Concept Note of the joint FAO-IPCC-IFAD event:
Expert meeting on emerging activities to combat climate change – use of FAO data and IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines for Agriculture and Land Use

Overview

FAO, IPCC and IFAD are jointly organizing the "Expert meeting on emerging activities to combat climate change – use of FAO data and IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines for agriculture and land use". The event takes place in Rome at FAO HQ, Nov 13-14 2014. Expected attendance is of some 50 participants, comprising national and international experts, representatives of relevant institutions and agencies and interested donors. The expert meeting is implemented by the Climate, Energy and Tenure Division (NRC) and the Statistics Division (ESS) of FAO, with support from the Government of Norway via the ''Monitoring and Assessment of GHG Emissions and Mitigation Potential" Project (MAGHG) (http://www.fao.org/climatechange/micca/ghg/en/), jointly with the IPCC and the IFAD.

Background

In 2009, a Joint IPCC-FAO-IFAD Expert Meeting on FAO data for AFOLU/LULUCF identified data gaps and possible solutions, aimed at improving the use of FAO datasets for AFOLU GHG inventories. The outcome of this expert meeting was summarized in the meeting report "Datasets for use in the IPCC Guidelines - FAO data and how it can be used in the IPCC Agriculture and Land Use Guidelines." The meeting participants anticipated that this report would help FAO fine-tune data collection efforts to increase compatibility with the data necessary to understand GHG emissions and removals from the AFOLU sector.

In response to recommendations made in 2009, the Governments of Germany and Norway funded FAO via the ''Monitoring and Assessment of GHG Emissions and Mitigation Potential" Project (MAGHG) Project to begin addressing the gaps identified by building new datasets and developing guidance and training in support of IPCC and UNFCCC processes for the AFOLU sector. As a result of these activities, and in a broad international collaboration, FAO launched the FAOSTAT Emissions database (http://faostat3.fao.org/faostat-gateway/go/to/browse/G1/*/E and http://faostat3.fao.org/faostat-gateway/go/to/browse/G2/*/E), containing a global set of Tier 1 emission estimates based on existing and newly developed activity data for the AFOLU sector.

The FAOSTAT Emissions database has contributed to the recent IPCC AR5 global and regional synthesis analysis of AFOLU emissions and mitigation potentials (http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/216137/icode/), and is increasingly used by experts in member countries as a tool to support GHG inventory processes and mitigation analysis. In 2014, the EU used the FAOSTAT database to conduct QA/QC analyses of the national agriculture GHG inventories of its twenty-eight countries. FAO further supports capacity development of its member countries at regional and national level, including via the creation and dissemination of manuals to facilitate inventory development and methodologies for life cycle analysis. New work is underway to expand the FAO data to include information on available management practices and to develop reference levels to 2030 and 2050.

Thus, FAO data has been significantly enhanced since the 2009 IPCC-FAO-IFAD Expert Meeting. A revision of the information in the IPCC-FAO-IFAD Expert Meeting report is timely. It is also relevant to consider how the information on the use of the FAO datasets in AFOLU GHG inventories could be continuously updated and made available to inventory compilers in an efficient and user-friendly way.

The 2014 expert meeting is meant to serve both as a reflection of progress made since 2009 and as an opportunity to build on lessons learned and to address emerging needs in the area of improved forest and rural statistics for use not only in national GHG inventory and mitigation, but also for rural development in general. The meeting will address the urgent need to conduct analyses, identify actions and implement activities for both mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change.

Thus, the 2014 expert meeting on "Emerging activities to combat climate change – use of FAO data and IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines for Agriculture and Land Use" seeks to take stock of existing datasets and IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines and identify gaps towards meeting current and expected future reporting commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Such gaps may relate to existing and emerging national and international activities for mitigation and adaptation to combat climate change in the AFOLU sector, including GHG inventories, Biennial Update Reports (BURs), Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and other mitigation activities, alongside linkages with sustainable rural development and national zero-hunger goals.

The event will discuss the implications of these activities on the use of available datasets and IPCC Guidelines for GHG reporting and accounting for AFOLU. The discussion will be organized around three main themes, each one identifying a major emerging need: i) improvement of inventory estimates; ii) land-based mitigation actions and building reference levels; and iii) linkages with adaptation, food security and rural development. Each theme will be addressed with a focus on its key support components: a) datasets and b) GHG inventory guidelines.

The three themes and their two sub-components will be analyzed in the context of the need to apply scientific knowledge while recognizing that monitoring and reporting processes are to be developed in the context of relevant statistical principles. In particular, effective and useful guidelines take into account current and expected future availability of data, especially in developing countries.

The event will comprise a session on each of the sub-themes. For building reference scenarios and associated reference levels, discussions will focus on datasets and guidelines requirements to describe the socio-economic system, with a focus on food security, bioenergy and other non-food uses of agroforestry products. For land-based mitigation actions, much discussion could focus on requirements to describe temporal, spatial and activity boundaries. For adaptation actions, discussion might focus on requirements to link GHG accounting to the evaluation of adaptation projects, in particular, in so far as mitigation co-benefits of adaptation are concerned.

The two main dimensions, datasets and guidelines, will be addressed in each session with relation to the sub-themes. The dimension of datasets refers to the need for additional data, e.g., at higher levels of granularity and/or for new activities to be estimated. The dimension of guidelines refers to the current applicability of current IPCC Guidelines and further needs for addressing emerging activities to combat climate change.

Objectives

The events objective is to discuss the use of FAO data and IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines for AFOLU with a view on emerging activities to combat climate change.

Specifically, the event should consider the following topics:
- How FAO datasets can help in AFOLU inventory compilation using the IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines by providing activity data, EFs and other parameters and facilitating QA/QC and verification;
- How the information on international, predominately FAO, datasets (that were first compiled at a joint FAO-IPCC-IFAD meeting in 2009) could be continuously updated and made available to relevant user-groups for estimating emissions and removals of greenhouse gases from the AFOLU sector;
- How the FAO datasets and IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines could potentially be used for other purposes such as mitigation analysis for agriculture and land use at national and project scale;
- How to effectively develop required capacities to use FAO datasets and IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines.

Expectations

Recommendations jointly developed by participants will include a focus on the following areas:
- Identification of datasets available at global scale for implementing IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines

- Good practice for use of global datasets for verification of country-level estimates
- Good practice for eventual use of IPCC GHG Inventory Guidelines to assess activities beyond annual GHG inventories, including wider GHG impacts and their linkages to adaptation planning, and their application within a permanent reporting systems and processes