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“Towards multi-functional agro-ecosystems
promoting climate resilient futures”

Envisioning a more equitable future for food, land, and water systems by 2050

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Abstract

Food, land, and water systems (FLWS) in low- and middle-income countries are under mounting pressure from a polycrisis. By 2050, global food demand is projected to increase significantly, climate shocks to intensify, pressure on natural resources to mount, and urbanisation and youth populations in many regions to expand rapidly. Without a shift in current trajectories, these pressures will compound existing inequalities, deepening vulnerabilities and hindering women, youth, and socially excluded groups to achieve their full potential in terms of productivity and resilience. The coming decades will determine whether FLWS evolve into engines of equality, inclusion, and resilience, or reinforce patterns of exclusion and instability.

We envision a 2050 future in which FLWS are inclusive and just by design, with equitable access to land, water, markets, information, and decision-making spaces; inclusive economic development; recognition of care work; digital inclusion; and strengthened and equitable resilience capacities. It is a future where social norms foster equal opportunity to benefit from and meaningfully participate in FLWS. In this 2050 future women, youth, and socially excluded groups are empowered and have a voice as decision-makers, innovators, and drivers of change.

This presentation introduces a collection of contributions that will be presented as a panel session. The collection includes a forward-looking intersectional gender analysis of FLWS to 2050 and four agenda-setting pieces proposing evidence-based strategies to address structural barriers to equality and inclusion in relation to resilience to climate change and shocks, access to and governance of resources, digital inclusion, and young women's potential as drivers of change. In this presentation, we outline the conceptual foundation of the collection, building on the Gendered Food Systems Framework and feminist perspectives on power and structural inequalities. We situate the contributions within these frameworks and highlight that lasting transformative change towards more equitable and inclusive FLWS by 2050 requires addressing power imbalances at multiple levels, alongside shifts toward more equitable norms, agency, control over resources, governance, and voice in mutually reinforcing ways.

Keywords: 2050, climate change, food systems, gender equality, inclusion, polycrisis

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