

Tuesday, 13 October 12:30– 14:00

Iran Room

Harnessing the adaptation and innovation potential of smallholder farmers and rural communities addressing climate change related risks and vulnerabilities for food security and nutrition

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ORGANIZERS

IFAD

WFP

FAO

WFO (World Farmers Organization)

EU international Development Commission

Abstract: Climate change exacerbates the risks of hunger and under-nutrition. Farmers, rural communities, businesses and governments around the world report growing impacts of climate change on their agricultural productivity and food security. Farmers are already trying to find ways to adapt. This side event at the 42nd session of the Committee on World Food Security will focus on harnessing the adaptation and innovation potential of smallholder farmers and rural communities.

The UN's Rome based agencies have many concrete actions to report on both climate change and social issues.

Proposed format: The side event will adopt a Davos-style debate format in which panelists can engage with each other and with participants in an informal setting. Guiding questions have been agreed, with additional questions sought from social media and from the audience at the event. The event is being promoted through IFAD/WFP/FAO social media channels, with any questions sent from this community being passed on ahead of the event. At the event we will be live Tweeting, a blog will be produced and photos will be taken. A selection of publications and a banner will be in place. The reception that follows will allow the audience to meet one-on-one with participants and ask further questions.

KEYWORDS: Climate Change , Adaptation , Mitigation , Agriculture

Languages: EN

Summary: At a Committee on World Food Security (CFS42) side event yesterday, representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) had an opportunity to present the programmes of their respective agencies, as well as to explain to an engaged audience how they are working together to realize the Adaptation and Innovation Potential of Smallholder Farmers and Rural Communities.

Moderator Martin Frick expressed the dilemma that confronts the international community. We live in a situation where 800 million people go to bed hungry every day, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 is committed to zero hunger by 2030. While this is an enormous challenge in itself, climate change adds even more complexity.

"Risk has always been a dimension in agricultural development, but climate change has raised the magnitude, and altered the nature of risk," according to Leslie Lipper of FAO's Agriculture Development Economics Division. The costs of adapting to climate change, which can be significant, should not fall only on rural communities. That's why FAO and WFP have both promoted safety net and cash transfer programmes that provide a basic income resilience to smallholders in some of the most food insecure regions.

"This is critical work, but safety nets and handouts aren't enough," said WFP's Inge Breuer. Increasingly, there is a need to combine such programmes with climate risk management systems. For instance, through cash-based transfers that incentivize rural people to participate in community adaptation projects. "We have a lot of work going on to optimize food systems and see what works best in rural communities. We are thinking about how we can leverage these cash transfers to encourage new economic opportunities," Breuer said.

Similarly, Margarita Astralaga, Director of IFAD's Environment and Climate Division said that adaptation to climate change should not be done on an ad hoc basis, which may create winners and losers in rural areas; rather, adaptation investments should aim to increase the

resilience of the entire food system. Astralaga brought up the work being done in the CALIP project in Bangladesh, where IFAD is partnering with local universities to enhance climate modelling for a flash flood early warning system. In this way, rural women and men living in the vulnerable Haor Delta will have access to more accurate, real-time climate information, which can afford them the ability to protect their rice crops, a vital income source.

Finally, Beat Roosli of the World Farmers' Organization (WFO) asserted that secure access to productive resources is a central factor when farmers' decide whether to make adaptation investments in their farms. "In this regard, climate change and land tenure are inextricably linked," he said. This also raised the question of farm-size, and whether it's better to optimize productivity on each farm unit, or focus on aggregating small plots, thereby scaling up adaptation investments. "The question of farm size is secondary at first, Roosli suggested, "Farmers may have to scale up later, but first they must become more productive with the resources they have."