

**Amigos da Terra - Amazônia Brasileira \* Anthra \* Brighter Green \* Humane Society International \* Indian Youth Climate Network \* IFOAM - International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements \* IMAFLORA - Instituto de Manejo e Certificação Florestal e Agrícola \* Kheti Virasat Mission \* Missions 3G- Gauri \* Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature \* Sri Lankan Youth Climate Network \* Woods Hole Research Center \* World Vision International**

## **A Global Vision for Agriculture and Food Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Beyond: A Civil Society Call for a SBSTA Work Programme on Agriculture**

18 November 2011

Dear Ministers and Policymakers,

We, the undersigned civil society and nongovernmental organizations, envision and promote resilient, sustainable, and humane agricultural landscapes that ensure food security<sup>1</sup> for the 21st century and beyond. The increasing challenges of climate change, water resource pollution and depletion, land degradation, combined with a growing population and rising middle class make the need to improve agricultural landscapes of the utmost urgency. How the global community chooses to address these challenges can seriously affect people, animals, and the rest of the natural world, including achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, a multi-faceted approach is needed, which aligns work across institutions, governments, and scales, and ensures the success of social, environmental, and development goals including food and water security, poverty reduction, biodiversity preservation, climate change adaptation, and animal welfare. The ability of billions of people to have safe, affordable, and reliable access to sufficient food for good nutrition depends on it, both now and for our children and their families in the future. *As a start to developing a more humane, equitable, and sustainable agricultural future, parties can sign a Long-term Cooperative Action (LCA) agreement in Durban that creates a Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) work programme on agriculture that incorporates, respects, prioritizes, and furthers the principles outlined in this letter.*

Key principles:

- Policy and finance in agriculture must support marginalized stakeholders, including women, smallholder farmers, pastoralists, small-scale fishers, and indigenous peoples. These groups, in addition to civil society, are all important stakeholders in the agriculture discussion. Their inclusion should be enhanced and valued in policy debates and decisions regarding food security, agriculture, and agriculture-related funding.
- Climate change, agriculture, development and other policies now need to be developed (and existing policies reformed) with an eye to addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation and ensuring food security for a growing population. Both adaptation and food security are of primary importance to the majority of nations and people worldwide, and should be prioritized.
- Any policy solution in agriculture must enhance individuals' and communities' abilities to prepare for, adapt, and respond to, the harmful impacts of climate change. In the agriculture sector, practices which meet the triple test of being economically viable, ecologically sound,

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<sup>1</sup> Food security includes four pillars – availability, access, nutritional quality, and stability (or resilience).

and socially acceptable are invariably win-win as they are at once mitigating and adaptive. However, climate change policies in the area of agriculture should also be evaluated for their ability to enhance the potential for improved food security, as it is only to the extent that they bring improvements to the lives of smallholder farmers, their children and families today and among future generations that they will prove viable in the longer run – something essential if change is to be truly adaptive and mitigating in its outcome.

- To achieve sustainable, resilient food production systems that contribute to food security and sustainable development, we support community-based and other approaches incorporating management of land, water and living resources. There are existing approaches that can include ‘no-regret,’ cost-efficient, and effective measures that reduce people’s vulnerability and climate-proof development strategies.<sup>2</sup> For example, conservation and improved management of ecosystems can reduce vulnerability and contribute to improved food production:
  - Conservation tillage increases soil water retention in face of drought, while also sequestering carbon below ground;
  - Agro-forestry systems increase above and below ground carbon storage while also increasing water storage below ground, even in the face of extreme climate events;
  - Mangroves serve as fish nurseries while at the same time providing protection from rising sea-levels and severe storms and high value carbon sinks.<sup>3</sup>

High-level calls for a more sustainable agriculture sector are not new.<sup>4,5</sup> There needs to be a paradigm shift<sup>6</sup> to an agriculture which is at once more sustainable, resilient and productive. With the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) annual meeting about to take place on the African continent, it is an opportune time to develop a programme of work that can comprehensively support resilient landscapes, and the people and species that rely on them. The UNFCCC is a unique and appropriate forum for incorporating a multi-faceted approach to a more secure agricultural future, following Article 2’s call “to ensure that food production is not threatened.”

***As stated above, a key outcome of Durban should be an LCA decision to create a SBSTA work programme on agriculture, as long as the work programme incorporates, respects, prioritizes, and furthers the principles outlined in this letter.*** A draft decision text, which incorporates political needs of various parties, is attached to this letter.

This work programme is only a small piece of what is needed globally to create more sustainable, resilient, and productive approaches to agricultural landscapes, one which contributes simultaneously to adaptation, mitigation, and improved food security and well-being of all people – men, women and children of this current and future generations. It must be incorporated into other current and future landscape initiatives. And civil society and stakeholders must be vigilant to ensure that much broader, action-oriented frameworks follow. Only with global action and inclusive stakeholder dialogues can we hope to address the challenges of climate change, poverty, food security, and other environmental problems in ways that not only attain development goals,

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<sup>2</sup> Andrade Pérez A, Herrera Fernandez B, and Cazzolla Gatti R. 2010 Building resilience to climate change: ecosystem-based adaptation and lessons from the field. International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Gland, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> Agriculture & Climate Change: An Agenda for Negotiation in Copenhagen (International Food Policy & Research Institute, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> McIntyre BD, Herren HR, Wakhungu J, and Watson RT, eds. 2009. Agriculture at a crossroads: synthesis report. International Assessment of Agriculture Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council. 2010. Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter. December 20. A/HRC/16/49.

<sup>6</sup> FAO. 2011. Save and grow: A policymaker’s guide to the sustainable intensification of smallholder crop production. [http://www.fao.org/ag/save-and-grow/index\\_en.html](http://www.fao.org/ag/save-and-grow/index_en.html).

but re-envision and re-create resilient landscapes worldwide, especially for marginalized peoples throughout the developing world.

Sincerely,

Amigos da Terra - Amazônia Brasileira

Anthra

Brighter Green

Humane Society International

Indian Youth Climate Network

IFOAM - International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

IMAFLORA - Instituto de Manejo e Certificação Florestal e Agrícola

Kheti Virasat Mission

Missions 3G- Gauri

Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature

Sri Lankan Youth Climate Network

Woods Hole Research Center

World Vision International

## **Proposed New 'Option 4' for Agriculture**

### **Resilient Landscapes - helping agricultural communities be more resilient to climate change**

*Accepting* that a priority for developing country Parties is to help their agricultural communities adapt to climate change caused by historical accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions principally from developed countries;

*Reaffirming* the objective, principles and provisions of the Convention, in particular its Article 2, Article 3, paragraphs 1, 2 and 5, and Article 4, paragraphs 1(c) and 1(e);

*Recognising* the potential for agricultural communities to modify their agricultural practices and systems in a manner that not only strengthens their resilience and capacity to adapt to climate change but also makes a contribution to global efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change;

*Bearing in mind* the linkages between agriculture, environmental sustainability, food security, nutrition, employment, and income;

*Recognising* that maintaining and restoring natural ecosystems can enhance landscape resilience and delivery of ecosystem services;

*Mindful* of the potential for improvements in the efficiency and productivity in the use of land and labour to have adverse consequences for some landholders and communities, especially the poorest among them, and thus the need to take explicit steps to protect the interests of small and marginal farmers, the right and ability of farmers to develop, save and use their own seed, varieties and breeds, the rights of indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge and practices, in the context of applicable international obligations and taking into account national laws and national circumstances;

*Affirming* that cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions in the agriculture sector can strengthen the ability of developing country Parties to pursue economic and social development and poverty eradication strategies but must be pursued in a manner that contributes to safeguarding local food security and local livelihoods as well as farm animal health and welfare and do not involve unjustifiable restriction on international trade;

*Determined* to ensure that any initiatives, arrangements, rules or mechanisms that might be established by the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC or Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, such as and including NAMAs, the CDM and a REDD+ mechanism, are elaborated and implemented in a manner consistent with each other and with the need to help established agricultural communities adapt to climate change;

1. *Decides* that all Parties, with respect to the agricultural sector and taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and their specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, should promote the development, introduction and widespread adoption, as appropriate, of agricultural practices and systems expected to improve the capacity of agricultural communities to adapt to climate change in a timely and resilient manner, especially those that are also likely to contribute to mitigation as well as adaptation;
2. *Decides* that, pursuant to and consistent with paragraph 1 above, all Parties should promote and cooperate in the research, development, including transfer, of technologies, practices and processes:
  - a) that strengthen the ability of agricultural communities to adapt to climate change;
  - b) that control, reduce or prevent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases;
  - c) that enhance sequestration and accumulation of atmospheric carbon in plants and/or soils;
  - d) that enhance food security;
  - e) that enhance and restore clean air, water, and soil; and
  - f) that enhance farm animal health and abilities to express natural behaviour;
3. *Requests* the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice [SBSTA] to establish, at its thirty-sixth session, a programme of work on agriculture to enhance implementation of Article 4, paragraph 1(c), of the Convention, taking into account paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and to report on progress to the Conference of the Parties [COP] at its eighteenth session;
  - a. *Mindful that* any outcomes of this work programme shall be coordinated and implemented in such a way as not to duplicate work or negatively affect the outcomes of other initiatives, arrangements, rules or mechanisms that might be established by the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC or Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, such as and including NAMAs, the Adaptation committee, the CDM and a REDD+ mechanism
4. *Invites* Parties and accredited observers to submit to the Secretariat by 20 March 2012, their views on the content and scope of the work programme; and
5. *Requests* the Secretariat to compile these views into a miscellaneous document for consideration by SBSTA at its thirty-sixth session.
6. *Decides* that a specific 'window' should be created in the Green Climate Fund to support and encourage the prompt adoption of changes to agricultural practices and systems consistent with and pursuant to SBSTA advice;