

ROSA Newsletter

Views on current news Moving towards COP 16 in Cancun: Addressing the implications of climate change on nutrition

The next United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 16) will be held in Mexico, from 29 November to 10 December 2010. In this article, Philippe Crahay from the NGO ACF¹, in collaboration with Cristina Tirado von der Pahlen from the UCLA², examine the way current climate change negotiations could contribute to protect nutrition from the effects of climate change. They call for more attention to be paid to adaptation strategies of the most vulnerable and the climate change finances required.

What are the impacts of climate change on food and nutrition security in developing countries and what are the required responses?

Climate change directly affects food and nutrition security. It will increase the risk of hunger and undernutrition on an unprecedented scale within the next decades, undermining current efforts to address these issues. Climate change is likely to make natural disasters more frequent and intense. The frequency and severity of production shortfalls are projected to increase due to climate change, thereby increasing food prices even further. Besides its negative effects on food security, climate change will also increase undernutrition problems through its impact on health, sanitation, water and maternal and child health care practices, among others.

The poorest and most vulnerable in developing countries, more specifically young children and women in rural, peri-urban and urban areas, are at greatest risk of suffering from the potential impacts of climate change. They have limited capacities to cope with extreme climate events and adapt to climate change impacts.

A combination of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions supported by research and technological innovation can reduce the threat to food and nutrition security. A revitalised twin-track approach has been proposed to address the impacts of climate change on food and nutrition security³.

Climate change mitigation actions are urgent in order to reduce the extent of future effects of climate change on food and nutrition security. However, mitigation strategies should be designed carefully, as some actions such as the expansion of biofuel production can exacerbate food and nutrition insecurity.

There is a need to ensure "policy coherence" when developing food and nutrition security, adaptation and mitigation strategies and when integrating them in sustainable climate-resilient development plans, at global, regional and national levels. Coordinated, coherent nutrition-sensitive institutional and policy frameworks and improved governance are necessary at all levels. The involvement of local stakeholders and vulnerable communities is essential in these processes.

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³ Track one consists of direct and immediate nutrition interventions and safety nets and track two consists of a broader multi-sectoral approach, which mainly involves sustainable and climate resilient agriculture and rural development, health and social protection schemes, risk reduction and management plans and strengthening climate resilient community-based development.

Following the disappointing outcomes of the Copenhagen conference (COP15), what can we expect from this conference?

The COP16 represents an important opportunity to set a new pace for multilateral negotiations. It could lead to progress and possibly to positive agreements, more specifically regarding measures on adaptation, technology transfer, agriculture and forests. It could lead to a new fund to house long-term climate financing. In itself, COP16 represents an important *springboard* towards a post-2012 fair, ambitious and legally-binding agreement.

So far, climate change mitigation remains the *heavy weight* of the UNFCCC agenda; however populations in developing countries now have to adapt to climate change effects. Adaptation and mitigation should receive the same degree of priority. One essential negotiation point will determine the potential success of COP16: the climate change finances. Recent trends suggest that the financial support provided by the industrialised countries was primarily dedicated to supporting mitigation projects in emerging economies. Some allocated climate change funds appear to be recycled from the existing aid budget. Innovative and concrete propositions, along with stronger public financial engagements, can help re-building trust into the international climate change negotiations. Fast-start climate change financing and long-term climate funds, additional to the Official Development Assistance (ODA), should be mobilised to support adaptation measures. These measures should involve and support in priority the most vulnerable, more specifically children and women, in the poorest countries.

Adaptation has been relatively neglected in UNFCCC negotiations. Are there any others specific issues that require more attention in the framework of COP16?

Despite the fact that climate change will increase the risk of undernutrition on an unprecedented scale, nutrition security has been so far absent from the UNFCCC agenda.

Comprehensive long-term cooperative actions within the framework of the UNFCCC are needed to formulate clear responses in order to protect nutrition from the impacts of climate change and develop mitigation actions that also benefit nutrition. The UNFCCC negotiators have the opportunity and the responsibility to consider and address nutrition security in the strategies defined as part of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA). Unless this is done urgently, it will not be possible to reduce hunger and undernutrition in a changing climate.

The United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) has just released an important policy brief on climate change and nutrition security that will be presented at the COP16⁴.

Others key reading and references

United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN). Climate change: food and nutrition security implications, SCN News 38, 2010

World Food Programme (WFP) et al, Climate change, food security and hunger: Key messages for UNFCCC negotiators, technical paper of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) task force on climate change, 2010

Nelson et al, Climate change impact on agriculture and costs of adaptation, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), 2009

MC Tirado et al, Addressing the challenges of climate change and biofuel production for food and nutrition security 2010, Food Research International, volume No. 43, issue 7, August 2010

⁴ For more information, see the following weblink: http://www.unscn.org/en/nut-working/nutrition_and_climate_change/ncc_egroup.php

Agenda

Past events

- **ACP regional briefing on climate change, land acquisition and food security in West Africa (1-3 November, Ouagadougou):** The 4th regional briefing in West Africa discussed the links between climate change, agriculture and food security in rural areas: governance and financing of climate adaptation; the land acquisition and its contribution to development and the promotion of responsible agricultural transnational investments. The target group was more than 120 policy makers from West Africa and other African countries.
- **Symposium on information systems on food security (1-2 September, Brussels):** It was organised by the European Commission in collaboration with FAO. The symposium aimed to contribute to a reflexion on national food security information systems which are essential for decision makers to anticipate, prevent and respond earlier to impending food security threats. All presentations and a summary of discussions and conclusions are available on ROSA's website [">>>>](#)

Forthcoming events

- **29-30 November 2010 :** 3rd Africa-European Union Summit – Tripoli (Lybia)
- **29 November – 4 December:** World Food Security Forum – Cap Town (South Africa)
- **29 November - 10 December:** Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-16) – Cancun (Mexico)
- **6-7 December:** European Development Days – Brussels
- **7-8 December:** Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) Annual Forum on “Regional solidarity to address food crises: south-south cooperation and regional aid effectiveness” – Accra (Ghana)
- **7-9 December:** International symposium on food and nutrition security. Food-based approaches for improving diets and raising levels of nutrition – Rome
- **14-16 December:** 26th annual meeting of the RPCA (Réseau de Prévention des Crises Alimentaire) – Accra (Ghana)

For further information: [Upcoming events](#)

EC's latest news

- **The Commission announced the creation of DG DevCo:** On 27 October 2010, the EC announced the establishment of the “EuropeAid Development and Co-operation Directorate-General” (DG DevCo), which will unite the DG Development and the EuropeAid Cooperation Office. The merger followed the final votes on the European External Action Service (EEAS), which will be launched on 1 December.
- **EU conclusions on 2010 annual report on the EU development and external policies:** On 8-9 November 2010, the Council adopted the conclusions on the annual report on the development and external assistance policies and their implementation in 2009. Among the recommendations made, the Council suggests to focus the next report on the MDGs and the EU's actions in support of their achievement. 2010 also marks the start of a broad reflection on the European Consensus on Development and on the future of EU development cooperation. The Council invites the Commission to include in next year's report a section on this process. [Read the 2010 annual report released on June 2010](#)
- **Presentation of the ERD 2010 draft report:** This year, the European Report on Development deals with the issues of poverty, inequality and social protection, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. The EC held a preparatory conference in Brussels on November 4th 2010, with the aim to present and discuss the consolidated draft. Participants included researchers as well as representatives from the EU Member States, Commission services, international organisations and civil society (around 80 participants). The final ERD will be officially launched at the European Development Days in Brussels on December 7th.
- **The 2010 European Development Days:** The EDD will take place on 6-7 December in Brussels. The general theme of this year is "New Decade: New Actors, New Challenges". A range of events will be offered over two days in 3 different venues with a variety of high-level speakers. Of particular interest, three events which are directly related to food and nutrition security [For more information](#)

New online documents

➤ Food security indicators

Guidelines for measuring household and individual dietary diversity, FAO – October 2010

This paper is a revised version of the FAO guidelines for measuring dietary diversity. The guidelines describe how to adapt and use the dietary diversity questionnaire, how to calculate each of the scores and how to create other indicators of interest from dietary diversity data. The main changes in this version are the proposal for a new individual dietary diversity score and an annex on classifying food items into food groups.

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Global hunger index 2010. Focus on the crisis of child undernutrition, IFPRI, Concern Worldwide, Welthungerhilfe, ACTED – October 2010

The "Global Hunger Index" (GHI) was designed by IFPRI in order to ensure the measurement and the monitoring of people suffering from undernutrition in the world. This composite index offers a pluridimensional approach to malnutrition. This report presents the GHI scores of countries and regions, analysing the steps taken backwards and the progress made in the struggle against malnutrition.

Validation of a measure of household hunger for cross-cultural use, FANTA, AED – May 2010

This report describes the findings from a validation study of the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS), a measurement scale to assess the access component of household food insecurity in resource-poor areas. The study was carried out by the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance II Project (FANTA-2) in partnership with the FAO and Tufts University.

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➤ Social transfers

Frontiers of social protection Brief N° 8: Seasonality and social protection in Africa, RHVP – September 2010

This brief first describes the seasonal patterns of livelihoods and food insecurity in rural sub-Saharan Africa. It then reviews policy interventions that were adopted in the past to address seasonal hunger – "seasonal safety nets" – and contrasts these with more recent "social protection" approaches.

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➤ Other thematic areas

The state of food insecurity in the world – Addressing food insecurity in protracted crisis, WFP, FAO – 2010

The report starts with an overview of undernourishment in the world and focuses on the case of countries facing a protracted crisis. The report argues that improving food security in protracted crises requires going beyond short-term responses in order to protect and promote people's livelihoods over the longer term. Supporting institutions is key to addressing protracted crises. Local institutions, in particular, can help address food security problems in protracted crises, but they are often ignored by external actors. The current aid architecture needs to be modified to better address both immediate needs and the structural causes of protracted crises. Important areas of intervention (including social protection and risk reduction) are often underfunded. Broader social protection measures help countries cope with protracted crises and lay the foundation for long-term recovery. Key interventions include providing safety nets, insurance when appropriate, and services such as health and education.

Who's really fighting hunger?, Action Aid, Peuples Solidaires – 2010

ActionAid tracks the progress that has been made when countries translate the right to food into concrete actions, such as investing in poor farmers, and introducing measures to protect the vulnerable. The scorecard is designed so as to give credit for effort and progress, not just outcomes. Tougher standards are set for wealthier developing countries, such as South Africa, Brazil, China and India, than for low income countries. Indicators are based on the actions that the UN has identified as most critical to reverse growing global hunger, most recently in its 2008 Comprehensive Framework for Action.

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