



Small-scale Farmers' Climate Manifesto 2023

Invest in Small-scale Farmers; Invest in Agroecology.

Summary

The small-scale farmers' climate manifesto presented by small-scale farmers at COP 28 highlights the urgent need for climate justice, emphasising the pivotal role of agroecology in addressing climate challenges. The manifesto, rooted in the experiences of those most affected, advocates for inclusive, sustainable, and equitable solutions. The manifesto explores the impacts of climate change on small-scale farmers in Uganda, showcasing the multifaceted challenges small-scale farmers face, from erratic rainfall patterns to economic disparities. The manifesto calls for specific policy measures at COP 28, urging financial support, emission reduction commitments, land rights protection, and inclusive climate policies. It also underscores the profound link between agroecology and climate justice, emphasising sustainability, resilience, and social well-being. The calls to action reflect a collective plea for tangible policy shifts that recognise the vital role of small-scale farmers in addressing the global climate crisis.

Background of the Manifesto

The manifesto presented at COP 28 by small-scale farmers is a resounding call to action, echoing the urgent need for climate justice and highlighting the pivotal role of agroecology in addressing the profound challenges faced by communities worldwide. Rooted in the collective experiences of those most impacted by the changing climate, this manifesto serves as a powerful narrative that seeks to transform the discourse surrounding climate policies, emphasising the importance of sustainable and equitable solutions.

The manifesto is a culmination of our voices and experiences as small-scale farmers who find ourselves on the frontlines of the climate crisis. The small-scale farmers, deeply connected to lands and communities, provide firsthand insights into the profound changes we are witnessing, from unpredictable weather patterns to the increasing frequency of extreme events. At the heart of the manifesto lies a fervent advocacy for agroecology. Small-scale farmers, recognising the limitations and detrimental impacts of industrialised agriculture, emphasise agroecology as a transformative approach. Agroecology not only aligns with ecological principles but also embodies a holistic and people-centric model that fosters resilience, biodiversity, and sustainability. The manifesto firmly establishes the intrinsic link between climate justice and agroecology.

Climate change impacts small-scale farmers in Uganda.

Small-scale farmers in Uganda face significant challenges and vulnerabilities due to the impacts of climate change. The effects of climate change manifest in various ways, impacting agricultural productivity, food security, and the overall livelihoods of these farmers. Here are some key climate change impacts on small-scale farmers in Uganda.

Climate change has led to unpredictable and erratic rainfall patterns in Uganda. Small-scale farmers heavily depend on rain-fed agriculture, and irregular rainfall results in water scarcity, drought, or flooding. This variability makes it challenging for farmers to plan and time their planting and harvesting activities. Rising temperatures

contribute to heat stress on crops and livestock. Prolonged periods of high temperatures have negatively affected crop yields and reduce the quality of pasture for livestock, impacting overall agricultural productivity. Droughts have become more frequent and intense in certain regions of Uganda. Small-scale farmers often lack access to irrigation systems, making their crops



highly vulnerable to water scarcity during prolonged dry spells, leading to crop failure and food insecurity.

Changes in temperature and humidity patterns create favourable conditions for the proliferation of pests and diseases. Small-scale farmers face increased challenges in pest management, leading to crop losses and reduced yields. Extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall and flooding, can contribute to soil erosion and land degradation. This affects the fertility of the soil and reduces the productivity of agricultural land, posing a threat to the sustainability of small-scale farming practices. Climate change can disrupt ecosystems, leading to shifts in the distribution of plant and animal species. This impacts biodiversity, which is crucial for maintaining resilient and sustainable agricultural systems. Loss of

biodiversity can reduce the availability of pollinators and natural pest control, affecting crop yields.

Small-scale farmers often rely on livestock for both food and income. Climate change-induced changes in temperature, water availability, and the prevalence of diseases can negatively impact livestock health and productivity, affecting the livelihoods of these farmers. The cumulative impact of climate change on agriculture contributes to food insecurity and income loss for small-scale farmers. Crop failures and reduced yields can lead to insufficient food for households and reduced income from agricultural activities.

Small-scale farmers are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events such as storms, hurricanes, and floods. These events can result

in the destruction of crops, infrastructure, and homes, further exacerbating the challenges faced by farmers. Small-scale farmers often lack the financial resources, technology, and infrastructure needed to adapt to the changing climate. Limited access to climate information and extension services further hinders their ability to adopt resilient farming practices.

Addressing the impacts of climate change on small-scale farmers in Uganda requires a comprehensive approach that includes sustainable agricultural practices, climate-resilient technologies, access to financial resources, and policies that support adaptation and mitigation efforts at the community level. International collaboration and support are also crucial to helping these farmers build resilience in the face of a changing climate.

The call for climate justice

Climate justice is an imperative lens through which we view the interplay between climate change and its impact on vulnerable communities, particularly small-scale farmers. At its core, climate justice asserts that the burdens and benefits of climate change are not equally distributed and that those who have contributed the least to global warming are often the ones most affected. Small-scale farmers, who play a pivotal role in global food production, find themselves on the frontlines of this climate crisis. Small-scale farmers, often operating within the margins of subsistence, are disproportionately affected by the adverse effects of climate change. Extreme weather events, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and rising temperatures directly threaten their livelihoods, posing a significant challenge to food security and economic stability. Small-scale farmers, deeply rooted in their communities, hold valuable indigenous knowledge that has sustained agricultural practices for generations. Their methods are inherently attuned to local ecosystems and exhibit a level of resilience against climatic uncertainties. Recognising and preserving this wisdom is integral to climate justice.

Climate change exacerbates existing economic

disparities, and small-scale farmers, with limited resources and access to technology, face increased challenges in adapting to new climatic conditions. This inequality is a stark reminder that the consequences of climate change are not borne equally across all segments of society. Small-scale farmers contribute significantly to global food security. However, the impacts of climate change, such as altered growing seasons and increased pest infestations, jeopardise their ability to produce a consistent and reliable food supply. Climate justice recognises the right of these farmers to maintain control over their food systems, a concept known as food sovereignty.

Climate change-induced events, such as prolonged droughts or extreme weather events, can force small-scale farmers to abandon their lands, leading to internal displacement or migration. This phenomenon further underscores the need for climate justice as vulnerable communities grapple with the consequences of environmental changes often driven by factors beyond their control.

In light of these challenges, the role of small-scale farmers in advocating for climate justice becomes



crucial. Their voices amplify the call for equitable policies, sustainable practices, and international cooperation that address the root causes of climate change while ensuring the protection and empowerment of those most affected. As we converge at COP 28, the spotlight on agroecology as a central tenet of climate justice reinforces the collective responsibility to safeguard the livelihoods, dignity, and rights of small-scale farmers in the face of an evolving climate landscape.

The linkage between agroecology and climate justice is profound and multifaceted, intertwining principles of sustainability, equity, and resilience. Understanding this connection is crucial for crafting holistic solutions

to address the challenges posed by climate change. Here are key aspects that illustrate the strong linkage between agroecology and climate justice. In essence, the linkage between agroecology and climate justice lies in the shared goal of creating sustainable, equitable, and resilient systems that address the impacts of climate change while promoting social, economic, and environmental well-being.

Agroecology represents a pathway towards a more just and sustainable food system, embodying the principles essential for addressing the complex challenges of climate change in an equitable manner.

Why Agroecology Should Take Centre Stage at COP 28

Agroecology stands as a cornerstone for small-scale farmers, offering a transformative approach to fortify livelihoods and unite communities in tackling the urgent challenges of climate change. As we navigate the discourse at COP 28, it is imperative to recognise the paramount role of agroecology for several compelling reasons;

1. Agroecology is inherently people-centred, fostering inclusivity that embraces the wealth of indigenous knowledge. It recognises and empowers everyone involved in the agricultural process, ensuring a collaborative and diverse approach to climate solutions.

2. In stark contrast to industrialised agriculture, agroecology champions the protection of our ecosystems. Land, water, forests, and the atmosphere are safeguarded, promoting a harmonious coexistence between agriculture and nature.

3. Agroecology sets explicit goals to bolster the sustainability of

the entire food system, integrating ecological knowledge, economic viability, and social justice. It offers a comprehensive framework, considering the seed, soil, and societal aspects in tandem.

4. Acknowledging and addressing gender disparities, agroecology stands as a beacon of equality. It emphasises the importance of local knowledge, farmer empowerment, and socio-economic regulations, contributing significantly to the reduction of gender inequality.

5. Agroecology provides a robust response to climate change by implementing practices such

as crop diversification, conservation tillage, and rainwater harvesting. These methods not only store carbon but also safeguard natural resources, presenting a sustainable solution to climate challenges.

6. Small-scale farmers practicing agroecology contribute to the production of healthy, chemical-free food, fostering well-being within communities. Moreover, this approach proves cost-effective and sustainable, utilising natural resources that incur minimal expenses while yielding profitable returns.

Calls to the Parties of the UNFCCC from Small-Scale Farmers

Small-scale farmers urge COP 28 to prioritise and increase financial support for climate-resilient agricultural practices. This includes funding for the adoption of agroecological approaches, natural resource conservation programs, and the implementation of sustainable water management systems.

Small-scale farmers emphasise the urgency of climate action and call for time-bound commitments

to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We urge COP 28 to set clear and achievable targets for emission reduction, aligning with the global effort to limit temperature rise and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Small-scale farmers stress the importance of securing land and resource rights for local communities. We call for policies that protect farmers' access to and control over their lands, ensuring that we can



continue sustainable and diversified agricultural practices without the threat of displacement

Small-scale farmers emphasise the need for improved access to climate information. We call for policies that ensure timely and relevant climate information is accessible to small-scale farmers, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding planting, harvesting, and resource management.

Small-scale farmers advocate for policies that actively support the transition to agroecology. This includes incentives for farmers adopting agroecological practices, capacity-building programmes, and the integration of agroecology into national agricultural policies and strategies.

Farmers emphasise the importance of recognising and integrating indigenous knowledge into climate policies. We call for the inclusion of traditional farming practices and local knowledge in climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, respecting the wisdom that has sustained communities for generations.

Small-scale farmers stress the significance of gender-inclusive climate policies. We call for policies that address the specific challenges faced by women in agriculture, providing support for their active participation, access to resources, and empowerment within the agricultural sector.

Small-scale farmers call for the inclusion of robust adaptation planning in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of countries. We emphasise the

Conclusion

In conclusion, this manifesto stands as a powerful testament to the resilience, wisdom, and determination of small-scale farmers in the face of an unprecedented climate crisis. As the voices of those most impacted ring out, the urgent call for climate justice reverberates through every word, emphasising the crucial role of agroecology as a transformative force in our collective response to the challenges at hand.

The manifesto highlights the interconnectedness of climate justice and sustainable agricultural practices, particularly through the lens of agroecology. It reinforces the notion that the impacts of climate change are not evenly distributed and that those who have contributed the least to environmental degradation bear the heaviest burdens. Small-scale farmers, often overlooked in global conversations, emerge as the stewards of both their lands and the solutions essential to climate resilience.

As the document finds its place within the dialogue of COP 28, it is a plea for decision-makers, policymakers, and global leaders to heed the wisdom

importance of prioritising and implementing adaptation measures that specifically address the needs and vulnerabilities of small-scale farmers.

Policies supporting sustainable livestock farming are requested, recognising the importance of livestock for many small-scale farmers. These policies should encourage practices that enhance livestock resilience, reduce emissions, and promote ethical and sustainable animal husbandry.

Small-scale farmers call for policies that ensure the active participation of local communities, particularly farmers, in decision-making processes related to climate change. We stress the need for community-driven initiatives and bottom-up approaches to climate resilience.

Support is requested for the domestication of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), offering a platform for rural voices to be heard in addressing the multifaceted dimensions of climate change and human rights.

There is a plea for the strengthening of youth capacity through skill development and fostering business opportunities that align with ecosystem protection and restoration, thereby supporting climate and sustainable development goals. Parties are encouraged to adopt models that involve the participation of the next generation, including schoolchildren, in COP discussions, recognising them as the custodians of our shared future.

of those who till the soil, nurture biodiversity, and safeguard the delicate balance of ecosystems. It emphasises the imperative to recognise the profound significance of agroecology in mitigating climate change, preserving traditional knowledge, and fostering community resilience. In adopting the principles outlined in this manifesto, we pave the way for a future where climate justice is not just a lofty ideal but a lived reality for small-scale farmers and vulnerable communities worldwide. The manifesto challenges us to transcend rhetoric and embrace actionable solutions, fostering a world where sustainable agricultural practices, ecological harmony, and social justice intersect

Let this manifesto be a guiding light, inspiring a collective commitment to a future where the principles of agroecology and climate justice guide our actions, policies, and global collaborations. In the hands of small-scale farmers, the custodians of the land, lies the potential for transformative change. It is our shared responsibility to listen, act, and forge a path towards a more equitable and sustainable world.

