

What do African and Asian Farmers tell us on COVID-19 and Climate Change?





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by Tiina Huvio, Programme Director, Food and Forest Development Finland – FFD, MTK's agri-agency, leading the Climate Change Strategy for the AgriCord Alliance

In the face of COVID-19, smallholder farmers and forest producers face the challenge of how to balance between short term shocks and longer-term risks such as climate change. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has again revealed new vulnerabilities in the production systems and along the value-chains but has also shown the importance of forest and farm producer organisations to respond in times of crisis being close to communities in rural areas who hardly get attention from their governments or the international community.

These critical issues were discussed during an International Web conference on Multidimensional Resilience, organised by AgriCord, FAO's Forest and Farm Facility, Food and Forest Development Finland, Pan-African Farmers Organizations and Asian Farmers Association on the 11th of June, with more than 500 registered participants.



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www.agricord.org

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DIALOGUES

Representatives from farmers' organisations, AgriCord, EU, WFP, FAO and IFAD were brought to the table to establish priorities in building the resilience of smallholder producers, supply-chains and food systems.

The debates were fed by a survey conducted with 74 farmer organizations from 24 countries in Asia and Africa which revealed that COVID-19 response should not only focus on short term interventions but aim at more structural changes building just and sustainable food systems and demand attention to agricultural and forestry sector to build resilient landscapes. Ensured access to finance and liquidity is key for farmers' organisations and cooperatives to avoid the collapse of value chains and food systems.

The same applies to climate funding. Despite funding available for climate, farmers feel that they are left aside. A sustainable transformation can only be achieved if farmers are into the driver's seat and supported by local knowledge, research and technology. Farmers – men, women and youth – must be part of decision making and implementation.



Tiina Huvio is a specialist on agriculture, forestry and rural development. During her career, she has worked for FAO, the Finnish and Danish foreign ministries. Since 2013 she works for Food and Forest Development Finland (FFD) as Programme Director.

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