Agriculture Action Day
Agriculture-based climate solutions
Report

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From the content group to the Champions

The Agriculture Action Day at COP 23 aimed to enhance understanding of ambitious climate actions in agriculture that are essential to achieve the adaptation and mitigation goals of the Paris Agreement, as well as of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The thematic day brought together key partners to a wide diversity of Party and non-Party stakeholders to jointly raise awareness and reinforce momentum for enhanced climate action and ambition. The proposed actions offer agriculture-based climate solutions, that prepare the ground for future generations.

Climate change already affects agriculture and food security - without urgent action, millions more people will be at risk of hunger and poverty. Evidence indicates that agriculture absorbs approximately 22% of the economic impacts of medium- and large-scale natural disasters in developing countries. Agriculture alone bears over 80% of the economic impacts of droughts, which in many developing countries are becoming an increasingly common occurrence.

Simultaneously, there is also considerable potential to reduce emissions and enhance carbon sequestration through sustainable agriculture and forestry practices and land management as well as through interventions and measures across the entire food system. Indeed, unsustainable approaches to managing land over the past decades have resulted in approximately 33% of land being moderately or severely degraded — trends that must be reversed. Furthermore, global levels of food loss and waste are estimated to account for about 8% of total anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, livestock supply chains currently account for nearly 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions. More widespread adoption of (existing) enhanced husbandry practices could reduce these emissions by 20-30%. Many of these mitigation benefits can be achieved while supporting adaptation and enhanced agricultural productivity and output. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organiation (FAO) is currently working with partners and funding from the Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) in 17 countries to increase productivity of livestock in order to reduce enteric methane emissions and improve smallholders livelihoods, which reduces their vulnerability to climate change. More so than almost any other sector, agriculture offers considerable potential to enhance climate change adaptation and mitigation while delivering sustainable development co-benefits — including more and better employment, women's economic empowerment, and enhanced natural resource management.

Deliberations during the Agriculture Action Day highlighted the important progress that is being achieved through already established and new multi-stakeholder engagements, while also sending a clear message: Parties and non-Party stakeholders must significantly scale up investment, action and ambition in this sector.

1. **Short term (2018) and mid-term (2020) priority actions from the agriculture perspective that could have significant impact and deliver concrete results aligned with the long-term aims of the Paris Agreement and feed into the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue are:**

Despite this progress, there was broad consensus among the Agriculture Action Day participants that investment, action and ambition in agriculture will have to be dramatically scaled up in the years to come. Concrete areas for improvement include:

In the short term:

- *Enhance and invest in knowledge and information.* Enabling conditions need to be created towards enhanced national climate action. In particular this will include supporting and advocating for countries to improve their agricultural emissions inventories, including livestock. Additional analyses are needed to better identify the institutional barriers and market failures that are inhibiting broader adoption of climate-resilient and low-emissions agricultural practices in individual countries, regions and communities. Additional investments are required to generate and disseminate the data needed to inform policy decisions at the macro level, as well as investment decisions at the field and farm level. In doing so, it is critical to close the knowledge and capacity gap between developed and least developed countries.
- *Build capacity to address barriers to implement climate action.* Agricultural producers require additional capacities to understand the climate risks and vulnerabilities they face, and respond accordingly. To ensure such support is provided on a continuing basis, extension services should also be strengthened. Addressing financial capacity gaps is similarly important. Many farmers, herders, foresters and other agricultural producers need additional capacity to effectively utilize financial services.
- *Scale up public and private climate finance flows to agriculture, and use them in a catalytic manner.* Climate finance flows continue to favor mitigation over adaptation, and focus overwhelmingly on energy systems and infrastructure. These imbalances should be addressed. Emphasis should be placed not only on scaling up climate finance for agriculture and food systems, but also ensuring it is used to address barriers and leverage and unlock additional public and private investment, rather than be used for business-as-usual support.

In the medium term:

- *Strengthen a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder dialogue towards more integrated approaches.* Integrated approaches to landscape management will require enhanced coordination of policy and climate action across multiple public and private entities. For example, since agriculture is responsible for about 70% of all water withdrawals and 70-80% of forest conversion, there is a strong need to ensure coordination between the agricultural, and water and forest sectors when addressing climate change.
- *Incentivize public-private partnerships.* Strong dialogue and collaboration between the public and private sectors is key to ensure alignment between public policy and private sector investment decisions in agriculture and throughout the entire food system. Public-private partnerships also provide an important basis to pool human and financial resources to scale up climate action on the ground.

Marrakech Partnership

2. **New initiatives or commitments on climate action announced at COP 23.**

On 14 November 2017, CCAC partner countries will announce agriculture climate actions they will take. This will be recorded in the **CCAC "Bonn communiqué"** which shall include an acknowledgement of the agriculture sector as a significant contributor to the global climate challenge. It generates half of global anthropogenic methane emissions—primarily from livestock and paddy rice cultivation—as well as a substantial portion of the world's black carbon from open burning of agriculture residues. Agriculture is also impacted by climate change, and the threat of greater food insecurity is especially acute for smallholder farmers, including women, and those living in poverty. Yet solutions exist that can reduce emissions while increasing productivity, building resiliency, and improving the livelihoods of farmers.