YPARD Position Paper

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
Thirty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP31)

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About YPARD

Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) is the largest, youth-led global network that empowers young farmers, researchers, entrepreneurs and young professionals to actively contribute to sustainable agriculture, influence policy and drive innovation. It connects youth across regions, disciplines and sectors, providing a platform for knowledge exchange, capacity building, advocacy and action.

Through its regional and thematic working groups, **YPARD facilitates collaboration among youth, development actors and policymakers**, helping to ensure that young people's perspectives are integrated into international, regional, national, and local strategies. YPARD also works to strengthen youth leadership, enhance skills and create opportunities for intergenerational dialogue, mentorship and peer-to-peer learning.

The **YPARD Climate Working Group brings together young professionals working at the intersection of agriculture and climate change and coordinates YPARD's engagement in climate policy and advocacy**, including within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Working Group seeks to strengthen the meaningful participation and representation of young farmers, rural youth and young professionals in the international climate process and to ensure that their perspectives, priorities, experiences, and locally driven solutions are reflected in global climate discussions and outcomes.

Executive Summary

At COP31, young people call for stronger implementation of climate action that builds resilient, sustainable and equitable agriculture and food systems while safeguarding food security and responding to the realities of farmers and rural communities. Young farmers, rural youth and young professionals are already contributing as innovators, researchers, entrepreneurs and practitioners, yet continue to face barriers to accessing finance, technology, land, capacity-building and meaningful participation in climate decision-making.

As Parties consider the outcomes of the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security and the way forward under the UNFCCC, COP31 presents an important opportunity to strengthen the link between international climate commitments and implementation on the ground.

Through this Position Paper, YPARD advances youth priorities across agriculture and food security, adaptation, climate finance, just transition, capacity-building, gender, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities. These priorities highlight the need for accessible means of implementation, locally relevant solutions, inclusive policies and meaningful participation of young people, particularly those from climate-vulnerable countries.

YPARD calls on Parties to ensure that climate action and resources reach those working on the ground and that young people are meaningfully engaged not only as beneficiaries, but as partners, contributors and co-leaders. Across these priorities, YPARD emphasizes one central message: **Climate action must translate into inclusive, locally relevant and tangible implementation on the ground.**

Key demands

YPARD calls on Parties at COP31 to:

1. Agriculture and Food Security

- Establish an **implementation-oriented framework for agriculture and food security under the UNFCCC**, building on the outcomes of the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work, with clear priorities and strengthened access to means of implementation.
- **Safeguard food security and food sovereignty** while ensuring that future climate action reflects the needs of developing countries and meaningfully engages young farmers and rural youth.

2. Adaptation

- Scale up support for **locally led, climate-resilient agricultural practices**, including accessible climate information, early warning systems, appropriate technologies and capacity-building.
- Strengthen **water security, resilient rural infrastructure and local food value chains**, while ensuring meaningful youth participation in adaptation planning and implementation.

3. Climate Finance

- Ensure that climate finance commitments translate into **accessible, predictable and effective financing** for smallholder farmers, young farmers, youth-led organizations and rural communities.
- **Simplify access to climate finance** and strengthen support for agricultural adaptation, youth-led innovation and locally driven climate solutions.

4. Just Transition

- Ensure that **agriculture, food security and rural livelihoods are adequately reflected in just transition pathways**, respecting national circumstances and the rights of affected communities.
- Address structural barriers to **decent work, land, finance, skills and economic opportunities** for young farmers and rural youth, ensuring their meaningful participation in shaping just transition policies.

5. Capacity-building

- Invest in **long-term, locally responsive and implementation-oriented capacity-building**, including climate education, agricultural training, technology and innovation.
- Recognize and support **young people as knowledge holders, innovators and partners**, strengthening youth-led learning, knowledge exchange and participation in climate action.

6. Gender

- Ensure **gender-responsive and rights-based climate action** in agriculture and food systems, with the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls, including young women.
- Strengthen **equitable access to climate finance, productive resources, decent work, technologies and capacity-building** for women engaged in agriculture and food systems.

7. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

- Ensure the **meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities** in climate and agriculture-related policies and programmes, while respecting their rights, land tenure, livelihoods and customary practices.

- **Recognize, protect and respect Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge systems** and strengthen equitable partnerships in climate adaptation and sustainable agriculture.

YPARD COP31 Youth Priorities

1. Agriculture (*Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Agriculture and Food Security)*

Recalling **Decision 3/CP.27**, which established the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security, recognizing the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, as well as the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems, small-scale farmers, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth to the adverse impacts of climate change;

Recognizing the progress made under the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work through technical exchanges, annual synthesis reports, the online portal and in-session workshops, including discussions on systemic and holistic approaches and on the challenges and opportunities related to identifying needs and accessing means of implementation for climate action in agriculture and food security;

Noting that, at COP31, Parties will consider the progress and outcomes of the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work **and define the way forward for climate action on agriculture and food security under the UNFCCC**.

Emphasizing the need for future work to move towards stronger implementation, particularly in developing countries, by addressing barriers to finance, information, technology, knowledge and capacity-building, while keeping food security at the centre and meaningfully engaging young farmers and rural youth as actors in implementation.

We call on Parties to:

- Establish a **future implementation-oriented workplan or framework on agriculture and food security under the UNFCCC**, building on the outcomes, lessons learned and identified needs of the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work, with clear priorities, activities and mechanisms for continued technical exchange and implementation.
- Ensure that future work gives greater attention to **means of implementation**, particularly accessible climate finance, technology development and transfer, capacity-building and knowledge exchange, translating identified needs and gaps into concrete action at regional, national and local levels.
- Ensure that future work reflects the **specific needs and circumstances of developing countries**, particularly smallholder farmers, young farmers, indigenous communities, rural communities, while supporting locally appropriate and context-specific implementation.
- Keep **food security and food sovereignty central to** future climate action on agriculture, ensuring that efforts to transform agricultural and food systems strengthen rather than undermine food security, particularly in developing countries, while taking into account national circumstances and development priorities.

- Ensure the **meaningful participation of young people, including young farmers and rural youth**, in the design, implementation, monitoring and review of future UNFCCC work on agriculture and food security, through consultations, submissions, technical processes and implementation activities.
- Strengthen **coordination and complementarity with relevant work under the other Rio Conventions**, through shared priorities, compatible indicators, joint learning and coordination of national plans while respecting each convention's mandate, to promote coherent approaches to climate resilience, biodiversity, land and sustainable agriculture while avoiding duplication and additional reporting burdens.
- Establish **country-level partnerships platforms** linking farmer organisations, cooperatives, universities, national agricultural research institutes, extension providers, development partners and international organisations. Ensure farmers help set research priorities and retain access to the knowledge and benefits generated.
- Promote integrated approaches that strengthen **climate resilience, sustainable agricultural production and resilient food systems**, while recognizing the diversity of agricultural systems, knowledge and national circumstances.

2. Adaptation

Recalling **Decision 2/CMA.5**, which established the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, including targets related to water, food and agricultural production, ecosystems, infrastructure and livelihoods;

Welcoming the adoption of the **Belém Adaptation Indicators** at CMA7 and the advancement of the **Baku Adaptation Road Map**, while emphasizing the need to translate adaptation frameworks and planning into concrete sustainable implementation, particularly for vulnerable communities in developing countries;

Recognizing that young farmers, smallholder farmers, indigenous people, rural communities, and people with disabilities are increasingly exposed to climate risks and require locally appropriate solutions, accessible means of implementation and meaningful participation in adaptation action.

We call on Parties to:

- Strengthen support for **climate-resilient and locally adapted agricultural practices**, including appropriate climate-smart approaches, particularly for smallholder farmers and communities in developing countries that depend heavily on seasonal and climate-sensitive agriculture.
- Expand access to **climate information, early warning systems, adaptation technologies, knowledge and capacity-building** for young farmers and rural communities, ensuring that these services are accessible and responsive to local needs.
- Promote **locally led and community-based** solutions recognizing local and traditional knowledge and enabling communities to identify, design and implement solutions that respond to their specific vulnerabilities and priorities.
- Strengthen adaptation action addressing **water security, post-harvest losses and resilient local food value chains**, including through appropriate infrastructure and

technologies such as storage facilities, irrigation systems and market access roads among others in vulnerable rural areas.
- Ensure the **meaningful participation of young farmers and rural youth** in designing implementation, monitoring and evaluation of adaptation policies, National Adaptation Plans and actions affecting sustainable agriculture and food systems.
- Invest in youth-led soil health restoration, biodiversity monitoring, agro-ecological approaches and regenerative practices that improve soil carbon, fertility and ecosystems functions. Parties should meaningfully engage young farmers in soil health policies, national adaptation plans and sustainable land management.
- **Strengthen climate-resilient plant health systems**, including climate-informed pest and disease surveillance, early warning, agricultural extension, research and integrated pest management, to address emerging climate-related risks to agricultural production and food security.

3. Climate Finance

Recalling **Decision 1/CMA.6** on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance, which calls for scaling up climate finance for developing country Parties and recognizes the need to improve access to climate finance, particularly for those with significant capacity constraints;

Noting the **Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T** and ongoing efforts to scale up climate finance for developing countries, while emphasizing that increased financial flows must translate into **accessible and effective finance at the local level**;

Recognizing that young farmers, smallholder farmers, youth-led organizations and rural enterprises continue to face significant financial, technical, institutional and administrative barriers to accessing climate finance, particularly in developing countries.

We call on Parties to:

- Ensure that the implementation of the **New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance** and efforts to scale up finance towards USD 1.3 trillion annually by 2035 translate into accessible finance for smallholder farmers, young farmers, youth-led organizations, cooperatives and rural enterprises in developing countries.
- Promote **simplified, transparent and accessible climate finance processes**, reducing administrative, technical and co-financing barriers that prevent youth-led and small-scale initiatives from accessing existing funds and financial mechanisms.
- Strengthen **adaptation finance for agriculture and food systems**, ensuring that resources reach smallholder farmers, young farmers, and vulnerable rural communities facing increasing climate risks.
- Prioritize and finance youth-led programmes for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and prevention in the most climate-vulnerable countries.
- Strengthen support for **youth-led innovation, enterprises, science and technology** contributing to climate-resilient agriculture and food systems, including locally appropriate technologies, digital solutions, early warning systems and sustainable agricultural practices.
- Ensure that the **Green Climate Fund, Adaptation Fund and other relevant climate finance mechanisms** better respond to the financing needs, priorities, and

circumstances of young farmers and rural youth, recognizing them not only as beneficiaries but also as direct recipients, partners, and implementers of climate action.
- Strengthen linkages between **international climate finance, technical support and national and local implementation**, ensuring that mobilized resources translate into concrete climate action for sustainable agriculture and food systems on the ground.

4. Just Transition

Recalling **Decision 3/CMA.5**, which established the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme, and **Decision 2/CMA.7**, which further advanced its implementation and recognized the need for just transition pathways that reflect national circumstances and nationally defined development priorities;

Welcoming the growing consideration of **food security and agriculture within the Just Transition Work Programme**, including the fifth dialogue in 2026 on just transition pathways for holistic approaches to food security, with a focus on agriculture and oceans;

Emphasizing that just transition pathways in agriculture and food systems must protect food security, food sovereignty and rural livelihoods while creating opportunities for young people and addressing structural barriers to their participation in agriculture.

We call on Parties to:

- Ensure that discussions and outcomes under the **UAE Just Transition Work Programme and the emerging just transition mechanism** adequately reflect agriculture and food systems, including the specific circumstances of farmers and rural communities in developing countries.
- Ensure that just transition pathways in **sustainable agriculture and food systems protect food security, food sovereignty, access to safe water and food, livelihoods, social equity, and the rights of affected communities**, while reflecting national circumstances and development priorities.
- Strengthen support for **decent work, youth employment, entrepreneurship and green jobs** in agriculture and food systems, including access to skills, technology, infrastructure, finance and markets for young farmers and rural youth.
- Address structural barriers limiting young people's participation in agriculture and food production, particularly **access to productive land, secure land tenure, water, infrastructure and productive assets**, and ensure that transition policies and investments do not deepen existing inequalities in access to these resources.
- Recognize **young farmers, women, indigenous and local communities and rural youth as active agents of just transition**, ensuring their meaningful participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of transition pathways affecting agriculture and rural livelihoods.
- Strengthen **local food systems and rural food value chains** through investments in processing, storage, value addition and market access, while reducing post-harvest losses and supporting long-term resilient rural livelihoods.

5. Capacity-building

Recalling **Decisions 12/CP.29 and 19/CMA.6**, which extended the mandate of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building and reaffirmed its role in addressing current and emerging capacity-building gaps and needs in developing countries;

Welcoming the **PCCB workplan for 2025–2029**, including its focus on identifying capacity gaps and needs, strengthening coordination, knowledge-sharing and stakeholder engagement;

Emphasizing that capacity-building for sustainable agriculture and food systems should be **long-term, locally responsive and linked to implementation**, while recognizing young people not only as beneficiaries but also as knowledge holders, innovators and contributors to climate action.

We call on Parties to:

- Strengthen **long-term and implementation-oriented capacity-building** for developing countries on climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems, based on identified national and local capacity gaps and needs.
- Expand **climate education, agricultural and vocational training and climate literacy**, including opportunities for agricultural and climate education from an early age, to equip young people with the skills and knowledge needed for resilient agriculture and climate action.
- Strengthen capacity-building on **science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship**, enabling young farmers and rural youth to develop, adapt and scale locally appropriate climate solutions.
- Promote **knowledge exchange, peer learning and South-South and triangular cooperation**, including respectful exchange sharing, innovation and co-creation among Indigenous, traditional, local, and scientific knowledge systems, and stronger intergenerational learning.
- Ensure the **meaningful and sustained participation of young people** in identifying capacity needs and in the design, implementation and evaluation of capacity-building initiatives, as well as in relevant research, innovation and climate policy processes.
- Recognize and support **young people as knowledge holders, innovators, trainers and contributors to peer-to-peer learning**, creating opportunities for youth-led organizations and young professionals to contribute their expertise to capacity-building efforts.
- Empower young people t**o contribute to and lead climate monitoring, early warning systems and climate information services through digital innovation**, citizen science, data collection and community-based monitoring.

6. Gender

Recalling **Decision 7/CP.29**, which extended the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender for ten years, and welcoming the adoption of the **Belém Gender Action Plan (Decision 7/CP.30) for 2026–2034**, aimed at advancing gender-responsive climate action and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women;

Recognizing the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and girls, including women smallholder farmers and women in rural and remote communities, and the importance of addressing gender inequalities in agriculture and food systems;

Emphasizing the need to translate the Belém Gender Action Plan into concrete implementation across agriculture and food systems, including through gender-responsive finance, technology, capacity-building and strengthened data and monitoring.

We call on Parties to:

- Ensure that climate action on agriculture and food systems is **gender-responsive, inclusive, equitable and rights-based**, taking into account national and local circumstances and the differentiated impacts of climate change.
- Strengthen the **full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls, including young women**, in the design, implementation and monitoring of sustainable climate and agriculture policies and actions at all levels.
- Ensure **equal pay and fair compensation for women working across sustainable agriculture and food systems**, including farmers, farmworkers, producers, and food-sector workers. Promote equitable wages, access to decent work, social protection, and economic opportunities, while recognizing and addressing the unpaid and often undervalued contributions of women to food production, household food security, and local food systems.
- Promote **women-led local agribusinesses** to strengthen women's economic independence while contributing to local food systems and livelihoods.
- Ensure **equitable access to climate finance, adaptation support, capacity-building, technologies, climate information and other means of implementation** for women and girls engaged in agriculture and food systems, particularly women smallholder farmers and those in rural communities.
- Integrate **gender-responsive approaches across national climate, adaptation, agriculture and food systems policies and programmes**, including their implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthen the collection and use of **gender- and age-disaggregated data** to better identify inequalities, assess differentiated climate impacts and inform gender-responsive policies and interventions in agriculture and food systems.

7. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs)

Recalling **Decision 14/CP.29**, which continued the mandate of the Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) and welcomed the **Baku Workplan of the LCIPP for 2025–2027**;

Recognizing the important role of IPLCs, their values, knowledge systems, practices and lived experiences in strengthening climate action, resilience and sustainable agriculture and food systems;

Emphasizing the need to strengthen their meaningful participation and ensure that climate action in agriculture and food systems respects their rights, livelihoods, knowledge systems and relationship with land and natural resources.

We call on Parties to:

- Recognize and strengthen the contribution of **IPLCs and their knowledge systems** to climate resilience, sustainable agriculture and food systems.
- Ensure the **meaningful participation of IPLC** in the design, implementation and monitoring of climate and agriculture-related policies and programmes at national and local levels.
- Promote the **recognition, protection and respectful integration of Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge alongside scientific knowledge** in climate adaptation and resilience-building, while creating appropriate spaces for knowledge holders to share their experiences and solutions.
- Support **equitable partnerships and knowledge exchange** among IPLC, governments, researchers, youth and other relevant actors, while respecting the rights, knowledge systems and ownership of knowledge holders.
- Ensure that climate action and transition pathways in agriculture and food systems **respect the rights, customary practices, land tenure and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and local communities**, in accordance with applicable international frameworks and national circumstances.

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