

Climate and Agriculture

CIDSE position paper for the UNFCCC 'COP 18' summit in Doha, Qatar

Climate change, agriculture and food security are inextricably linked, and addressing existing global hunger while preparing to feed an increasing population in the context of a changing climate is a defining challenge of our times.

CIDSE wants to highlight that human rights - and particularly the right to adequate food - must be the starting point for all analysis and policy development on climate change, agriculture and food security. This means that consistency between climate and food policies is crucial, and that a focus on small scale farmers adaptation needs must be at the centre of climate policies dealing with agriculture.

The climate and agriculture nexus must be addressed consistently throughout food and climate policy frameworks, and on the basis of key principles. The respect and adherence to human rights is a central one. It has been ascertained that impacts of climate change put basic human rights at risk, and specifically the right to food. We believe that a approach centred on human dignity is needed, as it is the right of all human beings to live in dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. We also want to stress the importance that the agriculture sector has to enhance poverty alleviation. Agriculture represents a larger share of the economy in those countries with the highest percentage of poor and undernourished people, as it constitutes their main source of livelihood, either on a subsistence level or for income to meet household needs. These elements must be acknowledged throughout any policy dealing with agriculture.

CIDSE strongly questions the approach of a work programme on agriculture in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). We believe that it could lead to inappropriate and risky mitigation measures for small producers, or place additional pressure on small-scale food producers via inadequate climate policies while diverting important funds for development towards carbon accounting. Addressing agriculture in a new dedicated framework may also undermine the valid efforts already being undertaken in regards to agriculture adaptation within the UNFCCC framework through the Nairobi work programme and the work programme on loss and damage. CIDSE underlines the need for parties to clarify what could be the added value of such a programme compared to existing UNFCCC frameworks already addressing agriculture issues before going any further. However, if a work programme starts at COP 18, CIDSE would reject any work programme on agriculture which would not adequately address the urgent adaptation challenges, especially of small-scale food producers, and the need for financial and structural support to sustainable farming practices.

Our key demands:

- **Parties must guarantee policy coherence, and therefore ensure that decisions on agriculture adaptation or mitigation are informed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**, being the most legitimate institutional body on food security. Parties must in particular acknowledge the final report of the 39th Session of the CFS held in Rome from 15-20 October 2012. This report affirms that to address the effects of climate on food security consistently with the realisation of the right to food, climate concerns must be integrated in food security policies, and emphasis must be put on adaptation for all farmers and food producers, especially small scale producers¹. This must be reflected and integrated in any policy proposal made by the UNFCCC parties on agriculture. Besides, UNFCCC decisions on agriculture should also be based on independent research, such as the IAASTD report, and on the findings from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.
- **Parties in the UNFCCC must consider adaptation as the priority focus of climate policy dealing with agriculture**, especially as far as small scale food producers are concerned, and must address the severe underfunding of adaptation as a priority. Parties must notably fill the UNFCCC frameworks already dealing with agriculture adaptation (i.e. Nairobi Work Programme; work programme on loss and damage) with political investment, content and money.
- **Parties must acknowledge the heterogeneous contributions of different agricultural models to GHG emissions**. Mitigation policies in the agriculture sector must therefore be adapted to tackle emissions where they are most important, focusing first and foremost on industrialized agriculture, while respecting the right to development of small producers. Mitigation in the field of agriculture should lead to a reduction of fossil fuel consumption in industrial agriculture from machines, fertilizer and pesticide production rather than focusing on carbon sequestration in soils in the South. Existing mechanisms like *Land use, land-use change and forestry* (LULUCF) should be reformed in a way that loopholes are filled with substance and ambition to use the mitigation potential of farming and forestry in industrialised countries.
- **Mitigation in the field of agriculture must also address emissions sources that are linked to production and consumption patterns**, such as meat consumption, post harvest losses and food waste. Furthermore, driving forces of deforestation from the agro industry must be tackled by securing land rights of local communities and indigenous peoples and strengthen forest governance. Programmes in development, like *Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation* (REDD) and *Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions* (NAMAs) and other land based activities under the UNFCCC, should be in line with the full respect of human rights and especially the rights of indigenous people.
- **Parties must reject the inclusion of agriculture in carbon markets** as this would exclusively benefit large-scale farming and companies, putting at severe risk the climate and small food producers.
- **Parties must take into account the benefits generated from investing in small-scale food systems and agroecological approaches**. These can lead to the increase in food production, food sovereignty, and therefore greater income security. Simultaneously, capacity to adapt to climate-related issues and to other livelihoods shocks will be strengthened and enhanced, and agriculture's contribution to the greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced.

¹ Committee on World Food Security, 2012/39 Final Report

CIDSE is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies whose mission is to reach out to the most vulnerable, and ensure they can live in dignity and justice. To this end, we strongly focus on food security, as well as on the inter linkages between climate change and agriculture. We highlight that a human right principle is necessary, and should be the starting point for all kind of analysis. As development organisations, we ground our studies in the experiences of our projects and programmes, and in the hands-on of our Southern partners who engage directly with affected communities.

Read more:

[Agriculture from Problem to Solution – Achieving the Right to Food in a Climate-Constrained World](http://www.cidse.org/content/publications/just-food/food-and-climate/agriculture%20from%20problem%20to%20solution.html) CIDSE Guiding Principles and Recommendations, October 2012

[http://www.cidse.org/content/publications/just-food/food-and-climate/agriculture from problem to solution.html](http://www.cidse.org/content/publications/just-food/food-and-climate/agriculture%20from%20problem%20to%20solution.html)

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More about CIDSE in Doha via www.cidse.org/cop18



CIDSE Members



CIDSE is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies. Its members share a common strategy in their efforts to eradicate poverty and establish global justice. CIDSE’s advocacy work covers global governance; resources for development; climate justice; food, agriculture & sustainable trade; and business & human rights - www.cidse.org

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