IT TAKES ROOTS TO WEATHER THE STORM

Leveraging Climate Finance for a Global Agroecological Transition

Activist Guide

Landworkers' Alliance

European Coordination Via Campesina

La Vía Campesina


IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF ALL NATIONS TO INVEST IN SOLUTIONS TO THE LOOMING AND PRESENT FOOD AND MIGRATION CRISIS

SUMMARY

Climate change poses a severe and worsening threat to global food security and farmers livelihoods, **particularly in the Global South**.

Agroecological systems offer a way to both **reduce the impact** of the food system on the environment and **enhance its resilience** in the face of extreme and unpredictable weather events.

Investment in agroecological training programmes is **urgently needed** to address the challenges of food insecurity and climate-related migration and poverty. Leveraging the climate **Adaptation Fund** and **Loss and Damage Fund** set up by the UNFCCC can help to achieve these goals.

By putting pressure on these funds, you can stop the funding from going to “false solutions” being promoted by multinational corporations and **increase the amount of funding allocated to agroecological solutions led by farmers at the grassroots** which truly adapt our food system to climate change.

CONTEXT

CLIMATE CHAOS PUTS GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY AT RISK

The environmental impact of climate change is profound. The destruction of soils, ecosystems, and biodiversity, and threatens the future of food production. As climate change progresses, changing weather patterns are expected to bring **unknown pests along with more frequent and extreme droughts, floods, hurricanes and storms**, which will destroy crops, farmlands, farmstock and farmers houses.

Changing weather patterns are affecting yields and leading to more crop failures, increasing the number of people going hungry in the world. **Climate change could cause yield losses of up to 17% by 2050**, with food security potentially affecting **3.5 billion individuals** - an increase of 1.5 billion from now - with more severe losses possible the longer emissions remain unchecked.[1] This is climate injustice. While industrialised countries and the industrialisation of agriculture are the biggest sources of global warming gases, it is farmers and rural communities everywhere, but especially across the global south, that are among the first to suffer the impacts of climate change.[2]

CLIMATE MIGRATION

An estimated **1.2 billion climate migrants could be displaced by 2050** due to weather extremes forcing people to leave their communities.[3] With **more than 70% of the world's rural population highly dependent on agriculture**,[4] this figure includes millions of farmers who will be displaced from their homes and livelihoods.

If we are going to mitigate even a bit of the suffering on the horizon we need to make a more comprehensive adaptation and resettlement plan based on agroecological regeneration. This plan should be led by **grassroots organisations**, such as **African Women Rising**, with research support from academic institutions about how we can adapt to the anticipated changes, buffer weather extremes through planting trees for sustainable forestry management, develop diverse regenerative agriculture mitigate volatility in food supplies and facilitate access to land to lessen suffering from conflict and hunger which often follow displacement.

1. FAO (2015). Climate Change and Food Security: Risks and Responses. https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a4fd8ac5-4582-4a66-91b0-55abf642a400/content
2. Dawson, T.P., Perryman, A.H. & Osborne, T.M. Modelling impacts of climate change on global food security. *Climatic Change* **134**, 429–440 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-014-1277-y
3. Institute for Economics & Peace. Ecological Threat Register 2020: Understanding Ecological Threats, Resilience and Peace, Sydney, September 2020. Available from: http://visionofhumanity.org/reports
4. IFAD (2011) Rural poverty report, 2011, https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/c1bbf5fa-bdc3-4ea6-9366-d163b95b1180

THE INDUSTRIAL FOOD CHAIN

Around a third of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the food system[5], and the ETC group estimates that **90% of these are attributable to industrialised agriculture**.[6] Emissions are found at multiple stages throughout the food chain.

Production: Around 39% of food system emissions are related to production. Carbon dioxide is released when fossil fuels are used for manufacture of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, and to power on-farm equipment. Both carbon dioxide and nitrous oxides are released due to intensive cultivation and heavy chemical application, which degrade agricultural soils, and also reduce the land's ability to sequester carbon.

Post-production: Industrial food systems rely heavily on energy-intensive processes and non-biodegradable materials to refine, process, and package food products, and use fossil fuels for subsequent intercontinental transportation of food. 29% of food system emissions come from these supply chain activities.

AGROECOLOGY IS A REAL SOLUTION

Everyday millions of peasant farmers and indigenous peoples produce food in highly resilient and diverse ways across the world - in unique ways, from food forests, to small mixed farming plots, to pastoralist systems - that work in harmony with the natural environment, looking after soils, insects, wildlife and trees as they produce nutritionally rich, culturally appropriate food for their families and local communities.

In their 2009 report 'Who Will Feed Us?' ETC Group first estimated that small farmers and other peasant producers are currently the main source of nutrition for approximately **70% of the world's population**,[7] a fact which has since been confirmed. **Small-scale farmers make up around 95% of the world's farms, and 20% of farmed area**.[8] In some regions, they provide up to 80% of food security, particularly during times of scarcity when the industrial food chain fails to deliver.

AGROECOLOGY = CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Agroecology not only reduces the impact of food systems on the environment, it **enhances the resilience of these systems** in the face of climate change.[9] Agroecological farmers are climate innovators, drawing on local knowledge to find ways to adjust by adapting their seeds and production systems to unpredictable situations.

5. Crippa, M., Solazzo, E., Guizzardi, D. et al. Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic GHG emissions. Nat Food 2, 198–209 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00225-9
6. ETC Group (2017). Who Will Feed Us? The Peasant Food Web vs. the Industrial Food Chain. Val David, Davao City, Mexico City. https://www.etcgroup.org/sites/www.etcgroup.org/files/files/etc-whowillfeedus-english-webshare.pdf_.pdf
7. ETC Group (2022). Small-scale Farmers and Peasants Still Feed the World https://www.etcgroup.org/files/files/31-01-2022_small-scale_farmers_and_peasants_still_feed_the_world.pdf
8. Naran, Falconer & Chiriac (2020). Examining the Climate Finance Gap for Small-Scale Agriculture. Climate Policy Initiative and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/publication/climate-finance-small-scale-agriculture/]
9. To learn more about the differences between agroecological food webs and the industrial food chain see this report by the ETC group https://www.etcgroup.org/whowillfeedus


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70% OF GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY IS PROVIDED BY SMALL SCALE FARMERS

CLIMATE ADAPTATION TECHNIQUES

Agroforestry, intercropping, and polyculture enhance ecosystem stability and reduce dependency on chemical inputs.

Diverse cropping systems: reduce risks associated with pest outbreaks and disease spread, both of which are exacerbated by changing climates.

Seed-saving and selective breeding amongst local communities is used to develop resilient and adaptable crops and livestock, making adaptation a continual process occurring in every region of the world.

Agroforestry: Integrating trees and crops to enhance biodiversity and carbon sequestration, increasing shade and helping to regulate temperature fluctuations and water loss.

Soil restoration: Utilising composting, cover cropping and rotations, and reduced tillage to rebuild soil health and fertility, reducing input requirements and building soil structure and moisture retention to combat both droughts and floods. By increasing organic matter the system reduces erosion, and enhances water retention, which serves to increase resilience to extreme weather.

Waste recycling: promoting complementary resource use, redundancy in yields, and synergistic plant and animal interactions that help to build fertility and provide natural pest control.

Peasant farmers carry out this work with very little financial or logistical support, often operating under restrictive laws which make it difficult to produce commercial crops with the seeds they are developing or laws which make it illegal to save their own seed. But with help, the impact of their work could be far-reaching.

ENHANCING IMPACT THROUGH SUPPORTING AGROECOLOGICAL TRAINING NETWORKS

Agroecological training schools and networks operate across the world, fostering a grassroots ground-up approach to agricultural transformation. The agroecological training network model is among the most effective strategies for scaling up sustainable farming practices.

Farmers trained in agroecology often become educators themselves, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of knowledge dissemination. This grassroots approach ensures that solutions are culturally relevant and economically viable, empowering communities to lead their agricultural transitions.

La Via Campesina alone includes 70 schools dedicated to agroecological education, which promote knowledge exchange among farmers and cultivate local leadership. These schools use farmer-to-farmer “train the trainer” models to rapidly disseminate practices.

By equipping farmers with adaptable, region-specific solutions, these schools are an effective way to rapidly address the pressing challenges of climate change, such as droughts, floods, and biodiversity loss, while advancing equitable food systems.

Despite their proven success, agroecology schools operate on limited budgets, constraining their ability to reach all communities in need. With additional funding, these schools could significantly expand their operations, bringing agroecological education to millions of farmers and ensuring the widespread adoption of climate-resilient practices. Funding for agroecology schools must be prioritised to scale their impact.

Organisations like the **Agroecology Fund** and the **Agroecology Coalition** have already developed models for channeling resources to community-driven initiatives, demonstrating the effectiveness of targeted support for grassroots solutions. Similarly, networks such as the **International Funders for Indigenous Peoples** emphasise funding frameworks that uphold the rights and traditions of Indigenous communities, many of whom are agroecology practitioners by necessity and tradition. These organisations provide a blueprint for mobilising financial resources, ensuring that funding reaches the communities and networks implementing meaningful change. Their models emphasise inclusivity, equity, and sustainability, aligning closely with the principles of agroecology.

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SUPPORTING PEASANT FARMERS TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE KEY TO FUTURE FOOD SECURITY

CASE STUDY

AMRITA BHOOMI, INDIA

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Amrita Bhoomi, located in Karnataka, India, is an agroecological training centre dedicated to empowering farmers through education.

Founded in 2013 by La Via Campesina, the centre was created as a grassroots response to the impacts of industrial agriculture, including soil degradation, farmer indebtedness, and ecological collapse.

By promoting sustainable farming practices rooted in local knowledge, Amrita Bhoomi aims to strengthen farmer sovereignty, improve livelihoods, and restore ecological balance.Their focus on Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) promotes circularity in resource use, lowering input requirements and negative externalities to reduce the impact of agriculture and increase farmers self-reliance.These techniques also support regeneration of biodiversity and soil health, while crop diversification, agroforestry, and local seed-saving programmes help farmers to build resilience and adapt to climate change.

Amrita Bhoomi operates as a hub for agroecological education, with a focus on farmer-to-farmer learning. The centre offers:

- **Workshops and Demonstrations:** Practical training on composting, natural pest control, intercropping, agroforestry, and other techniques designed to promote circularity in resource use and lower inputs.
- **Seed Sovereignty Programmes:** Farmers are encouraged to preserve and exchange indigenous seeds, ensuring access to affordable, resilient varieties, and empowering farmers to resist the pressures of genetically modified seeds. The centre stores 220 varieties of seeds to preserve local crop diversity.
- **Youth Engagement: Programmes** designed to involve rural youth in sustainable farming, countering the migration trend to urban areas.

Amrita Bhoomi has had widespread success - over 100,000 peasant farmers now practice ZBNF in Karnataka, highlighting the power of community-led initiatives in achieving sustainable agriculture. Farmers have managed to revive indigenous farming practices as well as developing new techniques to keep pace with the changing climate. By reducing input costs and increasing yields through low-input agroecological methods, many participating farmers have become debt-free, and the adoption of agroecology has enhanced the capacity of local farms to withstand erratic weather patterns, such as droughts and unseasonal rains.

However, scaling the impact of the centre's programs requires more funding and institutional support, and countering the influence of industrial agricultural corporations in Karnataka remains a constant struggle. By investing in similar centres and farmer-to-farmer networks, policymakers and funders can support resilient, equitable food systems in the face of global challenges like climate change and food insecurity.

FINANCING AGROECOLOGY

A GLOBAL PRIORITY FOR FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE

While 25% of climate-related economic effects have been on the agricultural sector,[10] funding seldom reaches agriculture, and even less so small-scale solutions. Of the half trillion dollars spent on climate finance in 2017/18,[11] only **3% of this was spent on agriculture**, and **1.7% on small-scale agriculture**, despite representing 95% of farms.[12] The Centre for Agroecology, Water, and Resilience at Coventry University estimates that only **2.7% of EU funding goes towards supporting agroecological solutions**,[13] while the majority of funding is eaten up by industrial agriculture's "climate-smart" technologies - such as carbon credits - which offer very little return on investment while often exacerbating inequality. However, more recently projects have begun to recognise the importance of agroecological approaches in addressing environmental issues, food insecurity, and social equity, and bodies including the FAO recognise that agroecology is an essential way forwards for our food systems.

One of the most important global processes for dealing with the impacts of climate change is the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCC) process often called 'COP'. At first, the climate negotiations were focused on the urgent need to reduce emissions, but due to incredible efforts by civil society there has been more focus on distributive justice funding where financing is an obligation for countries with historical responsibility for climate change. The **Koronivia programme** was initiated by the UNFCC in recognition of the importance of integrating agriculture into climate change negotiations and action plans, since supporting a transition to sustainable agriculture has a joint impact, helping both to reduce emissions and enhance resilience. It laid out a pathway for supporting agriculture, focusing on assessing adaptation, soils, nutrient use, livestock, and food security & socio-economic dimensions. There are now two key funds which aim to support farmers in these key areas to enhance sustainability and adapt to climate change.

10. https://ejfoundation.org/reports/climate-2017
11. "Climate finance aims at reducing emissions, and enhancing sinks of greenhouse gasses and aims at reducing vulnerability, and maintaining and increasing the resilience of human and ecological systems to negative to negative climate change impacts." UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (UNFCCC SCF, 2018)
12. Naran, Falconer & Chiriac (2020). Examining the Climate Finance Gap for Small-Scale Agriculture. Climate Policy Initiative and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/publication/climate-finance-small-scale-agriculture/
13. Pimbert, M.P. (2023). *Financing Agroecological Transformations for Climate Repair.* CAWR Policy Brief. https://www.coventry.ac.uk/globalassets/media/global/08-new-research-section/cawr/cawr-policy-briefs/cawr-policy-brief-2023-11---financing-agroecology-transformations-final.pdf

THE ADAPTATION FUND

The Adaptation Fund, created under the Kyoto Protocol and later incorporated into the Paris Agreement, finances projects that **build resilience to climate impacts**, ranging from early warning systems and water resource management to sustainable agriculture and ecosystem restoration. This stream of funding is the one we need to focus on to leverage finance for agroecology as a climate adaptation measure. Funding comes from governments, private organisations, and a share of proceeds of Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) issued under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism projects. Though the fund has fallen short of its goal to raise $300M annually, $133 million was pledged at COP29, where the largest contributors included Germany ($65.1M), Spain ($19M), Ireland ($13M), Sweden ($12.2M), and Denmark ($7.3M).[14]

THE LOSS AND DAMAGE FUND

The Loss and Damage Fund, formalised under the UNFCCC,[15] is designed to address the **irreversible impacts of climate change that go beyond what communities can adapt to**. This includes extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and loss of ecosystems. Established at COP27, the fund is intended to help the most vulnerable countries who are bearing the brunt of climate-related disasters and is set to start financing projects in 2025. Contributions come from developed nations and other entities, with funds aimed at rebuilding infrastructure, restoring livelihoods, and compensating for damages. The Fund has $745 million dollars pledged support so far, with 27 countries contributing. The largest supporters include France ($105 M), Italy ($105 M), UAE ($100 M), Germany ($96.8 M), UK ($50.5 M), and Australia ($32.6 M).[16]

Both funds present opportunities to support and scale agroecological practices. Loss and Damage financing can support communities in transitioning to resilient, sustainable farming systems post-disaster, while the Adaptation Fund can finance proactive measures like training networks, seed banks, and soil restoration projects that may help to avoid some of the negative effects of climate change. Since 2010, the Adaptation Fund has supported 180 projects with $1.2 billion.[17] Many projects are multi-sector, but approximately 32% of the funding has been allocated to projects relating to agriculture and food security.[18] Directing even a small amount of these funds towards agroecological schools and training programmes has the potential to create large-scale change

14. https://cop29.az/en/media-hub/news/breakthrough-in-baku-delivers-13tn-baku-finance-goal
15. https://unfccc.int/loss-and-damage-fund-joint-interim-secretariat#tab_home
16. https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/funds-and-financial-entities/pledges-to-the-fund-for-responding-to-loss-and-damage
17. https://www.adaptation-fund.org/adaptation-fund-board-enhances-access-to-climate-finance-by-advancing-locally-led-adaptation-programme-key-partnerships/
18. https://www.adaptation-fund.org/projects-programmes/project-information/projects-table-view/

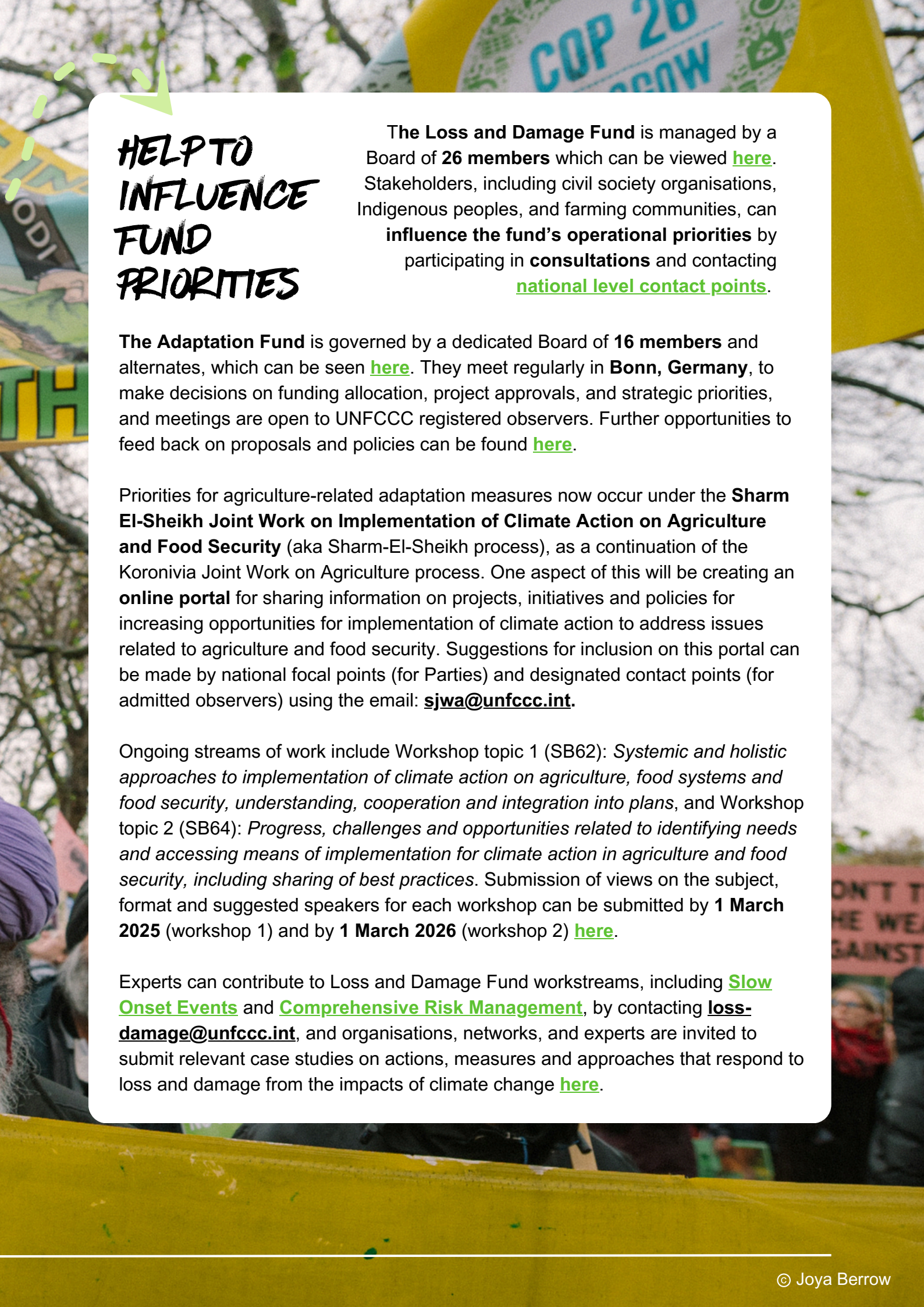
TAKE ACTION!

HOW ACTIVISTS CAN AMPLIFY THE AGROECOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

Activists play a vital role in ensuring that funding mechanisms under the Adaptation Fund and Loss and Damage Fund prioritise agroecological practices. One mechanism is through engagement with the Boards of both funds, and with the Sharm-El-Sheikh process which determines priorities relating to the UNFCCC's work on agriculture.

Key aims include:

- **Encouraging Lower Funding Thresholds:** Advocate for a reduction in minimum funding amounts to ensure that grassroots organisations, cooperatives, and local farmer networks can access financial support without the administrative burden of competing with large-scale projects.
- **Promoting Simplified Application Processes:** Lobby for user-friendly application procedures, with language and technical support to facilitate the inclusion of marginalised groups, particularly Indigenous peoples, smallholder farmers, and women-led organisations.
- **Advocating for Faster Rollout and Allocation of Funds:** Use platforms and consultations to emphasise the urgency of timely funding for vulnerable communities.



HELP TO INFLUENCE FUND PRIORITIES

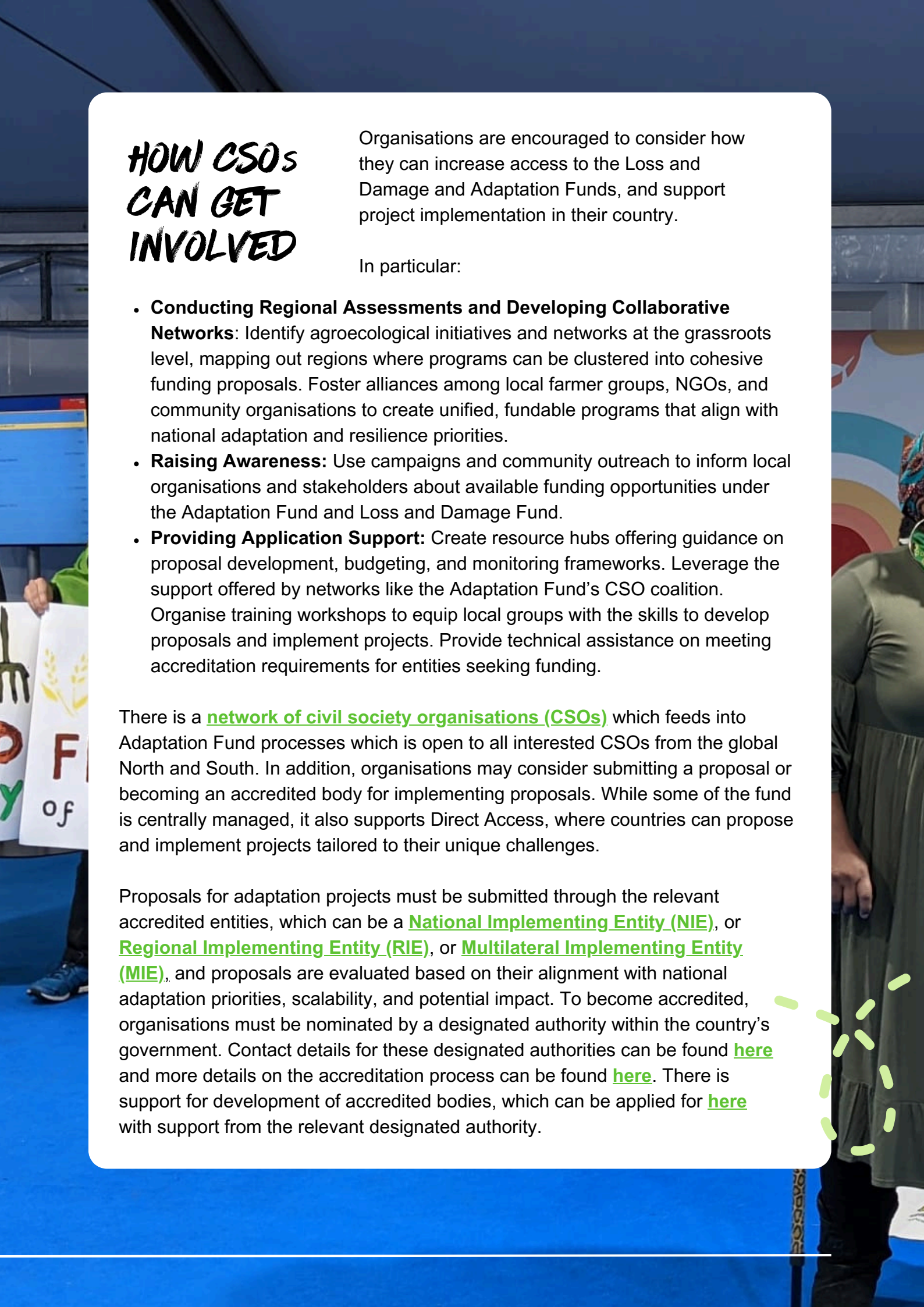
The Loss and Damage Fund is managed by a Board of **26 members** which can be viewed **here**. Stakeholders, including civil society organisations, Indigenous peoples, and farming communities, can **influence the fund's operational priorities** by participating in **consultations** and contacting **national level contact points**.

The Adaptation Fund is governed by a dedicated Board of **16 members** and alternates, which can be seen **here**. They meet regularly in **Bonn, Germany**, to make decisions on funding allocation, project approvals, and strategic priorities, and meetings are open to UNFCCC registered observers. Further opportunities to feed back on proposals and policies can be found **here**.

Priorities for agriculture-related adaptation measures now occur under the **Sharm El-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security** (aka Sharm-El-Sheikh process), as a continuation of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture process. One aspect of this will be creating an **online portal** for sharing information on projects, initiatives and policies for increasing opportunities for implementation of climate action to address issues related to agriculture and food security. Suggestions for inclusion on this portal can be made by national focal points (for Parties) and designated contact points (for admitted observers) using the email: **sjwa@unfccc.int.**

Ongoing streams of work include Workshop topic 1 (SB62): *Systemic and holistic approaches to implementation of climate action on agriculture, food systems and food security, understanding, cooperation and integration into plans*, and Workshop topic 2 (SB64): *Progress, challenges and opportunities related to identifying needs and accessing means of implementation for climate action in agriculture and food security, including sharing of best practices*. Submission of views on the subject, format and suggested speakers for each workshop can be submitted by **1 March 2025** (workshop 1) and by **1 March 2026** (workshop 2) **here**.

Experts can contribute to Loss and Damage Fund workstreams, including **Slow Onset Events** and **Comprehensive Risk Management**, by contacting **loss-damage@unfccc.int**, and organisations, networks, and experts are invited to submit relevant case studies on actions, measures and approaches that respond to loss and damage from the impacts of climate change **here**.



HOW CSOs CAN GET INVOLVED

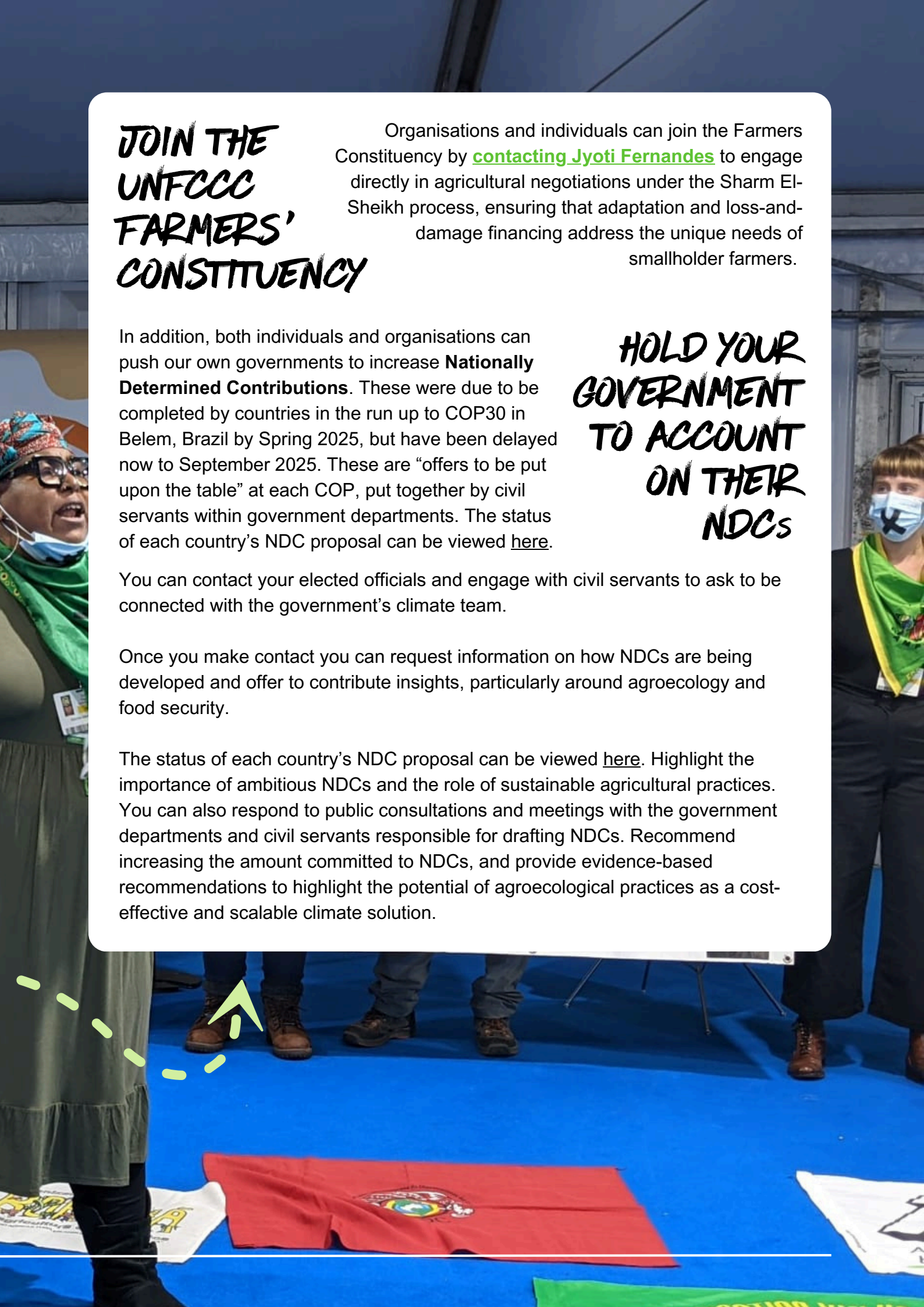
Organisations are encouraged to consider how they can increase access to the Loss and Damage and Adaptation Funds, and support project implementation in their country.

In particular:

- **Conducting Regional Assessments and Developing Collaborative Networks**: Identify agroecological initiatives and networks at the grassroots level, mapping out regions where programs can be clustered into cohesive funding proposals. Foster alliances among local farmer groups, NGOs, and community organisations to create unified, fundable programs that align with national adaptation and resilience priorities.
- **Raising Awareness:** Use campaigns and community outreach to inform local organisations and stakeholders about available funding opportunities under the Adaptation Fund and Loss and Damage Fund.
- **Providing Application Support:** Create resource hubs offering guidance on proposal development, budgeting, and monitoring frameworks. Leverage the support offered by networks like the Adaptation Fund's CSO coalition. Organise training workshops to equip local groups with the skills to develop proposals and implement projects. Provide technical assistance on meeting accreditation requirements for entities seeking funding.

There is a **network of civil society organisations (CSOs)** which feeds into Adaptation Fund processes which is open to all interested CSOs from the global North and South. In addition, organisations may consider submitting a proposal or becoming an accredited body for implementing proposals. While some of the fund is centrally managed, it also supports Direct Access, where countries can propose and implement projects tailored to their unique challenges.

Proposals for adaptation projects must be submitted through the relevant accredited entities, which can be a **National Implementing Entity (NIE)**, or **Regional Implementing Entity (RIE)**, or **Multilateral Implementing Entity (MIE)**, and proposals are evaluated based on their alignment with national adaptation priorities, scalability, and potential impact. To become accredited, organisations must be nominated by a designated authority within the country's government. Contact details for these designated authorities can be found **here** and more details on the accreditation process can be found **here**. There is support for development of accredited bodies, which can be applied for **here** with support from the relevant designated authority.



JOIN THE UNFCCC FARMERS' CONSTITUENCY

Organisations and individuals can join the Farmers Constituency by **contacting Jyoti Fernandes** to engage directly in agricultural negotiations under the Sharm El-Sheikh process, ensuring that adaptation and loss-and-damage financing address the unique needs of smallholder farmers.

HOLD YOUR GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT ON THEIR NDCs

In addition, both individuals and organisations can push our own governments to increase **Nationally Determined Contributions**. These were due to be completed by countries in the run up to COP30 in Belem, Brazil by Spring 2025, but have been delayed now to September 2025. These are "offers to be put upon the table" at each COP, put together by civil servants within government departments. The status of each country's NDC proposal can be viewed here.

You can contact your elected officials and engage with civil servants to ask to be connected with the government's climate team.

Once you make contact you can request information on how NDCs are being developed and offer to contribute insights, particularly around agroecology and food security.

The status of each country's NDC proposal can be viewed here. Highlight the importance of ambitious NDCs and the role of sustainable agricultural practices. You can also respond to public consultations and meetings with the government departments and civil servants responsible for drafting NDCs. Recommend increasing the amount committed to NDCs, and provide evidence-based recommendations to highlight the potential of agroecological practices as a cost-effective and scalable climate solution.

AGROECOLOGICAL FARMERS FEED THE PLANET AND COOL THE EARTH.

YOU CAN SUPPORT CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN OUR FOOD SYSTEM.

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN TO FINANCE AN AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION.

The time for action on this is now, we really can't delay.

Testimony comes in daily from farmers across the world who are doing their best to produce the food our communities need in the face of climate chaos.

You can follow the climate justice work of La Via Campesina on the website by clicking here.

To join the working group on **Leveraging Finance for Agroecology** (which will be active until COP30 in Brazil, November 2025) please contact Jyoti on **jyoti.fernandes@landworkersalliance.org.uk**