



## **Agricultural work programme under threat amidst uncertain climate talks**

*Leading scientists, engineers and farmers warn of missed opportunity*

**6 December 2010, CANCUN, MEXICO** – A beneficial and widely supported agricultural work programme is at risk of not being adopted amidst the uncertain state of broader negotiations, leading agricultural experts at the climate negotiations in Cancun warn.

Agriculture is a necessary yet significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 14-31 per cent of total emissions. The world's 1.5 billion members of farm families also manage the planet's water, soil and carbon systems.

Yet unlike the forestry sector, agriculture still does not have a dedicated work programme for addressing how it can be incorporated into the broader climate agreement. Such a programme is the starting point for allowing scientists, policymakers, farmers and industry to refine understanding of key issues for mitigation and adaptation in the farming sector.

Howard Minigh, a Farming First spokesperson and President and CEO of CropLife International, said, "Over the last forty years, advances in high-yield agriculture have prevented vast amounts of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere. Yield intensification should be a high priority in these climate negotiations, helping to address the joint climate change-hunger challenge."

More and better aligned research, investments and knowledge sharing could help mitigate against future emissions from the agricultural sector and to enable farmers to better adapt to changing temperatures and rainfall patterns, reduced soil fertility or limited access to vital resources for supplying the world's food. This is especially relevant in less developed countries where farmers have fewer coping mechanisms in place.

Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Chief Executive Officer of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) said, "Unless action is taken now to help African farmers respond, the impacts of climate change could derail the region's recent efforts to transform the agricultural sector."

Innovations in both technology and in knowledge sharing should be supported by harmonised policy environments and streamlined regulatory frameworks relevant to local contexts. Morgane Danielou, Director at the International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA), said, "Solutions to climate change and food security need to be tailored to local conditions and local needs. Public-private partnerships between research organizations, governments and industry are important collaborations to help adapt agricultural technologies to the unique climate situations faced around the world."

Minigh continued, "The good news is that science is already helping farmers to do more with less, and we can intensify that effort to help reduce agriculture's carbon emissions."

Forest and agriculture experts held a side event at the climate negotiations calling for further investment from the world's leaders. Earlier, at Agriculture and Rural Development Day on Saturday, more than four hundred experts from across the world, including policy makers, farmers, scientists and representatives from the private sector and civil society, attended Agriculture and Rural Development Day to identify and discuss best practices and technologies for climate change mitigation and adaptation in agriculture.

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About Farming First:

Farming First is a global coalition representing the world's scientists, engineers and industry as well as more than 100 farmers' associations and agricultural development organisations. Farming First calls for a broad-based, knowledge-centred approach to increase agricultural output in a sustainable and socially responsible manner. To learn more, visit:

[www.farmingfirst.org](http://www.farmingfirst.org)

To view Farming First's position on climate change, visit:

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