

FAO National Consultation on Bioenergy and Food Security in Peru

Bioenergy, and particularly biofuels, have been promoted as a means to enhance energy independence, promote rural development and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. In principle there are many benefits offered by bioenergy developments but these need to be balanced against the impacts on food security and the environment. Thus, it is important to examine the extent to which the economic potential from the industry can boost the agricultural sector for the benefit of the rural poor.

On May 5 the FAO Bioenergy and Food Security Project (BEFS) carried out a national consultation in the city of Lima, with the participation of 30 senior officials from the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Energy and Mines, civil society and private sector institutions in the energy sector in the country.

The BEFS analysis provides an entry point into the issues surrounding bioenergy and food security. The results arising from the analysis should not be seen as definitive but they do provide strong direction in terms of identifying the policy priorities.

During the consultation, the policy conclusions arising from the seven technical components of the analysis, namely *the Agriculture Markets Outlook in Peru the Land suitability for production of bioenergy crops, Water Resources Management, Biomass resources from residues, Biofuel Production cost, Economy-wide Effects and the Household-level Food Security* were presented and discussed. The results of the analysis strongly support the view that it is the management and structure of the sector that is vital to ensure that the gains are maximised and the risks as far as possible minimised.

The BEFS analysis results emphasize the need to carefully consider the use of natural resource for bioenergy production. Hence, the bioenergy sector will only be able to support sustainable development, livelihood promotion and environmental protection if these goals are well-integrated into any bioenergy policy design and implementation.

The diversity across regions in the country does not allow for a one-size fits all rural development policy. This regional difference also influences the bioenergy potential, for example the analysis found that:

- i) Water planning is essential in the costal areas and land panning needs to be considered in terms of water availability.
- ii) There is existing biomass potential in the jungle and better policy support is needed for it to be realized and developed.
- iii) In the Sierra there is high demand for bioenergy, yet the analysis indicate a limited potential for bioenergy development thus alternative strategies for energy provision need to be considered.

The key policy themes are the need for:

- **Planning** across a range of sectors: agriculture, energy environment water forestry and infrastructure among others.
- **Water Management**
- **Enforcement** of policies for environmental protection-forestry management
- Institutional development to link bioenergy policies to support **small farmers**
- Support bionenergy development beyond transport biofuels

The Vice Minister of Agriculture, Ing. Huber Leonidas Valdivia Pinto said: *“The findings will strengthen initiatives in the Agriculture Ministry, there is a great concern on how policies affect food security and in this project food security concerns are at the heart of the analysis.”* The analysis has two main functions. First, it illustrates the use of the tools and secondly, the results, offer a starting point for policy-makers on some key issues surrounding bioenergy

development in Peru. It was stressed that continued use and extension of the BEFS tools are essential to provide a more comprehensive analysis for policy development.

The FAO Representative in Peru, Dr. Roberto Cuevas said *“the BEFS tools and results provide strong support to governments in the debate on bioenergy as well as assist in the dialogue with the private sector. It is precisely these type of events that are essential in supporting this process and for that we thank your participation and contributions.”*

The official launch of the BEFS Peru assessment will take place on October 2010.

The BEFS Project is funded by the German Government. The project is implemented in participating countries in Latin America, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Peru is the only BEFS participating country in Latin America. The national consultation was led by Erika Felix y Yasmeen Kwhaja, FAO Technical Officers in collaboration with national experts.