

New Zealand submission to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

Views on issues related to agriculture

March 2012

1. At COP 17, the Conference of the Parties invited Parties to submit their views on issues related to agriculture (decision [-/CP.17] Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, paragraph 76 refers). New Zealand welcomes this opportunity, and looks forward to participating in the exchange of views at SBSTA 36.

Issues related to agriculture – the case for ongoing work in the SBSTA

2. The agriculture sector must face a set of complex challenges in order to feed a growing world population. Climate change makes this all the more challenging. The magnitude, complexity and interconnectedness of these challenges make a clear and compelling case for SBSTA to begin a structured and holistic consideration of issues related to adaptation and mitigation in the agriculture sector.

3. New Zealand wishes to emphasise the ultimate objective of the Convention (Article 2 refers), and in particular the fundamental importance of food production emphasised in the second sentence. In this respect we wish to point to the need to take into account the relationship between agriculture and food security and the synergies and tradeoffs between adaptation and mitigation. Work in SBSTA on issues related to agriculture can facilitate efforts to enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity of agricultural production systems to the physical impacts of climate change, and facilitate efforts to mitigate agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and removals so that the agriculture sector can contribute to global mitigation in a manner consistent with its potential to mitigate, and its need to produce food for a growing population.

4. New Zealand also considers that these efforts on adaptation and mitigation need to be placed within the context of sustainable development, as all countries must be able to satisfy their basic development needs, and in the context of food security. Furthermore, the physical and geographical differences of agricultural systems, different national circumstances, and temporal considerations for adaptation and mitigation need to be taken into account. Sound science should underpin all efforts.

5. Environmental effectiveness and resilience will be significantly enhanced with broad participation. All relevant actors in agriculture need to be engaged in adaptation and mitigation efforts. To this end we stress the importance of focusing efforts to enhance efficiency and productivity of agricultural production systems in a sustainable manner. It is through this frame that the global community has the best opportunity of overcoming a number of economic, risk-related, political, institutional, technical and societal barriers and thereby enabling the sector to more fully realise the opportunities that exist.

6. New Zealand considers that ongoing work in SBSTA on agriculture will:

- Provide an opportunity to share experiences, good practices in, and lessons learned from the development of policies and practices for adaptation and mitigation in agriculture.
- Strengthen synergies between the UNFCCC and other relevant organisations.

- Assist Parties and other actors to make well-informed and science-based decisions on how to maximise synergies between food security, adaptation and mitigation.
- Promote enhanced and coordinated investment in the agriculture sector, including by governments, farmers, the private sector, organisations, foundations, and other funding agencies.

Defining the scope of discussions in SBSTA on issues related to agriculture

7. The Convention, in its Article 9, establishes the subsidiary body for scientific and technological advice (SBSTA) to provide the Conference of the Parties and, as appropriate, its other subsidiary bodies with timely information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to the Convention. With this in mind, New Zealand considers that work done in SBSTA on issues related to agriculture should include the following aspects:

- i. **Assessment of the state of scientific knowledge on the physical impacts of climate change on agriculture.** This could include, inter alia, consideration of: IPCC assessment reports and relevant IPCC special reports; other relevant scientific reports; work conducted in other UNFCCC programmes, e.g. Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change; inviting work from, or making recommendations to, other UN bodies or organisations.
- ii. **Assessment of the state of scientific knowledge on the measurement and estimation of greenhouse gas emissions and removals in the agriculture sector.** This could include, inter alia, consideration of: relevant scientific literature; national communications and greenhouse gas inventory reports; experiences with measuring and estimating greenhouse gas emissions and removals in the agriculture sector at all scales, in different environments and under different agricultural systems.
- iii. **Consideration of the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of adaptation and mitigation in agriculture and their synergies.** This could include, inter alia, consideration of: technical and economic mitigation potential in the agriculture sector; identification of technical, institutional, and/or socio-economic barriers to the successful and sustainable adoption of adaptation and mitigation practices; consideration of synergies (win-win) and trade-offs in existing and emerging adaptation and mitigation practices.
- iv. **Provision of advice on scientific programmes, international cooperation in research and development related to climate change and agriculture.** This could include, inter alia, consideration of: relevant international/regional research efforts, e.g. Consultative Group of International Agriculture Research (CGIAR), Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases, EU Food Security, Agriculture and Climate Change Joint Programming Initiative (FACCE-JPI), other national and sub-national programmes; agriculture sector- (industry/farmer) led initiatives.
- v. **Identification of ways and means to support capacity-building, information sharing, education and training of all relevant stakeholders on adaptation and mitigation in agriculture.** This could include, inter alia, consideration of: programmes, including existing UNFCCC programmes, to support capacity building in relevant agriculture research and policy development; educational programmes, e.g.

fellowships, exchanges, scholarships, awards; relevant programmes of international organisations, e.g. FAO, OECD, UNDP, etc

- vi. **Identification of innovative, efficient and state-of-the art technologies, practices, processes and know-how for adaptation and mitigation in agriculture and advice on the ways and means of promoting their development and/or transfer.** This could include, inter alia, consideration of: specific adaptation and mitigation practices and experience in implementing such practices; mitigation and adaptation benefits of proven agricultural technologies, practices, processes and know-how, i.e. those that have been implemented effectively by farmers for a sustained period of time, and consideration of the lessons learned in their effective implementation; ways to encourage greater research into and the development of new technologies and innovations related to agriculture.
- vii. **Consideration of the ways and means that existing or emerging institutional arrangements under the UNFCCC can support adaptation and mitigation in agriculture.** This could include, inter alia, consideration of: existing processes, mechanisms, instruments and tools under UNFCCC; new or emerging processes, mechanisms, instruments and tools under UNFCCC, e.g. Technology Executive Committee and Technology Mechanism.
- viii. **Sharing of information of relevant activities within and outside the UNFCCC process to facilitate efficient planning of work.** This could include, inter alia: sharing of information on meetings, workshops, conferences and events related to agriculture adaptation and mitigation that are in the process of being planned, or have been scheduled by organisations and institutions, including other Rio Conventions, UN agencies and programmes, international and regional organisations, national governments, the research and scientific community, farmers' organisations, the private sector, and civil society. Ensuring that discussions on agriculture in other parts of the UNFCCC process are appropriately informed with the most up-to-date scientific knowledge.

Exploring possible modalities of work on issues related to agriculture

8. To progress discussions on issues related to agriculture, the SBSTA could, as appropriate, employ the following modes of work:
 - Organise workshops, expert meetings, and consultations on specific topics.
 - Invite accredited observer organisations and other relevant experts, practitioners and relevant organisations and initiatives to participate in specific activities, as and when it is deemed necessary or useful to receive their input.
 - Prepare reports and technical papers on specific topics of interest.
 - Request other relevant and appropriately qualified institutions and organisations to prepare reports and technical papers on specific topics of interest.
 - Provide regular progress reports to the COP, e.g. annually.
9. In addition to the above modes of work, SBSTA should look at its existing programme of work and any relevant areas that need to be identified and built upon.
10. New Zealand looks forward to engaging on the above issues with other Parties.