



Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance

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New UN FAO 'hunger roadmap' over-relies on dangerous bioenergy

[“Achieving SDG2 without breaching the 1.5C threshold: A Global Roadmap,”](#) released today at COP28 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), over-relies on dangerous bioenergy as a climate solution, according to members of [CLARA](#), the Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance.

Ending hunger is essential and the agriculture sector, particularly industrial agriculture, must undergo considerable adaptation and mitigation as it finds a way forward to achieve multiple objectives.

CLARA members, however, have serious concerns about several aspects of the roadmap. Agroecology, an absolutely essential approach to farming that works with nature and ecosystems, centers the rights of farmers, and supports both mitigation and adaptation, is not in the report. The report’s consideration of livestock overemphasizes reducing emissions intensity (rather than decreasing gross emissions).

Most alarming, the report calls on the agricultural sector to produce clean energy in the form of biomass, despite the fact that bioenergy is not a climate solution and undermines food security and land rights. It proposes doubling current levels of solid biomass use by 2030 and tripling it by 2050 (from 6% total energy today, to 13% in 2030 and 18% in 2050).

Solid biomass is essentially wood sourced from plantations and from natural forests. It is unsustainable. The sheer quantity overwhelms any claims to improved quality of wood production, which to date have been shown to be false.

Biomass burning for energy is not carbon neutral as claimed by FAO. It is as at least as emissive as coal at the smokestack per unit of energy produced, although by carbon accounting convention these emissions are not recorded in the energy sector unlike those of fossil fuels. Additionally, the idea that use of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) paired with biomass will result in drawing carbon from the atmosphere is based on the misapprehension that biomass energy itself is carbon neutral.

CLARA Members had this to say:

Peg Putt, Coordinator of the Biomass Action Network

"The huge expansion in so-called 'modern' biomass, doubling the current levels by 2030 and trebling them by 2050, is dangerous and unacceptable. It would exacerbate the climate crisis whilst also harming communities and biodiversity, and we already have numerous examples of its adverse impacts.

"Planning to ally energy production from biomass burning with carbon capture and storage as BECCS is both unhelpful, unrealistic, and does not in fact contribute to carbon removal from the atmosphere as claimed. That claim is based on ignoring the carbon emissions at the smokestack."

Kelly Stone, Network Coordinator and Senior Policy Analyst with ActionAid USA:

"Ignoring agroecology in this roadmap is frustrating if not surprising. Despite the essential aspects of agroecology for small family farmers adaptation and the value it brings for mitigation in the agriculture sector, it is often ignored. That's not acceptable if we are going to have the needed just transition in agriculture."

"The biomass provisions though are deeply disturbing and have no place in this document. Bioenergy, with or without carbon capture and storage, is not a climate solution and its certainly not in keeping with food and land rights."

Lili Fuhr, Director, Fossil Economy Program, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

"This roadmap is clearly missing a crucial piece as it does not address the fossil fuel derived agrochemical inputs - fossil fertilizers and pesticides - that not only sustain unsustainable and unjust food systems but are also fueling climate chaos. Phasing out fossil fuels does not end with the energy sector, we also need food systems free from fossil fuels."

"It is highly concerning that the FAO calls for investments and a scaling of a geoengineering technology that is currently under a de-facto moratorium under the CBD. Bioenergy with CCS (BECCS) not only threatens food security and land rights, but also does nothing to address climate change while actually further pushing us beyond planetary tipping points. BECCS also depends on CCS - the 'abatement' technology that due to its abysmal track record has become the most widely discussed dangerous distraction at COP 28."

Teresa Anderson, Global lead on climate justice with ActionAid International

"The Roadmap's big problem is that it can't bring itself to name the real issues at stake. It dances around the elephant in the room, pointing the finger anywhere but the actual culprits in the food sector. In failing to name chemical fertilisers, factory farming or industrialised agriculture as the major sources of emissions and deforestation, its recommendations boil down to protecting the status quo."

"One quarter of the world's people base their livelihoods on agriculture. The Roadmap struggles with the tension between the need to protect the livelihoods of billions of farmers, and the compulsion to cheerlead the agribusiness technologies that displace labour, livelihoods and local knowledge."

"The lack of joined-up-thinking is illustrated by a naïve endorsement of Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) to drive down global temperatures. BECCS is more likely to drive land grabs and deforestation, harming farmers and creating conflicts over land and food. It's surprising to see food experts blind to that likely outcome."

About CLARA

[CLARA](#) (the Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance) is a global civil society alliance with more than 40 members from conservation, agroecology, land-rights, faith-based, and forest restoration organizations and communities. CLARA is providing analysis on Article 6 negotiations, forests and land use, agriculture, and human rights from COP28 in Dubai, November 30 – December 12.

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This briefing does not necessarily express the opinions of all CLARA members.