



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

FAO'S WORK ON FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

FAO's mandate is to achieve food and nutrition security for all. The world has been making good progress in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. However, **about 800 million people** are still hungry today. Climate change threatens to undercut and possibly reverse the progress we have made.

FAO plays an important role in assisting member countries to understand the challenges and opportunities for the agricultural sectors and the range of possible responses. To this end, FAO is supporting member countries to develop their capacities in integrated approaches, such as agroecology and climate-smart agriculture, as well as through Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), national adaptation plans (NAPs), and nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs). These are a part of FAO's commitment to support member countries participate in important international processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Decisive action on climate change
is crucial to eliminate hunger.



FAO'S APPROACH TO FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- 1.** FAO stands for food security and poverty eradication. Our work is to ensure food security especially under the impacts of climate change. The central importance of food security needs to be recognized in the post-2020 agreement. FAO supports UNFCCC as the central forum for climate change.
- 2.** The agricultural sectors are particularly exposed to the impacts of climate change and climate variability. The impacts are already felt today. We need to create more resilient food production systems that are better adapted to the changing climatic conditions especially in (poor) developing countries.
- 3.** At the same time, the global population grows. We need to sustainably increase the productivity of agricultural sectors. The right policies to ensure food security and build resilience and productivity typically come with substantial benefits, particularly for the rural poor. Better watershed management, improved soil quality and gender empowerment are only some examples.
- 4.** In addition to ensuring food security and adapting to the impacts of climate change, mitigation and the potential to sequester emissions in soils and trees can be an important additional benefit. There will be challenges for the sector, but there will also be opportunities – if we get the global policies right. That means, looking holistically at all the services farmers provide – not only food production.
- 5.** This will require a paradigm shift from the dominant input intensive approach to more sustainable and resilient food systems. This change has a cost – a cost that poor farmers, fisherfolk, foresters, and indigenous communities, especially in developing countries, cannot pay alone.
- 6.** Climate change can only be addressed in an “all of government” approach. Therefore, Ministries of agriculture, fisheries and forestry need to be at the table when countries develop and implement domestic policies to address climate change and national positions for the negotiations. Making agriculture and our food systems more resilient and sustainable should be an overarching political and development priority, not only for the agricultural sectors.

THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATION PROCESS

FAO has an important role to play in the negotiations under the Convention, where ensuring food production is not threatened is a primary objective. FAO is currently an observer to the UNFCCC and provides technical advice to member countries.

Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change states that:

“The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient 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”.

Negotiations under the UNFCCC are nearing an important milestone with the post-2020 global climate agreement scheduled to be concluded in Paris in December 2015.

The landmark UNFCCC was adopted in 1992 and came into force in March 1994. It has near universal membership with 195 countries having ratified the Convention. Negotiations under the UNFCCC have continued over the intervening years. In addition to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 (which entered into force in February 2005), key decisions were reached in Bali in 2007 with the establishment of the Bali Action Plan and in Copenhagen in 2009 with the Copenhagen Accord. Copenhagen began a shift away from a prescriptive ‘top down’ approach to a broader, more flexible, inclusive ‘bottom up’ approach. The negotiations at Paris will need to strike a delicate balance between these approaches.

Negotiations on a post-2020 agreement began following a decision in Durban in 2011, where countries agreed to deliver a new agreement to cover the period beyond 2020. They also agreed to a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol to cover the period to 2020. The post-2020 negotiations occur under the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP). A key element of the post-2020 agreement is that all countries will put forward contributions. The contributions, known as Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), will comprise three basic elements – adaptation, finance and mitigation – with different countries likely to emphasize the different elements.

Negotiations under the ADP are occurring in two parallel work-streams:

- » The post-2020 global climate change agreement
- » Enhancing mitigation action in the period prior to 2020



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