

Submission on Agriculture to SBSTA by the Food, Agriculture and
Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)
Submission jointly prepared and endorsed by FANRPAN and Mary
Robinson Foundation - Climate Justice (MRFCJ).

Subject: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, paragraph 76 of Decision [-/CP.17]: Views from Parties on issues related to agriculture referred to in paragraph 75¹.

General Remarks: FANRPAN and MRFCJ welcome this opportunity to address issues related to agriculture for the exchange of views in the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) at its thirty-sixth session and for future work on agriculture under UNFCCC.

Recommendations for consideration by SBSTA:

1. Establish a work programme under the UNFCCC on agriculture.
2. The work programme should address the adaptation and mitigation aspects of agriculture and the important links between the two in the context of sustainably managing natural resources and ensuring food and nutrition security.
3. The UNFCCC should take a human-centred, climate justice approach to issues of food and nutrition security and agriculture. The focus should be on building resilience, meeting people's needs and promoting evidence-based policies that safeguard human rights.
4. The gender dimensions of food and nutrition security and the prominent role of women in food production and the agriculture value chain must inform all aspects of the work programme.
5. The work programme should be informed by the research, tools and experience of local and international, academic and civil society organisations working on food and nutrition security, agriculture and related issues.
6. Work on food and nutrition security and agriculture under the Convention should be linked to other relevant work under the Convention including; LULUCF; REDD+; NAMAs; capacity building; climate finance; adaptation planning and Nairobi Work Programme.

¹ Paragraph 75 of Decision -/CP.17:

"The Conference of the Parties,

75. Requests the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice to consider issues related to agriculture at its thirty-sixth session, with the aim of exchanging views and the Conference of the Parties adopting a decision on this matter at its eighteenth session".

Background to these recommendations:

Climate justice and the right to food

The right to food is one of the most basic rights of humankind. Not only is it one of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, but it has been reflected in a series of UN Conventions ranging from the Rights of the Child, to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Despite these commitments, hunger, under-nutrition and malnutrition are unacceptably widespread and the impacts of climate change are set to compound the problem. The 925 million men, women and children who are already food insecure and who contribute least to the causes of climate change; now stand to bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change. It is estimated that by 2050 up to 25 per cent of world food production could be lost as a result of climate change, water scarcity and land degradation resulting in an increase of 10-20 per cent in the number of people going hungry.

Climate justice links human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its resolution equitably and fairly². This approach should inform work undertaken by the UNFCCC on the impacts of climate change on food and nutrition security and the role of agriculture in food production. Key to this approach is the need to put people first, to understand the needs and rights of farmers, pastoralists, fisher folk, men and women to access food and water, to build resilience, and to benefit equitably from the transition to a green economy. While science and technology need to inform our actions, alone they will not lead to inclusive, sustainable and equitable results.

The work of the UNFCCC on agriculture should address the needs of policy makers, farmers and consumers to understand the multiple factors that affect food security; from climate and environment to politics and power. The approach should be informed by human rights and strive for equity and justice. In the absence of predictable seasons, farmers need access to land and inputs, protection from risks, and the skills, training and information to produce the food they need to feed their families and provide a livelihood. Consumers need access to reliable, affordable and good quality sources of food – those not directly involved in food production are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change on global food supplies.

² Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice

Addressing gender equality

Any work undertaken by the Convention in the field of agriculture should be fully cognisant of the role of women in food production, processing and nutrition. Between 60 and 80 per cent of the food produced in most developing countries is produced by women – despite the fact that women own less than 2 per cent of the land.

Women are primarily responsible for feeding their families and ensuring good nutrition. Likewise women and children are amongst the most vulnerable to malnutrition, particularly during pregnancy and the first 1000 days of life. The World Development Report 2012³ states that *‘Women now represent 40 per cent of the global labour force, 43 per cent of the world’s agricultural labour force, and more than half the world’s university students. Productivity will be raised if their skills and talents are used more fully. For example, if women farmers were to have appropriate technologies, the same access as men to quality seeds, fertilizers and other inputs, maize yields would increase by almost one-sixth in Malawi and Ghana.’* Underestimating the role of women in food production will severely hamper the world’s ability to feed a growing population in a climate constrained world.

Approaches such as Climate Smart Agriculture⁴ are laudable steps in the right direction, however they must embody and enable gender equality, so as to protect vulnerable women and men and provide equal opportunity to benefit from new technologies and farming techniques.

³ World Bank (2012) World Development Report; Gender equality and development. The World Bank, Washington DC.

⁴ Definition of climate smart agriculture: agriculture that sustainably increases productivity, resilience (adaptation), reduces/removes GHGs (mitigation), and enhances achievement of national food security and development goals – www.fao.org

Addressing adaptation and mitigation in all aspects of food production

Agriculture is widely acknowledged as a major contributor to climate change contributing 14 – 30 per cent of global greenhouse gases. However, too often not enough is said about the sector's potential to mitigate the effects of climate change and how agriculture can be part of the solution. Agriculture is consistently misrepresented in climate change agendas, resolutions and protocols where it is addressed mainly as an environmental issue with little regard for its major contributions to livelihoods, food and nutrition security and resilience.

With the world's population set to reach 9 billion by 2050, agricultural production will need to increase by 70% in order to meet demand. For a sector that is heavily dependent on climate, innovative action is required to intensify agricultural productivity and achieve food and nutrition security, adapt to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This is most critical for small holder farmers whose livelihoods are subject to multiple shocks and stresses that can increase household vulnerability and lead to poverty. A report by the World Bank⁵ notes that, in agriculture-based countries, where agriculture is critical for economic development, transforming smallholder systems is not only important for food security but also for poverty reduction, as well as for aggregate growth and structural change. It is therefore mandatory to adopt and adapt available technologies as well as invest in new technologies to sustainably intensify agricultural production and ensure food and nutrition security in Africa and worldwide.

While farmers around the world focus more on increasing food production, the quality of food and its impact on nutrition and the environment can be neglected. While there is need to increase food production in a climate smart manner, an increase in the volume of high value and nutritious foods should also be addressed in order to feed the world's growing population.⁶

Agriculture has both adaptation and mitigation challenges and there are many responses that can result in synergies and win-wins if the issues are addressed together. Adaptation and mitigation strategies must rapidly shift from purely environmental concerns to incorporate the social and economic threats and opportunities posed by climate change.

⁵ World Bank (2008) World Development Report 2008; Agriculture for Development. The World Bank, Washington DC.

⁶ Bouis & Hunt (1999) Linking food and nutrition security: Past lessons and future opportunities. Asian Development Review 17: 168–213.

Linked responses – working together

Regionally and globally, policies developed for climate change, forest management, water resource management and food security are incoherent. The UNFCCC can play a role in informing an enabling and coherent policy environment for agriculture and food production in the context of climate change. In the recent past, Africa and a large number of agro-based economies strongly supported the inclusion of agriculture in the UNFCCC negotiations. Climate Smart Agriculture and sustainable agriculture strategies have the potential to enhance resilience, and reduce emissions while increasing food production.

Enhancing linkages with ongoing work on disaster risk management and avoided deforestation and afforestation at the international level would reflect the challenges being faced by farmers and pastoralists coping with the impacts of climate change on their livelihoods. This requires linkages to other processes within the UNFCCC as well as collaboration with the many actors outside the UNFCCC who have been conducting work in this field.

Civil society organizations have a key role to play in advancing bottom-up and people-centric policies. Bringing the voices of the affected rural communities into the negotiation arena would help to accentuate the urgency of the problem and illustrate the value of linked approaches to inter-related climate and land management problems.

In conclusion, FANRPAN and MRFCJ recommend that the SBSTA establishes a work programme on agriculture. The work programme should adopt a climate justice approach that is informed by human rights, and in particular focuses on the role that women can play in increasing food production and feeding the world's hungry. The work programme should enable synergies in addressing adaptation and mitigation to climate change, while ensuring important linkages to other UNFCCC processes and the work of organisations outside the UNFCCC. Finally, the work programme on agriculture should be reflective of the needs of communities most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

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