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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
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Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Nineteenth Session

Rome, 16-20 May 2016

Strategy for FAO's work on Climate Change - roadmap

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Executive Summary

The 118th session of the Programme Committee in November 2015, in discussing the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation (PC 118/3) and its Management Response, requested that the Organization prepare a Strategy for its work on climate change. The Strategy will be submitted to the sessions of FAO's Technical Committees (on Fisheries, Forestry, Agriculture and Commodity Problems) to be held in 2016, as well as to the 120th session of the Programme Committee in November 2016. It is proposed that the draft Strategy outline the conceptual framework for the achievement of three overarching outcomes:

1. Improved integration of food security, agriculture, forestry and fisheries considerations in international governance on climate change through reinforced FAO engagement;
2. Enhanced capacities of member countries on climate change through FAO's leadership as a provider of technical knowledge and expertise;
3. Strengthened coordination, learning and delivery of FAO's work on climate change.

Effective delivery of FAO's transformative climate change agenda will be dependent upon:
a) prominent and consistent contribution to relevant international processes on climate change governance and action; b) focused coordination and alignment of FAO's climate change work; and c) mobilization of FAO's global network with appropriate support to deliver policy and technical advice at country level.

Guidance sought from the Programme Committee

The Committee is invited to provide guidance on further refinement of the proposed Strategy, in particular on the proposed conceptual framework and three overarching outcomes.

Introduction

1. Climate change is one of the greatest global threats to agricultural, fisheries and forestry systems, food security and poverty reduction. Climate change threatens to undercut and possibly reverse progress that has been made in the fight against hunger and malnutrition in recent years. Climate change and extreme weather events pose multiple challenges: they may reduce productivity and the production of food – as well as feed, fibre and fuel – and could add increased pressure to already fragile food systems.
2. Recognizing the importance of action on climate change, the Programme Committee agreed that an evaluation of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCAM) be carried out.
3. The Evaluation,¹ presented to the Programme Committee at its 118th session in November 2015, appreciated and welcomed FAO's role in CCAM. Among other recommendations, it highlighted the need for FAO's stronger engagement at country level and greater clarity in defining its objectives towards integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation as a cross-cutting priority in the work of the Organization. Consequently, the Committee requested that a FAO Climate Change Strategy be prepared for its review.
4. The guidance from the Evaluation and the Committee is in line with calls on the international community to scale-up climate change efforts. The 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change² reports that human influence on the climate is evident and increasing, with impacts on all continents and in the oceans. In September 2015, the international community subscribed to 17 Sustainable Development Goals aimed at paving a trajectory towards a hunger-free, more equitable and more sustainable world by 2030. Most recently, in December 2015, the landmark Paris Agreement for climate action was adopted by the 195 nations party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
5. Over 90 percent of all countries that submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) towards the COP 21³ negotiations included agriculture as a sector to be considered for mitigation and/or adaptation. In particular, the agricultural sectors⁴ are the foremost priority for adaptation in INDCs: out of the 130 INDCs that include an adaptation section, 124 countries specifically refer to crops and livestock, 105 countries to forests, and 60 to fisheries and aquaculture. Furthermore, the Preamble to the Paris Agreement recognizes 'the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse effects of climate change'. Furthermore, through the embracement of the more inclusive concept of 'food security', the language under the Framework Convention itself to ensure that 'food production is not threatened' by climate change is strengthened. International support for climate action in the agricultural sectors is therefore clear.

I. Climate change within FAO's Strategic Framework

6. The agricultural sectors can – and must – play a pivotal role in the context of the global efforts to adapt to, and address climate change. Consequently, climate change has been designated as one of FAO's three highest priorities and as a cross-cutting theme in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2016-17⁵ under Objective 6 on technical quality, knowledge and services.
7. This further strengthens the emphasis FAO already placed on climate change in the PWB 2014-15, which identified, as a major area of work, climate-smart agriculture under Strategic Objective 2 and resilience to natural hazards and crises under Strategic Objective 5.

¹ PC 118/3; PC 118/3 Sup.1

² IPCC, 2014. 5th Assessment Report. <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/index.shtml>

See also: IPCC, 2014. 5th Assessment Report, 2014. Chapter 7: Food security and food production systems. www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg2/WGIIAR5-Chap7_FINAL.pdf

³ Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC.

⁴ For the purpose of this document, the 'agricultural sectors' are understood to comprise crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries.

⁵ CL 153/3

8. Climate change adaptation and mitigation feature as increasingly prominent components in FAO's technical work in countries and across regions.. The inclusion of climate change as a cross-cutting theme under Objective 6 is an opportunity to facilitate focused coordination and alignment of the many threads of FAO's climate change work to ensure consistency and compliance with FAO's standards, guidance and best practices, as well as those of its strategic partners.

9. FAO actively engages in global processes and fora that address climate change, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where it highlights food security and the perspectives of the agricultural sectors to ensure that appropriate attention is given to both the adaptation needs and mitigation contributions. A distinct and consistent presence at these and other relevant fora is essential to ensure that food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry are given sufficient recognition and prominence in climate change governance and action.

II. Climate Change Strategy - Roadmap

10. As requested by the Programme Committee at its 118th session, FAO developed a roadmap for preparation of the Strategy on Climate Change, which includes the following milestones:

- discussion of the draft Strategy at 2016 sessions of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), the Committee on Forestry (COFO), the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP);
- approval and recommendations by the 120th session of the Programme Committee (November 2016); and
- endorsement by the 155th session of the FAO Council (December 2016).

11. As an initial step, a Strategy Development Team has been established comprised of representatives from all Regional Offices and Technical Departments, to provide inputs from across the Organization.

12. Members' inputs to the draft Strategy will be provided through FAO's Technical Committees at their 2016 sessions⁶ and incorporated into the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to be presented to the 120th session of the Programme Committee for final approval in November 2016.

13. The resultant Climate Change Strategy is expected to: (i) outline the strategic choices and action priorities informed by FAO's comparative advantages (at global, regional and national levels); (ii) guide FAO's work on climate change; and (iii) strengthen its impact in delivering FAO's climate work. The Strategy will be complemented by an Action Plan detailing how the Strategy will be implemented through the current and future PWBs.

III. Climate Change Strategy - Conceptual framework

14. The draft Strategy's conceptual framework will comprise the following:

15. *Introduction:* the Strategy will at the forefront set out the direct relevance of the agricultural sectors in addressing both food security and climate change As highlighted in the Evaluation report, FAO has unique strengths to address CCAM, including the provision of highly-valued technical support, information and tools; helping governments and partners to harmonize disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and strategies; and as a trusted facilitator and neutral source of technical data on the global stage. The *Introduction* will conclude with an explanation of the purpose of the Strategy.

16. *Context:* the nature and scale of climate change impacts on food and agricultural systems will be emphasized as the key motivator for an expansion of activity by FAO in this area. Furthermore, it is proposed that this section further outline ongoing work on climate change globally, while noting the relatively low investment in agricultural sectors as opposed to the energy and transport sectors.. It will also briefly outline the current political context and momentum for action (in particular highlighting the 2015 conclusion of the SDGs, the SFDRR, Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement), in the context

⁶ COFI (11-15 July 2016); COFO (18-22 July 2016); COAG (26-30 September 2016); CCP (3-5 October 2016).

of which FAO's efforts on climate change will be scaled-up, and the cross-cutting importance of climate change in FAO's Strategic Framework.

17. *Vision and role on climate change:* FAO has a unique role to play in ensuring food security, environmental, social and economic sustainability for farmers, pastoralists, fishers, foresters and other rural dwellers in the face of climate change. FAO strives to realise its vision of a hunger-free, sustainable and equitable world by assisting governments in promoting production systems that are better adapted and more resilient to the impacts of climate change, while minimizing their environmental footprint.

18. *Approach:* the main focus of FAO's climate work is to help countries strengthen their capacities to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and therein support countries in developing appropriate policies, strategies, data and technologies, and to access financing in order to maintain and improve food security and rural livelihoods in the face of climate change.

19. *Guiding principles:* it is envisaged that the Strategy will aim to facilitate the transition of food and agricultural systems and dependent livelihoods to become more resilient to climate change founded on principles of social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

20. *Expected outcomes:* in order to achieve this transition, the aim of the proposed Strategy is to define the conceptual framework within which the following overarching outcomes can be attained (*Box 1*):

- Outcome 1: Improved integration of food security, agriculture, forestry and fisheries considerations in international governance on climate change through reinforced FAO engagement;
- Outcome 2: Enhanced capacities of member countries on climate change through FAO leadership as a provider of technical knowledge and expertise;
- Outcome 3: Strengthened coordination, learning and delivery of FAO's work on climate change.

Box 1: Expected outcomes

Outcome 1: Improved integration of food security, agriculture, forestry and fisheries considerations in international governance on climate change through reinforced FAO engagement. The Strategy aims to increase FAO's engagement in international fora to promote the perspectives of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, food security, rural livelihoods and natural resource management and conservation. Actions to be targeted at global level (including the UNFCCC, the SDGs and Agenda 2030, among others) and at regional and national levels (FAO country offices to facilitate linkages between agricultural sectors' Ministries and environmental, finance and other relevant national institutions).

Outcome 2: Enhanced capacities of member countries on climate change through FAO leadership as a provider of technical knowledge and expertise. The Strategy aims to enhance countries' capacities to effectively integrate food security and agricultural sector considerations into national and regional strategies and programmes, and *vice versa* climate change considerations into national and regional agriculture, forestry and fisheries strategies and programmes. Emphasis is placed on strengthening coherence between climate change adaptation (both to slow onset events and extreme events) and DRR approaches, as well as exploring opportunities for mitigation in line with countries' policy goals and national commitments. FAO aims to scale up the provision of data, technical expertise and tools for addressing CCAM and enhance country capacities to use them. FAO will also provide systematic support to facilitate country access to financing for climate action in the agricultural sectors.

Outcome 3: Strengthened coordination, learning and delivery of FAO's work on climate change. The Strategy sets out to: (i) enhance internal coordination mechanisms for climate-related work across all five Strategic Programmes; (ii) strengthen the capacities of FAO's country, sub-regional and regional offices to effectively engage with national, sub-regional and regional climate change processes, make inter-sectorial links with the agricultural sectors and food security; (iii) connect with climate change financing opportunities; (iv) foster partnerships by furthering collaboration with non-state actors for CCAM (civil society organizations, private sector, cooperatives, academia); and (v) promote resource mobilization opportunities.

IV. Implementation of the Climate Change Strategy

21. The Strategy's aim to achieve the transition of food and agricultural systems and dependent livelihoods to become more resilient to climate change calls for a strengthening of FAO's capacity in order to scale-up its support to member countries. To this end, the Strategy identifies three main focus areas:

22. *A prominent and consistent contribution to relevant international processes on climate change governance and action and climate finance* to be achieved by:

- a) ensuring consistent input and a high-level presence of FAO at Conferences of the Parties to the UNFCCC and other relevant fora, to the benefit of member countries and thereby ensuring that the priorities of the agricultural sectors feature consistently in discussions on climate;
- b) engaging in climate financing opportunities, including the Green Climate Fund, GEF, regional development banks, multilateral and bilateral development partners, private sector investment, as well as other innovative financing opportunities, in a coordinated, formalized and strengthened manner, in order to efficiently and optimally facilitate action in member countries.

23. *Mobilization of FAO's global network with appropriate support to deliver policy and technical advice at country level* to be achieved by:

- a) development and deployment to FAO's country, subregional and regional offices of learning programmes aimed at strengthening the decentralized offices' ability to effectively engage with national, regional and sub-regional climate change processes;
- b) facilitating inter-sectorial links between government departments and other relevant institutions with the agricultural and food sectors, and by fostering partnerships with relevant public, private and civil society actors;

- c) connecting with climate change financing opportunities from dedicated funds and development partners, as well as innovative opportunities for collaboration with private sector investments, lending banks and individuals;
 - d) effective communications, building on FAO's own communication channels and using the tools of Communication for Development to support local, national and regional engagement for climate change action in food and agriculture.
24. *Focused coordination and alignment of FAO's climate change work* to be achieved by:
- a) emphasizing FAO's comparative advantage with regard to its technical preeminence in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security, as well as its unique global network for the provision of policy and technical support. In supporting the addition of climate change as a cross-cutting theme under Objective 6, FAO has the opportunity to deliver coherent and coordinated support to countries for CCAM in food and agricultural systems, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable populations;
 - b) effective collaboration between the Climate and Environment Division (NRC), technical departments and the Strategic Programme teams in order to work in close synergy in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation issues within the Strategic Framework.