



For immediate release

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COMMUNIQUÉ

COP22 – Action for agriculture

With the future of agriculture moving up the agenda at the UN Conferences of the Parties (COP22) negotiations, a trio of side events is examining key issues for farmers facing climate change. Sessions held on the sidelines of the climate change talks currently under way in Marrakesh, Morocco have included the launch of an ambitious new initiative to support agriculture and build climate resilience for farmers in Africa. Also discussed was the importance of involving young people in developing and implementing smart climate change solutions for agriculture, as well as effective ways of mobilising finance to fund them.

After the Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4 2016, the focus of deliberations at COP22 has been on implementation. More than 90 percent of African countries have included agriculture in their Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) for meeting both adaptation and mitigation goals, significantly raising the profile of the sector in climate change negotiations.

“Addressing agriculture is critical to achieving global climate change goals, both in terms of adaptation and mitigation,” said Michael Hailu, Director of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA). Together with a range of partners, CTA is supporting three side events that focus on agriculture and climate change. “Agriculture is being severely impacted by climate change, but it can also contribute significantly to meeting mitigation targets. Several effective climate smart agriculture solutions have already been identified. The time has now come to take concrete action on the ground and adjust national and regional policies that will encourage them.”

The Adaptation of African Agriculture (AAA), unveiled in Marrakesh earlier this week, is one such initiative. Developed by the Moroccan Government, it aims to transform African agriculture by mobilising US\$30 billion to support innovative policies, financial mechanisms and capacity development. The AAA focuses on three pillars for adaptation – improved management of soils, water and climate risk. The launch offered a platform for national governments, farmer organisations and civil society to share success stories.

“There are a number of innovations that can be brought to scale, to counter the threats of climate change,” said Bruce Campbell, Director of the CGIAR Research Programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), which jointly hosted the event with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Morocco and the country’s National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA), with support from CTA and other partners. “For example, AfricaRice has been working in West Africa with rice farmers, successfully adapting water management techniques that have shown success in Asia’s rice fields to West African conditions. Farmers have seen rice yields increase from 1.5-2 tons per hectare to 3.5-4.5 tons per hectare.”

Although six of the ten countries most affected by climate change are in Africa, the continent only attracts around five per cent of climate funding. And just a small portion of the agricultural finance available for climate change trickles into funding for climate smart agriculture. A session on

investment opportunities for scaling up CSA examined innovative approaches to mobilising investment.

The event, organised by the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA) in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Environment and CTA, brought together experts from a range of sectors including international organisations, financial institutions, government and research. The meeting discussed investment opportunities for CSA in the future, building on lessons learned from case studies where innovative financing schemes have shown good results.

Young people must be involved in developing and implementing climate smart solutions if countries are to succeed in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and addressing the impacts of climate change, another meeting heard. Climate smart agriculture (CSA) is particularly suited to youth, as a pathway for sustainably increasing productivity, building resilience and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

“African youth have already proved their potential in promoting and implementing innovations to combat climate change,” said Oluyede Ajayi, Senior Programme Coordinator of CTA, which is co-hosting a session on youth engagement in CSA in Africa, together with CCAFS, the Climate Smart agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN) and other partners. “The aim of the session is to highlight the challenges youth face and the opportunities that exist for them to engage in the promotion of climate smart agriculture on the continent. This will help young people to become agents of change for climate smart agriculture.”

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