

Statement by Argentina during the SBSTA workshop on early warning systems and contingency plans in the agriculture sector (2 June, 15 to 18 pm, Bonn)

Argentina associates itself to the statement delivered by the G77 and China, and thanks the presenters and speakers that gave interesting insights during this workshop.

Our country reaffirms the view that the Group has contributed positively during SBSTA-40 in paving the way for conducting these in-session workshops that will be held consecutively in SBSTA-42 and SBSTA-44 according to COP-20 decision. As the G77 and China, Argentina is willing to engage constructively on the SBSTA-42 technical and scientific discussions in the two workshops mandated for these sessions, taking into account the conclusions of SBSTA 38, and towards the consideration at SBSTA 43 of the reports of both workshops. In this sense, as mentioned by the G77 and China the reports need to be comprehensive and to capture the views of developing country parties, taking into consideration that agriculture is the backbone of developing countries' economic systems and that there is an urgent need to increase the adaptive capacity of agriculture to deal with the adverse effects of climate change. This continues to be the key priority for developing countries in light of the particular vulnerabilities of the agricultural sector and its relationship with the livelihood of millions, food security and poverty eradication.

In this sense, as mentioned by the G77 and China and by many other countries today, the area of early warning systems addressed by today's workshop merits specific attention, as there is enough evidence to support that climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of adverse climatic events, such as torrential rains, floods, long droughts, frost, and hail, among others, threatening seriously the future development of the agricultural production systems, according to conditions of each country or local area. Moreover, the increase of temperatures is generating favorable conditions for the proliferation and outbreak of pests and diseases that will make agriculture productive systems even more vulnerable.

Under this scenario, Argentina's territory faces huge challenges both in terms of the increase of average annual precipitations, leading to intense floods, as well as of droughts. Besides that, there have been increases in temperature, and all of these factors have significantly affected the livestock and agricultural systems, particularly the development and yields of crops.

These two phenomena could induce situations that will not allow us to go back to previous production conditions. Important challenges make it necessary to produce more food in different climatic conditions, which will require increasing the adaptive capacity of the sector, through the strengthening of national capacities and fostering the transfer of technologies and also international cooperation for their endogenous development.

Given these scenarios, it is important to develop EWS and we are encouraged by the sharing of national cases and experiences in this workshop that helps us to enhance technical and scientific information under SBSTA,

Regarding the experience of our country in the development of early warning systems and contingency plans, some of the strategies used in Argentina in the field are:

a. Climate forecasting systems

These systems are composed by a series of agricultural weather stations strategically placed in the country to census weather events. These stations provide instantaneous data available for the producer, as well as information to be interpreted by specialists, to generate forecasts. Therefore, through these surveys climatic behavior patterns can be established, being very useful for taking production decisions and for anticipating extreme events.

b. Combined early warning systems

Through satellite images, information of weather stations and historical records, vegetation dynamics and the masses of air and water vapor are monitored, and reports and notices are made available to regional producers and neighboring communities. These systems are used to anticipate the occurrence of insect pests, fungal and bacterial diseases, and conditions of high susceptibility for animal diseases, as well as to develop forecasts of rain in order to plan farming.

In this line, it can also be mentioned the relationship between early warning systems and response to vegetation fires since they represent a major threat to natural and productive systems of the country.

c. Costs of erosion

Technicians from the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA) performed valuations for several areas and estimated that soil degradation caused by erosion means losing 450 kilograms of soybeans per hectare per year in some regions, what had food security implications. In turn, software that estimates how much is lost due to water erosion as there is a real relationship between the soil lost and crop yield was developed. From these studies, INTA seeks to raise awareness to producers to enable and improve practices to prevent erosion. This is a necessary step to prevent further climatic events generate further erosion, being that the reason why it can be described also as a strategy of early warning system.

d. Contingency plans for extreme events

At national level, there are programmes and legislations to respond in a timely manner to emergencies and / or agricultural disaster, with the aim to prevent the damage caused by climate change impacts, that significantly affect the production and / or agricultural production capacity, threatening the continuation of family farming, directly or indirectly

affecting rural communities. In this way, in 2009 the law for a "National System for the Prevention of Farming Emergencies and Disasters" was approved. This Law seeks, in relation to the impacts of climate change, to regulate strategies aimed at financial assistance for the reconstruction of the productive systems impacted by climate change effects; aid to farmers to reduce losses during the emergency and / or agricultural disaster; recovering the productive capacity of production systems, and reducing vulnerability to future events.

In addition, in Argentina technological tools to optimize the management of surveys for actions aimed at reducing the damages of climate disasters are applied. The information thus integrated into a computer georeferenced system allows to have maps of critical areas (risk and interest) allowing for quick action in cases of weather disasters. Moreover, numerous studies have been developed in terms of EWS and in particular in terms of causes and consequences of floods. In addition, in terms of desertification and extreme weather events, the National Action Programme for the Combat against Desertification has been conceived as a fundamental part of the sustainable development national strategy.

Moreover, two projects have been approved by the UN Climate Change Adaptation Fund of the Kyoto Protocol and are currently under development, which have also components related to enhancement of EWS development and contingency plan. Those two projects are:

- The Unit for Rural Change project (UCAR) to support small producers from the North of Argentina to face flooding and drought. Such Project is focused on activities in the Northern provinces that are very affected by recurrent events like droughts and floods, including by the development of public insurance schemes for small producers, in the context of poverty eradication and economic and social development.
- The Project "Increasing climatic resilience and improvement of sustainable land management in the southwest of the Buenos Aires province" to reduce vulnerability of livestock and agricultural systems in the southwest of the Buenos Aires province.

In this context, in relation to the SBSTA work, we would like to reaffirm the proposals made by the G77 and China that will be submitted electronically as mentioned by Egypt, as the SBSTA needs to address the following issues in order to assist developing countries on early warning systems and contingency plans, taking into account the diversity of their agricultural systems, the differences in scale and the short, medium and long-term challenges:

- Provide access to scientific and technical information and means of implementation of early warning systems and contingency plans
- Assist governments and communities with expertise in developing early warning systems and contingency plans in relation to extreme weather events and their effects;
- Encourage the collaborative participation by farmers in any contingency plans in relation to extreme weather events and climate change that will affect them;
- Recognise the role of rural and poor people, especially women and the youth, in the assessment of risk and vulnerability of agricultural systems to different climate change scenarios at regional, national and local level;

- Provide means of implementation to developing countries in the development of their early warning systems and contingency plans, taking into consideration that developed countries should play a role in technology transfer and capacity building for developing countries on adaptation
- Support research in addressing climate change related contingency planning and early warning systems, including in terms of potential economic impacts
- Support research and development to promote better understanding of the trends as well as exchange of experiences on the use of appropriate control and management methods for climate-related pest and diseases;
- Exchange information and experiences on insurance systems, in order to protect agricultural activities from extreme weather and climate events

Finally in this context we look forward to the report that the Secretariat will prepare on this workshop, together with the report of the workshop on risk and vulnerability assessments, for its consideration at SBSTA 43 as agreed in SBSTA 40, in order to continue exchanging scientific and technological points of view in relation to adaption of agriculture to the effects of climate change, in accordance with SBSTA mandate. In this regard, we would be cautious at this stage in relation to the EU idea of linking this SBSTA work with TEMS and WS2, as this would exceed the agreements reached in SBSTA 40 for the celebration of the four workshops.

In this way, we look forward not only to the celebration of tomorrow's workshop on risk and vulnerability assessments, but also to engage constructively in the two additional workshops to be celebrated in 2016 and to discuss their reports in SBSTA 43 and 45, respectively.

Thank you very much Mr. Co-chair.