



Contributions from the World Rural Forum to the COP30 Presidency Roadmaps on transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just orderly and equitable manner; and halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030

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Introduction

The World Rural Forum (WRF) is honoured to contribute to the development of both Roadmaps led by the COP30 Presidency. As a global network representing over 75 million family farmers across 90 countries, the WRF welcomes this opportunity to share the perspectives of rural and family farming communities, who lead multiple climate solutions while being among those most affected by the consequences of climate change and external shocks.

Family farming¹ is the predominant form of agricultural organisation in the world, managing between 70-80% of all farmland and producing over 80% of global food in value terms (FAO, 2019). By virtue of its multifunctional nature, family farming holds strategic importance beyond agricultural production itself, contributing to food security, territorial development, biodiversity conservation and the global response to climate change. This recognition has been enshrined by the UN General Assembly through the Declaration of the **UN Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028)** in resolution [A/RES/72/239](#).

This submission addresses both Roadmaps together because, from family farming's perspective, advancing a genuine just transition requires simultaneously tackling the underlying causes shared by fossil fuel dependency and deforestation. These include the structural inequalities faced by rural communities and the absence of public policies and dedicated finance for family farming. Despite their central role in global food security and climate adaptation, family farmers remain underserved by climate finance. In 2021, only 0.3% of total international climate finance reached family farmers (Climate Focus, 2023).

The transition away from fossil fuels and family farming

Diagnosis and barriers faced by family farming

Food systems are among the largest consumers of fossil fuels globally. As reported by Zero Carbon Analytics, “almost half of the world's population depends on food produced using synthetic nitrogen fertilisers”, which also represent a significant share of operational costs in agricultural production (Zero Carbon Analytics, 2026). This dependency translates quickly and directly into economic fragility for family farmers' households with each geopolitical shock or extreme climate event. For example, the outbreak of the current conflict in the Middle East, which has disrupted one of the main fertiliser and fuel transit routes

¹ Family farming is a means of organising agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production, which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family capital and labour. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions (FAO)

through the Strait of Hormuz, has caused fertiliser and fuel prices to rise. In North Africa alone, prices increased by 20% (Zero Carbon Analytics, 2026).

The weight of this structural dependency on fossil fuels to produce food falls most heavily on family farmers, who have less capacity to absorb these price shocks, access alternatives or adapt their production models rapidly. In Asia, WRF members report that dependency on diesel for water pumps and other equipment and transportation compounds this vulnerability, as rising fuel prices reduce operational capacity throughout the value chain (AFA, 2026). When this occurs and family farmers are forced to reduce or forgo fertilisation cycles, yields fall, food security deteriorates and rural poverty intensifies. A just transition in food systems must address these asymmetries directly.

Family farmers face multiple barriers for a just transition from fossil fuels. Affordable and technically appropriate alternative to synthetic fertilisers and fossil fuel-dependent agricultural machinery either do not exist or remain insufficient. The financial mechanism through which climate transition support is typically channeled (green bonds, loans, carbon credits and even some grant arrangements) have not been designed with the diverse realities of family farming in mind, including family farmers' risk profiles, collateral situations and production cycles. In parallel, technical assistance rarely reaches the most rural communities and family farming organisations have not traditionally been part of national planning processes for designing the climate transition and response plans, such as NDCs and NAPs.

Pathways toward a transition that benefits family farming and rural communities

- **Agroecology as an alternative pathway:** Family farmers demonstrate, around the world, that transitioning away from fossil fuels need not mean a reduction in food production. Through the implementation of agroecological practices, they show that it is possible to maintain and improve yields while reducing fossil fuel-dependent inputs. At national level, at least 12 countries, including Brazil, Colombia, Kenya and Ethiopia, have adopted national agroecology strategies to diversify and build resilience into their food systems (Agroecology Coalition, 2026).

- **Moving toward more integrated policy frameworks:** There are multiple and diverse ways to support family farming, but those cases where the most sustainable impacts are observed stem from the strategic combination of instruments and levers, and from policies that recognise the heterogeneity of producers. For family farming, the articulation between finance, extension services and markets' access is key, generating a three-engine model that closes the production cycle (WRF and Aliades Coop V, 2026). Cases such as the PRONAF in Brazil and Law 2046 in Colombia offer lessons on the combination of credit and subsidies, close technical accompaniment and the creation of predictable demand.

- **Financial innovation as a condition for inclusion:** The financial architecture for the just transition must be rethought if it is to reach family farmers and frontline communities. Financial innovation includes deploying a range of instruments such as: differentiated credit lines, climate-indexed insurance, banking services interoperability, revolving funds and the strengthening of cooperatives and family farming organisations. For example, Uganda has successfully piloted a model of digital financial inclusion with close user support and financial literacy (WRF and Aliades Coop V, 2026).

At the international level, the Roadmap should also uphold global commitments to mobilise public finance and establish dedicated funding windows within international climate funds that are designed for family farmers and the just rural transition. These mechanisms should include simplified access procedures, grant-based delivery, multi-year funding cycles compatible with agricultural production, and monitoring systems that measure outcomes at the producer level and account for the specific realities of underrepresented groups such as women and young farmers.

- **Women farmers and rural youth as agents of the just transition:** Women carry a disproportionate share of agricultural labour in many regions, yet face barriers to accessing land, credit,

education and leadership positions in rural institutions. Transition policies that do not expressly address this structural inequality reproduce and deepen the exclusion of women. Dedicated financial and technical instruments for rural women, combined with formal recognition of women's leadership in the agricultural practice are essential components of a just transition.

There is a significant and growing decline in youth participation in agriculture, driven in part by low economic returns, high production volatility, high costs to access land and the limited professional prospects associated with current production systems. The transition to more resilient and diversified food systems, supported by digital tools and access to new markets, represents a significant opportunity to rebuild the appeal of family farming for young people. Finance targeted at young farmers, mentorship programmes and access to productive assets are necessary investments if the transition is to be generationally sustainable.

Family farming perspectives on halting and reversing deforestation by 2030

Diagnosis and barriers faced by family farming

Family farmers are among the most important forest stewards globally. Where rural communities have secure land rights, access to technical support and economically viable livelihoods, they have demonstrated the capacity to maintain and restore forests while producing food and goods sustainably. The Deforestation Roadmap must be grounded in this recognition, as family farming, when adequately supported, is a central part of the solution to deforestation and land degradation.

However, in regions where family farming communities border forest areas, an absence of adequate support and alternatives can lead to unsustainable land use practices. Economic vulnerability, limited access to training and technologies for more sustainable production, insecure land tenure and lack of public services in rural areas all contribute to these dynamics.

As a response, one of the practices led by family farmers is agroforestry systems, such as growing cacao under shade or coffee under native forest canopy, silvopastoral models and native species intercropping. These systems not only represent viable sources of income for family farmers but also effective tools for the sustainable management and restoration of forests.

Pathways to halt and reverse deforestation that benefit family farming and rural communities

- **Addressing the structural pressures facing family farmers in land use planning and management:** Investment in the productivity of family farming as a model of sustainable agricultural production is one of the most effective strategies available for tackling deforestation. When family farmers can produce more on the land they already work, the economic rationale for expanding into other areas can potentially be reduced. Support focused on productivity and livelihood improvement should therefore be understood as a deforestation prevention strategy and not solely as an agricultural development objective. A good example of this approach is the "[Florestas Produtivas](#)" programme led by Brazil's Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Farming (MDA), whose objective is to recover degraded or altered lands, expanding the capacity to produce healthy foods and promoting social justice in the preservation and restoration of forests.

A just transition in this area must begin by establishing a framework in which sustainable land use becomes an economically viable option for producer families. Community-led territorial planning, which integrates zones for sustainable production with the livelihood needs of family farmers in a coherent territorial vision, produces strong results where there is genuine community ownership and long-term institutional commitment.

- **Secure land access and tenure as a prerequisite for transition:** Insecure land tenure is as much as a justice issue as an ecological one. Family farmers without secure land rights have fewer incentives to make long-term investments in sustainable practices and are more exposed to environmental crime on their lands by external groups that damage ecosystems and endanger these communities. The Roadmap should treat land tenure for family farmers as a foundational condition for effective and equitable forest conservation.

- **Recognition and direct compensation for the provision of ecosystem services:** Family farmers provide a range of essential ecosystem services, from carbon sequestration to biodiversity conservation and water resource management, which are currently overlooked in climate accounting frameworks and remain uncompensated by markets and national policies. Where payment mechanisms do exist, they frequently fail to reach family farmers and their organisations directly, being captured instead by intermediaries or structured in ways accessible only to large holders, or those with greater technical resources.

Results-based payment mechanisms established under the Paris Agreement hold significant potential for mobilising financial resources and creating long-term incentives for sustainable land use and forest protection. For that potential to be realised in a just manner, it is essential that the economic and technical benefits generated reach family farmers who implement climate solutions on the ground. The Roadmap should promote benefit-sharing mechanisms designed to facilitate direct, verifiable and accessible payments to family farmers, with the participation of family farming organisations in their governance and with a rights-based approach.

- **Differentiated approaches for diverse contexts:** The Roadmap should create space to reflect the diversity of family farming realities across different geographical, cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Family farmers working in established agricultural areas with functioning services face different circumstances than those working in territories that limit fragile ecosystems or have limited state presence. Family farming communities that hold traditional knowledge and practices to care for forests and land deserve recognition of their rights and knowledge, and their integration with new technologies and development programmes. The Roadmap should leave an opportunity to differentiated policy pathways designed in partnership with family farming organisations.

Policy coherence between the two COP30 Roadmaps

The two major challenges addressed by these Roadmaps are, in the reality of food systems and family farming, deeply interconnected. The WRF therefore draws attention to these interdependencies, as they carry direct implications for the development of global and national strategies.

Fossil fuel price shocks reduce family farmers' yields, which potentially increases the economic pressure to expand the agricultural frontier, connecting energy market volatility directly to deforestation dynamics. The agroecological approaches that many family farmers have already adopted, by contrast, simultaneously reduce dependence on fossil fuels and reduce pressure on forest land, making investment in family farming models a powerful lever available across both Roadmaps. Secure land tenure is a prerequisite for both a just energy transition and forest conservation. Integrated policy frameworks that combine

finance, technical assistance and market access are also equally applicable to both Roadmaps. Furthermore, the absence of family farming and rural economies from transition strategies at national and global levels is a gap identified in both Roadmaps, leading to weaker policy coherence and preventing progress on either roadmap if treated in isolation.

In this regard, the WRF recommends that the COP30 Presidency considers establishing a coordination mechanism between the two processes and that both food systems and family farming are explicitly referenced in the outcome documents as cross-cutting themes. A working group with effective participation of family farming organisations would further help ensure that synergies between Roadmaps can be put in practice.

Key recommendations for the Roadmaps from family farming

Drawing on the diagnoses and analyses proposed from the perspective of family farming, the WRF presents the following recommendations to the COP30 Presidency for the development of the two Roadmaps:

1. Recognise family farming as a key actor for the decarbonisation of food systems	Both Roadmaps should explicitly recognise the sustainable models and practices promoted by family farming (including agroecology and traditional farming practices), as a key implementation pathway, and establish targets for directing political and financial support to scale these practices.
2. Design dedicated and adapted financial instruments for family farming	Dedicated funding windows should be established within multilateral climate funds that are accessible to family farmers through simplified procedures, favourable and grant-based terms, multi-year cycles and appropriate measures to address the climate risks faced by family farmers.
3. Adopt integrated policy frameworks as the standard delivery model	At national and international levels, support for the just rural transition and forest conservation should simultaneously integrate accessible finance, close technical assistance and access to predictable markets and livelihoods. Mechanisms that address these challenges in isolation do not produce lasting results.
4. Establish secure land tenure as a foundational condition	Both roadmaps should commit to supporting secure land rights for family farmers, especially rural women and youth, as a prerequisite to enable long-term investments in the energy transition and forest stewardship.
5. Centre rural women and youth as agents of transition	Dedicated instruments for rural women and young people, including targeted finance, training and mentorship programmes and access to productive assets, should be integral components of both Roadmaps.
6. Ensure the effective participation of family farming organisations in Roadmap governance	Family farming organisations should be recognised as strategic partners in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of both Roadmaps, with formal engagement mechanisms and resources to facilitate their participation.
7. Formalise policy coherence between the two Roadmaps	A working group with representation from family farming organisations, tasked with identifying and putting into practices the policy synergies between the two Roadmaps would enable the interconnections shared by these challenges to be addressed comprehensively and align these efforts with other commitments undertaken by Parties and stakeholders, including, for example the UN Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028).

The World Rural Forum commends the COP30 Presidency for its leadership in advancing both Roadmaps and for the inclusive mutirão spirit that has characterised this process. We remain open to continuing to collaborate with the COP30 Presidency, the UNFCCC, Parties and other stakeholders, to connect this policy development process with the experience and practical knowledge of family farming organisations around the world.

The World Forum Secretariat

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