

Submission by South Africa

ISSUES RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

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South Africa welcome the opportunity to submit its views on the current state of scientific knowledge on how to enhance the adaptation of agriculture to climate change impacts while promoting rural development, sustainable development and productivity of agricultural systems and food security in all countries, particularly in developing countries, taking into account the diversity of the agricultural systems and the differences in scale as well as possible adaptation co-benefits.

There is no doubt that climate change remains a top priority for most developing countries, particularly in Africa where agriculture is key to the livelihoods of many people. South Africa, in its climate change response strategy, recognises the importance of adaptation in agriculture and the need to achieve food security and the importance of technology transfer. By focusing on reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience, key issues of strategic national, regional and international importance such as food security, sustainable development, eradication of poverty, job creation and sustainable livelihoods will be addressed.

It is critical for developing countries like South Africa to focus primarily on reducing vulnerability to the impact of climate change, on enhancing resilience, and encouraging adaptation actions that take into account the diversity of the agricultural systems and the differences in scale as well as possible adaptation co-benefits. Adaptation actions must be aimed at increasing resilience, and take into account the concerns of vulnerable groups, particularly rural people, women, youth and children. Therefore, there is a need to develop a gender sensitive disaster and vulnerability risk reduction, and to include vulnerable groups from planning to implementation of adaptation strategies such as ecosystems management approaches that can provide multiple benefits. These vulnerable groups and communities must be afforded opportunities to develop and implement their own indigenous strategies as well as participate in the discussions and development of national and international adaptation policies for agriculture.

South Africa has identified the following critical areas that SBSTA needs to address in order to support and assess the current state of scientific knowledge on how agriculture responds to climate change. This must take into account the need to promote rural development, and the sustainability and productivity of agricultural systems and food security. This applies to

all countries, but developing countries also need to take into account the diversity of their agricultural systems and the differences in scale, as well as possible adaptation co-benefits

- Assessment of future research needs;
- Assessment of adaptation needs at regional, national and local scale;
- Assessment of possible adaptation co-benefits at regional, national and local scale;
- Assessment of current adaptive capacity (stress testing, early warning systems, national planning, disaster response, institutional capacity, infrastructure maintenance, risk and vulnerability assessments, pests and diseases, research, etc);
- Assessment of technological needs relating to adaptation and the promotion of technology transfers;
- Development of institutional arrangements for proper coordinated response;
- Adaptation actions must be country driven and be aligned with national developmental goals and objectives;
- Capacity building:
 - Provide access to information and means of implementation of agricultural adaptation (especially finance and new technologies), particularly for developing countries;
 - Recognise the role of rural and poor people especially women and youth in implementing adaptation programmes and activities at local levels;
 - Recognise the importance of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems and skills in regard to sustainable practices, and ensure that indigenous knowledge be valued and widely disseminated.

In conclusion, there is a need to build on community resilience to enhance adaptation strategies, as well as to share knowledge and experiences that will be an investment towards enhanced productivity and sustainability. It is therefore critical that public-private partnerships be encouraged and supported to enhance the response of agriculture to climate change.