Coordination SUD
Solidarité Urgence Développement

Recommendations by the Climate and Development Commission for the Lima conference on climate change

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FAMILY FARMERS ARE KEY TO FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE!

Today more than ever before, agriculture is faced with a major challenge: **ensure the food and nutritional security of a growing world population while preserving the world's natural resources and tackling climate change**.

According to the latest FAO figures, 803 million people still suffer from hunger and more than 180 million suffer from malnutrition. If we continue at the same rate of emission, by 2080 six million more people will suffer from climate change-related hunger.

Farming is the economic sector that is most vulnerable to changes in the climate, and is also responsible for nearly 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions; on top of that are added indirect emissions linked to deforestation. **Not all agricultural models share the same level of responsibility for these emissions, however: systems that make intensive use of chemical inputs, fossil fuels and capital are amongst the largest emitters, especially when their output is sold thousands of kilometres away on international markets!**

At the COP17 in Durban in 2011, farming was officially included in the negotiations. The SBSTA, the Convention's scientific body, set itself the mission of beginning a discussion and undertaking consultations on a dedicated work programme.

It quickly became apparent, however, that adopting an agenda on farming was coming up against diverging views from different countries. These divergences were confirmed at Doha and then in Warsaw, where the discussion on farming was once again "blocked".

Nonetheless, in June of 2014, the SBSTA outlined a work programme, identifying four topics[1] that will be the subject of four workshops in 2015 and 2016. The conclusions from those workshops will provide technical and scientific fodder for the COP21 and 22 negotiations.

As development actors working with smallholder organisations and small producers in the South and echoed by Coordination SUD's member organisations, **we would like family farming to be placed at the heart of the SBSTA working groups and negotiations, in order to tackle the dual challenges of climate change and the right to food.**

Family farming and climate issues

Family farming in the South *emits few greenhouse gases but is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It also plays a fundamental role in local food security, land planning, resource management, job creation and social stability. With nearly 500 million farms, it represents the most widespread type of farming in the world.*

Smallholders have always had to develop strategies to face the vagaries of climate and to manage sometimes difficult agricultural conditions, and have succeeded in doing so. The scale and speed of climate change are such, however, that it is now urgent and essential for the international community to provide far more support to family farmers in favour of innovation and greater investment in the more resilient types of agriculture.

Family farming and agroecology - Brazil

The work program on agriculture proposed by the SBSTA should incorporate the following principles:

- *Ensure the participation of representatives of family farming in the submissions and workshops (offering, including financial support).*
- *Ensure the inclusion in discussions of the autonomous agricultural models for small producers, less expensive for society, and more respectful of human rights, protection of biodiversity and the environment (agroecology) in order to accompany the broadcast.*

1 http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/sbsta/eng/l14.pdf

1 In favour of open and transparent negotiations

1. Enable civil society organisations – in particular smallholder organisations – to be strongly and directly involved

Although they represent the vast majority of farmers, family farmers from developing countries are hardly represented at international climate negotiations. In order for the work programme on farming proposed by the SBSTA to be relevant and effective, however, it must develop from the bottom up, taking into account the local realities of farmers in how they apply adaptation and mitigation measures.

Civil society organisations, in particular smallholder organisations, must therefore be stakeholders in the decisions taken about the agricultural sector under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as stipulated in Article 6 of the Convention[2].They must also participate in the SBSTA workshops in 2015 and 2016.

2. Strengthen synergies between the various forums of governance

Better coordination of forums of governance that work on the topic of "agriculture/climate" is essential and must be given some thought within the framework of the work programme on farming under the UNFCCC. This has to do in particular with the link between the UNFCCC and the two other Rio Conventions (Desertification and Biodiversity), as well as with strengthening the relationship between the UNFCCC and the Committee on World Food Security, at the level of both the concerned international organisations and that of the Parties to the Convention.

The Committee on World Food Security

The reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), begun following the 2007-2008 food crisis to take stock of the governance, consistency and coordination of agricultural and food policies, is a good example from which the UNFCCC should draw inspiration. The CFS is an inclusive and participatory forum which has now proven its worth. Civil society organisations participate in the consultations and negotiating groups through a mechanism dedicated to that end, alongside States, international organisations, foundations and private sector actors.

2 ARTICLE 6: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PUBLIC AWARENESS (…) the Parties shall: (a) Promote and facilitate at the national and, as appropriate, subregional and regional levels, and in accordance with national laws and regulations, and within their respective capacities: (…) (iii) Public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and developing adequate responses;

2 Promote agricultural models that meet the challenges of food security and climate change

1. Put agricultural models in perspective and pro-actively support the agro-ecological transition

The impact of climate change is such that we cannot continue to ignore the issue of differentiated impact as regards greenhouse gas emissions of agricultural models and their capacity for adaptation.

The agro-ecological approach is in particular an effective, resilient and sustainable model of production, able to tackle the issues of adaptation and mitigation and with proven on-the-ground results. Practiced on family farms, it allows people to become autonomous and is based on existing local knowledge, the preservation of natural resources, promoting the potential of ecosystems and natural biomass cycles, and land management, including the various environmental, social and economic aspects thereof.

2. Promoting low-carbon agricultural development

The intensive agricultural systems used in industrialised countries are being copied more and more often in emerging and developing countries. They emit a lot of greenhouse gases, however, because they use synthetic inputs and energy (especially water), throughout the sector. In addition, the expansion of industrial crops is one of the causes of tropical deforestation in Southern countries, which is responsible for a significant share of emissions.

The work programme must therefore take into account the fact that mitigation efforts in the agricultural sector must above all target industrial farming; this must be made a priority in the Convention's Annex 1 countries as well as in emerging countries.

Irrigation system in the Andes - Ecuador

The Global Alliance for a Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA)

"Climate-Smart Agriculture" has been promoted by the FAO since 2010.

It consists of the following three pillars: sustainable increase of agricultural revenue and productivity, strengthening climate change resilience, and reducing emissions where possible.

An international Alliance on Climate-Smart Agriculture was launched in September 2014 at the Climate Summit in New York. A large majority of civil society organisations, however, including the member NGOs of Coordination SUD, have expressed their serious doubts about this Alliance, based on an analysis of the initiative's framework document[3]. There are five major criticisms of the idea and of the Alliance:

- *The range of promoted practices is not limited by any excluding criteria nor by any social or environmental standards.*
- *Although there is a brief mention of the right to food, the reference to Human Rights is insufficient.*
- *The priority needs of the various agricultural models are not clearly identified: adaptation for family farmers vs mitigation for industrial farming.*
- *There is a risk of creating a "climate smart" label for agricultural practices which could be hijacked by the big companies that dominate the agricultural and agri-food systems (greenwashing).*
- *The governance of the Alliance and its links to the UNFCCC and the Committee on World Food Security are vague, leading to a risk of generating competition, confusion or lack of representation of family farming.*

Despite the serious concerns expressed by civil society, France decided to join the GACSA with a view to influencing it from the inside.

3 http://www.coordinationsud.org/document-ressource/les-notes-c2a-ccd-global-alliance-for-climate-smart-agriculture/

3. Assist family farmers in sustainable adaptation

Other than financial support, the world's family farmers must receive aid in their efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Given their structural vulnerabilities, the priority is in the least developed countries.

► Through the widespread distribution of adaptation practices

Improving agricultural techniques through sustainable and agro-ecological practices, including agro-forestry, is essential, as are a good relationship between agriculture and livestock farming, efficient and equitable management and water and soil conservation practices, crop association and rotation for greater productivity and to improve soil fertility, access to seasonal and multiannual weather forecasts, and the diversification of agricultural activities and livestock farming.

Indeed, agro-ecology allows for the development and optimal use of natural resources and of the factors of production, and helps reduce the use of synthetic inputs. This also helps boost the resilience of agro-ecosystems in the face of climate change, both by increasing carbon sinks in the soil's organic matter and biomass and by reducing CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions[4].

4 UNCTAD, 2013. Wake up before it is too late: Make agriculture truly sustainable now for food security in a changing climate, http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ditcted2012d3_en.pdf

Reviving social structures and strengthening smallholder capacities, in particular as regards analysing market opportunities, are also strong prerequisites for adaptation.

► By taking nutritional issues into greater account

The quality of agricultural production is affected by climate change. Growing wheat, rice or barley in a high-CO2 environment can in fact reduce their protein content by 10% to 14%. Future prospects are alarming: by 2050, the fall in available calories is expected to cause childhood malnutrition to increase by 20% (compared to if there were no climate change), half of which would be in sub-Saharan Africa.

It is therefore essential to go beyond simply the need to increase agricultural output: diversification strategies for agriculture must also be supported, as must promoting those crops that are most beneficial nutritionally.

► By sharing knowledge and good practices

Pooling specific knowledge and experiences, as well as research results, is imperative. This is based on dialogue between smallholders (for example, the "Farmer Field Schools", which allow farmers to share their knowledge with one another), and is supported by their knowledge and skills, civil society, research, agricultural development organisations and smallholder organisations, in particular at local level.

Strengthening the links between scientific research and producers could take place, for example, by involving these actors in national and regional agricultural innovation platforms. **These could aim at referencing and promoting agro-ecological transition practices for family farming**, as well as practices to adapt to climate change.

► Through structured policies

This adaptation to climate change by family farmers in the South requires agricultural and land policies and that they be consistent across different levels, ranging from national to local. National Adaptation Plans have been established in many countries, but too many have not actually led to any concrete, implemented action, mostly because of a lack of funding.

These policies must take into account the difficulties raised by the smallholders themselves by developing local adaptation plants (taking into consideration land-related problems, in particular) that are based on the concrete skills of the local and community actors as well as non-governmental organisations. For instance, these local action plans could be supported by the proposed agricultural innovation platforms mentioned above.

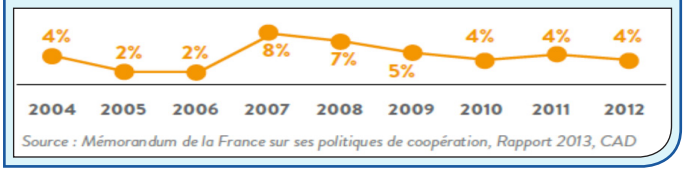
3 Make adaptation by family farming a funding priority

1. Reduce the vulnerabilities of family farming

Family famers have the potential to adapt to constraints and to be a source of innovation. It is therefore necessary to mobilise public funding on top of Official Development Assistance (ODA), aimed specifically at family farming and at the wider issue of adaptation to the vicissitudes of the climate by Southern smallholders.

- *Make adaptation by family farmers a funding priority (in particular through the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and by other non-ODA funds), especially in developing countries.*
- *A significant increase in ODA to support family farmers in the South is necessary to bolster family farms and to increase their resilience to climate-related risks. Aid for the Agriculture and Food Security (AFS) sector, however, has fallen considerably since the 1980s, and it is now treated as a poor relation.*

AFS sector share in total ODA (in%)



Source : Mémorandum de la France sur ses politiques de coopération, Rapport 2013, CAD

This funding must serve in particular to identify, improve, and back up traditional skills and innovation in terms of adaptation, to improve climate forecasts and predictions, and to better evaluate vulnerabilities, especially factors of and trends in malnutrition. The Green Climate Fund should make adaptation by family farmers in the South the very core of its priorities. The goal is to create a funding scheme to which local organisations would have easy access, and which would prioritise support for the specific actions that they propose.

2. Carbon markets: a deceptive solution

The development of voluntary agricultural carbon offset markets has already led to the widespread acquisition of land and forests[5], thus worsening the issue of land grabbing.

According to the FAO, over the last decade, more than 83 million hectares of farmland have changed hands, and some 13 million hectares of forest have been converted to other use, often non-agricultural in nature[6]. In addition to harming the right to food of the affected populations, this type of project has sometimes taken place with complete disregard for land-related or customary rights.

In addition, given the high cost of transactions and the fact that carbon revenue per hectare is often low, the profitability of these types of projects for a smallholder is far from guaranteed.

The lack of certainty about demand for carbon credits and problems of access for smallholders or local operators make this a weak funding method that rarely ensures tangible mitigation results.

5 Anseeuw, W., L. Alden Wily, L. Cotula, and M. Taylor. 2012. "Land Rights and the Rush for Land: Findings of the Global Commercial Pressures on Land Research Project". ILC, Rome
6 FAO, 2014. FAO and Post-2015 development agenda Issue Papers : Sustainable Agriculture

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Coordination SUD is the French national platform of international solidarity NGOs. Founded in 1994, it brings together more than 140 NGOs 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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The **Climate and Development Commission (CCD)** of Coordination SUD works to influence the strategies of the development actors , to pass on good practices and to influence international negotiations. It brings together about 20 international solidarity NGOs.

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