The Gates Foundation has announced a new commitment to advancing climate adaptation, helping smallholder farmers build resilience to a warming world and protect hard-won gains against poverty especially in Sub-Saharan Africa

In these regions, where food security and livelihoods depend on agriculture, latest estimates show that smallholder farmers and the communities they feed are among the most exposed to droughts, floods, and rising temperatures. Yet less than 1% of global climate finance targets the growing threats to these vital food systems.

Speaking on the sidelines of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP30), which runs from November 10 to 21 in Belém, Brazil, Bill Gates, chair of the Gates Foundation pointed out that smallholder farmers are feeding their communities under the toughest conditions imaginable.

“We’re supporting their ingenuity with the tools and resources to help them thrive—because investing in their resilience is one of the smartest, most impactful things we can do for people and the planet,” he said.

At COP30, global leaders are especially emphasizing locally driven adaptation, the four-year, $1.4 billion investment will expand access to innovations that help farmers across sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia adapt to extreme weather.

The commitment supports Bill Gates’ vision, outlined in his recent COP30 memo, of prioritizing climate investments for maximum human impact and advances the foundation’s goal of lifting millions of people out of poverty by 2045.

Farmers in low-income countries especially from Sub-Saharan Africa produce one-third of the world’s food but face mounting climate threats. Without greater adaptation investment, these shocks will continue to drive food insecurity and reverse hard-won gains against poverty.

World Bank research shows that targeted adaptation investments could boost GDP, particularly in small island and developing states, by up to 15 percentage points by 2050. The World Resources Institute estimates that every dollar invested in climate adaptation will yield more than $10 in social and economic benefits within a decade.

“Climate adaptation is not just a development issue—it’s an economic and moral imperative,” said Mark Suzman, CEO of the Gates Foundation. “This new

commitment builds on our support for farmers in Africa and South Asia who are already innovating to withstand extreme weather. But they can’t do it alone—governments and the private sector must work together to prioritize adaptation alongside mitigation.”

While climate shocks continue to intensify, the financing needed to help farmers adapt to them is not keeping up. According to the 2025 UN State of Food Security and Nutrition report, Africa was the only region where hunger and malnutrition increased this year. Without urgent adaptation, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that agricultural productivity in parts of Africa could drop by up to 20% by 2050.

It is expected that Bill Gates foundation’s new investment will scale farmer-led, evidence-backed innovations that strengthen rural livelihoods and food systems amid growing climate threats.

It will expand technologies and approaches already showing results, including mainly digital advisory services such as Mobile apps, SMS, and other platforms that deliver timely, tailored information to help farmers make informed planting decisions and manage risk, including support for the AIM for Scale initiative, which aims to reach 100 million farmers across Africa, Asia, and Latin America by 2030 .

Other solutions will focus on promoting climate-resilient crops and livestock including carieties that withstand drought, heat, and emerging pests while improving yields and nutrition

Among other approaches such as soil health innovations aim to enhance productivity, and reduce emissions—supported by a $30 million partnership with the Novo Nordisk Foundation to advance soil science research, it said.

The statement issued by Bill Gates Foundation ahead of COP30 stresses that the new commitment builds on partnerships that were expanded or launched through the foundation’s COP27 pledges and are already reaching millions of farmers. Examples include:

Launched in 2023, this global partnership delivered AI-powered SMS weather forecasts to nearly 40 million farmers across 13 Indian states during the 2025 monsoon season, helping protect millions of acres of crops, it said.