

# COP28: Meet the Fairtrade delegation

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## **How I got started in climate advocacy**

My community comes from a proud heritage of farmers who worked with nature for thousands of years, and I have seen the hardships and difficulties faced in farming since my childhood. Farmers here fight with the scorching sun and all the obstacles to light up the future of their children.

I completed my university education in biosystem technology with the main aim to uplift the living standard of my community. I then joined the Monaragala Organic Farmers Association as a documentation officer and learned more about the struggles in farming. I identified significant impacts of climate change in farming coconut, fruits, herbs, spices, and other crops and started raising awareness for adopting climate-smart agricultural practices.

Through a youth programme organised by Fairtrade NAPP, I had the opportunity to learn more about the impact of climate change in different areas of Sri Lanka and the real-time issues faced by farmers. I also gained knowledge about practices to meet those challenges, which I can now share with my community.

## **How climate change has impacted my community**

Farmers in our area follow the rainfall pattern of the Yala and Maha seasons for harvesting. However, the variability of rainfall has increased in recent decades, as well as the frequency of extreme rainfall, droughts, and floods. There is not enough rain when crops require it, and there is excessive rain when crops require dry conditions. Farmers in our community have to expend additional costs for irrigation systems due to the decrease in ground water.

**#TheClockisTicking**



The high ambient temperatures have negative impacts on plant growth, leading to reduced crop quality, drying pollen, and inhibited seed germination. And some pests and diseases spread more rapidly. For example, there is a failure in the nut formation of coconut when exposed to warm and drought conditions and fruit crops can't be store for a long time if harvested under extreme rainfall. In some periods, extreme wind physically damages the plants. Overall, it is challenging for farmers to survive under these conditions, as they can't be economically stable when their livelihood depends on farming.

### **How my community adapts**

We work together to minimise climate change impacts. For example, we organised a programme to provide plants such as mango, soursop, mesua, and others that help to minimise soil erosion, trap excess carbon in the environment, provide sufficient shade to the farm, and reserve the underground water resources. And we implemented the Fairtrade project "Model Farms" to minimise the negative impact of climate change.

My team and I conduct training and awareness programmes about climate-smart agricultural practices such as water, weather, nitrogen, and energy. As well as getting updates from farmers regarding the issues they face and discussing solutions with them during regular farm visits.

### **My climate action demands to global leaders**

Many producers lack proper knowledge regarding mitigation and adaptation practices or don't have the financial means to implement them. We desire financial support to implement projects, technical assistance, facilitation of access to resources, instruments, and other facilities that enable the implementation of climate-smart agricultural practices to minimise the impact of climate change.

Farming is everything for the people in my community. So as a youth, I feel it is my duty to find solutions to the obstacles they are facing and support them to tackle these challenges.

**Learn more about Fairtrade's work on climate and environment:**

<https://www.fairtrade.net/issue/environment>