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PRESS RELEASE

Efforts to end world hunger must be aligned with tackling climate change warns UN's top climate change official Christiana Figueres on World Food Day

(Daegu, 16 October 2013) – World Food Day has been celebrated every October 16 since 1945 and this year the focus is on Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition.

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), today said: “Food security and climate change are interlinked. Hundreds of millions of people are undernourished or face food insecurity, and climate change is making it harder to feed a growing population.”

“Aside from permanent shifts in climatic conditions which will affect farming, climate change is causing more and more extreme weather, for example tropical storms, floods and droughts which can push subsistence farmers and others living in food insecurity into dire circumstances.”

“If we are to sustainably feed the world’s population in the future we need to see action today that prepares farmers around the world for the impacts of climate change.”

But positive action is already taking place, it just needs to be scaled-up, Ms. Figueres continued:

“At the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw, as part of the Momentum for Change initiative, we will showcase a set of activities that are working on the ground to curb emissions or help people adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change and improve their lives, also in the field of agriculture. By shining the light on such concrete examples of what exactly is possible, we can inspire policy makers and others to take action.”

Momentum for Change has already showcased activities such as CBA Namibia, which is pioneering farming techniques which will help adapt to climate change’s impacts. HARITA in the Horn of Africa also works to provide affordable insurance for farmers to improve their food security.



For further information and to schedule interviews with Christiana Figueres specifically on the issue of Momentum for Change activities, and for information on which “lighthouse activities” will be showcased in Warsaw, please contact Sarah Marchildon at momentum@unfccc.int.

About HARITA

HARITA, a project by Oxfam America and REST in Ethiopia, was recognized as one of the 2011 Momentum for Change lighthouse activities. It has broken new ground to integrate disaster risk reduction and affordable insurance by allowing poor farmers to pay insurance premiums with their labor through risk reduction projects in their communities. Scaling from 200 households in one village in 2009 enrolled in the financial package to more than 13,000 enrolled households in 43 villages in 2011, by end of 2012 HARITA aims to have reached approximately 70 villages and 15,000 households.

Cash-poor farmers are given the option of working for their insurance premiums by engaging in community-identified projects to reduce risk and build climate resilience, such as improved irrigation or soil management. In the event of a seasonal drought, insurance payouts are triggered automatically when rainfall drops below a pre-determined threshold, enabling farmers to afford the seeds and inputs necessary to plant in the following season and protecting them from having to sell off productive assets to survive. In partnership with local microfinance institutions, the model allows farmers the option to bundle insurance with credit and savings.

More prosperous farmers will pay their insurance premiums in cash. Over time, as the poorest farmers become more prosperous, they can “graduate” from the need to pay through labor, and begin paying in cash, helping to ensure the project's commercial viability and long-term success.

One of the key achievements in 2012 is that farmers are now purchasing insurance either with partial or full cash instead of purchasing it entirely with labor, reflecting progress towards the establishment of a commercial insurance market in rural Ethiopia.

Building on the success of HARITA, the activity is currently being expanded within Ethiopia and in Senegal as part of the R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, led jointly by Oxfam America and WFP. Expansion to two additional countries is also planned over the next five years.

For more information, please see: http://unfccc.int/secretariat/momentum_for_change/items/6636.php

About CBA Namibia Harnessing Coping Strategies Via a Holistic Approach for Community Adaptation to Climate Change (CES)

CBA Namibia was recognized as one the 2012 Momentum for Change lighthouse activities. The goal of this community-based adaptation programme (CBA) activity is to pilot six coping strategies to climate change vulnerability in local communities, with the expectation that these efforts can be duplicated on a large scale to communities in similar situations. The six strategies include: the innovation and use of energy-efficient stoves (the EzyStove), agro-forestry and vegetable production under micro drip. They help sustain food security and income generation with no adverse impacts on the land and other natural resources.

EzyStove, for example, is a fuel-efficient wood-burning stove, developed with local users and Swedish company Veryday. It is produced locally and provides a solution that replaces cooking over an open fire. The stove reduces harmful smoke, decreases deforestation, creates local jobs and drastically reduces carbon dioxide emissions.



The initiative is a response to communities' concerns over alarmingly high rates of deforestation and increasing respiratory illnesses due to the widespread practice of cooking over open fires. The CBA activity focuses on awareness-building interventions on climate change, coping strategies and nutritional needs, as well as social mobilization of community members. It uses a participatory approach throughout the activity cycle: planning, development, implementation and resource mapping, all to assist in retaining sustainability once the activity is completed.

For more information, please see: <http://unfccc.int/secretariat/momentum_for_change/items/7094.php>

About Momentum for Change

Momentum for Change aims to create a public platform that raises awareness about concrete mitigation and adaptation actions being implemented by a wide range of stakeholders at regional, national, or local level. Momentum for Change seeks to demonstrate the multiple benefits of addressing climate change and to transform misperceptions surrounding taking action on climate change.

About the UNFCCC

With 195 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 192 of the UNFCCC Parties. For the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. In Doha in 2012, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which establishes the second commitment period under the Protocol. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

See also: <<http://unfccc.int/press/items/2794.php>>

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