

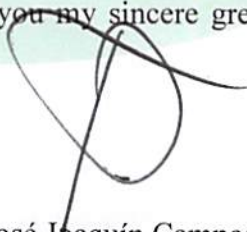
March 16th, 2012
DG-112/2012

Dr. Karen Christiana Figueres
Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention
on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
Haus Carstanjen
Martin Luther King Strasse 8
53175 Bonn
Germany

Dear Dr Figueres,

I congratulate you and the COP in their seventeenth session in Durban for recognizing the importance of agriculture in mitigation and like to take this opportunity to propose the discussion of a new approach towards agriculture by the SBSTA in its 36th and future sessions: Climate Smart Territories. Based on our long experience in research and development in agriculture and natural resources we are developing this approach in several Latin American territories and see great scope for its application in other parts of the world. Its greatest strength is that it allows for an optimum use of the synergies and the reduction of negative trade-offs between mitigation, adaptation, rural development and the use of scarce natural resources such as water, energy, soils and biodiversity.

I take this opportunity to convey to you my sincere greetings and high appreciation for your work.


José Joaquín Campos Arce
Director General



Submission by the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE)

Views to the issues related to agriculture referred to in Paragraph 75 of Draft decision [-/CP.17] of the Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and Paragraph 76 of Draft decision [-/CP.17] of the Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention.

The Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) is a regional organization that aims to increase human well-being and reduce poverty in rural areas through education, research and technical cooperation, promoting sustainable management of competitive agriculture and natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through its almost 40 years of postgraduate education, research and technical cooperation in the region of Latin America and The Caribbean, CATIE and its partners have developed agricultural systems that can help mitigate and adapt to climate change and variability, and therefore welcome the COP 17 recommendation to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to include agriculture as a separate agenda item of SBSTA 36 in Bonn. The views of CATIE on agriculture in the context of climate change are the following:

General framework: Agriculture and livestock are land uses highly interconnected with the use of energy, water, biodiversity, ecosystem services and soils, and provide the world's population with food and rural population with means of living. If well managed, these land uses have a great potential to sequester carbon and reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as from the application of agrochemicals, soil management and from decomposition of manure and solid wastes. Actions to realize this potential, however, may affect the use of natural resources and ecosystem services, as well as the capacity to provide food and livelihoods. Climate change may affect the potential of agriculture to mitigate through its effect on the availability of water, energy, ecosystem services and good soils. Many of these interrelations cannot be managed at the farm level, in particular when farms are small and vulnerable, nor by individual farmers. This means that the focus of the SBSTA discussions should be on agriculture in its local and territorial context, considering the co-benefits and trade-offs of mitigation in the agricultural sector in relation to the use of energy, water, biodiversity, ecosystem services and soils, as well as in relation to the capacity to produce food and livelihoods. The different impacts of climate change on each sector as well as the role of good governance at different levels to facilitate climate intelligent actions at the territorial scale should be considered. This will require enhanced actions at international, national and local scales in assessing existing knowledge and technologies as well as the processes available for generating and disseminating knowledge and technology.

Agriculture and food production: To feed the increasing world population, while at the same time reducing emissions and adapting to the changing availability of water, biodiversity, energy, ecosystem services and soils, agriculture will need to become more efficient in its use of resources, as well as in the distribution of its benefits. Since climate change will directly affect food production, models and mechanisms need to be improved or developed to allow more accurate and reliable projection of

impacts as well as predictions and early warning of extreme events at national and local scales. Mitigation efforts should not endanger a nation's capacity to produce food.

Agriculture and synergies with other sectors: From long term field experience at the territorial scale, CATIE has developed the concept of Climate Smart Territories (CST) as an ecosystem approach to the agricultural sector; SBSTA may wish to consider workshops on this concept to explore the viability of such territories for mitigation, while optimizing the co-benefits and reducing the negative trade-offs with adaptation, water use, energy use, food security, biodiversity and ecosystem service provision. Climate Smart Agriculture and similar initiatives can contribute greatly to the development of Climate Smart Territories but have to be coordinated with similar efforts within the forestry and other sectors.

Research and technology transfer: Research and technology transfer within the agricultural sector should focus on improving the efficiency of the use of water, energy and soils as well as on synergies between food production and biodiversity conservation. The real potential of achieving mitigation, adaptation and improved food security is a key issue; e.g., through studies of the management of soil organic material in agricultural systems. This research will also need to identify the vulnerability to climate change of the local natural resources, the agricultural crops and the agricultural systems. It is important that such research considers existing traditional and local knowledge and technology, respecting intellectual property rights.

Financing: Mitigation in the agricultural sector in developing countries needs seed funds in order to access the human and financial resources needed to achieve the desired changes in the sector. In addition, for mitigation to become successful, it will require financing from public and private resources for research and development in adaptation and in improving local governance, allowing adaptation, mitigation, socioeconomic and biodiversity base lines to be established and integrated land use planning to take place at the local, territorial and national scales.

Capacity building: Climate Smart Territories require strengthening of local, interdisciplinary teams of professionals based on identified needs. Capacity building processes with local, national or regional centers will contribute to sustainability of the interventions. Topics to be included are climate smart agriculture, soil and water conservation, ecosystem based adaptation, integrated pest management, agroforestry and agrosilvopastoral systems, MRV for mitigation and MRV for co-benefits of mitigation.

Proposal: work program on agriculture under SBSTA. In the light of all the above, CATIE would like to propose the establishment, at COP 18, of a work program on agriculture that considers Climate Smart Territories.