

## **LDC GROUP SUBMISSION ON ISSUES RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

This submission is made by the LDC Group in response to the SBSTA 40 (June, 2014) conclusions. The SBSTA, recalling Article 9 of the Convention, on the basis of the objective principles and provisions of the Convention, in accordance with decision 2/CP.17, paragraph 75, continued discussions and concluded that it would undertake scientific and technical work, taking into account the conclusions of SBSTA 38, in the following areas:

- (c) Identification of adaptation measures, taking into account the diversity of the agricultural systems, indigenous knowledge systems and the differences in scale as well as possible co-benefits and sharing experiences in research and development and on the ground activities, including socioeconomic, environmental and gender aspects;
- (d) Identification and assessment of agricultural practices and technologies to enhance productivity in a sustainable manner, and food security and resilience, considering the differences in agro-ecological zones and farming systems, such as different grassland and cropland practices and systems.

Recognizing that agriculture holds the key to LDCs' sustainable and rural development, a top priority on the global agenda now is how to feed the projected world population of nine billion by 2050. This task is especially formidable in LDCs, where close to 75% of the small scale farmers directly or indirectly rely on rain-fed agriculture and agro-pastoralism as a source of livelihood. LDCs' capacity to produce and secure food is likely to be challenged by limited adaptation measures, taking into account the diversity of the agricultural systems, indigenous knowledge systems and the differences in scale as well as possible co-benefits at regional, national, and local levels. There is limited experience on climate research and gender issues in relation to national development in the LDCs. Therefore, only sharing those limited experiences in research and development and on the ground activities, including socioeconomic, environmental and gender aspects would not help the LDCs much in attaining food security and rural development. There are also limited skills in the LDC food security arena in identifying and assessing agricultural practices and technologies that would enhance agriculture productivity in a sustainable manner, enhance food security and resilience, considering the differences in agro-ecological zones and farming systems. Thus, ensuring food security in LDCs requires urgent actions that would improve the production and productivity of agriculture systems and promote climate-resilient agriculture in a sustainable manner.

One most important factor in identifying and addressing adaptation measures in LDCs is the adequate provision of finance because adequate provision of finance is cross-cutting in all development spheres of the LDCs. For example, the UNEP *Africa Adaptation Gap Report*, released prior to the Warsaw climate conference in 2013 found that adaptation costs for Africa, which has a greater number of LDCs, alone could reach approximately US\$350 billion annually by 2070 should the 2°C target be significantly exceeded, compared to US\$150 billion lower per year if the target were met. Another UNEP study estimates that for South Asia, which also consists of many LDCs, the average adaptation cost could be as high as US\$40 billion. The UNEP *Adaptation Gap Report (2014)*, on the other hand, highlights that Least Developed

Countries and Small Island Developing States are likely to have far greater adaptation needs. Without early efforts to implement adaptation measures in these countries, the report continued, the existing adaptation gap will widen as greater financial resources will need to be committed later. Considerable opportunities abound in the LDCs for using existing knowledge (i.e. a combination of scientific and indigenous knowledge) on climate change and adaptation more effectively. For example, in The Gambia, some farm communities use their existing indigenous knowledge on wind speed and direction at the beginning of the rainy season to precisely gauge a drought year. If the wind speed is high and it moves in the West to East direction that means that drought could be expected in that year. So, the farmers would prepare to plant early so that their crops can mature early for harvest before drought sets in. This example of an indigenous knowledge could be blended with scientific knowledge to come up an Early-Warning Indicator that could be used to mitigate a drought season. In many LDCs, however, there is a lack of systematic identification and analysis of adaptation knowledge gaps. Therefore, integrating and interpreting scientific evidence in combination with indigenous knowledge from different sources and making it available to farmers and decision makers at all levels is one of the most important knowledge needs of the LDCs.

Identification and assessment of agricultural practices and technologies is crucial to enhance productivity in a sustainable manner, increase food security, and build community resilience. In the LDCs there is a need to accelerate the propagation and international transfer of agriculture practices and technologies to increase food security and enhance adaptation measures, many of which already exist. This requires governments to remove challenges to technology uptake, for example through provision of incentives, enactment of regulations, and strengthening of public and private institutions. Critical to the successful uptake of technologies for adaptation is their applicability beyond increasing resilience to climate change. The UNEP Adaptation Gap Report (2014) states that experience shows that it is easier to scale up the deployment of adaptation technologies when they meet a number of other human needs in addition to providing climate benefits. As an example of successful technologies, the same report looks at scientifically-developed seeds which can be used to sustain agriculture within the context of a changing climate—critical for most LDCs, given the dependence of large proportions of the LDC population on farming.

## **Recommendations**

- The UNFCCC should create a repository of adaptation options, in relation to agriculture and food security, which can be integrated in development decisions by the LDCs.
- The international community should continue to promote and adequately provide financial support for research and development and gender issues with regard to sustaining food security in the LDCs.
- Consideration of knowledge gaps in relation to agriculture and food security should be integrated more explicitly in project and program appraisal and design to ensure that the knowledge produced responds better to user needs and identified knowledge gaps in the LDCs.

- The UNFCCC and the UNCCD may start working on how to strengthen synergies on (c) above by, among other things, taking measures and organize a scientific workshop to highlight issues of interest to the LDCs.

Finally, we note that it would be helpful for SBSTA to welcome the participation of some international organizations with work areas on the two mentioned-topics at the workshop to present more up-to-date scientific information.