**Input to the Integrated Forum on Climate Change and Trade**

This input is a joint output of the World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) Climate Change and Trade Working Groups, prepared in response to the IFCCT call for stakeholder input on trade and climate adaptation and on bridging climate and trade tools to support low-carbon transitions. In particular, this input addresses how trade cooperation can strengthen farmers' access to the means of adaptation, maintain resilient food and agricultural input flows, and support food security, as well as how climate-related trade measures can account for different production conditions, equivalent environmental outcomes, and farmers' implementation capacities.

## Preamble and Global Problem Statement

Farmers are already taking active steps to adapt to climate impacts, strengthen rural resilience, and contribute to mitigation, all while guaranteeing global food security and rural livelihoods. However, farmers cannot deliver effective climate action in isolation; they require an enabling economic and policy environment to invest, adapt, and thrive.

Across every region, severe weather extremes, including severe droughts, heatwaves, unpredictable rainfall, and hydrological shifts, are compounding escalating trade disputes, geopolitical conflicts, supply chain bottlenecks, and steep input cost inflation for energy, fertilizers, seeds, and machinery. As global agricultural production must expand sustainably to nourish a population projected to reach 9.8 billion by 2050[1], international trade must act as a vital pillar of support. A fair, transparent, and predictable rules-based trading system can and must serve as a core enabler of farmer-led climate action by unlocking market opportunities, facilitating access to climate-resilient technologies, and safeguarding food security worldwide. At the same time, trade must contribute to national food security objectives. This is particularly important in the context of growing geopolitical tensions and conflicts that are increasingly disrupting trade flows and global food security.

Keeping in mind Article 2.1(b) of the Paris Agreement, which provides that climate-resilient and low-emissions development should occur "in a manner that does not threaten food production", national climate targets and mitigation pathways should not be reliant on reducing food production.

## Key Challenges at the Climate Trade Intersection

- **Compounding Environmental and Market Shocks:** Farmers face unprecedented climate disruptions alongside volatile commodity prices and rising production costs that squeeze farm margins, erode operational liquidity, and restrict long-term investment in sustainable practices.
- **Unilateral Measures and Compliance Barriers:** The proliferation of potentially trade-restrictive non-tariff measures, border adjustments, and unilateral sustainability standards risks penalizing producers, including smallholders and family farmers in developing nations who lack financial and technical compliance capacity, while national circumstances must also be taken into account.

[1] https://www.un.org/en/desa/world-population-projected-reach-98-billion-2050-and-112-billion-2100

- **Restricted Access to Tools and Financial Means:** Systemic barriers, high transaction costs, and fragmented distribution networks impede farmers' access to affordable, locally appropriate technologies, climate-smart inputs, advisory services, and direct climate finance. Moreover, efforts by farmers' organisations and cooperatives to overcome such barriers by means of technology and knowledge transfer are supported by inadequate levels of climate finance, with only some 7% of global climate finance allocated for agrifood systems in 2025.
- **Disconnect Between Trade Policy and Farm Realities:** Global trade frameworks and environmental regulations frequently treat food security and climate action as competing objectives, failing to recognize farmers as essential delivery partners and stewards of agroecosystems.

### Working Groups Calls to Action Trade as an Enabler of Climate Action

**Trade Policies That Enable, Rather Than Constrain, Climate Action:** International trade and climate frameworks must be mutually reinforced. Trade rules should actively create conditions that allow farmers to adapt, innovate, and contribute to climate mitigation while maintaining economically viable farming operations. International trade must be guided by some basic principles to ensure that farmers throughout the world can fulfil their wider economic, social and environmental role and the particular needs of each country are taken into account, especially those of least developed countries.

**Fair and Predictable Market Returns for Farmers:** Farm-level climate action requires substantial capital investment. Farmers must operate within fair, transparent, and predictable market conditions that generate returns reflecting true production costs and incentivize sustainable innovation.

**Fair, Proportionate, and Inclusive Trade Measures:** Climate-related trade standards and regulations must be transparent, science-based, non-discriminatory, and predictable. Policies must explicitly account for adaptation and compliance costs faced by farmers and strictly avoid unilateral or disguised protectionism. Revenue from such measures must be reinvested into the sector and support transformation towards more climate-smart agriculture and forestry. Climate-related trade measures should recognize diverse production conditions, including those of tropical agriculture, and allow farmers to demonstrate equivalent environmental outcomes through locally appropriate practices and credible methods of verification.

**Universal Access to the Means of Climate Action:** Trade policies and international agreements must facilitate unhindered, affordable access to locally appropriate technologies, inputs, knowledge, advisory services, and finance, supported by robust technical assistance and capacity building.

**Open, Resilient Trade to Safeguard Global Food Security:** Open and resilient agricultural trade is vital to absorb climate shocks. Governments must maintain the flow of food and critical agricultural inputs, strictly disciplining export restrictions and protecting crisis response mechanisms.

**No Farmer Left Behind Equity for Smallholders and Family Farms:** Smallholders and family farmers must be fully integrated into emerging sustainable value chains. Emerging climate standards must not exclude producers due to institutional or capacity

constraints. Governments and value-chain partners should provide technical assistance, proportionate traceability requirements, realistic transition periods, and access to finance so that smallholders and family farmers can meet new requirements without being excluded from markets.

**Farmers at the Centre of Global Policy Design:** Farmers and their representative organisations must be meaningfully involved in drafting, implementing, and reviewing trade and climate policies, as well as in the conception and design of climate action projects supported by global climate finance instruments such as the GCF. As frontline land stewards, farmers are indispensable solution providers.

This input is anchored in core WFO institutional policy paper consensus documents, including the WFO Policy on International Trade, the WFO Policy Paper on Climate Change and Agriculture, and the WFO Statement before the 14th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization. The Working Groups invite the IFCCT to take account of the global challenges facing food and agriculture systems and the needs and experiences of farmers at the local level, recognizing trade alongside domestic agriculture as a vital enabler of farmer-led climate action, reinforcing the position of farmers in global value chains, and safeguarding the food security and livelihoods of the global population.