

## Coordination SUD's Recommendations for the Durban Climate Change Conference

### Any Durban Decision on Agriculture Must Take Smallholder Farming in Developing Countries into Account!

 28 November - 9 December 2011, Durban (South Africa)

**A**griculture means managing land and biomass. As a sector, it both emits and captures greenhouse gases. Agriculture is also the economic sector that is most vulnerable to climate variations. The effects of climate change can already be felt in the field but the majority of the three billion small farmers and small stock farmers have almost no latitude to withstand these changes alone. Worldwide, 70% of the food insecure are poor farmers. Yet, they produce 70% of all food worldwide and 80% of the food in developing countries! An additional 600 million people could become food insecure by 2080 under the effects of climate change, swelling the ranks of the 925 million people already going hungry today.

Because of this, agriculture is central to the issues involved in fighting climate change. Paradoxically, and for the wrong reasons, agriculture has long been conspicuously absent from international climate negotiations. Even after agriculture's arrival on the agenda for the negotiations in 2009, the international negotiations ignored the specificity and importance of smallholder farming.

The time has come for more responsible consideration of agriculture in the fight against climate change. Any decision adopted in Durban about a work program on agriculture must recognize the specificity and importance of smallholder farming in developing countries.

#### ► Action Principles for the Agricultural Sector

- > Differentiate between different types of agriculture
- > Recognize agriculture's multifunctionality
- > Acknowledge the common but differentiated responsibilities of developed countries and emerging countries when it comes to agricultural emissions
- > Respect the food sovereignty and right to food of rural and poor households in developing countries.

#### Our Priorities for Agriculture

- Re-introduce a paragraph on agriculture that prioritizes both mitigation and adaptation and takes into account agriculture's multifunctionality in a decision by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action.
- Launch a work program on agriculture under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) if and only if this program:
  - addresses the issues of adaptation and mitigation in the agricultural sector equally;
  - differentiates priorities in function of countries and agricultural models;
  - recognizes the importance and specificity of smallholder farming in developing countries and prioritizes adaptation for these farming systems;
  - aims to study, optimize and disseminate proven practices that are locally suitable and locally rooted.

# 1 Recognize the crucial role played by smallholder farming in developing countries

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► **Any decision on agriculture should take into account the specific role and importance of smallholder farming in developing countries in the fight against climate change and food insecurity.**

> Acknowledge the quantitative significance of smallholder farming. Peasant farmers and stock farmers make up an overwhelming majority (98%) of farmers worldwide—nearly 1.5 billion workers in developing countries. The world's rural population is 3 billion people. Less than 30 million farms have access to motorization on surface areas of less than 10 hectares, and nearly 2.7 million farms are smallholder farms.

> Promote the crucial role of smallholder farming in development and food security. Smallholder farming plays a fundamental role in local food security, as it does in territorial development, job creation, environmental protection, structuring the social fabric in rural areas, and public health.

> Adopt a differentiated approach to priorities in response to climate change. The different types of agriculture have different priorities in response to climate change. An agro-industrial farmer in a developed country, making heavy use of inputs, will seek to mitigate his or her greenhouse gas emissions and optimize CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration in the soil. A nomad stock farmer or smallholder farmer in a developing country, whose emissions are often next to nothing, will mainly seek to adapt to the harmful effects of climate change.

# 2 Include adaptation by smallholder farming in developing countries in the priorities of the SBSTA work program and climate finance

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► **Only launch an SBSTA work program on agriculture if the following conditions are met:**

> Give at least equal place to adaptation and mitigation.

> Address smallholder farming's needs in developing countries. The work program should reflect the diversity of adaptation challenges and agricultural models around the world, especially the most vulnerable smallholder farming systems in developing countries.

> Optimize proven local adaptation practices. Local actors have long-standing experience with adaptation issues and local constraints. Even though this know-how is currently inadequate in response to climate change, any agricultural adaptation program should seek first to understand, support and optimize proven practices to build sustainable and locally-rooted adaptation strategies.

► **Finance in priority the adaptation of vulnerable smallholder farming systems.**

The technical and financial efforts must be made as directly as possible and focus on smallholder farming in developing countries. This is necessary to respond effectively to the inherently local nature of vulnerability, determined by a combination of factors.

## 3 Promote conversion to low-carbon agricultural models

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### ► In terms of mitigation, the work program should:

> Examine solutions that are adapted to the local context and accessible to smallholder farming. Solutions destined to improve productivity while mitigating greenhouse gas emissions must be adapted to the local context and directly accessible by smallholder farms in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.

> Support the development of ecologically-intensive agriculture. The work program should contribute to the identification, development and dissemination of agroecological practices. Technical development and genetic improvements should be based on the development and optimization of proven smallholder farming know-how and practices.

> Help agriculture move back to territories and the local level to ensure local food security and avoid emissions from the transport of food products.

> Promote policy coherence between developed and developing countries. It is crucial to review developed countries' and some emerging countries' modes of production and consumption as they are high greenhouse gas emitters. Better stock management and waste prevention should be encouraged.

> Take into account agriculture's multiple functions when establishing emission measurement criteria. The methodology for accounting carbon intensity per farm unit—as promoted by some countries—reduces agriculture to two dimensions: productivity and greenhouse gas emissions. This accounting method masks the principal challenge of mitigating global agricultural emissions in absolute value. It also favors highly intensified, specialized, large-scale farming models. Other models, however,

including smallholder farming, play a crucial role at the local level in terms of food security, the economy, social stability and environmental sustainability. The adaptation and socioeconomics co-benefits arising from low-carbon agricultural activities implemented by smallholder farming systems should also be measured.

> Make a link with effort to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. The work program must lead to solutions to improve farmers' incomes on existing farm sizes while developing sustainable practices, such as agroforestry.

> Trigger low-carbon agricultural development. The intensified agricultural systems in industrial countries—sometimes exported to emerging or even developing countries—are high emitters because they consume large amounts of inputs and energy, and make heavy use of food processing. In order to increase production while lowering the agricultural sector's impact on climate change and the environment, the work program should examine modalities for converting agro-industrial models from the green revolution into low-carbon, resilient models more suited to local economies. In non-emerging developing countries, the agriculture work program should contribute to the adoption, in these countries, of integrated agricultural development plans that are resilient and low-carbon.

### ► The carbon market: a false solution for smallholder farmers.

The carbon market has little chance of helping smallholder farming systems. It is complex to implement in the agricultural sector and will probably result in high transaction costs. It is also an uncertain finance mechanism for smallholder farmers, both because of the low demand for this type of credits and problems that smallholder farmers may encounter while trying to access it. Finally, it can bring additional threats to local communities' access to land.

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## 4 For strong peasant involvement in the climate negotiations

► **Give peasants the means to participate actively in the international negotiations and in national policy-making in climate change and agriculture.**

While they account for the vast majority of farmers, smallholder farmers in developing countries are currently absent from the international negotiations. The active participation of farmers' organization requires supporting capacity building and informational activities targeting their members. It also requires giving them the space necessary to submit proposals in the international negotiations. These organizations must also be able to participate actively in elaborating national public policies in connection with agriculture and climate change.

► **Directly involve farmers' organizations in the agriculture work program and phase two of the Nairobi Work Program.**

The design of the agriculture work program should be bottom-up and take into account the experience, support requests and problems encountered by farmers in developing countries regarding both adaptation and mitigation.

## 5 Reposition the agriculture discussions in the fight for food sovereignty

► **Do not mask the local reality of food sovereignty.**

Increasing agricultural yields and food availability will not be enough to resolve the problem of food insecurity, which is tied to much more than agricultural productivity alone. Reasoning solely on the global scale runs the risk of masking the local reality of food insecurity, fostering the expansion of developed countries' high-productivity models to the detriment of smallholder farming. This could give rise to actions that only worsen food insecurity: marginalization of smallholder farming in relation to sectoral and research policies, large-scale land grabbing, and the promotion of international trade liberalization that suffocates local markets.

► **Act on the underlying constraints that weigh on smallholder farming and threaten food security.**

The vulnerability of rural populations to climate change is due to classical determining factors as well as economic and social factors. No progress toward "climate-smart" agriculture will be possible if countries do not act on the structural threats to the development of rural communities: international trade liberalization; price volatility; limited access to inputs, credit, natural resources and markets; land tenure insecurity; and the lack of investment and technical support from States.

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**Coordination SUD (Solidarity, Relief, Development)** is the national platform of French development and relief NGOs. Founded in 1994, it brings together more than 130 member NGOs and 6 member networks (CLONG-Volontariat, CNAJEP, Coordination d'Agen, CRID, FORIM, Groupe Initiatives) that are active in the fields of humanitarian relief, development assistance, environmental protection, and human-right defense. Member NGOs work together in specific working groups on various issues to align their positions and build shared advocacy campaigns.

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**Coordination SUD's Climate and Development Working Group (CDWG)** works on the links between development and climate change. It brings together approximately thirty development and environmental NGOs that are members of Coordination SUD and/or Climate Action Network France (CAN-F). CDWG is lead by Gret. Its objectives are: to facilitate experience and information sharing among member organizations; to raise awareness among French development and relief NGOs on climate-related issues and help them mainstream climate change issues in their projects; to help member organizations build collective positions on climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries; and carry out advocacy and reporting work in the international climate change negotiations.