



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the United Nations Climate Change Conference - Poznań

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Events convened on Wednesday, 3 December 2008

Mitigation in Agriculture and Rural Areas

Presented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

This event discussed the potential, challenges and co-benefits of mitigation activities in the agriculture sectors, as well as ways forward.

Peter Holmgren, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), outlined key messages and challenges regarding mitigation in the agriculture sector. He highlighted that: agriculture is key for climate change; farmers are at the center of mitigation measures in the sector; and mitigation mechanisms must reach small farmers and rural communities. Regarding challenges, he said that agricultural practices must be improved, and financial and institutional mechanisms should be developed to provide incentives and disincentives for mitigation in the sector.

Jørgen Olesen, Aarhus University, discussed the theory and practice of agricultural emissions mitigation. He noted that restoring degraded land is an important measure, and that Southeast Asia and Latin America have the largest mitigation potential in the sector. He discussed measures underway in Denmark, and said that various incentives, such as taxes, regulation, and financial support, are currently under consideration.

Caterina Batello, FAO, presenting on behalf of Mohammad Ibrahim, Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), discussed opportunities for carbon sequestration in grassland ecosystems. She highlighted a project in Latin America that integrates grassland and agroforestry management with payment for environmental services. She called for more data on emissions and sinks, as well as financing, technology transfer, capacity building, and robust methodologies.

Brent Swallow, World Agroforestry Centre, discussed financial incentives for agricultural mitigation. He described two programmes supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD): RUPES and PRESA. He also highlighted experiences in Vietnam and Africa, and outlined possible negative and positive spillover effects of activities in the sector. He concluded by discussing implications for carbon finance.

Stelios Pesmajoglou, UNFCCC, presented on challenges and opportunities for mitigation in the sector. He described the Secretariat's technical paper, which covers: global mitigation potential and costs; mitigation practices for livestock and manure management and crops and soils; related policies and measures; and recommendations and issues for future work.

Atiqur Rahman, IFAD, gave concluding remarks, and noted that agriculture has high mitigation potential and adaptation and mitigation activities can be "win-win" and act synergistically. He called for incentives and resources for small farmers, development of and access to technologies, and a coordinated, global response, with an emphasis on national- and local-level, participatory action.

Participants discussed: climate impacts on the landscape scale; relevance of adaptation; palm oil production; the definition of degraded lands; negative spillovers; impacts of policies on indigenous peoples; the role of improving agricultural yield; and operationalizing reductions in the sector.



Caterina Batello, FAO, described the negative impacts of poor grazing practices, and the potential of grasslands and pastures for carbon sequestration.

More information:

<http://www.fao.org>
<http://www.agrisci.dk/jpm/jeo>
<http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org>
<http://unfccc.int>
<http://www.ifad.org>

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The New Energy Revolution

Presented by Greenpeace International

This event presented a blueprint produced by the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) and Greenpeace International (GPI) for radically reducing the carbon intensity of the energy sector and improving energy efficiency, part of a broader action plan to combat climate change.

Sven Teske, GPI, introduced "Energy [R]evolution," a report on the potential to create a global energy scenario that would halve carbon consumption by scaling up renewable energy sources, increasing efficiency and decreasing energy consumption. He noted that the proposed scenario is based on proven technologies and that barriers to implementation are political and not technological. He said that the report uses a "back-casting" approach to determine what is needed to prevent the increase of global average temperature beyond two degrees Celsius. He said that this will require per capita average carbon consumption to be reduced to one metric tonne, and noted that such reductions will have implications for equity between developed and developing countries.

Teske then described the scientific approach used for the scenario, noting that the reference scenario was based on the International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook, and that computer modeling was performed by the German Space Agency. He said the scenario considers both energy demand and supply, and noted the need to consider how much renewable energy can realistically be delivered within different time frames. He highlighted the importance of sourcing renewable energy locally, and of making structural changes conducive to reducing consumption. He called for the phasing out of fossil fuel and nuclear power, noting this will affect countries differently depending on their mix of energy sources, and for the decoupling of carbon consumption and growth.

Oliver Schäfer, EREC, questioned why more action has not been taken to reduce the carbon intensity of the energy sector, and called for stronger leadership. He noted that although it took Germany ten years to generate one percent of its energy supply by renewable sources, it only took five more years to raise this figure to ten percent, and said that global growth rates in renewable energy of 30 to 40% were possible. He noted that the European Community was founded on treaties that concerned nuclear and coal power, and that a new energy framework is needed that removes subsidies from these unsustainable energy sources.

Participants discussed: the merits and pitfalls of biodiesel; the energy payback time of renewables (the amount of time a renewable energy technology takes to produce the same amount of energy that went into producing that technology); and whether the scenario could have been based on a more ambitious target.



Audience members during the event.



Sven Teske, Greenpeace International, said that adopting the energy blueprint could save over US\$3 trillion dollars per year compared to the business-as-usual scenario.



Oliver Schäfer, EREC, said that a new framework is needed to support renewable energy.

More information:

<http://www.energyblueprint.info>

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The GEF Experience in Financing Technology Transfer

Presented by the Global Environmental Facility

In this event, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), which serves as the financial mechanism of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), presented its experience in financing the transfer of climate-friendly technologies.

Robert Dixon, GEF, said that the GEF has become one of the largest public sector technology transfer (TT) mechanisms in the world. He noted that during the 17 years since its creation, the GEF has provided support to more than 130 countries for technology needs assessment and national communications, and has allocated US\$2.5 billion to support the deployment, diffusion and transfer of climate-friendly technologies.

Jukka Uosukainen, Chair of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer, Finland, highlighted ongoing efforts to develop a strategy paper on TT and noted that the GEF has focused its attention on facilitating the diffusion of existing technologies, rather than the development of new technologies. He also stressed that financing gaps in certain sectors, such as energy and transport, must be urgently addressed.

Zhihong Zhang, GEF, presented on the GEF's experience with climate change mitigation projects. He noted that the GEF has been engaged in technology development, transfer and diffusion since its creation. He also stressed that the GEF-4 strategic programme for climate change has prioritized, *inter alia*: energy efficient technologies, buildings, and industries; market-based approaches to renewable energy; and sustainable urban transport technologies.

Aram Gabrielyan, Armenia, presented on Armenia's district heating project. He stressed the importance of creating a favorable environment for the private sector, as well as energy efficiency measures carried out through partnerships between municipalities, house owner associations, and the private and public sectors.

N.H. Ravindranath, Indian Institute of Science, discussed the Indian waste-to-energy "biomethanation" project. He explained that the objective of the project was to capture methane emissions while generating clean energy. He highlighted that domestic capacity increased as a result of enhanced cooperation between external promoters and local technology institutions.

Bonizella Biagini, GEF, described the GEF's experience with adaptation projects. She explained that the initial "staged approach" consisted of enabling activities, while current projects aim at reducing vulnerability and increasing adaptive capacity on the ground. She also provided examples of adaptation TT projects, including: technology information transfer in the agriculture sector; infrastructure and technologies for water management; and capacity building, coordination and policy development in disaster risk management.

Participants discussed the need to reduce barriers restricting access to GEF funding by streamlining the project cycle, and ways to link the GEF's efforts more closely with the current Conference of the Parties' activities.



Robert K. Dixon, GEF, said that the GEF supported the transfer of more than 30 climate-friendly technologies in over 50 developing countries.



Zhihong Zhang, GEF, stressed that GEF's funding has leveraged an additional US\$15 billion in co-financing TT projects.



L-R: Robert Dixon, GEF; Zhihong Zhang, GEF; William Ehlers, GEF; Jukka Uosukainen, Finland; N.H. Ravindranath, India; Bonizella Biagini, GEF; Aram Gabrielyan, Armenia.

More information:

<http://www.gefweb.org>

<http://www.nature-ic.am/ccarmenia/en>

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Community-based Adaptation: Small is Beautiful

Presented by CARE International Foundation

This event discussed the merits of community-based adaptation (CBA), possible funding avenues for CBA, and elements of a post-2012 agreement that would facilitate CBA.

Angie Dazé, CARE International, made a case for including CBA in a global climate response. She described a CBA approach that combines an enabling environment with four strategies: disaster risk reduction, building resilient livelihoods, developing local capacity, and addressing vulnerability drivers. She outlined problems with existing adaptation mechanisms for supporting CBA.

Saleemul Huq, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), outlined the treatment of adaptation in the UN climate negotiations. He warned that governments could contribute to the elite capture of adaptation funds if resources are not spent directly on the most vulnerable. He urged participants to contact their Adaptation Fund Board representatives, and said CBA funding from bilateral and multilateral agencies and foundations may be more promising in the short term, given political constraints in the UN climate process.

Heather McGray, World Resources Institute, presented on CBA principles to be included in a post-2012 agreement. She argued that it would be a "missed opportunity" if efforts are dedicated only to shaping funding streams in the UN negotiation process, given that the process can articulate frameworks and principles for, as well as coordinate, CBA efforts. She urged discussion of what types of capacities are needed to facilitate CBA.

Participants discussed: elite capture of adaptation funds; the use of prior informed consent when sharing CBA information; legal rights to adaptation; the role of ecosystem-based adaptation; migration; coordination among governance levels; institutional competition; and capacity building.



Saleemul Huq, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), said that while adaptation was once the "stepchild of climate change," it is gaining recognition and making progress.

More information:

<http://www.careclimatechange.org>

<http://www.iied.org>

<http://www.cba-exchange.org>

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Local mitigation and adaptation measures of indigenous peoples

Presented by Tebtebba Foundation

This event discussed the importance of indigenous peoples' mitigation and adaptation strategies and highlighted that while the climate change regime will have an impact in 20 to 30 years, a human rights-based approach may help indigenous peoples to cope with climate impacts now.

Jennifer Rubis, Sarawak, Malaysia, argued that the threats posed by climate mitigation projects may be more dangerous to indigenous peoples than climate change itself.

Johnson Cerda, Comuna Santa Elena, Ecuador, described how the Limoncocha community is breeding indigenous fish species to replenish the fish stock. He also argued that legal recognition of indigenous peoples' land title is crucial for forest conservation.

Gilberto Arias, Kuna Yala Congress, Panama, said that his community is located on an island being eroded by sea levels rise and coral reef destruction, while the population is increasing.

Bill Erasmus, Athabaskan Council, Canada, described changes in normal weather patterns that are endangering northern Canadian species, including caribou and the polar bear.

Margaret Lokawua, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Uganda, stressed the need to train local communities in veterinary services and improve conservation of traditional plant cultivars.

Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, Tebtebba, argued that human rights of indigenous peoples, as defined by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, must be recognized in any outcome of the climate negotiations.

Participants discussed: how the Adaptation Fund and the CDM could include indigenous representatives in their decision-making processes, recognize indigenous knowledge, and support these initiatives through project funding under these mechanisms.



Bill Erasmus, Athabaskan Council, Canada, emphasize the need to put a human face on the climate change issue, because indigenous people are the most vulnerable as they are the closest to the land.

More information:

<http://www.tebtebba.org>

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