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Farmers' Day at COP25 Madrid

On December 4th, 2019, in Madrid, within the context of the UNFCCC COP25 Farmers Day, the World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) together with the CGIAR Centre for Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) hosted the event on "Transforming Food Systems with a Farmers Driven Climate Agenda".

The event marked the first anniversary of the WFO conceived initiative "**The Climakers**", launched last year at COP 24 in Katowice, Poland. It showed how farmers are using their practical experience gained from living and working on the land, and with nature, to adapt to a changing climate.

Farmers' leaders and other stakeholders committed to supporting the initiative, including representatives of the research world, private sector and civil society, brought on the debate their perspective and experience.

Opening the event, the WFO President, **Theo de Jager**, reiterated the tremendous need to strengthen the perspective of farmers in all the processes related to climate change, stressing that farming owns an important part of the solution. "As farmers, we live very close to nature, closer than anyone else in the world. We are the ones that work under the sun or the rain and wind. We are the ones whose production processes are most threatened by wildfires and disasters. Hence, for centuries, farmers have been involved in mitigating and adapting to climate phenomena. That's why last year in Katowice we launched a farmers' driven approach to climate change, trying to put farmers at the very centre of the debate when it comes to agriculture and food systems".

The WFO Secretary-General, **Arianna Giuliadori**, highlighted the main findings of the first 12 months of the "Climakers" initiative, presenting the results of the data gathering campaign: an overwhelming 96% of the farmers declared that they feel the effects of climate change. Farmers are ready to adopt Climate-Smart agricultural practices, but they need help to face obstacles, like access to financial resources, to reliable information and innovation technology.

The event provided an excellent venue to officially launch "**The Climakers – Stories from the Field – Volume 1**". This publication, the first of a series, is designed to present a collection of science-assessed best farming practices, showing the enormous potential of the agricultural sector when it comes to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

As representative of the research world, **Bruce Campbell**, CCAFS Program Director reiterated the importance of closing the gap between farmers and science, reminding that science is the key. Still, it is crucial that farmers and science work hand in hand to look for sustainable solutions in agriculture globally.



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The perspective of the Caribbean and European Climakers were shared by **Alex L. J. Shyy**, Deputy Secretary-General of Taiwan ICDF; **Jannes Maes**, Belgian dairy farmer and President of the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) and **Niels Peter Nørring**, Climate Director of Danish Agriculture and Food Council (DAFC).

During this session, Jannes Maes emphasised the importance for farmers to be properly acknowledged for the steps they have taken to mitigate and adapt to climate change, are taking and are committed to taking in the future with the right support.

Bernhard Stormyr, Head of Sustainability Management in YARA, brought into the debate the fertiliser business perspective, speaking on behalf of the International Fertilizer Association (IFA). On the other side, **Elizabeth Gulugulu** from Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN) addressed the audience on the role of young farmers in adapting to climate change.

“Put farmers first”, stated **Martin Van Nieuwkoop**, Global Director of World Bank Agriculture, during his closing speech on the role of farmers in transforming the food systems under the changing climate.

The event that gathered over 200 participants was the occasion for a forward-looking and constructive exchange among all the actors of the entire value chain on how farmers can drive the change in the global political debate on agriculture and climate change, based on their practical experience on the field.

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ABOUT THE WORLD FARMERS' ORGANISATION

The World Farmers' Organisation is a member-based organisation bringing together national farmers' organizations and agricultural cooperatives, from all over the world. Its aim is to strengthen the voice of food producers on the global scene, enhancing their relevance as economic, social and environmental actors. Currently representing approximately 1.5 billion farmers. WFO is the reference organization representing the farmers' community in all the relevant international processes, including the United Nations processes, such as the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development, the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, to name but a few.
