



Agriculture and Rural Development in the Copenhagen Climate Change Talks

COP15 COPENHAGEN By Bruce Campbell

The recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15) held in Copenhagen from 7th to 18th December 2009 ended with much disappointment because it failed to produce a legally-binding agreement. However, it was not all bad news: as reported in this issue of Collective Action News, there were some noteworthy successes for agriculture and rural development, and for forestry.

One of the 12 points of the Copenhagen Accord calls for the immediate establishment of a mechanism to enable the mobilization of financial resources from developed countries for reducing emissions and enhancing sequestration from forests in developing countries (REDD+ = Reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries). REDD+ was highlighted at Forest Day 3 in Copenhagen, an event hosted by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. Agriculture nearly made it into the REDD+ agenda (as so-called REDD++). As late as November, draft negotiating text still had reference to emissions in agricultural systems, but this text was removed in the final days. This situation gives us plenty of work in 2010 – demonstrating how a system of meeting emission targets in farming landscapes can work, and getting such systems into the agreement that may come at COP16, to be held in Mexico in November-December 2010.

Forestry was firmly on the agenda at COP13 in Bali two years ago. Not so for agriculture, which has been late coming into climate change negotiations. But at COP15, agriculture was given a major stimulus. The Copenhagen Accord endorses the decisions of the Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action that opens the door for agriculture. The text on agriculture recognises the impact of climate change on food security, the need for adaptation and mitigation in agriculture, and requests the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (which provides advice to the UN Climate Change Conference on scientific, technological and methodological matters) to establish a programme of work on agriculture. The next year or two will see a flurry of activity on agriculture, to bring it firmly into the negotiations.

The CGIAR contributed to the discussion in Copenhagen on agriculture mainly through its participation in "Agriculture and Rural Development Day" (ARDD). ARDD was the first full-day focus on agriculture in conjunction with a UN Climate Change Conference. Jeff Sayer, a member of the Science Council, noted "Agriculture day was playing catch up and used science to argue – apparently successfully – for remedying the present lack of attention given to agriculture in the climate change negotiations".

ARDD aimed to build consensus on ways to fully incorporate agriculture into the post-Copenhagen climate agenda and to discuss strategies and actions needed to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in the agriculture sector. The event was attended by over 350 participants, including representatives from governments, UN and international agencies, businesses, NGOs, academia and farmers. It was organised by the Challenge Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), IFPRI and the Global Donor Platform on Rural Development (Platform), and held on 12th December 2009 at the University of Copenhagen, which also hosts the CCAFS secretariat.

The steering committee for ARDD comprised many of the big names in international agriculture (e.g. FAO, IFAD, IFAP, GFAR, CGIAR Alliance), and also brought in the global environmental change research community, represented by the Earth Systems Science Partnership. The CGIAR communications unit worked with the Platform to organise a large group of communicators, including some from CIMMYT, IFPRI, ICRAF and CIAT. CGIAR Chair Kathy Sierra opened the day, emphasizing the need for comprehensive national strategies on agriculture and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Roundtable panellists included the DGs from WorldFish and ILRI; Carlos Seré (ILRI) stated that the key policy issue is engaging small agricultural stakeholders in mitigation-related business, which poses challenges in terms of quantification and verification. The closing session included CCAFS Chair Thomas Rosswall who presented the findings of the four Roundtables to the afternoon plenary. International Food Policy Research Institute organised one of the Roundtables, and six of the twenty stalls at the Ideas Marketplace were led by CGIAR scientists. A report synthesising CGIAR climate change activities was released.

ARDD brought together the "biggest names on the global agriculture scene" as The Ecologist reported (Dec 14). ARDD was an excellent example of what CGIAR collective action can deliver. Jeff Sayer, in reporting Forest Day and ARDD back to the Science Council noted that "These events were the best examples that I have seen of the CGIAR engaging effectively with a major policy debate and an area of civil society concern... there is much to learn from this – almost all of it positive".

For ARDD videos, blogs, photos see the web links on www.agricultureday.org/; for a summary report www.iisd.ca/climate/cop15/ad/. For the Alliance report synthesising CGIAR climate change activities, "Climate, Agriculture and Food Security: A Strategy for Change", see www.cgiar.org/pdf/CCAFS_Strategy_december2009.pdf.

The collective action underpinning CGIAR's involvement in Agriculture and Rural Development Day at COP15 included inputs from the CGIAR Chair, the Science Council, the Challenge Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security, DGs of two CGIAR centers, as well as CGIAR communications experts and scientists. Regional and national partner organisations also played a key role, including the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, and the Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers.

Newsbytes

CG Research Map: Ushering in the Revamped Ongoing Research Projects in Africa

The refurbished CG Ongoing Research map has new functionalities such as: A more targeted and friendly search engine, project overviews, and links to project documentations among others, which will be sure to revolutionize the way we share research information and make browsing even more interesting. We are currently working on completing these additional project details.

Keep an eye on the February issue, when we will bring you more comprehensive coverage on the same.

Stay informed at: <http://ongoing-research.cgiar.org/>

Fish is foremost in the nutritional dimension of the battle against HIV/AIDS

WorldFish and partners in Zambia are studying the best approach to countering HIV/AIDS with improved nutrition. Evidence is emerging that good nutrition helps prevent or slow down the onset of AIDS-related illness in HIV-infected people, partly by improving the efficacy of antiretroviral drugs. In subequatorial Africa, HIV infection leads to AIDS more quickly than in other regions because of poverty and malnutrition. As fish promises to provide affordable animal protein and micronutrients to people living with HIV, WorldFish and its partners are comparing methods of delivery, supported with funding from the Swedish International Development Agency and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Preliminary studies in Lusaka that compared HIV patients that consumed fish with those who did not found that adding 2.5 kilograms of dried fish powder per month to the diet helped nutritional status and wound healing. The clinical trials in Lusaka analyze the effects of fish and fish powder on the nutritional status and response to antiretroviral therapy of patients in clinics and treated at home, and have found preliminary but strong indications that fish powder sustainably improves conditions for people living with HIV.

Link to Fisheries and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Investing in Sustainable Solutions Program Website:

<http://www.worldfishcenter.org/wfcms/SF0959SID/>

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Newsletter team:
Kate Longley, Michael Hailu, Rebecca Selvarajah-Jaffery, Reagan Sirengo and Abel Belachew

Questions, comments, feedback? Please email:
r.selvarajah-jaffery@cgiar.org

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