

SUBMISSION BY THE GAMBIA ON BEHALF OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDC) GROUP ON AGRICULTURE

In Durban the Conference of Parties (COP) requested the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to consider issues related to agriculture at its thirty-sixth session, with the aim of exchanging views and to enable the COP adopting a decision on this matter at its eighteenth session in Doha, Qatar. The COP also invited Parties and accredited observer organizations to submit to the Secretariat, by 5 March 2012, their views on the issues referred to above. It is in this respect that pursuant to paragraphs 75 and 76 of COP17 LCA Outcome, the LDCs are making a submission on its views on agriculture for consideration at the SBSTA-36 in Bonn, Germany.

The LDCs are the most vulnerable group of countries to the adverse impacts of climate change and they have the least capacity to deal with such challenges. Poverty is rampant in all LDCs and poverty eradication still remains the key development priority of their governments. As such, technical and financial support to the LDCs is key for them to adapt to additional challenges brought by climate change. Parties need to give special attention to the need of the LDCs as stipulated in Article 4.9 of the Convention.

The LDCs welcome the COP decision on agriculture to refer the issue to SBSTA as it will give an avenue to broaden discussions that will include issues related to adaptation in agriculture and not only mitigation as was the case in LCA discussions under Cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions. This decision will enhance the implementation of Article 4, paragraph 1(c), of the Convention. The LDCs look forward to SBSTA provide scientific and technological advice on agriculture as outlined in Article 9 of the Convention.

Agriculture is important to all LDCs. In most LDCs, well over 80% of the economically-active population, particularly small holder farmers and pastoralists rely on agriculture for livelihoods, employment, and income-generation. In addition, the sector contributes significantly to GDP in most LDCs. However, agricultural production has been declining in the recent past, affecting food security and livelihoods. The challenges arising from climate change will worsen the situation. Agriculture is not perceived in terms of its contribution to the growth process through increased productivity, but mainly in the context of sustaining food security. Climate change is threatening food production systems and therefore the livelihoods and food security of hundreds of millions of people who depend on agriculture in the group.

Agriculture is the sector most vulnerable to climate change in LDCs due to its high dependence on weather and climate. As a result, adaptation in the agriculture sector is very key to the LDCs as evidenced in the NAPA submissions. At least 80% of all projects identified in the NAPAs are in the agriculture sector. Issues of food security are very key to the LDCs in particular its availability, access, utilisation, and reduction of post harvests losses. Food production in LDCs is mainly from subsistence and marginal farmers, and as such respecting their rights to arable land is very important.

Almost all economies of the LDCs are agriculture-based. As such, LDCs will pay particular attention to issues related to trade of agriculture products. In this view, the LDCs urge all parties to abide by the COP decision adopted in Cancun in particular paragraph 90 of the Cancun agreements (Decision

1/CP16) which reaffirms that “the Parties should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development in all Parties, particularly developing country Parties, thus enabling them better to address the problems of climate change; measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.”

Issues of interest to LDCs under SBSTA discussion on agriculture:

1. Assess the state of knowledge and information: There is a lot of existing high-quality scientific and technical information on adaptation in agriculture in the context of climate change. It would be useful for SBSTA to look at what already exists and provide a scientific and technical platform to accelerate on-the-ground implementation as well as to identify the gaps where additional analysis is required;

2. Cooperation on research and development: Promoting the cooperation on new research and sharing existing knowledge between countries and regions would benefit adaptation activities. This could include technology development and transfer, identifying and sharing best practices on adaptation, enhancing access to information, and education and training;

3. Modelling in agriculture sector. There is a need for more information on the anticipated impacts of climate change at the national and sub-national levels related to agriculture. As such, modelling and downscaling of the global and regional models to local situations in LDCs is very important. Many regional climate models lack a level of details necessary to guide adaptation activities locally. Additionally, information is needed to inform adaptation on both short and long term impacts of climate change, such as extreme events and water availability. The LDCs look for SBSTA to provide its scientific and technological information on this;

4. SBSTA will have to look at an integrated approach to the issue of agriculture that includes livelihoods, the cultural components of agriculture, and considers the entire lifecycle of agricultural inputs, such as fertilizer and water. Taking into consideration as many aspects as possible through integrated approaches, could provide a more solid technical and scientific basis for agriculture;

5. Measurement and methodological issues: SBSTA is expected to provide information on the current state of scientific knowledge on measurement, methodologies, and the estimation of greenhouse gas emissions and removals in the agricultural sector, including methodologies for adaptation. This is very important as long as it will not lead to new commitments by developing countries;

6. SBSTA should - develop scenarios, tools, methodologies to assess carbon stocks in all types of ecosystems in LDCs (dry, humid, arid, semi-arid, sub-humid) - areas/sub sectors of high or potential GHG emissions. However, the LDCs do not consider the sector for market based mechanisms;

7. Assess the state of development, transfer, efficiency of technology, and practices that enhance adaptation and mitigation to climate change: This could include issues related to assessment of vulnerabilities and practices for adaptation; enhanced access and utilization of technology and

information, including best practices, local technology, capacity building support, and south-south cooperation, integrated soil fertility management and pest and diseases management.

Tools that SBSTA can use in its work on agriculture

SBSTA submissions will provide the basis for exchanging views among Parties in Bonn and are intended to lead to a decision on agriculture at COP 18 in Qatar. In addition, there are a number of tools to expand the fora for discussion on agriculture beyond negotiations. These include:

- Holding workshops and expert meetings: SBSTA can hold workshops and expert meetings to explore topics in more detail. The Secretariat could produce workshop reports which will capture key issues to inform the discussions;
- Request technical papers on given topics;
- Recommend to COP to request that IPCC prepare briefings or assessments in particular in relation to local future impacts of climate change on agriculture in the LDCs;
- Cooperation with other bodies under the Convention like the CGE, Technology Executive Committee, the Adaptation Committee in particular to seek cooperation with other groups. For example, research and systematic observation (RSO) on specific research issues could be undertaken jointly with SBI;
- Pilot Activities. SBSTA could use pilot activities to inform the process and its work programme.