



## Policy Brief

# Cultivating Equality: Agriculture, Food & Nutrition Security in the UNFCCC

**OVERVIEW** We face a greater challenge than ever before: ending hunger and malnutrition in the face of climate change and natural resource scarcity. Success demands that we tackle inequity and gender inequality as a matter of social justice and human rights.

### Introduction

Globally, 795 million people are chronically hungry; 159 million children under five are stunted. Changes in climate in the last 30 years have already reduced global agricultural production and threaten to reduce it further. Inequality shapes who has access to food and the resources to grow it and buy it. It determines who can adapt to a changing climate. Climate change amplifies the risks already poor and marginalized people face, and the impacts are hardest on those least responsible for causing it.

Millions of small-scale food producers in Southern Africa are struggling to recover from the worst drought in 35 years, while cyclones have only recently slammed into Mozambique and Madagascar. A severe drought grips the Horn of Africa, leaving 15 million people in need of assistance in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. Famine conditions loom in Somalia where the third consecutive year of failed rains has eroded any resilience these communities had.

Hunger and poverty are not accidents—they are the result of social and economic injustice and inequality. This reality is no truer than for women—half the world's population, with far less than their fair share of the world's resources. Despite this, proposed solutions to end hunger in a changing climate overemphasize increasing food production. While improving yields among small-scale food producers is important, it is not sufficient. To end hunger and malnutrition in a changing climate, we must address inequality in food systems.

The Paris Agreement sets a goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and recognizes the importance of protecting food security and ending hunger. This demands ambitious and urgent action, without which the world risks breakdown of food systems, migration, increased food insecurity, particularly for poorer populations, conflict, and the loss of rural livelihoods due to increased water scarcity, heat stress, and desertification.

Vulnerable populations, small-scale food producers, and particularly women deserve a new strategy to support them in the face of climate change.

**Business as usual—increasing greenhouse gas emissions, unsustainable means of production, high levels of food waste and loss, and unequal access to resources and power—is unacceptable. It's time for a dialogue and action about equity.**

## UNFCCC Agriculture Recommendations

It is imperative that UNFCCC agriculture negotiations deliver a constructive outcome that holistically addresses the needs of small-scale food producers, particularly women, and that is grounded in sustainability and equity. Parties must come together around next steps that will enable further learning and catalyze concrete action.

In the four workshops held in 2015 and 2016, Parties acknowledged the importance of protecting food security and addressing the interests of small-scale food producers, particularly women. These workshops served to identify areas of need, including for identification of best practices, capacity building, and further sharing of knowledge, as well as opportunity to foster collaboration among the bodies under the Convention.

Negotiations in Marrakech failed to result in progress in the agriculture agenda item. Yet more work on agriculture remains for the UNFCCC, and next steps in agriculture must make a valuable contribution to continued learning and increased action. As Parties resume negotiations, CARE makes the following recommendations for UNFCCC Parties.

### **Ensure UNFCCC agriculture decisions promote food security, human rights, and gender equality**

First and foremost, Parties must ensure UNFCCC decisions on agriculture reflect the priorities of food security, human rights, and gender equality. Guidelines should be in place to ensure that no climate actions undermine these priorities, which Parties recognized as key principles in the Paris Agreement. The special characteristics of land, in particular, demand that protections be in place to ensure the environmental and social integrity of climate actions related to land. Agriculture is far more than a sector—it is a livelihood, source of food, and part of cultural identity. It is critical for individual and household food and nutrition security, national economies and poverty reduction.

### **Establish a joint SBSTA/SBI Work Programme on Agriculture and Food Security**

The principles of the Paris Agreement are particularly important as Parties consider next steps for agriculture negotiations. Agriculture cuts across several areas of negotiations, and Parties indicated in the workshops that numerous bodies under the Convention can support action in agriculture, from the Nairobi Work Programme to the CTCN to the Paris Committee on Capacity Building, among others. These bodies and others, including some outside the Convention, can contribute to advancing the agenda on agriculture, but this requires coherence, coordination, collaboration, and space for a holistic agriculture agenda.

#### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that climate change will impact “all aspects of food security...including food access, utilization, and price stability.”

Agriculture is complex, requires further learning to address gaps and emerging issues, presents challenges at multiple scales, and may require management of trade-offs. Furthermore, for the first time, the Paris Agreement calls for safeguarding food security and ending hunger—two matters of direct relevance to agriculture which are not currently addressed in other agenda items. Future efforts must, therefore, go beyond additional workshops to enable a clear agenda of action.

To adequately address agriculture, Parties must create a platform with sufficient scope and mandate to examine the issue holistically, to inform and drive efforts to meet needs, and to coordinate the numerous Convention bodies and processes that can contribute to catalyzing action and support. Parties should establish a joint SBSTA/SBI Work Programme on Agriculture and Food Security. A work programme can provide coherence and consistency to an agenda of learning, support, and action. A five year workplan should be negotiated, following a decision to

**50%**

Increase in length of heat waves in tropical regions with 2°C temperature rise than with 1.5°C.

**79 %**

of economically active women in developing countries spend their working hours producing food through agriculture.

**80%**

of food in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia is produced by small-scale food producers.

## REALITY FOR SMALL-SCALE FOOD PRODUCERS

Small-scale producers, particularly women, already struggle to grow, catch, or buy enough nutritious food because of small land plots, depleted fish stocks, water scarcity, or lack of access to secure land tenure, financial and extension services, climate information, and markets. Higher temperatures, shifting seasons, and erratic rainfall pose significant challenges for small-scale food producers, who are already often one bad harvest away from crisis. Climate change is a further burden they do not need.

## WOMEN'S BURDEN, WOMEN'S POTENTIAL

Women comprise an average of 43 percent of the global agricultural labor force. They make up nearly 50 percent of farmers in Eastern and Southeastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and are responsible for almost 90 percent of food preparation in the household. Yet, too often, women are not viewed as equal players in the household and community. So when they are not consulted on use of household income or community plans for natural resources, their knowledge is not captured, their priorities are not reflected, their needs are not addressed—and their rights are not respected.

establish the work programme, with a review of the work plan after the initial two years.

The world we seek—one of climate justice and food and nutrition security for all—demands that all actors address inequality in food systems, from producers and consumers, to the organizations that represent them, government leaders, and the private sector.

**Objectives:** The fundamental aim of a work programme will be to enhance the implementation of the Convention and the Paris Agreement, its principles, goals, and objectives. A work programme should

- Ensure climate actions advance—and do not undermine—the principles of the Paris Agreement, particularly the priority of safeguarding food security, ending hunger and human rights.
- Enhance action to build adaptive capacity and resilience in agriculture, particularly in developing countries.
- Inform and enhance mitigation action to contribute to the objectives of the Paris Agreement while ensuring that mitigation action does not threaten food security, gender equality, or human rights.

**Work Programme Purpose:** To provide sustainable and forward looking direction and guidance to agriculture negotiations within the UNFCCC, to support provided, and to action undertaken at national level. In order to achieve its objectives and purpose, the Work Programme will

- Facilitate sharing of knowledge and identification of best practices;
- Identify gaps in knowledge, support, and action & encourage efforts to fill these gaps, including through activities undertaken by other bodies under the Convention (e.g. the Adaptation Committee, Least

Developed Countries Expert Group, Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, Climate Technology Centre and Network, or Paris Committee on Capacity Building);

- Inform the work of other Convention bodies and negotiations;
- Provide guidance for regional, national, and subnational level action; and
- Facilitate collaboration with other Convention bodies, including the financial mechanism, and relevant UN-mandated processes outside the Convention, such as the Committee on World Food Security and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



**Modalities:** The Work Programme should draw upon successful approaches in other work programmes and dialogues within the UNFCCC, such as the Lima Work Programme on Gender, and should avoid duplication of efforts in other platforms or bodies. Modalities may include

- submissions from Parties and observers,
- in-session or regional workshops or forums,
- technical papers, and
- special events, e.g. high level ministerial dialogues, among others.



With regard to workshops in particular, attention should be given to maximizing their value, ensuring

- (1) that all workshops are designed to contribute to a specific deliverable rather than only a workshop report and
- (2) adequate time and space for open and constructive exchange among Parties and with civil society.

The gender and adaptation workshop at SB44, for instance, provided ample time for discussions, presentations, and break out groups that facilitated wide sharing of experiences by Parties and civil society organizations and fruitful exchange of ideas on good practices and next steps.

**A Work Programme on Climate Change and Food Security must ensure robust engagement and participation by civil society**, including small-scale food producers, social movements, NGOs, and women's groups. Civil society organizations bring not only the perspective of populations who may not have a seat at the table; they also bring a wealth of experience working with vulnerable, chronically hungry populations and small-scale food producers on the front lines of climate change. Previous conclusions by SBI regarding observer participation in workshops both "requested...additional efforts [be made] to promote transparency and observer participation"<sup>1</sup> and, going further, "encouraged the chairs...to invite, time permitting, observer organizations to make presentations."<sup>2</sup> In workshops and forums, for instance, at least one representative from each of the official constituencies should be invited to give a presentation and actively participate in the discussion.

Upon agreement to establish an Agriculture and Food Security work programme, Parties should negotiate a five year workplan to ensure valuable contribution to support and action in agriculture.

### **Integrate the principles of the Paris Agreement in key decisions of the APA regarding INDCs**

The linchpin of the Paris Agreement is the submission of INDCs every five years, to indicate the contributions Parties will make toward the objectives and goals of the Paris Agreement. In the first round of INDCs, submitted in 2015,

over 160 countries included agriculture as a priority for mitigation and/or adaptation. It is clear that agriculture is a priority sector, yet particularly with regard to mitigation action in the agriculture sector, action presents risks and must be undertaken in a way that does not undermine food security, human rights, gender equality, biodiversity or ecosystem integrity, nor undermine efforts to build resilience and adaptive capacity. As the APA negotiates the rules or guidelines for INDCs and the transparency framework, it is therefore imperative that the principles of the Paris Agreement be reflected in its decisions.

### **The APA must establish guidance on information to be provided in INDCs that calls for details regarding**

- processes Parties will undertake to ensure full and effective participation of affected populations and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities;
- governance structures related to land; and
- how food security, sustainable development, biodiversity, and gender equality have been taken into account, protected, and promoted.



While information provided in INDCs will address planned action to adhere to the principles of the Paris Agreement, it is also important to ensure Parties share the actual actions taken. As such, **the APA must also establish guidelines for transparency that call for Parties to report on steps taken to promote the principles of the Paris Agreement**, including food security, gender equality, and human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> FCCC/SBI/2002/17

<sup>2</sup> FCCC/SBI/2011/7

