

FAO AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The mandate of FAO spans the entire biosphere, both on land and at sea. The living processes of all ecosystems, as well as management interventions of mankind as he utilizes the biosphere, all affect both the capture and release of carbon, the principal factor causing the greenhouse effect. Thus, the activities of FAO are important for adequately responding to climate change and containing its adverse effects.

1. Roles of FAO:

1.1 Present

FAO contributes to the international debate by assessing the available scientific evidence. It participates in national, regional and global observing and monitoring systems, collecting and disseminating information and data. It provides a neutral forum for negotiations and technical discussions on climate change and agriculture.

Since 1988, FAO has had an Inter-departmental Working Group on Climate Change which focuses on assisting developing countries to enhance their capacities to confront the negative impacts of climate variability and change on agriculture. Specifically:

- Promoting policies and practices for emission reductions and carbon sequestration;
- Providing data and analyses on soil and water conditions, biomass and cropping systems;
- Developing methodologies and guidelines on land use assessments, bio-energy, extreme weather impact assessment, forestry, conservation agriculture;
- Linking climate change interventions to sustainable rural livelihoods;
- Contributing towards reconciling definitions for technical issues;
- Providing Members with technical advice, publications and services to field projects and donor programmes;
- Monitoring climate variability, including El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO);
- Co-operating with the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and other agencies.

1.2 Future

Through the newly established Environment, Climate change and Bioenergy division, FAO will strengthen its information and advocacy activities to encourage investment in preparedness; promotion of adaptation of agricultural, forestry and fishery systems to climate change to ensure that efforts to protect the land and aquatic base for sustainable agricultural production are integral elements of climate change adaptation measures. Information and analysis will be critical and so will capacity-building.

2. Partners:

Country-level governments and other stakeholders in agriculture, including forestry and fisheries, are the key partners for policy change and practical action. Internationally, however, FAO seeks synergies with activities undertaken by the secretariat and subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC, the IPCC, sister agencies such as the WMO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Secretariats and subsidiary bodies of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), as well as regional organizations. FAO hosts the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.