

APAC sends a strong message to COP28 recommending an inclusive and resilient agri-food system

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The Asia-Pacific Climate Week (APCW) concluded with the message that "an inclusive and resilient agrifood system is needed in the world's most populous region if the global climate objectives are to be realized, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The UN reported during a large regional prelude to the upcoming UN climate conference in Dubai later this month.



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APCW brought together more than a thousand experts in the Malaysian city of Johor Bahru, to discuss a wide variety of climate-related issues, from rising global temperatures and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, to water and land issues such as droughts and floods, and regional deforestation. The need to transform Asia and the Pacific's vast and vital agrifood systems to better anticipate, absorb and accommodate climate shocks while also minimizing future risks through mitigation and adaptation was also high on the agenda.

Agri-food systems solutions are climate solutions

With more than half the world's population, and a majority of its undernourished – 400 million – the transformation of the region's agrifood systems can be achieved, but it must be done in such a way as to make those systems more resilient and sustainable through equitable, inclusive and gender responsiveness – while addressing loss and damage in the agriculture sectors. The climate has already changed and will continue to change with largely downside risks for agrifood systems and food security. Farmers, fisheries, foresters and herders across Asia and the Pacific are already adapting – with or without support.

Agricultural production in Asia is also a major source of GHG emissions, with rice cultivation, synthetic fertilizer use, crop residue burning, and manure management comprising major sources across countries in the region.

FAO's recently released report, the [State of Food and Agriculture 2023 \(SOFA\)](#), found that more than USD 10 trillion is lost each year in hidden costs relating to the world's agrifood systems, with one-fifth of those costs environmental. The environmental hidden costs, while not exhaustive, constitute over 20 percent of the quantified hidden costs and are equivalent to almost one-third of agricultural value added. They are mostly associated with greenhouse gas (GHG) and nitrogen emissions and are relevant across all country income groups," the SOFA reported.

"We have been able to stave off risks to agrifood systems and food security from recent, past climate change because of investment in rural infrastructure, extension services and improved agronomic practices," said Beau Damen, FAO Natural Resources Officer, who participated in the APCW. "We now have a narrow window to rollout the next generation of inclusive institutional arrangements and investments needed to transform agrifood systems in a way that can provide nutritious food to hundreds of millions of people in Asia and the Pacific while also reducing the role it plays in driving the climate crisis," he added.

Member countries participating at the event highlighted national initiatives including many supported by FAO and other development partners to move towards a systems approach including the use of foresight in developing long term strategies for low emission development, the adoption of nature and ecosystem based approaches and the use of early warning systems to prepare anticipatory responses to climate induced extreme events.