

PRESS RELEASE



The Reality of Coffee Farming in the Era of Climate Change

Hamburg, March 20, 2024 – Sector discussions often focus on the needs of the coffee industry – such as securing the supply chains, making coffee production more sustainable, and complying with regulations. However, smallholder farmers are by far the largest group of players in the coffee sector. **Almost all of the 12.5 million coffee farms worldwide are smallholder farms.** They produce up to 80 % of the global coffee. That makes it important to know what the real needs of smallholder coffee farming families are. To what extent are the industry's efforts actually improving the livelihoods of farming communities and enhancing their climate resilience?

In order to find answers to these questions the initiative for coffee&climate (c&c) brought together local experts from coffee-growing regions, scientists, and experts from organizations. Together they explored the realities of coffee farming in the face of climate change in the **Online Symposium "It's Bean Too Hot: The Reality of Coffee Farming in the Era of Climate Change"**. Eleven speakers covered a wide range of issues encompassing challenges, obstacles, and solutions to changes that the accelerating climate change imposes on coffee production, farming, and livelihoods. 700 professionals from the coffee and sustainability sector registered to attend the symposium.

The first part was dedicated to the **impact of climate change on coffee production, landscapes, and smallholder livelihoods.** The paramount importance of food security for coffee-producing smallholders and communities was undisputed amongst participants and served as common basis for further reflection.

However, a central point of discussion was the question of what kind of resilience to climate change is needed, and who needs to prepare for it, and how. Perspectives on this issue varied greatly depending

on the local situation and on the stakeholder group (i.e., coffee buyer, roaster, farmer) to which the actor belongs. A harmonization of the different approaches remains challenging. However, it was uncontroversial that the resilience of the coffee sector as a whole can only be achieved if there is resilience at the community level first.

Many farmers are conscious of climate change because they experience it in the form of changing weather patterns. And **many smallholders may be able to cope with climate change by adapting** to it. On the other hand, large areas may become entirely unsuitable for coffee production. It may even be necessary for farmers to transform their businesses by growing other cash crops in order to maintain their livelihoods.

Solution approaches and best practices were the focus of the second part. Food security for smallholders as a human right, and as a necessary precondition for successful coffee production as well as for enhancing resilience against climate change remained the overarching theme of the symposium. Presentations now predominantly dealt with practical approaches like **dynamic agroforestry and circular economy** to diversify income sources, enhance biodiversity, and save on agrochemicals. The approach of the **Climate Pioneers** was presented as a solution to involve youth to become local climate leaders and for them to improve their life skills and professional perspectives.

Central to overcoming all kinds of obstacles – covering strategic issues, day-to-day work, and monitoring and evaluation – is pursuing a **solution-oriented participatory approach**. Only then, helping the farmers develop their own climate adaptation strategies becomes feasible. And only then can a sufficient level of trust be built with local communities. Including the **women's perspective** in creating approaches is often neglected which not only leaves half of the community behind but also impairs the success of projects. The relevance of **digital communication** in everyday project work continues to grow, but it is not a miracle cure for all challenges.

All in all, both days of the online symposium **“It’s Bean Too Hot: The Reality of Coffee Farming in the Era of Climate Change”** provided many new aspects. However, it also renewed the certainty that only a living partnership of all local players and within the coffee sector will enable success in the fight against climate change.

The **recording of both days of “It’s Bean Too Hot”** is available on the c&c YouTube channel:

Day 1: <https://youtu.be/IGP43zhLDIY>

Day 2: <https://youtu.be/0QrdrsTd2IQ>

Please find photos for this press release [here](#).

About the initiative for coffee&climate

The initiative for coffee&climate (c&c) is a pre-competitive partnership of private and public actors. Together they strive to support smallholder coffee farming families and their communities to effectively respond to climate change, increase their resilience, and improve their livelihoods. Since its founding in 2010, c&c has been working in seven regions worldwide: Following a five-step participatory and inclusive approach, smallholder families get access to practical tools and knowledge, allowing them to adapt their farms to climate change, minimize carbon emissions, and enhance the

carbon storage potential in coffee landscapes. More than 131,000 coffee farming households have been trained on climate-smart techniques to date.

More about the initiative for coffee&climate:

<http://www.coffeeandclimate.org/>

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