

ROSA Newsletter

Zoom Negotiations on climate change: What place for agriculture and food security?

Agriculture is one of the sectors the most directly affected by climate change. There are major risks that will affect agricultural production and threaten food security, and increase conflicts for access to natural resources. Some of the most important are increasing numbers of extreme weather events (increased frequency and severity), greater intra- and inter-seasonal variations, lack of water and the problem of the distribution of rainfall¹. The most vulnerable are often exposed to severe natural disasters, are highly dependent on climate-sensitive resources and have limited economic and technology resources (FAO, 2009). The question of the capacity for adaptation and resilience in the face of climate change arises strongly for the agricultural sector and the groups that depend on it.

At the same time, this sector generates a large share of the world's greenhouse gases, particularly if gas emission caused by deforestation resulting from the extension of agricultural land is included (see Box No. 1). Therefore there is significant potential for mitigation in agriculture, particularly by carbon capture and sequestration techniques.

Agriculture is still a fairly marginal question in climate negotiations. During the last conference on climate change, major steps forward were taken despite the lack of official decisions. This article looks at the **results of the Copenhagen Conference** and questions the **place given to agriculture**, in the light of the **potential for mitigation** from this sector and **food security issues**.

Box No. 1: Agriculture's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and the sector's potential for mitigation

According to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), in 2004, the agricultural sector (excluding change of land use) accounted for **13.5% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions**. Emissions, depending on the type of agriculture, are increasingly greatly. Added to that, change of land and forest use accounts for **17.4% of all GHG emissions**².

The **potential for mitigation** in agriculture is high, although it varies with region and type of agriculture. Regions that could contribute the most to mitigation via agriculture are Southeast Asia and Latin America (IPCC 2007). Several types of agricultural practice and techniques already exist to limit greenhouse gas emissions and increase the soil's capacity for carbon capture and sequestration. These include sustainable development of arable land and pasture, and protection and restoration of organic matter in soil and deteriorated soil.

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¹ For more information on the potential impact of climate change, see Bulletin No. 11 on food security issues as related to climate change, and Bulletin No. 16 on adaptation to climate change in the agricultural and rural development sectors.

² These figures do not include total carbon capture via photosynthesis in land ecosystems, and so are not representative of the final carbon balance sheet, which is positive at present. It should also be noted that there are large variations and a high degree of uncertainty in calculating emissions (FAO, 2009).

The results of the Copenhagen Conference

The Copenhagen Conference, as planned by the Bali roadmap, was the outcome of two years of negotiations that aimed to define a new multilateral climate regime. Two texts were negotiated. The first was on the **Kyoto Protocol** that defines quantified commitments for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for 2008-2012. The second is on long-term commitments of countries that signed the **Framework Convention on Climate Change**. The aim of the Convention is to stabilise the concentration of greenhouse gases in order to avoid major changes in the climate.

One of the major issues of the negotiations was the adoption of an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol stipulating new quantified commitments. Several countries hoped that the Copenhagen Agreement would succeed the Kyoto Protocol, because Kyoto is the only legally binding instrument, and ends in 2012.

Several points in the Framework Convention were to be negotiated: reduction in emissions (including reducing deforestation and land degradation), adapting to the impacts of climate change, financing, technology transfer and sectoral approaches.

The Ad Hoc Working Group under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) and the group working on concerted long-term action under the Climate Agreement (AWG-LCA) were in charge of writing **texts on the various subjects of the negotiations**. However, these documents could not be adopted due to the lack of consensus on most of their provisions. The mandate for negotiations of these groups had to be extended to the next Conference of Parties to be held in Mexico in late 2010.

The Copenhagen Conference ended with the adoption of one text negotiated by 27 countries. This is a **political declaration**, of which the Parties to the Convention “take note”, since they were not able to reach consensus to sign it. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention, Yvo de Boer, emphasised that “we need to be clear that it is a letter of intent and is not precise about what needs to be done in legal terms” and that we need to “turn what we have agreed politically in Copenhagen into something real, measurable and verifiable”³.

The text has a **single quantified objective**: not to exceed an overall temperature rise of 2°C. But the agreement has no indications on how to keep global warming below this limit, whether in terms of reducing world emissions by 2050, stabilising greenhouse gas levels or global emission peaks.

According to the Bali roadmap, Copenhagen was to have defined new objectives and actions for **medium term reduction of emissions** (2020), with **differential treatment** of developed and developing countries. The Copenhagen text stipulates that countries commit to saying what they intend to do before **31 January 2010**. Developed countries will have to fix quantified objectives. As for developing countries, they will define nationally appropriate mitigation actions.

In Bali, developing countries agreed to take part in a worldwide effort to reduce emissions, on condition that they received funding, technology and capacity building. The Copenhagen text makes provision for **so called “early” funding and long term funding**, and setting up **new funds or mechanisms**. For 2010-2012, 30 billion dollars will be allocated as a priority to the most vulnerable developing countries. In terms of long term funding, the agreement states that the developed countries commit to progressively freeing up a target of 100 billion dollars annually by 2020 to meet the needs of developing countries. Lastly, the agreement recognises that action must be taken to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation of forests (REDD), particularly by setting up a REDD+ mechanism. A mechanism dealing with technologies in the areas of adaptation and reduction of emissions is also envisaged.

It is still too soon to determine the capacity of the “Copenhagen Agreement” to mobilise countries effectively and unblock some of the points in the negotiation. At the last meeting organised by the Parties to the Framework Convention in Bonn (9-11 April 2010), the major point of disagreement was how much weight to give to the Copenhagen text. It was decided that a new text should be proposed by the Convention task force presidency before the next negotiators’ meeting in June in Bonn. This should take account of “**all that was achieved in Copenhagen**”, which covers both technical negotiation texts and the Copenhagen political agreement.

³ UNFCCC, Press Conference, 19 December 2009

The place of agriculture and food security in negotiations

For a long time, agriculture was considered to be marginal to negotiations on climate. It was only dealt with indirectly in the Kyoto Protocol through projects funded as part of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) on the use of land, changes of allocation of land and forestry and on energy. The mitigation potential of agriculture was recognised recently. It was only in June 2009 that an informal dialogue process was started between the countries interested in the subject. It highlighted a consensus on the importance of the role of agriculture in the mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and led to the creation of a **Special Working Group** to deal with agriculture in sectoral approaches.

In Copenhagen, discussions were held on the basis of a draft text drawn up by the working group. The document reaffirms a certain number of essential principles. It recognises the **close relationship between agriculture and food security**, and the **relationship between adaptation and mitigation actions**. The operational part contains three elements: i) cooperation in research and development on agriculture, ii) disguised trade restrictions and iii) setting up a work programme on agriculture. However, this text was not included in the final decision, which contains any specific provision on agriculture.

Box No. 2: Main elements contained in the draft text - Specific actions for agriculture

- i) The Parties decide to **cooperate in research and development**, including transfer of technologies and practices for reducing GHG. This particularly concerns technologies and practices that sustainably improve the effectiveness and productivity of agricultural systems, and help ensure food security.
- ii) The Parties affirmed that sectoral approaches, particularly specific actions in the agricultural sector, must not be arbitrary or unjustified **means of discrimination or disguised international trade restrictions**⁴.
- iii) The Parties requested **setting up a work programme** specific to agriculture.

Although notable progress has been made since 2009, it is still a long way off target. One of the main difficulties in including agriculture in the new agreement lies in the **methodologies to adopt**, particularly in terms of calculating and following greenhouse gas emissions, and estimating the carbon capture and sequestration capacity of soil. A working programme for agriculture to be prepared for the next session in June 2010 should help clarify technical and methodological questions.

Another central question is related to **funding**, since agriculture has been excluded from current climate mechanisms. Funding of measures for agricultural mitigation has not yet been discussed given the very preliminary nature of the work of the ad hoc group. Concerning carbon capture and sequestration, no decision has been taken between the two possible solutions of setting up a market mechanism or releasing public funding. It is important to emphasise that this question must be linked to that of agricultural investment in developing countries. Funding for combating climate change must be additional to and clearly distinct from Official Development Assistance. However, the important issue is to increase synergies and effectiveness as much as possible by combining both sources of funding⁵.

Finally, discussions on the agricultural sector have **only looked at mitigation**. However, given the multifunctional nature of agriculture, discussion on negotiations for climate change cannot be dissociated from questions of adaptation and food security. It would seem vital to promote a broader approach that considers the links between mitigation, adaptation and development. Internationally, it is vital that the Convention and Protocol mechanisms should interact with actions carried out in the areas of agriculture and food security, and other multilateral agreements on the environment. Agriculture will meet the challenge of climate change thanks to the support of adapted and consistent actions at all levels.

This article was written by the ROSA team with the collaboration of Anne Chetaille (GRET).

⁴ This paragraph is the major point of disagreement between countries that wanted to include this provision and those that did not want to include trade in climate negotiations.

⁵ Ancrer l'agriculture dans un Accord de Copenhague. Rapport de synthèse de la FAO pour les parties à la CCNUCC.

Views on current news: Is the Eastern Sahel facing a major food crisis?

Following on the annual assessment of crops and food security, and the meetings organised in March and April of this year⁶, CILSS⁷ (Permanent Interstate Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel) analyses the food situation in the sub-region. The intergovernmental organisation reiterates the appeals made for an urgent response to deal with food insecurity in the Eastern Sahel.

This article summarises the situation in areas of food insecurity and the way the food markets are functioning. It emphasises the needs and shortcomings in responses, and offers guidelines for actions to implement.

Five years after the food crisis that affected several countries in the sub-region, the Eastern Sahel is once again faced with a particularly difficult situation. What are the causes of food insecurity in these vulnerable areas, and what is the nature of the crisis?

The situation this year reveals a chronic crisis that has been developing for a long time. There are many causes, and they are both structural and linked to the current situation. In pastoral areas, for example, there are far too many animals for the resources available, and strong pastoral policies are needed, such as improving access to water and restoring grazing land, and how the food-livestock industry is organised. For the present season, there are several factors that have aggravated pastoral difficulties: two successive years of major lack of forage and lack of water and livestock watering. In addition, high cereal prices combined with the drop in price of cattle have led to a deterioration of the terms of trade that limits access to food for pastoral and agropastoral households.

Moreover, the agricultural season in Niger and Chad has suffered from a substantial drop in cereal production. Contrary to 2005, markets are functioning well in the eastern basin. Food is available in the markets, particularly maize, thanks to the transfer from areas of surplus to areas of deficit.

But the question of access to food is raised particularly for vulnerable groups, because of the drop in household revenues. In Niger, for example, revenues from sales of millet have dropped considerably. Niger used to be the main supplier for Nigeria, but became an importer in 2010.

One of the main lessons to learn from the 2005 experience is the need to coordinate the actions of the various players. What are your recommendations about national, regional and international responses needed?

The information we have confirms that Sahelian Niger, Chad and Northeast Mali and Burkina Faso are facing a severe food and nutrition crisis. This situation requires immediate action on the part of countries, regional integration organisations and partners. To ensure that actions interleave correctly, it is vital to include the responses in the contingency plans set up for countries affected by the crisis.

Therefore CILSS supports setting up regional responses that are complementary to the efforts made by countries. One of the strong recommendations made after the latest consultations is about ECOWAS organising an emergency meeting to prepare the response, particularly via loans based on national stocks. Regional organisations must also ensure strict application of free circulation of food products between the different countries in the region.

At a national level, a series of measures have been set up by Niger, Chad, Mali and Burkina Faso to help vulnerable groups. However, these actions do not systematically eliminate the effects of the crisis. They need to interact with interventions that tackle the structural causes of food insecurity in the sub-region.

This article is based on discussion with the Communication Department of CILSS.

⁶ The regional consultation on food and nutrition insecurity in the Sahel and West Africa was held from 30 March to 1 April in Lomé (Togo) and the restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network was held on 8 - 9 April in Paris.

⁷ The CILSS is involved in food security West Africa to forecast harvests, consolidate the food balance sheet, follow prices and markets, identify food risk areas and provide information on actions to deal with the different annual situations.

Agenda

Past events

- **Meeting on the right to food at the 13th session of the Human Rights Council:** This session took place from 1 to 26 March 2010, in Geneva. At the 9th meeting, on 5 March, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, presented the reports of the countries visited in 2009 and a thematic analysis on the current organization of the agro-food chain and its impact on the realization of the right to food. [>>>](#)
- **Restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network in the Sahel and West Africa:** The Permanent Interstate Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Sahel and West Africa Club organised a restricted meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (RPCA) in the Sahel and West Africa on 8 - 9 April in Paris. [>>>](#)
- **Negotiations on climate change organised by the UNFCCC in Bonn:** The Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met from 9 to 11 April to adopt a working programme for the rest of the year. The meeting is the first since the Copenhagen Conference in December 2009. [>>>](#)

Forthcoming events

- 17-18 May:** Dialogue on the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) – Dublin (Ireland)
- 21-25 June:** Food security regional seminar in Asia – Vientiane (Laos)
- 25-27 June:** G8 Summit – Huntsville and G20 Summit - Toronto (Canada)
- 7-9 July:** Investment forum for food security in Asia and the Pacific - Manila (Philippines)
- 20-22 September:** Millennium development goals Summit (MDG) – New York
- 11-14 October:** 36th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) – Rome
- 29 November-10 December:** Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP-16) - Cancun (Mexico)

For further information: [Upcoming events](#)

EC's latest news

- **EC action plan in support of the Millennium Development Goals:** On 21 April, the European Commission adopted the latest action plan that will include proposals to Member States on how to foster delivery on aid commitments. It will aim to increase the level of support by making aid more efficient and by directing it more specifically to the countries and sectors most in need. [>>>](#)
- **Information meeting on European response to fight against undernutrition:** On 13th April, Info Point of EuropeAid's Cooperation Office organised a lunchtime debate on "Malnutrition, a forgotten crisis. Greater European mobilisation." The main purpose of the meeting was to present the strategies of France and the UK and show the European synergies that exist to combat malnutrition in developing countries. [>>>](#)
- **An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security:** The European Commission and Parliament have drawn up this report to provide a policy framework for the EU and Member States to tackle hunger and malnutrition. This final version follows the public online consultation that took place from late 2009 to early 2010 based on a preparatory analysis document. European Ministers of Foreign Affairs are due to adopt the report on 10 and 11 May. [>>>](#)
- **Food Facility: an interim report on measures taken:** On 12 March 2010, the EC adopted a report on food facility measures taken in 2009. The document provides qualitative and quantitative information on interventions (programming, formulation, contracting and implementation), and on related administrative and support measures (staffing, studies). An additional document gives further details on measures taken. Since the measures were not implemented in the first target countries until mid 2009, it is too early to evaluate the effects of the aid. [Read the report](#)

New online documents

➤ Nutrition

The neglected crisis of undernutrition : DFID's strategy (2010): This document sets out DFID's strategy to tackle undernutrition. It presents a brief overview of the situation and its implications for DFID's role and priorities in nutrition over the coming years. [>>>](#)

➤ Social transfers

Dependency and graduation - Frontiers of social protection Brief n°5, RHVP (February 2010): This briefing paper critically examines two concepts that permeate contemporary policy debates about the advisability and feasibility of introducing comprehensive social protection programmes in low-income countries – 'dependency' and 'graduation'. Both issues are commonly raised by governments and donors that are sceptical about making firm, long-term commitments to social transfer programmes. [>>>](#)

Delivering money: cash transfers mechanisms in emergencies - Save the children, Oxfam, British Red Cross (March 2010): International aid agencies and governments are increasingly giving cash payments as a way to provide relief to people after disasters. The use of cash, as opposed to 'in kind' assistance, is a relatively new approach. This report documents lessons learned from previous experience and provides guidance for project managers needing to make choices about how best to deliver cash to people. [>>>](#)

Comparing food and cash transfers to the ultra poor in Bangladesh - IFPRI (2009): Bangladesh has some social safety net programs that transfer food to the poor, some that transfer cash, and some that provide a combination of both. This study evaluates the impacts of food and cash transfers on food security and livelihood outcomes among the ultra poor in Bangladesh, with a particular focus on four interventions. [>>>](#)

Cash or conditions? Evidence from a randomized cash transfer program - World Bank (March 2010): This research paper presents the first experimental evidence on the effectiveness of conditionality in cash transfer programs for schooling, using data from an intervention in Malawi that featured randomized conditional and unconditional treatment. [>>>](#)

➤ Food and nutritional situation

Current food security situation in Honduras (December 2009): This study on the food and nutrition situation in Honduras was carried out as part of the European Union programme to support food security in Honduras. The results will enable players to define the priorities of the strategic plan for implementing food security policy. [>>>](#)

Analysis of food and nutritional situation in Central America and Dominican Republic - PRESANCA (January 2010): The report of the Regional Programme of Food and Nutrition Security for Central America (PRESANCA) gives a survey of the food situation in the region, based on a large body of statistical data, particularly on child malnutrition. [>>>](#)

➤ Climate change

Copenhagen: Political Immobility Faced with Citizen Mobilization? - RAC, Coordination SUD (February 2010): This article analyses the Copenhagen Conference, comparing the viewpoints of French environmental and international solidarity NGOs, who worked together for a stronger voice on the issues of international solidarity in climate negotiations. [>>>](#)

The Sahel and climate change. Issues for sustainable development - CILSS, Special bulletin Agrhymet (March 2010): The CILSS Special Bulletin features contributions from the AGRHYMET Regional Centre on the problems of climate change in the Sahel. Several of the articles also involve food security issues related to agricultural production in the region. [>>>](#)

Climate change and the right to food - Heinrich Böll Stiftung (December 2009): The report proposes concrete methods by which institutions can address climate change problems and realize the right to food symbiotically, in compliance with the integration under international law. [>>>](#)

Deepening the food crisis: climate change, food security and the right to food - Brot für die Welt, (August 2009): The aim of this study is to document important facts about the relationship between climate change and food security, evaluate these facts systematically and incorporate them in policy recommendations for the national and international level, focusing on the development of policies to adapt to climate change. [>>>](#)

➤ **Other thematic areas**

Local markets, local varieties rising food prices and small farmers' access to seed - IFPRI, FAO (2009): This report provides case-specific responses to key seed policy issues based on the relationship between seed markets and high food prices, which were discussed at the project findings meeting at the FAO in May 2008. The paper answers key questions in the country context for India, Kenya, and Mali including whether high food prices will mean higher seed prices and seed insecurity for poor farmers. >>>

Millions Fed. Proven successes in agricultural development - IFPRI (2009): This book examines how policies, programs, and investments in pro-poor agricultural development have helped to substantially reduce hunger across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The 20 success stories presented here provide both lessons and inspiration for continued efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition among the one billion people still facing this scourge. >>>

Network activities

➤ **A forum to discuss on the food security seminar in Asia**

EuropeAid is organising a regional seminar on food security for all EU Delegations in Asia. It will take place in Vientiane, Laos from the 21st to the 25th of June 2010. A forum has been launched to discuss on the programme of the seminar and get feedback from concerned delegations. You could join the discussion through the website at the section "[Private discussion forums](#)"

➤ **A new leaflet that provides information on the network and its activities**

To disseminate information on the network and its activities, a new leaflet is available at the website, in French and in English versions. Feel free to send it to colleagues and partners working on food security. You could download the leaflet in the section "Who are we". [English version](#)

➤ **Your opinions and suggestions on the network through a questionnaire.**

An on-line questionnaire was sent to all network members to better their opinions of and suggestions in regard to the network's objectives and activities. This contributed to elaborate a program of work that best meet your expectations and specific needs. A summary of responses will be soon available at the website.

*This bulletin was written by the GRET team in charge of animating ROSA. The network is an initiative of EuropeAid (Unit E6 – Natural Resources in collaboration with Unit G4 – Training and Knowledge Management).
The points expressed do not reflect the official position of the European Commission.*