



Climate Action Network-International (CAN-International) is the world's largest network of civil society organizations, with more than 800 members in over 93 countries, working together to promote government action to address the climate crisis.

1st September 2013

Submission to SBSTA: Addressing Agriculture in the UNFCCC

Introduction

The agriculture conclusions from SBSTA 38 June 2013 (FCCC/SBSTA/2013/L.20)

"The SBSTA invited Parties and admitted observer organizations to submit to the secretariat, by 2 September 2013, their 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. This should take into account the diversity of the agricultural systems and the differences in scale as well as possible adaptation co-benefits

Recommendations for a general approach to agriculture within the UNFCCC process.

The importance of agriculture

Global food production and thus food security are threatened by climate change. Every person in the world depends on agriculture for his/her very sustenance; most of the rural poor depend on agriculture for their livelihoods while agriculture has tremendous importance as a means of driving sustainable development. Local and mostly small-scale food producers feed the vast majority of world population¹. Climate change puts all of this at risk. The sustainability of agriculture and enhancement of food security, now and into the future, are of absolutely vital importance. Agricultural activities contribute about 15 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (plus an additional 10 percent from clearing forests for agricultural land). Addressing these emissions will be critical if we are to achieve the UNFCCC goal of limiting average global temperature increase to two degrees Celsius.

Policy goals

Thus, to the greatest extent possible, policies at all levels should be designed and implemented to meet four goals:

1. In sustainable ways, maintain and increase the security of food supplies for food insecure people, particularly in developing countries;
2. Enable small-scale food producers and other vulnerable populations to become more resilient to climate change;

3. Sustainably reduce emissions from the agricultural sector; and
4. Reduce emissions from the conversion of other land to agriculture.

Guiding principles

Countries agreed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to prevent dangerous climate change: to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. Climate policies that encompass agriculture must include safeguards and approaches that:

- ❖ Protect and promote ecosystems and biodiversity,
- ❖ Protect and promote rural people's gender-equitable access to natural resources,
- ❖ Protect and promote food security and the right to food,
- ❖ Protect and promote the rights of indigenous peoples and local populations,
- ❖ Promote poverty reduction and climate adaptation
- ❖ Protect and promote farm animals' health and ability to express natural behavior, and
- ❖ Protect and promote the rights of vulnerable groups, in part by requiring sufficient transparency, consultation, and active involvement of affected communities by supporting:
 - Adaptation policies that are embedded appropriately in the local context.
 - A rights-based approach during design and implementation of adaptation policies, ensuring the active involvement of the affected communities. This includes having access to relevant information (transparency) and a functional complaint mechanism.

Priority issues - Improving ecosystem health and building resilience

- ❖ Systems for biodiverse, socially and gender equitable, and resilient agriculture need to be developed, demonstrated, tested, and implemented so as to transform many currently unsustainable agricultural systems into ones which improve the health of ecosystems, communities, and cultures, even in the face of a changing climate.
- ❖ Small-scale food producers should be enabled to practice farming systems that 1) are resilient in the face of climate change, 2) are biodiverse and 3) strengthen the ecosystems of which they are part.
- ❖ Agro-ecological small-scale food producers and other forms of sustainable, ecological and climate resilient food production should be promoted.

Strengthening climate-resilient agriculture through the UNFCCC

- ❖ Climate policies relating to agriculture should be in line with the guiding principles identified above, and reflect recommendations from relevant international institutions including the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development (IAASTD) amongst others.
- ❖ In the current UNFCCC agenda, discussions on climate and agriculture should be coordinated and consistent with discussions relating to adaptation, technology, mitigation, LULUCF, REDD+ and flexible mechanisms.

Contributing to policy priorities

Funding for agriculture must address both adaptation and mitigation, and prioritize sustainable, adequate, and predictable sources of adaptation finance.

Recommendations for the UNFCCC

The UNFCCC should facilitate the potential for countries to:

- ❖ Promote biodiverse climate-resilient small-scale agriculture based on agro-ecological principles;
- ❖ Support appropriate technology development and transfer that enhance sustainability of food production systems;
- ❖ Include safeguards which protect biodiversity, equitable access to resources by rural peoples, food security, the right to food, the rights of indigenous peoples and local populations, as well as the welfare of farm animals, while promoting poverty reduction and climate adaptation;
- ❖ Explore opportunities to sustainably reduce emissions from the agricultural sector; and
- ❖ Reduce emissions from the conversion of other land to agriculture.
- ❖ For developing country agriculture the priorities should be sustainability, climate resilience, and food security, and Parties must provide resources for promoting biodiverse, resilient small-scale agriculture and appropriate technology development and transfer.

Developed countries must progress toward full and comprehensive accounting of the emissions associated with their agricultural activities, including bioenergy production and use.

ⁱ ETC Group. 2009. Who will feed us? Communiqué Issue 102, p. 4.