We are nowhere close to limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

As it stands more than 3.5 billion people will suffer the catastrophic consequences of climate change, including farmers, Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, youth, and - in all of these demographics - women.

Land rights play an important role in tackling the climate crisis, not least because they are crucial - among other things - to reducing gender inequality, wealth inequality, political inequality, and increasing food security and democratic health. Securing land rights for the people and communities living on and from the land - and including them in decision-making - should be a priority in ongoing negotiations and policy-making.

These policy recommendations were developed by the constituencies ILC works for: farmers, Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, youth, and women. They emphasise why land rights matter to these groups and what they demand from decision-makers.

For ILC’s publication on “Secure Land to Flight Climate Change” please click here:

For ILC’s key policy messages developed for the COP 27:
Our current agro-food system needs to transform. Securing land tenure is important to promote sustainable land use towards a new agro-food system, as land plays a role from generation of seeds to disposal of waste.

Governments must increase efforts to secure land tenure for farmers as a basis for food systems transformation.

Agroecological practices are key to a sustainable food system transformation. Governments must support regenerative and agroecological approaches to food production, which will not only build resilient farmer livelihoods and reduce fertiliser and methane emissions.

Smallholder farmers are best placed to engage in and promote agroecological efforts and should form part of climate solutions. We must significantly scale climate finance to promote adaptation and resilience of agriculture, increasing access to finance for small-scale and family farmers, women and youth.

People who live on and from the land must give their consent for any nature-based solution on their land or territory and must be included in any programming to build resilience, adaptation and mitigation measures.

Tree planting as a climate change mitigation measure can be harmful to smallholder farmers, both because it increases the demand for land, and because planting trees with a non-consultative approach can increase invasive plant and animal species in a given ecosystem.

The energy transition, which causes demand for the extraction of minerals and for infrastructure development, has increased pressure for land and will have significant land use impacts with implications on water sources and the movement of cattle. This puts communities at risk of land grabbing. The green energy transition should strictly embrace the principle of FPIC.

Policy-makers need to be more aware of the negative impact of private sector investment in land focusing on how it could lead to land grabbing. Carbon markets and private sector investments in carbon trading have increased the demand for land. People with insecure tenure are at risk of losing their land and livelihoods. All carbon finance programmes should clarify their position on tenure and avoid paving the way for land grabbing.

Land investments should be vested with people-led cooperatives and unions as opposed to profit driven companies. Governments must enact laws which support such investments and create a political culture which enables cooperatives and farmer/union associations.

Funds allocated for loss and damage should focus on the impacts of the climate crisis on smallholders and family farmers. Polluting countries and industries if they fail to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions should increase their contribution to loss and damage funding proportional to their emissions.

Preserving the custodianship of pastoralists over their lands and pastures is central to just and equitable food systems transformations. Policy-makers must recognise that pastoralism – a nature-based, agroecological food production system – is critical to provide for people and the planet.

Governments must increase efforts to secure tenure, which is critical to preserving and leveraging the dynamic and transformative capacity of pastoralists to provide for people and nature. Land tenure enables pastoralism as a low-input agroecological system – often in ecosystems where sustainable crop production is not possible – that provides food, nutrition and livelihoods not only to pastoralists but also to wider communities.

Mobile resource access has to be secure to enable pastoralists to work with nature, including to restore pastures, and adapt to changing conditions so that pastoral food production systems are resilient to climatic and socio-economic stressors and mitigate the impact of the climate crisis. Securing people centric, tenure based restoration is key to preventing land-use change and conflicts.

Policy-makers must facilitate youth access to land through land redistribution and rehabilitation programs, affordable leases, purchases, rentals, donations, and sharecropping, and by ensuring that land inheritance facilitates youth access to land, especially for young women.

Governments, civil society including people’s organisations and NGOs, and multilateral agencies must ensure meaningful youth participation in land and natural resource governance by establishing spaces for youth representation in decision-making bodies at national, regional and global levels and support networking among youth land rights advocates.

Governments, civil society including people’s organisations and NGOs, and multilateral agencies must fund youth initiatives and provide targeted support such as training, inputs, and financing for young family and indigenous farmers and pastoralists, on sustainable land management, agroecology, fisheries and forestry, and other climate resilient agricultural practices. They must also support youth-led research on sustainable agricultural practices, soil conservation and water management.

Climate change solution at all levels must promote intergenerational dialogue to facilitate knowledge transfer from elders to youth. Governments must offer financing programs adapted to the specificities of the agricultural sector and associated with agricultural access to markets and insurance mechanisms.
WOMEN’S LAND RIGHTS

- When establishing programmes, policies and funding, governments, civil society – including people’s organisations and NGOs – and multilateral agencies must take women’s contribution to farming, especially in transmitting traditional knowledge and the disproportionate impact that the socio-economic crises has on them.

- Governments and their institutions must be held accountable for implementing gender-responsive action plans to combat climate change. They must ensure women’s participation in national and global climate policy negotiations and ensure gender-inclusive implementation.

- Because women continue to suffer most during disasters, disaster risk reduction programs should prioritise women’s safety. Government must develop policies that not only recognise, but also effectively address gender inequalities in relation to the climate crisis.

- Peasant, indigenous and afro-descendent women have been especially marginalised as a result of gender inequalities and large patriarchal, capitalist companies’ control over resources. We advocate for adequate representation and full inclusion of indigenous, peasant and afro-descendant women in positions of power. It is essential that they are included in all stages of decision-making and that their traditional knowledge is respected.

- Governments must create conditions that promote environmental sustainability and sustainable development that can withstand the climate and socio-environmental crisis. Governments must fight against illegal deforestation and intentional fires that damage our flora and fauna and provoke droughts and floods that affect our commons, including soil, water, and biodiversity.

- Governments and multilateral agencies must allocate funds for adaptation initiatives, not solely for mitigation. Both are essential to comprehensively address the challenges we face.