

NGOs slam proposed work programme on agriculture
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In a side event at UNFCCC SB 36 titled “Work Programme on Agriculture; Priorities for Small Holder Farmers” network of organizations came out heavily on the proposed work programme on agriculture, which many of the Annex 1 and also developing countries are proposing SBSTA to undertake. In SB 36, SBSTA work is focused on analyzing submission and discussing views of country parties on issues related to agriculture, based on which it will advise the COP 18 in Qatar on whether a work programme should be adopted. By submission of parties, it is almost certain that COP will instruct SBSTA to undertake a work programme on agriculture to explore “linkages, synergies and trade offs” between mitigation and adaptation. However, in the side event, presented by CECOEDECON, PAIRVI, BJVV, SADED and Beyond Copenhagen, organizations and networks representing small holder farmers slammed the proposed work programme on agriculture saying that the work programme will pave the way for introducing soils in the carbon markets, will have disastrous impact on food security and small holder farmers who produce more than 70% of world’s food. They also cautioned that adaptation should be the priority in discussion on agriculture, rather than mitigation as agriculture in developing countries has much lower emissions and farmers need financial and technological support and capacity building to enhance resilience of agriculture that can ensure food security. They forewarned that work programme will neither reduce the emissions, nor help food security or small farmers.

Opening the discussion, Mr. Soumya Dutta (India Peoples Science Forum & Beyond Copenhagen) said that the discussion is extremely important and relevant to generate more clarity among the country parties and also civil society, as there are many and divergent views, on what should be the direction of discussion on agriculture in climate change negotiations, which should be the basis of decision whether a work programme is at all required. He also reminded that while talking about agriculture we have to keep in mind that roughly one fourth of the world’s population depends on agriculture as livelihood, while the proportion in developing countries is much higher.

Mr. Ajay Jha (CECOEDECON & PAIRVI) presenting an overall analysis of submission on Annex 1 countries and non Annex countries said that most of the developed countries see this discussion as an opportunity to push mitigation further in agriculture, which has been on the table since run up to Kyoto and has succeeded only partially till now. Most of the Annex 1 countries are submission are based on considerations of exploring synergies and trade offs between mitigation and adaptation, ensuring enhanced food production and agriculture being a major driver of deforestation, however, developing countries and least developed countries have been more comprehensive in their approach and based their submissions on approaches of poverty eradication, food security, environmental and livelihood sustainability, sustainable development etc. while NZ, US, Japan, Switzerland and many other Annex 1 countries have a clear preference for mitigation, Developing countries and Least Developing Countries favour priority on adaptation (Gambia, Tanzania, Malawi, Sudan), few others (G77 & China, South Africa); while recognizing the potential for mitigation, categorically prefer adaptation as a priority for developing and least developed countries. He added that developed countries far exceed developing countries in per capita emissions in ag, and in keeping with principles of CBDR, developed countries should lead the way in mitigation in agriculture. He added that Annex 1 countries, which actually have increased their ag emissions from methane and nitrous oxide from 1990 levels (except EU).

Teresa Anderson (the Gaia Foundation, UK) spoke about pilot projects on soil carbon sequestration. She said while developing and least developed countries have been lured by the promises of financial assistance in agriculture through mitigation projects, there is no money in mitigation. Alluding to the pilot project in Kenya, she said that less than 1% of the money changing hand has actually reached the ground, rest being apportioned among the project developer and consultants. Farmers who have been promised an unspecified amount of money (if they perform well) after a certain period, will not get more than USD1-5, every year. She also talked about the other false solutions (biochar, agrofuels, no till ag etc.) being promoted in the guise of climate smart agriculture and how they have failed the tests of empirical studies. She hinted that already enough work on ag mitigation is taking place and there is no

relevance for taking up a work programme which is again focused on mitigation in ag and soil carbon sequestration.

Anika Schroeder (MISEREOR, Germany) emphasized how negotiations in REDD+ also sought to include soils through the integrated landscape approach being pushed by WB, FAO, IFPRI etc. She shared the experience of communities of working in REDD+ projects in Brazil, and Indonesia etc. She also highlighted that while agriculture was being projected as a major driver of deforestation, as a matter of fact, it is agrofuel and largescale industrial plantations that is mainly occupying lands in developing countries. She also insisted that land and tenure rights and food security of the small farmers should have the top most priority in REDD+ discussions, and rights enshrined in the UNDRIP does not have a place in REDD+.

The presentations were followed by animated discussion on drivers of deforestation, climate smart agriculture, livestock and climate change negotiations, India's NAPCC and SAPCC etc, with participants agreeing to the need for SBSTA to engage with farmers groups to advise the COP 18 on what should be the issues for consideration in negotiations on agriculture and climate change.