

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY: THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIOENERGY

Committee of the Whole: Agenda Item 5.2

Roundtable 2: Climate Change and Food Security

Wednesday, 4 June 2008

Co-Chairs Report

The Roundtable was opened by the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, His Excellency Henri Djombo, Minister of Forest Economy, Republic of Congo. The Roundtable co-chairs, His Excellency Muzahem Al Muheisen, Minister of Agriculture of Jordan, and His Excellency Erik Solheim, Minister of International Development and Minister of Environment of Norway.

The panellists were Mr Martin Parry, Co-Chair of Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, UK, Ms. Ulla Holm, Global Director, Tetrapak, Sweden, and Mr Martin Khor, Director, Third World Network, Malaysia. Mr Alexander Müller, Assistant Director General of the FAO Natural Resources Management and Environment Department, acted as Secretary.

Panellists and discussions from the floor reflected on the following questions:

1. What key adaptation measures (at different scales) do you propose to meet the challenge posed by climate change to food security?
2. In light of the present discussion on deforestation and forest degradation and the role of agriculture in climate change mitigation – what incentives for carbon sequestration and emission reduction can we provide to local land users?
3. How can we best incorporate the interests of vulnerable groups in the proposed measures to deal with climate change?
4. How does climate change impact on access to food and its utilization by different consumer groups in developing and developed countries?

Mr Martin Parry stressed the urgency of the climate challenge which is already reflected in extreme weather events, and called for immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emission and assist vulnerable people and agricultural production systems to adapt, especially in arid and semi-arid areas. Mrs Ulla Holm underlined the importance of public-private partnerships to cope with climate change impacts on the food chain. Mr Martin Khor stressed that a resilient agricultural sector was a prerequisite for climate change adaptation and that there was a need to move back to self-sufficiency and local food production in developing countries, and called on FAO to assume a stronger role in promoting research and training in sustainable and organic agriculture.

The Roundtable agreed that climate change would pose a severe additional threat to food security and development. More research on the links between climate change and food

security was proposed, including investments on low carbon technologies and other adaptation measures. Governments were urged to ensure that agriculture, forestry and fisheries be addressed in the negotiations on the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM), with a focus on a more equitable access of developing countries to carbon markets. FAO and IFAD were invited to work on CDM methodologies for emission reduction and FAO's role in promoting REDD was recognized, as described in the information papers on climate change (HLC/08/INF/2 and HLC/08/INF/4).

The Roundtable pointed out the urgent need to promote various climate change adaptation options building on traditional knowledge and stressed the role of small farmers in the context of food security and climate change.

The contribution of agriculture to greenhouse gas emissions was recognized, as was the potential role of the agricultural sector in reducing both CO₂ and non-CO₂ emissions. In particular the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors were identified as offering opportunities to combine adaptation with mitigation efforts while at the same time safeguarding biodiversity.

The Roundtable stressed the importance of agriculture, forestry and fisheries receiving increased attention in the ongoing international negotiations for a post 2012 climate change agreement.