

CLARA

Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance

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IPCC Special Report on Land highlights increasing competition for land – notes severe impacts of bioenergy and the industrial food system

The IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land published today delivers a message of urgency for action on climate if we are to avoid dramatic, irreversible impacts on ecosystems and food security. Actions in the land sector such as transition towards agroecology and greater protection and restoration of restoring forests, peatlands and wetlands are crucial, as human activities already impact more than 70% of the earth's surface.

CLARA members welcome the report's findings, its balanced emphasis on mitigation and adaptation, and for the concerns it raises about the adverse impacts of bioenergy.

"It is impossible to overstate the critical role that land and natural ecosystems play in our lives, nourishing our families and sustaining our communities. So this Special Report on the severe threats that climate change poses to land and ecosystems must be taken seriously by governments. The findings of this report should incite us all toward faster action to limit temperature rise to 1.5C," commented Doreen Stabinsky, professor at College of the Atlantic (US).

Teresa Anderson, climate policy officer for ActionAid International explains: *"The world's leading scientists are clear – the way we produce food and manage land must change dramatically if we are to avert catastrophic climate change. Farming must work with nature, not against it.*

"The IPCC's land report puts a big question mark on the future of industrial agriculture. A major shift to farming approaches that work with nature, reduce emissions, empower women farmers and improve resilience to the impacts of climate change, is now essential."

Stabinsky and Anderson contributed to a 2018 CLARA report that reviewed scientific literature focused on the climate consequences of agroecology, the potentials for forest and coastal restoration, and conservation of intact ecosystems, including those under indigenous and community management. Kate Dooley at the University of Melbourne assembled this work into the report ['Missing Pathways'](#).

"As an Alliance focused on rights-based approaches to agriculture and forestry, we've now taken a global look at land use in the report 'Missing Pathways', while also releasing two dozen case studies from CLARA members documenting adaptation and mitigation responses at the community level. We're persuaded that with deep fossil fuel emission cuts, the 1.5 degree goal is still possible, using natural climate solutions to get the rest of the way toward the goal," commented Peter Riggs from Pivot Point. (An overview of the case studies is available [here](#).)

“We’re pleased that the IPCC looked seriously at agroforestry and other ecological solutions already being pursued in both traditional and regenerative agricultural systems around the world,” commented Professor Stabinsky. We appreciate the greater emphasis on land rights and secure land tenure as critical for mitigation and adaptation that the report brings,” added Sara Lickel, from Caritas France.

The IPCC however considered a broader range of solutions in its Special Report on Land.

Rising competition for land, and the perils of Bioenergy

“The IPCC has shown us the increasingly stark choices associated with land competition. It is morally and socially unacceptable that false solutions that threaten human rights compete with food supply and the needs of nature,” said Sara Lickel, from Caritas France.

“Rich, polluting countries cannot expect the Global South to give away huge swathes of farmland to clean up the climate mess,” added Teresa Anderson of ActionAid International.

“Large scale bioenergy and BECCS is effectively consigned to the dustbin of history by the IPCC report, which points out that the huge land area proposed for monoculture tree crops to feed bioenergy is equal to the entire extent of global cropland of 15 million square kilometers! Food security is acutely threatened in that scenario,” said Peg Putt, coordinator of the EPN’s global working group on forests, climate and biomass energy.

“The report leaves no doubt about the devastating impacts that large-scale bioenergy, BECCS and afforestation with monocultures would have on water availability, biodiversity, food security, livelihoods, land degradation and desertification—a tsunami of threats that make large scale bioenergy and BECCS completely unacceptable and unworkable,” added Linda Schneider, Senior Programme Officer International Climate Policy at Heinrich Böll Foundation.

The massive climate and biodiversity crises imply we must leave space for nature, for ecological restoration, to grow healthy food, and for livelihoods for the most vulnerable.

“Protecting forests and other carbon rich ecosystems as stable resilient carbon stores is in the report as a vital response option, along with restoring degraded natural ecosystems. These are essential actions for mitigation and adaptation, and to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergencies together,” Ms Putt concluded.

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