

## **Climate and Food Talk: The future of sustainable food systems in a changing climate and the role of smallholder production – the post Bonn landscape**

On 27 November 2017 the Permanent Mission of Germany and IFAD co-hosted a high-level event to discuss the implications of COP23, held in Bonn, Germany from 6-17 November, for food systems and smallholder farmers. Forming part of the Permanent Mission of Germany's Climate and Food Talks series, the discussion took place at the Official Residence of Dr Hinrich Thölken, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the International Organizations in Rome.

Moderated by Ambassador Thölken and opened by a keynote speech delivered by IFAD's President Gilbert Houngbo, the event brought together high-level speakers and panellists from government, international organizations, and civil society to discuss the linkages between agriculture and climate change, the current direction of political responses, including through COP23, and required areas of focus going forward, such as the need for urgent, coordinated action and to focus on how to best bring in youth. The audience included over 70 representatives from Permanent Missions in Rome, experts from each of the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs), and representatives of civil society.

### **Event summary**

Participants welcomed the results of the COP 23, but stressed that mitigation and adaptation measures needed to speed up. Participants identified financial but also governance related challenges. It became clear that changes in agricultural production will have to be achieved in order to reach international climate targets. Member states' recognition of agriculture's significance at COP 23 was seen as an opportunity that should not be missed to spur coordinated action. Participants highlighted a number of ongoing initiatives to advance global responses to climate change, urging that connections be made across efforts and actors. As the food and agriculture hub of the United Nations, the RBAs and their Member States had a particular responsibility to ensure that this is pursued. The relevance of rural development, smallholders and young people was underlined. Participants recognized that measures pursued and implemented by the RBAs were going in the right direction, but mainstreaming of climate issues needed to be further strengthened.

Ambassador Thölken opened the event by noting the critical linkages between agriculture and climate change, which is second only to the energy sector in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. He pointed out that agriculture, forestry are responsible for 24% of greenhouse gas emissions; 8% being attributable to food waste and loss.

In a keynote address that followed, IFAD President Gilbert Houngbo focused on the impact of and responses to climate change for smallholder farmers, underlining the particular vulnerability of poor coastal communities. Even if all Nationally Determined Contributions would be implemented, the sea level would rise dramatically and global warming would exceed 3 degrees. He stressed that mitigation efforts and economic growth can go hand-in-hand and pointed to the large impact that small, local actions can have while noting that some solutions, such as climate-related technology, are complex, requiring holistic, long-term approaches.

Dr. Halldór Thorgeirsson, Senior Director for Intergovernmental Affairs of the UNFCCC, also noted that the successful transformation of food systems had the potential to transform the effectiveness of global responses to climate change. He pointed to encouraging levels of ambition to deliver on the Paris Agreement evident at COP 23, including through Nationally Defined Contributions, as well as increasingly collaborative action between parties and non-party actors, including through the Marrakesh Partnership. The National Determined

Contributions existing today should be seen as the bottom line of possible ambition. He expects many countries to go beyond those goals till 2025.

Dr. Johannes Cullmann, Director of the World Meteorological Organization's Climate and Water Department, presented sobering scientific projections that pointed to the likely dramatic mid- and long-term effects of climate change, regarding loss of arable land and extreme sea level rise. The last time the planet faced a CO<sub>2</sub> concentration higher than 400 ppm, the sea level had been 10-20 metres above current levels. Better data and more rigorous forecasts are needed to assist with improving long-term planning, particularly for communities that are likely to be displaced. He called for radical responses given the scale of challenges and for clear incentives for the private sector to foster climate smart decisions

The panel that followed, moderated by Ambassador Thölken, discussed the significance of COP23 for global agriculture, the need to invest in country-level solutions, and the central role of youth in building sustainable food systems and sustaining dynamic rural communities. Highlights included:

- Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, emphasized the significance of the recognition by both developed countries and the G77 of agriculture's role in contributing to mitigating the effects of climate change at COP23, as well as the agreement of the Gender Action Plan, which has particular salience for agriculture given women's critical role in natural resource management.
- Mr Olav Kjørven, Chief Strategy Officer of the EAT Foundation, stressed the urgent need to transform the entire food systems, production and consumption patterns in order to contain temperature increases as well as to promote economic inclusion, to improve human health. He highlighted the role of governments in shaping food systems, and questioned the implications of leaving these systems to markets.
- Dr. Stefan Schmitz, Deputy Director General, responsible for food, agriculture and rural development and Commissioner of the "One World no Hunger" Initiative, German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), underlined the role of Rome as an intellectual hub for agriculture and food systems. He stressed the need to focus efforts, including of research, beyond farming and specific crops to the entire value chain and rural economy in order to make sustainable changes that address climate change and poverty. He stressed the role of governance.
- Divine Ntiokam, President and Founder of the Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN) urged for the needs, perspectives, and voices of youth to be taken into account when developing and delivering solutions, which would help to ensure that agriculture, is considered a viable livelihood for youth, also in view of current migration challenges. Climate related issues should be included in school curricula and other education activities.