

CLARA

Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance

CLARA Principles Agreed July 2020

Principles for land--use in climate action

The Climate, Land, Rights, and Ambition Alliance (CLARA) is a coalition of organizations committed to ambitious climate action in the land sector (agriculture and forestry). As CLARA members, we support and pursue climate actions that are based on agroecology, ecosystem integrity, and respect for human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

CLARA first articulated its principles for land-use action on climate change in the year leading up to adoption of the Paris Agreement. Since 2015, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has released two Special Reports (the 1.5°C report in 2018 and the Land and Climate report in 2019) that bring into even sharper focus the critical importance of land in our attempts to tackle climate change. The IPBES 2019 report showed the extreme speed at which the world's biodiversity is deteriorating.

In light of those scientific and policy developments, CLARA re-articulates its Principles. These reflect the fundamentals that brought our organizations together and constitute the basis of our joint work. They are not policy proposals, which are presented in different documents.

According to the IPCC Special Report on Land and Climate (2019) (IPCC Land report), "Land provides the principal basis for human livelihoods and well-being including the supply of food, freshwater and multiple other ecosystem services, as well as biodiversity." It has therefore a crucial role to play in our attempts to tackle both the climate change and biodiversity crises, as well as to ensure food sovereignty and eradicate poverty.

The IPCC Land Report has shown how necessary it is to significantly reduce land induced GHG emissions as well as to protect and restore natural carbon sinks.

Climate action must recognise the importance of the land sector, and any action or policy development must take into account social and ecological considerations. To do so, the following principles constitute the core of our work:

1. Addressing climate change requires radical, transformational change, based on equity.

Meeting the goal of limiting temperature rise to below 1.5C will require reducing global greenhouse gas emissions from energy, industry, agriculture and forests to zero by 2050, as well as restoring carbon in natural ecosystems. Reducing carbon emissions to zero means to

bring fossil fuel use to a halt.

Mitigation in the land use sector should not be used to displace or reduce mitigation in other sectors, and sequestration in the land sector must not be used as an offset. Carbon sequestered in land can be released back into the atmosphere at varying rates depending on land use and land use conversions, and so cannot compensate for continued fossil fuel emissions. Likewise, land mitigation actions in one area must not be used to justify ongoing 'business-as-usual' elsewhere.

Delaying a transformational change away from the overconsumption that has caused climate change, while relying on unrealistic expectations of future land-based mitigation or false solutions like BECCS (bio-energy with carbon capture and storage), bioenergy, or biofuels, leads to increased land competition, destruction of natural ecosystems and violates the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Such approaches further the injustices and destruction already caused by climate change.

2. Land is crucial for food security and food sovereignty

Food security and poverty eradication are priorities for developing countries. Currently, 2 billion people do not have regular access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food¹. The IPCC Land Report stresses the threat climate change poses to the four pillars of food security, but also the competition that could be induced by certain measures to tackle climate change, such as the increased use of bioenergy (including BECCS), biofuel, or large scale afforestation with tree plantations. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), an additional 600 million people could be at risk of hunger by 2080 as a result of climate change.² For this reason and to avoid competition, it is essential that the land currently used for food should not be converted to land used for non-food purposes in the name of climate mitigation, unless it answers restoration purposes. With a decreased pressure due to livestock production reduction, crop land, mostly coming from deforestation, should be allowed back to regeneration. The right to food, food security, and food sovereignty must be prioritised.

In the agricultural sector, a transformational change must be carried out towards agroecology, a model that enables both mitigation and adaptation. We need to distinguish between agricultural models, and priority must be put on tackling activities with the highest emissions, such as fertiliser use and production, as well as meat consumption and production, particularly in 'high-emitting' rich countries.

3. Land must be managed with a rights-based approach, ensuring public participation and preserving livelihoods

Any mitigation and adaptation actions involving land must protect, respect, and promote human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples, women, and local communities to secure tenure of land, territories, and resources. Indigenous Peoples, forest-dependent communities, women, and small farmers are often marginalised. Thus improving their security of land tenure and engaging fully in the governance of land and natural resources they depend on and have long managed is essential for effective and long-lasting land-based climate action.

Any mitigation and adaptation actions must uphold the right to public participation. Indigenous Peoples and local communities must be able to fully and meaningfully participate, which

¹ The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI-Report) 2019

² See also IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Chapter 20, p. 813 (2007), https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/ar4_wg2_full_report.pdf.

includes ensuring access to information, in land and forest-related climate action. Indigenous Peoples and local communities possess the knowledge about and are best placed to know how to mitigate and adapt to climate change in that region or area. Full, effective, and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in designing and implementing mitigation and adaptation actions involving land will lead to more ambitious and effective climate action and must be prioritized.³

4. Climate action must go with protecting and enhancing the resilience of natural ecosystems

Climate change is exacerbated by the destruction of natural ecosystems, but climate change is also threatening the survival of ecosystems - and through that the underpinnings of life on earth. Actions to reduce climate change and its effects must therefore work *with* nature, to protect and enhance the functioning and resilience of natural ecosystems. The destruction, alteration or over-exploitation of natural ecosystems for climate action purposes is unacceptable and in most cases counter-productive.

The world is currently off-track on meeting targets for 2020, including measures relating to deforestation (gross tree cover loss has increased) and forest restoration⁴. Mitigation measures related to land must not threaten important environmental objectives, as for instance protecting biological diversity and natural ecosystems. Many of these measures, such as protecting carbon-rich old-growth forests, wetlands and peatlands, and restoring degraded ecosystems, including agricultural soils, benefit both the climate and biodiversity, and should be prioritized. In general, measures related to land use should be designed in a way that incentivises broader environmental benefits : enhanced biodiversity, water quality, habitat for wild fauna and flora and soil fertility.



³ see generally IPCC report on climate change and land.

⁴ Tracking Progress of the 2020 World Climate Turning Point, World Resources Institute report (2019) https://files.wri.org/s3fs-public/2020-turning-point-progress_2.pdf