

Forum: GA1

Issue:Forum: General Assembly 1 - Social Committee

Issue: Protecting and ensuring the future of farming culture, food security, and farmers' rights, especially in rural areas with the change of climate and political environment

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Introduction

One of the biggest and most complex problems of today is protecting agriculture, ensuring adequate food for everyone, and defending the rights of farmers, especially in rural areas. Agriculture is used to meet one of the elements that ensure the survival of people, and is a very important element. Therefore, agricultural culture should not be lost or forgotten, it should be maintained. Climate change, rising temperatures, strange weather patterns, and natural disasters that devastate crops and soil are making it difficult to grow food. Additionally, political problems, unjust economies, and cultural changes as people move to cities harm farming communities and destroy their traditions. Old and quality farming methods and traditional knowledge are being lost, making it even more difficult to grow food safely and healthily. Most of the farmers who provide most of the agriculture in the world and produce the main products either have limited money and technology or do not have them directly. This makes them discouraged. Similarly, many women farmers cannot own land or receive support even though they work as hard, perhaps harder, than men. These problems are all interconnected and very serious. To solve these, countries need to work together to help farming communities, support local food systems, and share useful agricultural knowledge. They must also ensure that farmers have land, tools, and rights – in short, basic farming equipment and plain

human rights. If we do not act under these circumstances, hunger, poverty, and environmental damage will only worsen.

Definition of Key Terms

Agroecology

The application of ecological principles to agricultural systems and practices, or the branch of science concerned with this (*Oxford dictionary*).

Climate Resilience

The ability of farming systems and communities to tolerate and recover from the adverse impacts of climate change, including droughts, floods, and changes in growing seasons that may affect the product. Example: Selecting plants that are early maturing for areas that are prone to drought because of the decreasing rainfall.

Subsistence Farming

A form of farming in which nearly all of the crops or livestock raised are used to maintain the farmer and the farmer's family, leaving little, if any, surplus for sale or trade (*Britannica,2025*).

Background Information

Farming culture, food security, and farmers' rights are complementary to sustainable rural lives and global wellbeing. Agriculture incorporates traditional knowledge, locally adapted crop varieties, animal species, and inherited practices that not only support food production but also support community identity and social wellbeing in rural areas. Meanwhile, food security is defined as 'when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life' (*FAO,1996*). Protecting farmers' rights, including land ownership security, fair remuneration without discrimination, access to resources, and participation in policy decisions, is critical for the survival of all these systems over time.

Farming culture and traditional knowledge

The recognition of China's Honghe Hani Rice Terraces as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2010

highlighted the importance of centuries-old terrace farming and irrigation methods, highlighting threats from modernization and migration. Agricultural culture consists of long-standing agricultural practices, traditions, and knowledge that are passed down through generations in rural communities. Local climates, ecosystems, and cultural values often shape these practices according to their lifestyles. Traditional knowledge plays a critical role in preserving biodiversity, soil health, and sustainable land use. Therefore, if someone is in the agricultural sector, the work they do either comes from their families or they may not be successful because they encounter some difficulties, as they learned later. Similarly to the recognition of China's Honghe Hani rice Terraces, Indian farmers' protests between 2020 and 2021 revealed tensions between traditional farming knowledge and new agricultural laws and reflect the challenges rural farmers face in preserving their cultural heritage. However, due to urban migration, industrial agriculture, and the weakening of rural institutions, many of these practices and the transfer of occupations from family to family are in danger of extinction. We must remember that preserving farming culture is essential not only for food production but also for preserving cultural identity and resilience in rural communities.

Food security dimensions and challenges

As mentioned earlier, food security means ensuring that all people have continuous access to nutritious, and safe food. To achieve these requirements there are four key conditions; availability (adequate food production), access (economic and physical ability to obtain food), usability (nutritional quality and food safety), and continuity (uninterrupted access over time). Food insecurity can result from poverty, conflict, inflation, or natural disasters. That's why we see it frequently in countries below the poverty line. In rural areas, many of which are directly dependent on agriculture, disruptions in any of these dimensions can lead to widespread hunger. Building food-secure communities requires targeted quality and functional investments in local food systems, infrastructure, and rural economies. One of the examples for this problem is The 2011 Horn of Africa famine, caused by prolonged drought and armed conflict in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, exposed critical

weaknesses in food availability and access, exposing more than 13 million people to severe food insecurity. Likewise, this includes the 2022 food crisis in Afghanistan, where political instability combined with drought and economic collapse has greatly reduced food continuity and availability, pushing millions to the brink of starvation. Again, building food-secure communities requires targeted quality and functional investments in local food systems, infrastructure, and rural economies.

Climate change impacts on agriculture

Climate change is one of the most serious and urgent threats to agriculture today, with direct consequences for food security and rural livelihoods. This threat is at the top among other problems. The 2019-2020 Australian bushfires severely damaged farmland and pastures, causing major productivity losses and increased rural poverty. This was an indicator of the damage caused by natural disasters. Similarly, the 2015-2017 drought in California reduced crop yields and forced some farmers to abandon their land; This brought the situation in California to a critical point, showing that climate stress triggered economic distress and migration. Increasing temperatures, especially unusual temperature changes during the seasons (such as a sudden change in temperature in autumn or a sudden increase in temperature in the middle of winter), irregular rainfall, long-lasting droughts, and frequent natural disasters increasingly disrupt the growing seasons, damage crops, and reduce the fertility of the soil. Farmers, who are often considered small businesses using rain-fed agriculture as a source of income, are in a more difficult and vulnerable position because they have fewer resources than they need in the market to adapt. As a result, there is a risk of reduced productivity, loss of income, and increased rural poverty. In some regions, climate stress is also triggering forced migration and conflicts over land and water. To reduce these impacts, agricultural systems need to adopt more climate-resilient practices such as drought-resistant crops, sustainable irrigation and agroecological methods and make them available to agriculturalists who are not aware of them. At the same time, governments and

international organizations need to strengthen support systems to help rural farmers adapt and thrive in the changing environment.

Political and socioeconomic Barriers

Rural farmers (including other farmers, but predominantly rural farmers) often face structural disadvantages due to political and economic barriers. While agricultural policies often prioritize large-scale commercial farming, small farmers lack adequate access to land ownership, credit, markets, and technology. Rural infrastructure such as roads, storage facilities and extension services are often underdeveloped, limiting economic opportunities. Social inequalities further deepen these challenges. The Indian government's 2020 Farm Bills have highlighted the political exclusion and undermining of rural farmers, sparking widespread protests by small-scale farmers who fear loss of land rights and market access. Although women make up a large portion of the agricultural workforce, they often have fewer legal rights and less access to resources than male producers. The UN's 2019 report on Women in Agriculture (2019) highlighted that gender-based legal restrictions prevent millions of women farmers worldwide from owning land or accessing credit, significantly reducing productivity and rural development. These obstacles, especially applied to women, reduce productivity and hinder rural development. While this triggers our problem and reduces production with women abandoning it due to rights restrictions, it is also an example of how weak women's rights are. These barriers, especially those imposed on women, reduce productivity and hinder rural development. To secure the future of farming, policies need to be inclusive, rights-based and sensitive, with attention to the specific needs of rural communities.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

India

India is the country with the most agriculture in the world. More than half of its citizens live upon agriculture. This large workforce brings with it major domestic challenges related to climate, rural poverty and farmers' rights. Their biggest problem is their dependence on monsoon rains, and this problem makes it difficult

to preserve traditional agriculture. The failure to solve these problems caused farmers to protest.

China

China strategically prioritizes food security due to its large population and limited arable land. The government is investing heavily in agricultural modernization and rural development, and attaches importance to ensuring development. Climate change and urban expansion are challenging the ability to sustain traditional agricultural systems. That's why they invest in new systems.

United States

As the world's leading food exporter and innovation leader, the United States shapes [international food and agriculture policy](#) and provides massive funding for global food aid through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other organizations. However, compared to other countries, domestic farmers are increasingly affected by extreme weather and environmental pressures rather than economic ones

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

FAO is the leading UN agency focused directly on global food security and sustainable agriculture. It supports and monitors countries in developing climate-resilient agricultural systems and protecting rural livelihoods. This is the exact purpose of its establishment. FAO is the organization that sets international standards and publishes important data on food systems most accurately.

Brazil

Brazil is a major producer of soy, beef, and sugar, making it key to global food markets. However, it has faced criticism and protests due to deforestation of the Amazon linked to agricultural expansion. Land disputes between agribusinesses and Indigenous communities remain a significant problem.

European Union

International Fund for Agricultural Development

World Food Programme (WFP)

Timeline of Events

19 November 2010	FAO Recognition of the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces
20 July 2011	Horn of Africa Famine begins
January 2015 - March 2017	California Drought period
8 March 2019	UN Report on Women in Agriculture and Land Rights published
September 2019 - February 2020	Australian Bushfires' impact on agriculture
26 November 2020 - December 2021	Indian farmers' Protests against the 2020 Farm laws start
Throught 2022	Afghanistan Food Crisis escalates

Relevant UN Resolutions and Other Documents

1. UN Resolution 73/165 – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas

This resolution was published in 17 december 2018 and promotes the rights of peasants and rural workers, including access to land, seeds, and natural resources. It emphasizes the importance of protecting traditional knowledge and ensuring rural communities are part of decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods.

<https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/73/165>

2. UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda that was published on 25 september 2025. It includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Several of them directly address food security, sustainable agriculture, and environmental protection.

<https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/70/1>

3. International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

This treaty was adopted in 3 November 2001 but unfortunately entered into force 29 June 2004. This treaty recognizes farmers' rights to save, use, exchange, and sell farm-saved seed and the importance of traditional knowledge in conserving plant biodiversity. <https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/en/>

4. Paris Agreement (under UNFCCC)

This treaty was published in 12 December 2015. While primarily focused on climate change mitigation, this legally binding agreement also acknowledges the impact of climate change on food production and commits parties to sustainable food systems and climate-resilient agriculture. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

5. Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition

One of the first milestones of the UN was the declaration adopted during the World Food Conference, affirming that every man, woman, and child has the right to be free from hunger and malnutrition to develop fully and maintain health. This was published on 16 November 1974. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/109035?ln=en>

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

FAO Recognizes Honghe Hani Rice Terraces (China), 2010

The Food and Agriculture Organization officially designated the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) on June 25, 2010. This recognition led to the Chinese government's new protective policies to preserve centuries old terrace farming and traditional irrigation techniques and was geared towards helping the people. <https://www.fao.org/giahs/around-the-world/designated-sites/asia-and-the-pacific/honghe-hani-rice-terraces/en>

CFS Adopts Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food, 16 October 2004

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) adopted voluntary guidelines supporting the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. This was a concrete step towards the implementation of the Universal Declaration on the

Elimination of Hunger and Malnutrition (1974), but it did not yield the expected results.

<https://www.fao.org/right-to-food/resources/resources-detail/en/c/88895/>

AGRA's Soil Health Program, started in Ghana, 2009

AGRA launched the Soil Health Program in Northern Ghana in June 2009 to reverse soil degradation. The initiative has supported and functioned over 70,000 smallholder farmers with improved fertilizer access, seed varieties, and training on sustainable land use. <https://agra.org/>

WFP's Resilience Project in Niger, Initiated in March 2014

The World Food Program has launched a large-scale resilience project in Zinder and Maradi, Niger. It included food-for-asset programs, construction of irrigation systems, and farmer training. As of 2017, more than 250,000 people benefited and received support. It was the most productive work ever done. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/building-resilience-niger>

Possible Solutions

With the support of FAO and IFAD, Agricultural Innovation Labs that are located in universities or centers in rural regions could be developed and well used. These labs would offer soil testing, training on sustainable practices like composting and efficient irrigation, and maintain seed banks of traditional and climate-resilient crops. FAO grants and IFAD evaluations would support and monitor, the labs could combine the modern research with the local knowledge. Also, by using frameworks such as FAO's voluntary Guidelines on the responsible Governance of Tenure, governments can be encouraged to strengthen land tenure laws through national legislation. It can help ensure that rural farmers, especially women and indigenous groups, have safe access to land, reduce the risk of forced displacement, and increase their investment in long-term sustainable agriculture. This can reduce the risk of forced displacement, increase their investment in sustainable agriculture, and

help ensure that rural farmers, especially women, and indigenous groups have safe land access. Another solution could be to expand mobile agricultural extension services, especially in remote areas. Supported by partnerships between UN agencies and NGOs, these services can offer weather forecasts, climate adaptation tips, market prices and technical advice via SMS or mobile applications to these farmers and their ability to identify their next moves. This solution could somehow reach farmers with limited access to infrastructure or formal education and help improve resilience and preparedness for climate-related disruptions. Finally, a global subsidy reform framework could be developed under the World Trade Organization or a relevant UN body to redirect agricultural subsidies from environmentally harmful industrial practices to sustainable agriculture in rural areas. These restructured subsidies could align economic incentives with sustainable goals and rural empowerment by prioritizing climate-smart agriculture, climate-prepared agriculture, local food systems, and ecological management.

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