



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
**Climate Change,
Agriculture and
Food Security**



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COMMUNIQUÉ

Live from COP21: Spotlight on agriculture at the Paris climate talks

Both part of the cause of climate change, but also part of the solution, agriculture is central to any debate on global warming. Yet a detailed treatment of agriculture has yet to enter any of the agreements linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Paris climate change talks currently under way are unlikely to reach an explicit deal on agriculture. But an important side event has highlighted how countries are leading the way, by including action on agriculture in their Intended Nationally Determined Commitments (INDCs). These are commitments that governments were asked to make in the run-up to this month's crucial UN Conferences of the Parties (COP21) meeting in the French capital.

The side event, *From farmers' fields to landscapes: food security in a new climate regime?* explored how addressing agriculture and its connection with global warming is critical if real inroads are to be made against poverty and hunger. Organised as part of the Global Landscapes Forum, widely considered to be the world's leading platform for discussing land-use issues, the event, held today, sought to move agriculture further up the climate change agenda. It brought together representatives from agriculture, forestry, water and energy, law and finance to debate how to leverage a historic opportunity for shaping the world's development agenda in decades to come.

Sessions at the meeting focused on strategies for ensuring food security under climate change through policies, integrated land use, new technologies and practices, and the importance of empowering women and youth to ensure inclusion.

A central issue under discussion was whether a new climate regime should contain provision for food security – or if this is a gap in the INDCs. A number of countries included agriculture in their INDCs, and the success of any new climate agreement that COP21 produces will, to a significant degree, depend on the ambition of these promises.

Sessions at today's event aimed to investigate whether INDC pledges will be enough to deliver food security for billions of people and reduce agriculture's climate change footprint. They also posed key questions about what further actions, commitments and finance are needed to safeguard the future of food and farming in a climate-constrained world.

"An overwhelming majority of countries have expressed their interest in transforming the agricultural sector to be more climate resilient and reduce emissions," said Bruce Campbell, Program Director of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), which co-hosted the side event. "This is an excellent start – but climate finance needs to include agriculture as a key sector, and support countries to implement the plans they have laid out." Other partners who co-organised the meeting were the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), the Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and Pricewaterhouse Cooper (PwC).

Addressing agriculture is critical to achieving global climate change goals, both in terms of adaptation and mitigation. Agriculture is being severely impacted by climate change, but it can also contribute significantly to meeting mitigation targets.

"Agriculture plays a fundamental role in food security, so if climate change problems are not addressed now, it will have serious implications for the future," said Michael Hailu, Director of CTA. "Agriculture contributes to climate change, but it is also a victim. So we need to look at some of the solutions that agriculture can offer for adapting to climate change and, in some cases, to mitigating it as well."

Also attending the event were a number of high level officials, including several heads of state. President of Palau Tommy Remengesau Jr called for urgent global action on climate change if small island states, such as the one he heads, are to be saved. "There is still time to tackle climate change, the greatest challenge of our times, all countries and all people have a role to play in building a more sustainable future," he said. "In Palau, we are working hard to do our part and to take those next steps that will define our future. We have committed to provide 20 per cent of our

energy through renewable resources by 2020 and are already three-quarters of the way there. We have also committed to become carbon neutral by 2050.”

The head of one of the world's largest agricultural commodity trading companies warned that agriculture would be substantially affected by climate change. "It is absolutely a reality that climate change is going to significantly impact agriculture," said Olam International chief executive Sunny Verghese. "It impacts it both from the nexus it has with water, and the nexus it has with micro-climate as well, so it is probably the most important driver to future agricultural production, productivity and therefore price."

During today's rich programme, various approaches to tackling food insecurity were highlighted, including new initiatives in research for development, ambitious targets for the agricultural sector and inspiring land and seascape management proposals. Concrete examples illustrated what can be achieved, when individuals and organisations tackle food security through a climate lens.

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