

OXFORD CLIMATE & AGRICULTURE SEMINAR

INFORMATION NOTE

An informal dialogue on issues related to agriculture

1 - 2 May 2017, Wolfson College, Oxford, United Kingdom

Background

COP 17 (December 2011) requested the SBSTA to consider issues relating to agriculture.¹

Following the request, since May 2012 the SBSTA continued its work on issues relating to agriculture. The work included five workshops focused on the following areas:

- Current state of scientific knowledge on how to enhance the adaptation of agriculture to climate change impacts while promoting rural development, sustainable development and productivity of agricultural systems and food security in all countries, particularly in developing countries, taking into account the diversity of the agricultural systems and the differences in scale as well as possible adaptation co-benefits;
- Development of early warning systems and contingency plans in relation to extreme weather events and its effects such as desertification, drought, floods, landslides, storm surge, soil erosion, and saline water intrusion;
- Assessment of risk and vulnerability of agricultural systems to different climate change scenarios at regional, national and local levels, including but not limited to pests and diseases;
- 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;
- Identification and assessment of agricultural practices and technologies to enhance productivity in a sustainable manner, food security and resilience, considering the differences in agro-ecological zones and farming systems, such as different grassland and cropland practices and systems.

The work by SBSTA raised expectations that at the Marrakesh Climate Conference (November 2016) Parties may reach consensus on decision on issues relating to agriculture as requested by COP17 (December 2011). At SBSTA 45 session held at the Marrakesh Climate Conference Parties considered two draft texts prepared by developing countries (G77 and China) and developed countries (EU acting on behalf of the developed countries). All Parties were deeply involved in consideration of the drafts however, they were not able to develop a draft agreeable to all.

Outlook for SBSTA 46 (May 2017)

It is likely that Parties will reflect over their five-year long work on issues relating to agriculture and consider any further action they may wish to take. In particular, Parties may wish to identify further steps in their work in the context of their goals for consideration of agriculture as sectoral approach under the SBSTA.

¹ Decision 2/CP.17, paragraphs 75–77.

Objectives of the informal dialogue

The meeting aims to provide participants with an opportunity:

- To present their views related to questions prepared to facilitate exchange of views;
- To enhance understanding of each other's views through open discussions in an informal dialogue setting;
- To identify, explore and discuss more in-depth issues of common interest.

Approach

The idea is to have an informal dialogue on issues related to agriculture that intends to provide space for sharing ideas and views on different topics related to agriculture and climate change that could inform the relevant work under the Convention. The dialogue will follow the Chatham House Rule and all participants are invited in their personal capacity.

To help inform the discussions, a few expert resource persons will be available to provide independent perspectives on key topics of interest to the group.

A more detailed agenda will follow as a separate document.

The informal dialogue is open to the invited participants only.

The working language of the meeting will be **English**.

Questions

Questions to facilitate the exchange of views during the meeting:

1. In view of moderate progress achieved during the five-year consideration of issues relating to agriculture as sectoral approach under the SBSTA, should SBSTA continue its consideration of this matter?
2. What are advantages and disadvantages of the continuation of consideration of issues relating to agriculture as sectoral approach under the SBSTA?
3. What would be specific features of agriculture that make it different from other sectors identified in climate negotiations?
4. What do we mean when we talk about mitigation in agriculture? What is the difference (if any) between mitigation in agriculture and mitigation in other sectors?
5. What are the potential areas for synergies among various processes under the Convention that might facilitate the consideration of issues relating to agriculture as sectoral approach under the SBSTA?
