



Press release

Climate-Smart Agriculture: Science Must Be Proactive in Order to advance the debate !

Paris, March 19, 2015 - From March 16 to 18, the International Research Conference on Climate-Smart-Agriculture was held in Montpellier. It was an opportunity for Coordination SUD to recall the strong criticism voiced for nearly a year by French¹ and international² NGOs with regard to the Global Alliance (GACSA), launched in September 2014 in New York. A few months away from the COP21, the scientific community has a role to play in pointing out the potential dangers of this concept and the Alliance and address the multiple challenges facing agriculture in the context of a changing climate.

During these three days of conferences and debates, the international scientific community focused on the subject of agriculture known as "climate smart" (CSA) with the main objective of exchanging among peers, but also with policy makers and civil society. The conference's aim was thus to share knowledge about CSA in order to prepare a comprehensive research agenda and propose recommendations to policy makers a few months before the International Climate Conference (COP21) in Paris. Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Committee and the Climate and Development Committee from Coordination SUD were invited to participate in the final panel of the conference.

Coordination SUD welcomes the fact that many institutions and research centers are now working on the links between agriculture and climate. The scientific community, however, has a clear responsibility to refine the approach currently embodied by CSA, a concept that is very vague and not without risk. Indeed, it can encompass various agricultural models, whose environmental (natural resources), social (employment, gender equality), cultural (minority rights) and economic (autonomy/dependence of farmers) impacts are very different, even opposed. As Patrice Burger from CARI highlighted during the final round table: *"At this stage, CSA carries the risk of legitimizing productivist agricultural and agribusiness models, which have so far failed to ensure food security, provide satisfactory answers to environmental challenges or reduce the rural poverty of 500 million farmers in the world."* Research is not neutral and has a role to play in clarifying the issues at stake. Coordination SUD calls on scientists to work not only with policy makers, but also with farmer organizations and civil society, in creating the agricultural models of tomorrow. French NGOs invite the scientific community to work specifically on agroecology in order to prioritize small scale family farming, ensure effective and sustainable food security, maintain jobs in rural areas and meet climatic and ecological challenges.

As Philippe Jahshan, president of Coordination SUD, emphasized, *"A few months away from the COP21, the NGO members of Coordination SUD are very concerned with what the climate action agenda will propose and believe that the international community's approach to agriculture, in the form of CSA, driven by the GACSA, still has too many inaccuracies both in form and substance"*.

¹ <http://www.coordinationsud.org/wp-content/uploads/Note-ACSA-CCD-C2A-EN-final2.pdf>

² <http://www.climatesmartagconcerns.info/open-letter.html>

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Coordination SUD – Coordination SUD - Development Emergency Solidarity is the national platform of French international solidarity NGOs. Founded in 1994, it brings together more than 150 NGOs, of which a hundred belong to six collectives (Clong-Volontariat, Cnajep, Coordination humanitaire et développement, Crid, Forim, Groupe Initiatives), active in the fields of humanitarian aid, development assistance, environmental protection, the defense of disadvantaged people's human rights and international solidarity education and advocacy.

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