

SUBMISSION ON AGRICULTURE
BY THE GAMBIA
ON BEHALF ON THE GROUP OF LEAST DEVELOPED
COUNTRIES

Background

In Durban the COP requested 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 to enable the Conference of Parties adopting a decision on this matter at its eighteenth session in Doha, Qatar. The COP also invited Parties and accredited observer organizations to submit to the Secretariat, by 5 March 2012, their views on the issues referred to above. It is in this respect that pursuant to paragraphs 75 and 76 of COP17 LCA Outcome, the LDCs are making a submission on its views on agriculture for consideration at the SBSTA-36 in Bonn, Germany.

The LDCs are the most vulnerable group of countries to the adverse impacts of climate change and they have the least capacity to deal with such challenges. Poverty is rampant in all LDCs and poverty eradication still remains the key development priority of their governments. As such, technical and financial support to the LDCs is key for them to adapt to additional challenges brought by climate change. Parties need to give special attention to the need of the LDCs as stipulated in Article 4.9 of the Convention.

The LDCs welcome the COP decision on agriculture to refer the issue to SBSTA as it will give an avenue to broaden discussions that will include issues related to adaptation in agriculture and not only mitigation as was the case in LCA discussions under Cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions. Any decision on agriculture should enhance the implementation of Article 4, paragraph 1(e), of the Convention. The LDCs look forward to the SBSTA to work with the Nairobi Work Programme to provide scientific and technological advice on agriculture as outlined in Article 9 of the Convention.

Agriculture is important to all LDCs. In most LDCs, well over 80% of the economically- active population, particularly small holder farmers and pastoralists rely on agriculture for livelihoods, employment, and income-generation. In addition, the sector contributes significantly to GDP in most LDCs. However, agricultural production has been declining in the recent past affecting food security and livelihoods. The challenges arising from climate change will worsen the situation. Agriculture is not perceived in terms of its contribution to the growth process through increased productivity, but mainly in the context of sustaining food security. Climate change is threatening food production systems and therefore the livelihoods and food security of hundreds of millions of people who depend on agriculture in the group.

Agriculture is the sector most vulnerable to climate change due to its high dependence on climate and weather. As a result, **adaptation in the agriculture sector is very key to the LDCs as evidenced in the NAPA submissions**. At least 80% of all projects identified in the NAPAs are in the agriculture sector. Issues of food security are very key to the LDCs in particular its availability, access, utilisation, and reduction of post harvests losses. Food production in LDCs is mainly from subsistence and marginal farmers, and as such respecting their rights to arable land is very important.

Almost all economies of the LDCs are agriculture- based. As such, LDCs will pay particular attention to issues related to trade of agriculture products and any efforts by Annex 1 countries to adopt protectionist measures under the guise of mitigation and which negatively impact LDC trade in agriculture. In this view, the LDCs urge all parties to abide by the COP decision adopted in Cancun in particular paragraph 90 of the Cancun agreements which reaffirms that “the Parties should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development in all Parties, particularly developing country Parties, thus enabling them better to address the problems of climate change; measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.” Furthermore, nothing in the discussions should lead to a curtailing of policy space for LDCs to take measures in their full right to improve their domestic food security.

Issues of Interest to LDCs under SBSTA discussion on Agriculture.

1. Assess the state of knowledge and information: There is a lot of existing high-quality scientific and technical, traditional knowledge and information on adaptation in agriculture in the context of climate change. It would be useful for SBSTA, through its Nairobi Work Programme, to look at what already exists and provide a scientific and technical platform to accelerate on-the-ground participatory implementation as well as to identify the gaps where additional analysis is required.
2. Cooperation on research and development: Promoting the cooperation on new research and sharing existing knowledge between farmers’ communities, countries and regions would benefit adaptation activities. This could include technology development and transfer, identifying and sharing best practices on adaptation, enhancing access to information, and education and training.
3. Modelling in Agriculture sector. There is a need for more information on the anticipated impacts of climate change at the national and sub-national levels related to agriculture. As such, modelling and downscaling of the global and regional models to local situations in LDCs is very important. Many regional climate models lack a level of details necessary to guide adaptation activities locally. Additionally, information is needed to inform adaptation on both short and long term impacts of climate change, such as extreme events and water availability. The LDCs look for SBSTA, through the Nairobi work program, to provide its scientific and technological information on this.
4. SBSTA will have to look at an integrated approach to the issue of agriculture that includes livelihoods, traditional knowledge, the cultural components of agriculture, and considers the entire lifecycle of agricultural inputs, such as soil fertility and water management. Taking into consideration as many aspects as possible through integrated approaches that combine modern science with

traditional knowledge, could provide a more solid technical and scientific basis for the development of a more sustainable agriculture.

5. Measurement and methodological issues: SBSTA is expected to provide information on the current state of scientific knowledge on measurement, methodologies, and the estimation of greenhouse gas emissions; however, it must be noted that the LDCs are responsible for few emissions in the agriculture sector, compared to industrialized countries. The OECD countries' agriculture emissions far exceed those of the rest of the world. LDCs, are therefore concerned about the tradeoffs involved in discussions about agriculture under article 4.1 (c) (which stresses mitigation) that involve developing countries and LDCs in particular. Our urgent priority is to address agricultural adaptation challenges and enhancing our knowledge about climate impacts on our agriculture sector and food security. As such, our interest is in expediting the Work Programme on Loss and Damage that can help LDCs to understand and initiate a global response to address the impact of the slow onset of climate change on our agriculture and food systems and provide the support our economies and our food system needs to cope with the livelihood, food security and economic losses we will suffer to cope with both rising temperatures and increased climate related disasters. No SBSTA discussion on agriculture should therefore lead to new commitments by developing countries on mitigation, but rather step up action on how to safeguard our agriculture sector against the worst effects of climate change.

It must also be noted that OECD countries are advancing on an international partnership called the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases that is addressing research and technology associated with agriculture mitigation. The SBSTA should not duplicate this work, but rather assess the initiatives already underway regarding agriculture mitigation by Annex 1 countries and assess what further role the UNFCCC should play in "the development, application and diffusion, including transfer, of technologies, practices and processes that control, reduce or prevent anthropogenic emissions."

6. Rather, through the Adaptation Framework, coordinated by the Adaptation Committee, Parties should assess the state of development, transfer, efficiency of technology, and practices that enhance adaptation and mitigation to climate change: This could include issues related to mapping of vulnerable communities, assessment of vulnerabilities and practices for adaptation; enhanced access and utilization of technology and information, including best practices, local and traditional technology, capacity building support, and south-south cooperation ; integrated soil fertility and water management and pest and diseases management.

Processes Already in place THAT the UNFCCC SBSTA CAN USE IN ITS WORK ON AGRICULTURE.

SBSTA submissions will provide the basis for exchanging views among Parties in Bonn and are intended to decide how agriculture should be addressed at COP 18 in Qatar . There are a number of avenues to expand the fora for discussion on agriculture within the UNFCCC. . These include:

- Holding workshops and expert meetings: through the Nairobi Work Program to explore agriculture in more detail. The Nairobi Work Program could produce workshop reports which will capture key issues to inform the discussions under article 4.1 (e) under the adaptation framework.

- Request technical papers on given topics by international agencies such as the FAO and academic institutions such as: the impact of slow temperature rise on food production in LDCs and regions such as sub-Saharan Africa; effective low-cost, non-proprietary technologies and traditional knowledge that can help specific countries adapt to climate change; climate impact assessments on agriculture and food security on a country by country basis, starting with LDCs:
- Recommend to COP to request that IPCC prepare briefings or assessments in particular in relation to local future impacts of climate change on agriculture in the LDCs.
- Cooperation with other bodies under the Convention like the CGE, Technology Executive Committee, the Adaptation Committee in particular to seek cooperation with other groups. For example, research and systematic observation (RSO) on specific research issues could be undertaken jointly with SBI.
- Examine existing pilot projects in developing countries that address adaptation to to inform the process and its work programme.