

Ministerial Declaration on food security and the agricultural sectors in a changing climate

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations, assembled in Abidjan at the 29th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, recognize that climate change is a threat to our most fundamental human rights. It undermines our ability to eradicate extreme poverty and feed the world's almost 800 million food insecure people. Over 70 percent of Africa's poorest inhabitants live in rural areas, the majority of whom earn income from the agricultural sectors (crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) and other natural resources. As a result, they are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. By some estimates, climate change could increase the number of malnourished people by 600 million by 2080 unless we take immediate action. Other estimates suggest that the impact of climate change on food availability could result in an additional 500,000 deaths by 2050.

The fundamental connection between food security and climate change is reflected in two key international agreements reached in 2015.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on eradicating poverty in all its forms; ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture; and taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

The Paris Agreement on climate change recognizes the "fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change". The agreement emphasizes climate change adaptation, particularly for the world's most vulnerable inhabitants and countries. Developed countries reiterated their commitment to channel at least USD 100 billion in annual climate finance to developing countries by 2020.

The Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) we submitted ahead of COP21 in Paris outline our climate change policy priorities. Agriculture, forestry and land use feature prominently, reflecting the central importance of these sectors for our economies and societies. With the requisite levels of financial and technical support, we are committed to work with the international community to implement the agriculture, forestry and land use components of our INDCs.

We share a common vision that investment in productive and resilient agricultural development are vital to ensuring that our countries – and particularly our poorest and most food-insecure inhabitants – continue to prosper in spite of climate change.

We recognize that well-targeted investments in agriculture can simultaneously improve natural resource management, and contribute to adapting to climate change and to mitigating climate change impacts by easing the pressures that drive deforestation and improving soil health and access to water. Investments in agriculture can often generate these important environmental benefits at little or no additional cost.

We encourage developed countries, private sector actors, civil society and international organizations to work with us. It will be particularly important to:

enhance the capacity of our countries to improve national institutional governance for direct and international access to climate finance, and to develop transformational policies, programs and projects for climate resilience and low carbon growth, in alignment with UNFCCC COP 21 decisions.

Improve pledges together in 2018 so that all have ambitious targets for 2025 - and then every 5 years thereafter to make sure that African countries can cope with climate impacts and realize their mitigation potential as articulated in their INDCs.

increase financial and technical support for climate change adaptation, with a particular focus on the agricultural sectors and smallholder agricultural producers; and

improve coordination when providing technical and financial support, including by aligning support with existing work related to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, among others.

Abidjan, 8 April 2016