

## **Concept note**

### ***Regional Asia-Pacific Workshop on Climate Smart Agriculture: A Call for Action***

***18-20 June 2015***

***Swissotel, Nai Lert Park Bangkok, Thailand***

#### **Introduction**

Over the last couple of decades, the earth has begun to witness unheralded changes to its climate. Nations everywhere are beginning to experience disastrous weather events on a regular basis. The latest IPCC report has unequivocally concluded that this sustained alteration of climate patterns seen worldwide are the result of greenhouse gas emissions of anthropogenic origin. While climate change is beginning to bring about severe and perhaps permanent alteration of the earth's geological, biological and ecological systems, these are leading to emergence of extreme weather, ozone depletion, increase in wildland fires, loss of biodiversity, global spread of infectious diseases, and stresses to food-production systems.

Among the various sectors, agriculture has already been significantly affected by climate change, and it is expected to worsen in the decades to come. Increase in mean temperature, changes in rainfall, frequency and increased variability in temperature and rain patterns, changes in water availability, sea level rise and other perturbations to the ecosystem will all have severe impacts on agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The problems of climate change on agriculture are further exacerbated by the fact that global population is expected to rise to about 9 billion people by 2050. With continued increase in urban growth and rising incomes in developing countries, demand for food is expected to increase substantially: FAO has estimated that food production will have to increase by 60 percent by 2050 to meet the expected needs.

All considered the Asia-Pacific region is expected to be most severely challenged with food production. Despite rapid economic growth, the region is home to 60% of the world's poor, and over 500 million people remain undernourished. With an expected increase of another 850 million people by 2050, combined with urbanization and improved diets, the pressure to feed the population would be enormous. Climate change in the region is expected to reduce agricultural productivity by 10-50 percent in the next three decades, along with dramatic impacts on stability and incomes. The region is already witnessing considerable increase in floods, droughts, and some of the most devastation storms. In addition, the region's complexity adds further difficulties to overcome. Meeting the needs of the prosperous group and the large pockets of poor in a region with limited natural resources is going to be quite complicated. This is further exacerbated by those small South Pacific islands that are already beginning to experience inundation and loss of agricultural land as a result of sea level rise. Producing enough food for the increasing population in the face of decreasing resources and changing climate would be a daunting challenge.

#### **Best Option – Climate Smart Agriculture**

With the realization that climate change is real, Asia-Pacific region requires completely new approaches to address the growing food security concerns. In 2012, FAO, the World Bank and several countries organized the first Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and

Climate Change in The Hague. The Conference sought to mobilize action for achieving Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) as a means to enhance productivity and incomes, resilience to climate change and carbon sequestration. As a follow-up, FAO has been hosting in its HQs in Rome the Facilitation Unit (FU) of the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA) which was launched in September 2014 at the UN Climate Summit, and FAO is supporting countries and development partners to implement and scale up CSA approaches as a matter of priority. Work on CSA is being promoted actively through GACSA, a voluntary partnership to inspire the development and dissemination of innovative, evidence-based options for climate-smart agriculture in different settings, and that will involve a broad range of government and other stakeholders.

But what is the CSA concept? Briefly, it is defined as an approach that integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) by jointly addressing food security and climate challenges through: a) sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; b) adapting and building resilience to climate change; and c) reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions. CSA is an approach to developing technical, policy and investment conditions to achieve sustainable agricultural development for food security under climate change. Considering climate change can have such a profound effect on agriculture, the CSA approach is designed to integrate the national agricultural planning, investments and programs to operationalize sustainable agricultural development.

Although the concept of CSA is being explored with great interest in many parts of the world, this is not fully reflected in the Asia-Pacific region. It is revealing to discover that only Japan, the Philippines and Viet Nam are members of the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture which seeks to adjust agricultural, forestry and fisheries practice, food systems and social policies so they can better take account of climate change and the efficient use of natural resources. Considering the situation in the region, FAO is formulating several activities to mainstream CSA in the region, this workshop being part of it.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the workshop are to share knowledge and experience on implementing Climate Smart Agriculture among public, civil society and development agencies, and promote the mainstreaming and up-scaling of Climate Smart Agriculture.

## **Expected Outputs**

Based on those objectives, the expected outputs of the Workshop are:

- Knowledge and understanding of participants on Climate Smart Agriculture enhanced;
- Good practices and case studies on CSA in different countries shared and discussed;
- Priority actions to mainstream and up-scale CSA are identified and agreed;
- A regional-level collaboration and partnership is forged for facilitating countries to promote CSA as well as to implement priority actions linking CSA approach with agriculture-related investments, policies and measures in their transition to Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA); and
- A report summarizing the presentations and discussions at the Workshop including conclusions and recommendations (elaborated after the workshop).

**Date and Venue**

The three-day event is scheduled on 18-20 June 2015, Swissotel Nai Lert Park Bangkok. The Workshop also includes a field trip on the third day to visit a modern farm in Damnoen Saduak District, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand.

**Participants**

The expected 50 participants will include senior officials (1 per member state) of Agriculture and/or Natural Resources and Environment ministries of Asia-Pacific countries, other UN and International Agencies, regionally based development partners, and non-governmental organizations.

**Workshop Programme**

The Programme (tentative) of the Workshop is attached below.

**Contact details**

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