



OVERVIEW

On 19-20 November 2015, with support from FAO, representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment and other relevant sectors in 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific gathered in Bangkok, Thailand for a workshop on *'Making the UNFCCC work for Agriculture in Asia and the Pacific'*. Under the guidance of experts from FAO, UNFCCC, CGIAR technical centers, other UN partner organizations, and national and regional research institutions participants engaged in a series of instructional and interactive sessions designed to identify ways to better leverage the UNFCCC framework to deliver climate-resilient, low emissions development in the agriculture sectors comprising crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture. This briefing note provides a summary of the key messages from the workshop. Generally, improved understanding of ongoing UNFCCC processes and engagement by agriculture sector stakeholders in these processes will be necessary so that adequate measures are taken to strengthen the resilience of agriculture and agriculture dependent communities to climate change and ensure regional food security while also avoiding dangerous levels of global warming.



KEY MESSAGES

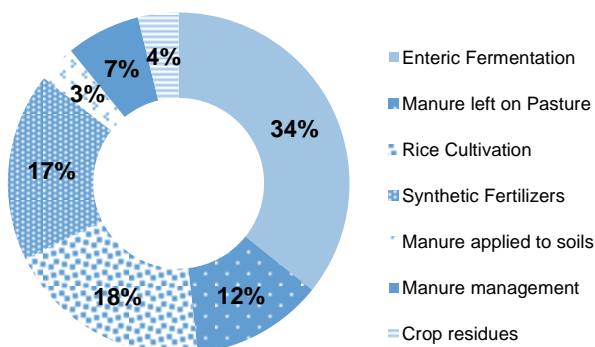
WHILE THE AGRICULTURE SECTORS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC IS AT RISK FROM CLIMATE CHANGE, FINDING WAYS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS FROM THE AGRICULTURE SECTORS WILL BE AN IMPORTANT WAY TO ACHIEVE THE GLOBAL 2°C TARGET. Participants agreed that climate change already poses significant risks to the agriculture sectors in Asia and the Pacific. Taking immediate action to tackle the impacts of climate change through adaptation and climate resilient development will be essential for achieving regional food security and other global and regional goals. While achieving food security remains the region's highest priority, agriculture is also a key driver of greenhouse gas emissions in the region. Participants also heard that appropriate actions to reduce emissions from key activities such as livestock, rice paddy and deforestation can make important contributions towards limiting growth in emissions and meeting the globally agreed 2 degree warming target.

ABINDING AND UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT AT THE UNFCCC COP21 WILL BE AN IMPORTANT WAY TO DRIVE CLIMATE RESILIENT AND LOW EMISSIONS DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC. Participants heard that the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) is anticipated to be a turning point towards a low-emission, climate-resilient future. A binding and universal agreement based on national contributions was discussed as a way to drive economy-wide action to tackle climate change and mitigate the risks of dangerous global warming and climate change to the agriculture sectors.

CURRENT UNFCCC SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE (SBSTA) WORKSHOPS AND DISCUSSIONS ARE AN IMPORTANT WAY FOR COUNTRIES TO DRAW ATTENTION TO KEY ISSUES FOR THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN THE REGION. Agriculture is a key element of the immediate future work program of the UNFCCC SBSTA. Many participants were not fully aware of the current SBSTA work program on agriculture adaptation and technology transfer. As SBSTA will ultimately provide advice to the COP on the inclusion of agriculture specific issues in future negotiations, participants agreed that stronger engagement with the SBSTA is an important opportunity to draw attention to country-specific and regional issues for the sector in the region.

INTEDED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (INDC) HAVE PROVIDED AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO HIGHLIGHT PRIORITY ACTIONS THAT COUNTRIES CAN TAKE TO PROMOTE RESILIENT AND LOW EMISSIONS

Shares of emissions from key agriculture activities in Asia-Pacific, 2001-2011 Average Values



Source: FAOSTAT, 2015

DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTORS. During the workshop participants conducted a review of their respective INDCs to identify opportunities, gaps and needs for the agriculture sectors. Consistent with the regional focus on food security, most INDCs from the region have highlighted adaptation and strengthening resilience as the highest priority for action in the agriculture sector under the INDCs (see Box below). Priority mitigation contributions included measures such as forest restoration, sustainable forest management, and reduced deforestation. Some INDCs also identified additional measures that may be possible with additional capacity and further financial assistance such as the scale up of alternate wetting and drying in irrigated rice paddy.

Selected priority actions for adaptation in Asia-Pacific INDCs

- Early warning systems and enhanced preparedness for extreme weather events
- Vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning
- Integrated water resources management
- Climate-resilient crop and livestock varieties
- Agroforestry, conservation agriculture and improved soil health.

DEPENDING ON THE OUTCOME OF COP21, ADDITIONAL WORK WILL BE REQUIRED TO UPDATE AND REFINE THE INDCs. During the INDC discussion it was thought likely that the current iteration of the INDCs will be the first step in a longer process that will involve the periodic need to update and refine the INDC contributions. Periodic review of the INDCs may provide some countries with an opportunity to better incorporate actions relevant to the agriculture and land-use sectors as the collection and analysis of data and information on the sector improves. Generally, participants acknowledged that building capacity to monitor and report on climate change activities will be essential to support the implementation of INDC contributions.

FINANCING RESILIENT AND LOW EMISSIONS DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURE NEEDS TO LEVERAGE A RANGE OF SOURCES INCLUDING PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE, PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT AND INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FINANCE. Investments in productive, inclusive and resilient agricultural development will be critical for ensuring and safeguarding incomes and food security in the region. Participants were briefed on a wide range of potential financing sources to pursue INDC priorities for the agriculture sector. While it was acknowledged that there was a great deal of interest in new sources of climate finance such as the Green Climate Fund, participants were encouraged to first reflect on where their governments and local private sector actors are investing in agricultural development and consider ways to leverage climate finance to make these investments more climate-smart.

Participants also considered new requirements that climate finance foster transformative change and innovation and what these terms mean for the region's agriculture sector. Bringing about transformative change in the agriculture was considered challenging because of the large number of people that practice agriculture and the diverse range of landscapes in which agriculture is practiced. Generally it was thought that there will be no one size fits all approach to transformative change in the region and that it will need to encompass developments at different institutional, geographical and temporal scales.



COORDINATION AMONG ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE MINISTRIES WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE THAT THE SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTORS ARE PROPERLY REFLECTED IN FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS. Coordination between government agencies and agriculture sector stakeholders on UNFCCC processes was identified as an ongoing challenge in many countries. Participants agreed that improved coordination is essential for countries to better leverage these processes and associated financing mechanisms for climate resilient and low emission development in the agriculture sectors.

THERE IS A ROLE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE MINISTRIES ENGAGE WITH UNFCCC PROCESSES AND INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE FINANCING SCHEMES. International organizations such as FAO working in partnership with development partners, country governments, communities, civil society and other agriculture sector stakeholders have a valuable role to play in enhancing capacity with agriculture sector-relevant elements of the UNFCCC framework. Participants also agreed there will be a future role for such organizations to support countries implement INDC priorities in the agriculture sector and enhance country capacity to design and implement actions in the agriculture sector that meet the requirements for the types of transformative and large scale projects and programmes increasingly sought by international climate financing schemes.

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