

**SECOND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL EXPERT GROUP ON
FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE
VAVA’U, TONGA, 27-28 JULY 2009**

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Group on Food Security and Climate Change was established in October 2008 with the overall goal of assessing and regionalizing the recommendations of the June 2008 High-Level Conference on Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy (HLC). Founded by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Expert Group works to increase understanding of how food security and climate change programmes can be made operational in the Pacific Region. During its first meeting in October 2008, the Expert Group considered the HLC Declaration and identified a number of short, medium and long-term measures that could be implemented in the Region.¹ At the request of the Expert Group, FAO agreed to support the second meeting of the Expert Group in 2009, in order to take forward the regional implementation plan of the Rome Declaration.

PURPOSE OF THE SECOND MEETING

SPREP and FAO convened the second meeting of the Expert Group in Vava’u, Tonga, with the objective of considering and agreeing upon joint work for “Copenhagen and Beyond”, referring to the 15th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC/COP 15), to be held in Copenhagen, December 2009, as well as other related conferences and activities. FAO and SPREP share the view that climate adaptation programmes should be more inclusive of food security concerns, and that climate change should be mainstreamed into food security policies and programmes. The Expert Group was expected to give its views on the SPREP and FAO ideas and proposals for action, and map out a process for implementation.

OPENING SESSION OF THE MEETING

The meeting was chaired by Taito Nakalevu, SPREP, who opened the meeting together with Vili Fuavao, FAO Representative in the Pacific. The participants in the Expert Group, representing FAO, SPREP, SPC, USP, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu, brought a broad array of experiences of critical importance to the substance of the meeting and the Expert Group’s objectives (see the Agenda and List of Participants in Annex 1 and 2, respectively).

¹ FAO, 2008. Regional Expert Group on Food Security and Climate Change, Report of Meeting (14-16 October 2008). In: Climate Change and Food Security in Pacific Island Countries. pp 243-257. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/i0530e/i0530e00.htm>

FAO stressed that climate change, agriculture and fisheries experts had been invited in their personal capacities to offer regional perspectives on food security and climate change. FAO seeks to support but not lead the Pacific climate change negotiations. The Expert Group is expected to provide technical guidance on how to move forward. The 8th meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers of Agriculture (Niue, May 2009) noted the “proposal for the Pacific Region to be the pilot region for the implementation of the outcomes of the HLC, in particular the twin issues of climate change and food security.”

SPREP stated that it fully supported the food security and climate change area of work proposed by FAO. The Expert Group will contribute by recognizing the priorities established under the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA), and developing and recommending tangible actions for Pacific communities already suffering from climate change impacts.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY

Presentations were made on: issues and decisions of the High-Level Conference; the FAO Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood Programmes; FAO climate change activities in fisheries and aquaculture; NAPAs in Pacific Island Countries (PICs); and the SPREP-implemented project on Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC). Copies of these presentations were distributed to participants as background information for on-going initiatives and upcoming programmes. The scope was to identify loopholes in current programmes and add value to existing efforts.

Brainstorming on possible objectives and outputs of the Expert Group took place in plenary discussions, as well as in working group sessions where experts examined issues applying to low-lying and high islands in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. The main areas considered are presented below.

Issues: assessing vulnerability and building resilience

- Vulnerability to climate change is a global concern: PICs should position themselves strategically at international level in order to address vulnerability by focusing on action-oriented policies and programmes.
- Environmental, economic and social sectors are most vulnerable to climate change: PICs’ first step for addressing vulnerability should be allocating resources to risk management for mitigating climate change effects.
- Food security is a continuum of vulnerability throughout the supply chain: PICs’ focus should be on food access issues, due to increasing food-import dependency which has led to dependency on external macro-economic factors and possible food shortages, and on increased urbanization which has led to challenges in food supply, especially for the poor.

- Climate change adaptation requires increasing resilience: PICs recognize that resilience measures should not only address food systems but also communities and their ability to cope with the change induced by climate.
- Adaptation is the prerogative of all citizens and at all levels: especially in PICs, innovative measures are required for organizing community action and promoting self-mobilization on climate adaptation measures.

Mainstreaming and policy development

- Policies for dealing with the cross-sectoral impacts of climate change must recognize and integrate the issues affecting the agriculture, fisheries, environment, health, education, trade and finance sectors. These issues must be dealt with within national development plans and involve public, private and civil society actors.
- There is a need to develop a joint SPREP/SPC/USP/FAO policy brief on the importance of mainstreaming food security within climate change policies and strategies. This policy brief would inform Pacific leaders for their use during Copenhagen negotiations and would also be disseminated to the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), scheduled to meet in Bangkok in September 2009.
- There is a similar need to mainstream climate change into food security policies and programmes, including those dealing with agro-ecosystem productivity, forest goods and services, and economic and livelihood benefits from Pacific fishery resources.
- PICs may consider to join the Indonesia-led country group that advocates including fisheries in the climate negotiations in the lead-up to Copenhagen, by spelling out the benefits of fisheries to livelihoods and the need to address climate-related vulnerability.
- The Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy (PIROP) needs to be revisited. As of now, PIROP does not address climate change, which is an increasingly critical issue in the Pacific.
- Innovative measures are needed that will guide organization of community action and promote self-mobilization on climate adaptation measures through, for example, raising awareness and developing extension activities.

Adaptation measures in Pacific action programmes

- The case studies undertaken by FAO in 2008 on climate change and food security in Marshall Islands, Cook Islands and Vanuatu, and the NAPAs of Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu should be reviewed and serve as a basis for developing a methodology for their food security development plans, including suggestions for implementation. This review could contain a regional checklist for countries to choose from in implementing climate-proof food security actions such as building soil organic matter and establishing drought and flood resistant agroecosystems, integrated coastal fisheries and aquaculture systems. It is recommended that NAPAs be extended to all Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs), as climate impacts are common and urgent to all.

- The 2010 Mid-term Review of the SPREP Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015 could be completed with food security-specific issues such as specific data requirements, methodologies and expected outcomes. Synergies can be built between SPREP and FAO programmes and resources, such as indicators that could be pooled from the SPREP-implemented Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Programme (PACC) and FAO's Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood Programme (FSSLP).
- PACC could further develop its food security components with tested and costed practical measures, including policy mainstreaming, demonstration measures and capacity building.
- Promotion of intra-regional trade of goods and services, such as tuna canneries, could enable PICs to share risks and benefits arising from the increased vulnerability of their food systems.

Climate adaptation and community-based management

- Food self-reliance entails the promotion of traditional foods and community-led management systems. Investments should be made along the entire food supply chain to develop a climate adaptation toolkit that includes measures to:
 - rehabilitate soils for indigenous crops and build soil fertility with, for example, biochar in atolls or mucuna in volcanic soils;
 - assess climate-related changes in water availability, as well as shifts of pests and diseases, with a view to anticipate adaptation needs of food systems;
 - broaden the genetic basis and revive indigenous varieties, such as giant taro and breadfruits;
 - promote multiple cropping, agroforestry, integrated crop-livestock systems and other polycultures to achieve synergies between food security and climate adaptation and mitigation measures;
 - facilitate the consumption of locally produced foods, including local energy sources for food preparation;
 - involve communities in research and development through on-farm trials;
 - assess and develop alternative sources of livelihoods, including farm and off-farm income generation activities;
 - promote alternative fishing activities, such as use of fish-aggregating devices (FADs), sea ranching and aquaculture;
 - apply the ecosystem approach and community-based management to coastal areas, with the relevant institutional mechanisms for the management, conservation and use of fishery resources;
 - adopt an integrated approach to natural resources management, including the legal and institutional provisions, for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, infrastructure development, environmental conservation and sustainable tourism development.

- Success stories, scoping studies and pilot projects on climate change adaptation should be assessed in order to take stock of experiences and identify factors conducive to replication and scaling-up of successful initiatives in the Pacific.
- A Pacific case study could be undertaken under the Japan-funded FAO project on the impact of climate change on fisheries. It should focus on vulnerability of the fisheries/aquaculture sector and communities, future vulnerabilities and indicators of change with a view to developing technical guidelines on adaptive strategies for coping with climate variability.

PROPOSED OUTPUTS FOR COPENHAGEN AND BEYOND

The Expert Group recognized the importance of having the Pacific priorities and requirements heard in the upcoming UNFCCC/COP 15 on climate change and food security that will be held in Copenhagen, as well as in the implementation phase of both climate change and food security projects. It determined four major steps that would be needed in the short-term, including:

1. Produce a policy brief for the Copenhagen process that includes specific examples of threats to food security and the urgent need to address vulnerability through effective implementation of climate-related action plans (how to convince Annex 1 countries). It would also call for the extension of NAPAs to all PICTs.
2. Develop a toolkit on climate adaptation measures in the Pacific food sector.
3. Mainstream food security into existing NAPAs, where appropriate.
4. Mainstream climate change into food security policies, starting with a country case study in 2010.

With a view to substantiate the policy brief and for other uses, the Expert Group discussed the possibility of preparing a customized assessment of the Pacific situation, including food security trends in the face of climate change and increased vulnerability. FAO will explore the feasibility of this task and report back to the group.

BIOENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY

FAO presented the bioenergy scoping study it conducted in 14 PICs. The Expert Group commended FAO for making this information available, thus allowing informed decision-making.

Participants concurred that bioenergy potential must be evaluated in relation to other renewable energy sources and that, in any case, consideration should be given to food security and environmental implications.

Import substitution of petroleum energy and reduction of GHG emissions seems possible to a certain extent in all PICs with the exception of Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tonga by using a small percentage of coconut oil and converting non-profitable copra industries into biodiesel: however, the extent and viability of coconut use for biofuels needs to be assessed case by case.

Ethanol production from sugarcane molasses, cassava and sweet sorghum in Fiji and Papua New Guinea would be feasible for both energy import substitution and exports. However, the use of food crops, such as breadfruit for ethanol in Samoa, is not desirable.

Use of coconut oil as diesel substitute is a mature technology. Vanuatu has a proven model for rural electrification, with farmers bringing copra to the oil extraction and generator site to prepay for metered electricity. The success of this type of initiative depends, in part, on regeneration of coconut industries, inter-cropping coconut with food crops and livestock, and replacing ageing coconuts. These practices are highly recommended, as they generate goods and services such as food, feed, fuel, fiber, cosmetics, handicrafts and environmental services.

Biofuel production in Fiji and Papua New Guinea could present constraints and benefits with regards food security and environmental benefits. In-depth evaluations are needed of: integrated cassava production and processing for ethanol generation, and off-season sugarcane and sweet sorghum ethanol production.

It is usually assumed that small-scale and decentralized operations for substituting fossil fuel imports (rather than large enterprises) provide more benefit to local communities. However, small operations are not necessarily profitable. It was therefore recommended to undertake a village case study to assess profitability.

FAO will edit and bring the scoping bioenergy study to the attention of countries and seek to undertake three case studies including: success story of Vanuatu rural electrification, village-level case biofuel productivity and profitability, and a national-level assessment of bioenergy and food security, in either Fiji or Papua New Guinea.

STATUS OF EXPERT GROUP AND WORKPLAN

It was agreed that the Expert Group will continue functioning as an independent advisory group on the implementation of the High-Level Conference commitment to use the Pacific as a model for the regionalization of its outcomes.

FAO is committed to continue its financial support of the Expert Group work, including hiring a consultant to assist in preparing the outcome documents, in cooperation with the Expert Group.

SPREP agreed to coordinate the Expert Group work on food security and climate change. Taito Nakalevu will continue chairing the Expert Group and Fine Lao will provide the Secretariat. A detailed workplan will be rolled out by the Secretariat and submitted to the Expert Group by e-mail, seeking participants' feedback.

The Expert Group will meet every two years, prior to the South West Pacific Ministers of Agriculture meetings. Virtual communications will be held throughout the two-year period.

In order to ensure continuity, it was agreed that while new experts may be added to the group, the current membership will be maintained, with each expert acting in her/his personal capacity.

Therefore, the next meeting Expert Group meeting will be in April-May 2011, in Vava'u, Tonga, on the occasion of the 9th Ministerial meeting. The Expert Group Chair will report on outcomes and progress of the Expert Group to the ministers.

AGENDA

Monday 27 July 2009	
8:30 am	1. OPENING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FAO remarks (Vili Fuavo) ▪ SPREP remarks (Taito Nakavelu) ▪ Introduction of individual experts
9:00 am	2. BACKGROUND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Briefing on the High-Level Conference (Nadia Scialabba) ▪ HLC mandate and implementation in the Pacific: the Regional Expert Group and Eighth FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture Meeting Communiqué' (Vili Fuavao)
9:40	3. CLIMATE CHANGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Status of NAPAs in Pacific Island Countries (Fine Lao)
9:50	Group discussions
11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best practices for food security and climate adaptation (Fine Lao)
10:15	Group discussions
1:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation of the FAO climate change sub-component of the FAO Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood Programme (Vili Fuavao) ▪ FAO activities on climate change implications for fisheries and aquaculture (Tarub Bahri) ▪ Climate change and fisheries in the Pacific (Jeff Kinch) ▪ Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (Taito Nakalevu)
3:30 pm	Working groups sessions
4:30 pm	Working Groups Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fisheries and climate change ▪ Agriculture and climate change
Tuesday 28 July 2009	
8:30 am	3. CLIMATE CHANGE (continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommendations for action <p style="text-align: center;">Group discussions</p>
12:00 am	4. BIOENERGY AND FOOD SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FAO bioenergy scoping study (Nadia Scialabba) <p style="text-align: center;">Group discussions</p>
2:00 pm	5. STATUS OF EXPERT GROUP AND WORKPLAN <p style="text-align: center;">Group discussions</p>
3:30 pm	6. CLOSING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summing-up and closing (Vili Fuavao and Taito Nakalevu)

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