

Summary

FAO Climate Change Days: Share and Learn

Rome, 21-24 June, 2010

What

The FAO Climate Change Days were held at FAO headquarters on 21-24 June, 2010. From field offices and government counterparts, 34 representatives traveled to Rome to attend. They were joined by over 80 people from headquarters. More than 30 facilitators and as many rapporteurs and resource persons from all FAO departments as well as external partners organized 28 dynamic sessions on a broad range of climate change related topics, in which the participants could discuss current challenges and future plans.

The workshop provided an excellent opportunity for FAO staff and close collaborators working on climate change in offices world-wide to meet in person and discuss the current state of their work and share experiences from ongoing and past field projects. Simultaneously, it was an opportunity to give briefings on the status of FAO's normative work, learn more about various climate change topics and generate ideas for future projects.

How

The workshop started off with an opening session and overview of FAO's priorities and strategies in climate change. Peter Holmgren (Director, Climate, Energy and Tenure Division; Chair of the interdepartmental working group on climate change) talked about the need to align the climate change and food security agendas. Jim Butler (FAO Deputy Director-General) and Stephen Katz (Chief, Knowledge Management and Library Services Branch) stressed the importance of communication, cooperation and knowledge sharing for breaking down the silos and effective delivery of FAO's work. Participants expressed the need for having a common vision on how to address climate change as an organization, and gaining a better understanding of the needs of colleagues in decentralized offices and projects. These issues were further discussed from many angles during the workshop.

The four days of the workshop were structured into sessions with complementing purposes:

- Topical sessions, given in parallel for smaller groups, aimed at giving an overview of the topic and allowing for discussion of key issues based on local examples
- Collaborative sessions gathering all participants on the sharing of good practices and how to integrate work coming from organizationally separated teams within the organization
- Demonstrations of various web-based tools and platforms for accessing and sharing climate change related data and information, networking and e-learning
- One full training day on the EX-ACT carbon balance tool

The facilitated and preplanned sessions of the workshop were complemented by Open Space meetings – impromptu gatherings quickly organised on site to discuss a particular topic in smaller

groups. Feedback from participants included appreciation of the positive and relaxed **atmosphere** of the workshop, which encouraged informal exchange, brainstorming and networking. A feedback survey distributed after the event shows high interest in attending contingent repetitions of the workshop in the future.

Outcomes

A reoccurring point in the discussions throughout the workshop was the need for cross-sectoral approaches and building strategies on a **systems perspective** to address climate change. Participants stressed that making project outcomes sustainable is key. This demands firm anchoring of interventions in local governance structures and finding synergistic solutions for adaptation and mitigation that promote resilient agricultural systems, for example sustainable land and water management. At the same time, it is crucial to have **sufficient information**; baseline data as well as monitoring data and projections, to make informed decisions on the impacts of climate change – and the effect of intervention measures – on different spatial and temporal **scales**. Impact and vulnerability assessments are complex due to various uncertainties, but should support adaptation planning.

The **dissemination of good practices** was also a central topic. Research with active farmer involvement and field demonstrations, financial mechanisms such as micro credits and subsidies enabling policies, strategic partnerships with governments, donors, research institutions and networks were brought up as means in this process.

Strengthening partnerships with other institutions and **improving communication** across organisational and sectoral boundaries within FAO was stressed as being exceedingly important for effective field work. The application of knowledge sharing tools and better organisation of focal points for regions could be helpful in this regard.

A clear need was expressed for strategies to **strengthen the capacities of country offices**. Country offices need to have sufficient information and experience to communicate with donors and take better advantage of funding opportunities. Participants called for trainings on writing funding applications and training packages on climate change issues to be distributed in the regions.

Future

The ultimate purpose of the FAO Climate Change Days was to strengthen a community of practice among people involved in FAO's climate change work. Therefore, the **follow-up activities** after the event are crucial. A mailing list/discussion group using the D-group platform has been set up for FAO staff to continue discussions, inform each other about advances and share documents. A case study publication is being prepared based on contributions from the participants, and the FAO's topical webpages on climate change are being reworked to better communicate information to decentralized offices.

For further information and resource material from the FAO Climate Change Days, visit the event website: <http://www.fao.org/climatechange/ccdays>. Focal point for follow up: Claudia Hiepe claudia.hiepe@fao.org

