



**LIVE STREAMING**



## Concept note

Agri-food systems are key levers towards climate change, while at the same time being among the largest emitters of greenhouse gasses and being affected by climate change. While the need to transform agri-food systems to achieve climate adaptation and mitigation is recognised, the meaning and application of just transition principles remains underexplored. Inherent in the just transition logic, the transition to low-carbon solutions in the agri-food sector should not place the burden solely on farmers and food chain workers, nor undermine the opportunities of future generations.

The side event aims to gather civil society organisations with policymakers to discuss how to realise a just transition framework in the agri-food sector to achieve sustainable and fair food systems while ensuring intergenerational justice and including the perspective of the Global South.

The event will also be an opportunity for the EESC to present its [opinion NAT/925 on the just transition in agri-food systems](#) and related work.

## Programme

*Moderation: Peter Schmidt, NAT section President, EESC*

### Keynote

IPES Food, Million Belay, member of the IPES-Food panel; co-founder and general coordinator of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)

### Roundtable

- Ms. **Rebecca Okello**, Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) (tbc)
- Mr. **Gunsham Seeborun**, Board Member Africa, World Farmers' Organisation
- Ms. **Anabella Rosemberg**, senior advisor on just transition, CAN International, Anabella Rosemberg,

### Debate with panelists

### Commenting to the discussion

- European Commission, **Frank Siebern-Thomas**, Head of Fair, Green, and Digital Transitions,

- Research Unit, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- European Commission, **Herwig Ranner**, Team Leader – Climate change and agriculture, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

**Closing:** Peter Schmidt

## Background

There is increasing awareness of the need to transform how food is produced, processed and consumed to ensure sustainable food production, support the farming community and maintain the health of both people and the planet. In the last few years, the food policy agenda and the transformation of the agri-food systems have gained centrality both at the European and international levels. The Committee on World Food Security, the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) show increasing agenda-setting related to food and agriculture.

There is a growing consensus on the need to transform the agri-food system to achieve both the global goal of adaptation and the collective temperature goal under the Paris Agreement. In this regard, the latest IPCC report<sup>1</sup> was particularly attentive to how food systems are increasingly vulnerable to climate change but are also contributing to it, with 37 per cent of the global greenhouse gas emissions – while simultaneously being affected by climate change. Still, there is a lack of a coherent and comprehensive approach to climate, agriculture and food and a lack of understanding of the social dimension and its implications.

Despite this, farmers and food chain workers will be bearing the brunt of a lot of changes to protect the food system and implement the changes. The impacts of climate change will affect them terribly - droughts, floods, wildfires and heatwaves that destroy crops and reduce harvests.

Getting the complete picture of the social implications of the transformations towards climate-resilient agri-food requires simultaneously addressing several challenges the sector is already confronted with, such as generational renewal of farmers, employment in the agricultural sector, social acceptance of the sector within the society, a fair food supply chain ensuring fair prices for all actors, intergenerational justice, occupational health hazards etc.

It is evident that the social dimension of the sector merits a more prominent place in the political dialogue. A Just Transition involves maximizing climate action's social and economic opportunities while minimizing and carefully managing challenges – including through effective social dialogue among all groups impacted and respect for fundamental labour principles and rights.

"Just transition" is the term most often used, particularly in those sectors such as energy supply, on which most just transition policies have focused. This notion emphasises the importance of addressing social and economic aspects of fundamental change in a fair way. Academic researchers, non-governmental organisations and some farmers' groups have started to reflect to envision a "just transition" for agriculture, but the term has not yet entered the mainstream in the sector.

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<sup>1</sup> [AR6 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2023 \(ipcc.ch\)](#).