

# REGIONAL EXPERT GROUP ON FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

REPORT OF MEETING  
(14–16 OCTOBER 2008)



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## INTRODUCTION

### MANDATE

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) received a financial contribution from FAO in the preparation of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Food Security, FAO, Rome, 3–5 June 2008. Activities foreseen included amongst others, convening a regional expert group consultation in order to assess the recommendations of the High-Level Conference (HLC) and recommend follow-up actions on climate adaptation for food security in the South Pacific. The Food Security and Climate Change Expert Group (FSCCEG) meeting was conducted from 14 to 16 October 2008.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE WORK

The overall objective of this work was to regionalize the outcomes of the HLC with the view to better understand how food security and climate change programmes could be made operational at the field level in the Pacific region. It should thus contribute to the UN systems, in particular FAO's efforts in incorporating climate change into its current and future food security programmes. The outcome of this work should contribute to:

- ~ the understanding of agricultural and climate change experts in the Pacific region on how climate change would further complicate the challenges that the Pacific is already facing on food security;
- ~ a better understanding of roles and actions that could be taken by different stakeholders and a clear pathway forward to implementation; and
- ~ the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (PCCR) deliberation that is being organized by the SPREP on the same week.

### BACKGROUND

Securing world food security in light of the impact of climate change may be one of the biggest challenges the globe will face in this century. More than 932 million people in the world today suffer from hunger, most of them living in developing countries, the very countries expected to be most affected by climate change.

In June 2008, world leaders and policymakers converged in Rome for the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Food Security. In this meeting, challenges were discussed and ways in which to safeguard the world's most vulnerable populations were deliberated on. There is an overwhelming consensus that all will need to act now. Throughout the three days of events, forty-two Heads of State and Government, one hundred high-level Ministers and sixty non-governmental and civil society organizations from one hundred eighty-one member countries discussed the challenges that climate change, bioenergy and soaring food prices posed to world food security.

Following significant discussion and negotiations, the Conference concluded with the adoption by acclamation of a declaration calling on the international community to increase assistance for developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and those that are most negatively affected by high food prices. All parties and regions were asked to act on this HLC Declaration with utmost urgency.

An Expert Group Meeting was convened in the Pacific region by the SPREP, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the FAO Pacific Islands Office to assess the recommendations of the HLC and recommend follow-up actions. The FSCCEG is comprised of Pacific island government representatives from the agriculture and climate change community, UN organizations (FAO, UNDP, UNEP) and the regional institutions co-organizing the meeting (see Table 2).

## STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING

### TASKS AND ACTIVITIES

The FSCCEG was conducted jointly with another regional meeting, the Climate Change Roundtable. The Climate Change Roundtable is a meeting of SPREP member countries, donors and other partners in the climate change arena.

The following tasks were carried out:

- ~ discussion on the definition of food security;
- ~ introductory presentations by SPREP on the paper prepared for the Rome meeting (see chapter 1), FAO on the outcomes of the Rome meeting and SPC

on the definitions of food security and what are some of the current problems and issues faced in the food security sector;

- ~ discussions ensued on conceptualization of the Rome Declaration to the Pacific context which included linking the Rome Declaration to some of the frameworks that already exist in the region, such as the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change and Action Plan (2006–2015), Niue Leaders Declaration on Climate Change (2008), Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework (2005–2015) and the Pacific Plan (2005);
- ~ the FSCCEG presented a summary of their deliberation on the final day of the Climate Change Roundtable to be included in the Facilitators summary document.

## PRELIMINARY OUTPUTS

### DEFINITION OF FOOD SECURITY

In accordance with FAO (2001), food security is defined as people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their needs for an active and healthy life. Food security is therefore central to human development and to many of the major human rights treaties.

### REGIONALIZING COMMITMENTS OF THE ROME DECLARATION ON FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The FSCCEG in their deliberation agreed to outline their preliminary assessment of the Rome Declaration as related to food security and climate change in Table 1. The measures presented at the left corner of the table are texts taken directly from the Declaration, whilst the regional action is presented in the right column.

TABLE 1: **REGIONALIZING THE COMMITMENTS OF THE DECLARATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY: THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOENERGY**

SHORT-TERM MEASURES	REGIONAL ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Respond to urgent requests for assistance</li> <li>~ Agencies assure resources for 'safety net' operations</li> <li>~ Agencies enhance co-operation in emergencies</li> <li>~ Deliver food in emergencies as soon as possible</li> <li>~ Donors to provide budget support for low-income countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Pacific Disaster Net</li> <li>~ Red Cross/ Red Crescent Programmes</li> <li>~ Humanitarian aid from regional donors</li> <li>~ FAO direct inputs in response to soaring food prices</li> </ul>
IMMEDIATE SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND TRADE	REGIONAL ACTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Revise policies to help farmers increase production and supply markets</li> <li>~ Improve access to fertilizers, seed and technical assistance for poor farmers</li> <li>~ Moderate fluctuations in grain prices and stockpile food</li> <li>~ Minimize restrictive trade that increases price volatility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ CROP Agencies, FAO, IFAD</li> <li>~ FAO direct assistance to vulnerable groups in rural communities</li> <li>~ Regional development partners</li> <li>~ Doha Development Agenda</li> <li>~ Promote Aid for Trade</li> </ul>
MEDIUM AND LONGER-TERM MEASURES	REGIONAL ACTION
<p>Policies to support poor in rural, peri-urban and urban areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Strengthening infrastructure for food distribution, improved shipping services</li> <li>~ Making agriculture attractive to youth</li> <li>~ Developing urban agriculture Fiji's 'Plant 5 a day' campaign for backyard gardening</li> <li>~ Retaining low value tuna for storage and sale</li> <li>~ Raising awareness of the nutritional value of local foods</li> <li>~ Mainstreaming climate change into food security programmes</li> </ul>
<p>Increase resilience of food production systems to climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Assess vulnerability of tuna and coastal fisheries, and agriculture, to climate change</li> <li>~ Diversifying subsistence fishing through inshore FADs and small pond aquaculture</li> <li>~ Salt/drought/flood tolerant 'climate ready' crops</li> <li>~ Crop varieties resistant to pests and diseases favored by climate change</li> <li>~ AusAID, EU, USAID, FAO and GTZ</li> </ul>
<p>Address challenges and opportunities posed by biofuels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Thorough assessment of impacts on food security</li> <li>~ Biodiesel from coconut oil?</li> <li>~ Cassava in PNG and Fiji</li> </ul>

[ → ]

[ → ] Table 1 continued

Step up investment in science and technology for food and agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Centre for Crops and Trees</li> <li>~ Centre of Excellence for Atoll Agriculture</li> <li>~ Improve biosecurity and disease eradication measures</li> <li>~ Incorporate benefits of traditional agriculture</li> <li>~ Aquaculture</li> <li>~ Post-harvest for fish in rural areas</li> <li>~ Address difficulties in achieving economies of scale</li> </ul>
Monitor and analyze food security in all its dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Forecasts of fish needed for food security by 2030</li> <li>~ Use of HIES and censuses to measure success of policies to achieve food security for rapidly growing populations</li> </ul>
CROSS CUTTING ISSUES	REGIONAL ACTION
Implement the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in the context of the challenges of climate change and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Undertake vulnerability analyses for all food production sectors</li> <li>~ Raise awareness of threats to food security and available solutions at the community level</li> <li>~ Provide incentives for economic growth to increase the options for achieving food security</li> <li>~ Appropriateness of agriculture courses taught in tertiary institutes (e.g. USP)</li> <li>~ Link to Mauritius Strategy and UNFCCC Bali Action Plan</li> </ul>
SUMMARY OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES FOR ACTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Diversify production systems to adapt to climate change</li> <li>~ Boost local production of crops and fish through investment in science</li> <li>~ Make agriculture attractive to youth</li> <li>~ Strengthen infrastructure for food distribution</li> <li>~ Reduce the burden of higher prices</li> <li>~ Develop peri-urban and urban agriculture</li> <li>~ Raise awareness of nutritional value local foods</li> <li>~ Implement effective biosecurity</li> </ul>	

### INPUT TO THE PACIFIC CLIMATE CHANGE ROUNDTABLE (PCCR)

The FSCCEG met on the fringes of the PCCR to review the outcomes of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security held in Rome in June 2008 and to identify ways to implement the Declaration from the HLC in the Pacific region.

The Expert Group recognized that climate change would exacerbate threats already affecting food security, and pose new challenges. They concluded that there is an urgent need to build the resilience of food production systems to climate change, particularly by diversifying the options for growing crops and harvesting fish. Other issues of relevance to the region that the Expert Group identified include the need to step up investment in science and technology for food and agriculture, undertake vulnerability analyses for all food production sectors, and mainstream climate change adaptation into national policies, strategies and programmes related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries. They also highlighted the need to maintain biodiversity and apply an ecosystem approach.

The Expert Group recognized that work in this area needs to be aligned closely with the Mauritius Strategy for the sustainable development of small island developing states and the UNFCCC Bali Action Plan.

FAO will convene the next meeting of the Expert Group to finalize the plan to ‘regionalise’ the High Level Declaration and implement the adaptations needed in the Pacific to provide food security in the face of climate change.

## THE WAY FORWARD

The results of the FSCCEG presented in this report is not exhaustive but a beginning that should further be elaborated in future meetings. The FSCCEG discussed and agreed that FAO will continue to host and convene the next meeting of the FSCCEG to finalize the regional implementation plan for the Rome Declaration.



TABLE 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

NAME OF DELEGATE	TITLE / CONTACT	ORGANIZATION
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NAME OF DELEGATE	TITLE / CONTACT	ORGANIZATION
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NAME OF DELEGATE	TITLE / CONTACT	ORGANIZATION
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*FAO Regional Programme for  
Food security and Sustainable Development  
– Sub-programme 2.3:  
Climate Change Preparedness,  
Adaptation and Mitigation*

*Main thrust*

- ~ Improving coordination among regional and national disaster mitigation and management institutions and systems, with a focus on information flow and capacity building among farmers to prepare and respond to natural disasters and adapt to and mitigate the impacts and threats of climate change.
- ~ Build on the work being initiated by SOPAC aimed at assisting PIF countries to develop their National Disaster Management Plans and by SPC Land Resource Division (LRD) to ensure that PICs can access crop, forestry and agro-forestry PGR that will help them manage natural disasters and climate change, protection of ecosystems vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change, and appropriate irrigation technologies.
- ~ Participatory methods, such as Landcare concept and approach of mobilizing local communities at grassroots level in care of the land, to be promoted actively in partnership with the successful ongoing Landcare movement in Australia. Attention to improved land management and soil fertility improvement strategies, participatory development of land use plans and action frameworks, and the development and use of GIS tools, towards improved sustaining soil fertility and agricultural productivity.

## *Sub-programme results*

### *Intermediate outcomes*

- ~ Wider choice of agricultural technologies (e.g. drought resistance/salt tolerance options).
- ~ Adoption of appropriate natural resource management regimes by major stakeholders (in coastal area and other critical ecosystems).

### *Immediate outcomes*

- ~ Agricultural research and development activities focused on increasing the range of crop species and varieties, with resistance or tolerant traits, initiated and/or sustained at national and regional levels.
- ~ Integrated coastal management processes set in motion and action plans at national, sub-national and community levels prepared and under implementation.
- ~ Land and water use strategies and action plans prepared and implemented at national and local levels, including environmental hotspots such as degraded areas, critical watersheds and wetlands.
- ~ Close coordination and harmonization of sub-programme activities with climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives of other regional and national institutions, including disaster preparedness and mitigation programmes.

### *Main outputs*

#### **Component 1: Agricultural Diversification**

- ~ Enhanced regional and national knowledge base on the issues, potentials, opportunities and constraints relating to crop diversification, covering existing crop and tree genetic resources and resistant/tolerant traits of crops and trees (pest, drought and salt) identified. Skill gaps, training needs and capacity building strategy and programme determined.
- ~ Laboratory and equipment of the MPPC in Kosrae and CePaCT in Fiji upgraded and operational.
- ~ A climate change adaptation collection (crops and trees) from sources in PICs and internationally possessing desired tolerant traits established in MPPRC or CePaCT.

- ~ Research and development personnel with enhanced knowledge and skills in: a) tissue culture and macro-propagation techniques for selected crops and varieties for utilization in climate change adaptation strategies; b) farming systems development, including soil amelioration/land husbandry and multiple cropping practices tailored to specific circumstances within the region/sub-region.
- ~ National crop improvement programmes focusing on climate change adaptation provided, enhanced PGR collection, and screening, monitoring and performance evaluation procedures in place.

### **Component 2: Integrated Coastal Area Management**

- ~ Enhanced regional and national knowledge base on the issues relating to unsustainable use and management of coastal ecosystems, including coastlines, coral reefs, mangroves and critical watersheds/catchments.
- ~ Suitable species for the rehabilitation of coastal areas and integration into agro-forestry system identified and evaluated, including for salt tolerance, pest and disease resistance, and fast growing characteristics.
- ~ National professionals with enhanced knowledge and skills on plant propagation techniques and maintenance of planting areas under coastal rehabilitation and agro-forestry systems.
- ~ A regional tree seed bank of timber, fruit and nut trees established and made operational through CePaCT.
- ~ Integrated coastal area management (ICAM) approaches for coastal protection piloted and tailored to economic, social and environmental characteristics of the region/sub-regions.

### **Component 3: Land and Water Management and Use**

- ~ Enhanced regional and national knowledge base on the issues relating to unsustainable use of land and water resources, as basis for identifying mitigation and/or adaptation options and frame needed actions.
- ~ National professionals with enhanced knowledge and skills on sustainable land management approaches, soil conservation methods, watershed management and efficient use of water for agriculture.

- ~ Institutional framework developed for participatory management of land and water resources, focusing on rehabilitation of environmental hotspots like degraded areas, critical watershed and wetlands. This includes formation and/or facilitation of grassroots organisations such as Landcare Groups, steering committees and focal points.
- ~ National Land use policies formulated or enhanced.
- ~ Land resource database and GIS established, and national soil laboratories upgraded.
- ~ Research and development programmes on land and water use issues initiated.

#### **Component 4: Technical and Coordination Support to Sub-programme**

- ~ Strategic and operational plans of the entire sub-programme prepared and communicated to all key regional and national organisations and other partners in the region.
- ~ Regular interaction with regional and national institutions responsible for nature resource and environmental management and for disaster preparedness and mitigation (including SOPAC and SPC/LRD).

