as progress against hunger stagnates and extreme weather events increasingly threaten global food security.^{9, 10}

Discussions must now move beyond increasing yields and reducing emissions intensity to systemic issues confronting the entire agriculture and food system—This means addressing pressing issues such as consumption patterns, the role of fossil fuels and industrial inputs, the growing prominence of commodity exports, the implications of tariffs and trade wars, food loss and waste, just transition for farmers and workers, and holistic solutions. The Global Stocktake outcome¹¹ adopted at COP28 reinforced the need for systems-based approaches and the importance of attaining climate-resilient food and agricultural production and supply and distribution of food. COP30 must build on this momentum. This also opens an opportunity to bring more focus on agroecology as an effective mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity strategy¹².

Brazil is a Party recognised for its constructive role in negotiations. And as a country with immense biodiversity and a large agricultural sector, including one of the most significant agroecology movement in the world, is well positioned to lead and elevate the discussion on agriculture and food systems at a Conference as significant as the upcoming COP30.

To ensure that a just food systems transformation and agroecology are central to COP30, we strongly recommend that the Presidency Agenda:

1. **Elevates agriculture and food systems within the Just Transition Work Programme**, ensuring it receives greater attention in the next round of dialogues, particularly in the context of adaptation, and the need to scale up support and strategies for farming communities and economies to transition away from harmful and highly polluting industrialised agriculture systems. Inclusive and participatory planning processes, social dialogue, training, reskilling, social protection and support for economic diversification are all essential elements for ensuring that transitions successfully support communities and do not exacerbate existing inequalities in agriculture and food systems.
2. **Recognises food systems transformation and agroecology as central to achieving climate goals** and calls for more ambitious national and international commitments, with strong emphasis on the right to food, right to a clean and healthy environment, rights of Indigenous Peoples, rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, and rights of traditional and vulnerable communities.
3. **Encourages Parties, especially high-income countries, to embed just transition of food systems in their climate strategies (including 2025 NDCs) with a strong focus on adopting healthy and sustainable diets and agroecology**, climate-resilient food production and high-welfare, diversified farming systems that support smallholder and family farmers.
4. **Mobilises public investment and technology transfer towards agroecology and climate-resilient food systems**, ensuring that financing aligns with the right to food, food sovereignty, land rights, animal welfare, and broader sustainability goals. This approach should also build resilience, support the diversification of crop production, reduce food waste, promote fair trading practices, whilst addressing the indirect causes of food insecurity, and encouraging local action and locally-led adaptation..
5. **Recognises that high-income countries must contribute financially to developing nations** and the fundings must be accessible to Indigenous Peoples, smallholders, fishers and family farmers and local and traditional communities, especially women and youth, with dedicated allocations for food systems transformation based on agroecology.

6. **Secures a firm commitment to halting deforestation and habitat loss linked to the production of agricultural and natural resource-based commodities**, ensuring that discussions on agriculture and land use explicitly address the impacts of industrial livestock expansion and unsustainable commodity supply chains and consumption. Recent commitments such as 2020 Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use and the UAE Consensus Agreement in 2023 have affirmed the urgent need to halt and reverse global deforestation by 2030.
7. **Ensures that negotiations on the Global Goal on Adaptation conclude with clear indicators on agriculture and means of implementation**, ensuring Parties, especially from the Global South, have adequate support and clear adaptation pathways for agriculture and food systems.
8. **Ensures coherence between climate action**, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, while protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples, of peasants and other small-scale food producers, of local communities, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and the welfare of both farmed and wild animals.
9. Finally, to prevent conflicts of interest, we urge COP30 leadership to **establish clear guidelines , building blocks , elements and targets that ensure corporate participation is constructive and contributes to the ambition of having a just transition that incorporates and recognizes the key role of agriculture and food systems transformation, and enables participation by MSMEs and Cooperatives**. This includes transparency in private sector engagement, safeguards against greenwashing, and prioritisation of solutions led by Indigenous, smallholders and family farmers, women, youth and civil society actors.

Brazil has a historic opportunity to champion a just and sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems, setting the stage for a climate just and climate-resilient future that benefits people, animals, and the planet alike. We call on the Presidency to build on the progress achieved at COP 28 in Dubai and COP 29 in Baku and further accelerate the implementation of ambitious climate action through a Just Transition that integrates the need of workforce and livelihoods dependent on agriculture and food systems and delivers benefits to all and leaves no one behind.

We stand ready to support this effort and welcome the opportunity to engage further.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the UNFCCC constituencies:

Children and Youth

Women and Gender

Environmental NGOs - Demand Climate Justice and Climate Action Network

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- ¹ ClimateWatch, <https://www.climatewatchdata.org/sectors/agriculture#drivers-of-emissions>, accessed 11 April 2025 ; IPCC, 2022: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- ² Global Alliance for the Future of Food. Toward Fossil Fuel-free Food: Why Collaboration Between Food & Energy Systems Players Is Key. n.p.: Global Alliance for the Future of Food, .
- ³ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2024. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024 – Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1254en>
- ⁴ Davis, B., Mane, E., Gurbuzer, L.Y., Caivano, G., Piedrahita, N., Schneider, K., Azhar, N., Benali, M., Chaudhary, N., Rivera, R., Ambikapathi, R. and Winters, P. 2023. Estimating global and country-level employment in agrifood systems. FAO Statistics Working Paper Series, No. 23-34. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc4337en>
- ⁵ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. Levels and trends in child malnutrition: UNICEF / WHO / World Bank Group Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates: Key findings of the 2023 edition. New York: UNICEF and WHO; 2023. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/jme-report-2023/>
- ⁶ Clark, Michael & Domingo, Nina & Colgan, Kimberly & Thakrar, Sumil & Tilman, David & Lynch, John & Azevedo, Inês & Hill, Jason. (2020). Global food system emissions could preclude achieving the 1.5° and 2°C climate change targets. Science. 370. 705-708. 10.1126/science.aba7357.
- ⁷ International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). (2022). Still One Earth: Indigenous Peoples – Protecting biodiversity and fighting for climate justice. <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2022-04/still-one-earth-Indigenous-Peoples.pdf>
- ⁸ AO and Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. 2021. Indigenous Peoples' food systems: Insights on sustainability and resilience from the front line of climate change. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5131en>
- ⁹ FAO. 2023. Achieving SDG 2 without breaching the 1.5 °C threshold: A global roadmap, Part 1 – How agrifood systems transformation through accelerated climate actions will help achieving food security and nutrition, today and tomorrow, In brief. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc9113en>
- ¹⁰ Minna Kaljonen, Teea Kortetmäki, Theresa Tribaldos. 2023. Introduction to the special issue on just food system transition: Tackling inequalities for sustainability, Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2022.100688>
- ¹¹ <https://unfccc.int/documents/637073>
- ¹² See "Ten elements of Agroecology" as recognised by 197 FAO member states, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/44c781fd-1f58-4545-ab31-57844e475443/content>
See "13 Principles of Agroecology" as defined by HLPE of the UN Committee on World Food Security