

LDC Experiences Ensuring Food Security in a Changing Climate: *Sharing Lessons and Looking Forward*

May 26, 2014, Cancun Mexico

Jointly organized by the Government of Canada and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The side event, jointly organized by the Government of Canada and the UNDP, provided an opportunity for an exchange on what LDCs are doing to address the impacts of climate change on food security. The event focused on projects supported through the Canada-UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Facility (CCAF), which scales up or expands Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) projects in Cambodia, Cape Verde, Haiti, Mali, Niger and Sudan. These national initiatives promote resilient agricultural practices, strengthen related



infrastructure and diversify sources of livelihood for vulnerable communities living in regions that are experiencing significant climate change induced pressures. The projects also target activities that support women engaged in agricultural-based livelihoods. The CCAF includes a global component focused on generating and sharing lessons from and between the national initiatives, including related to gender.



Ms. Caroline Leclerc provides opening remarks to a panel discussion with (from left to right) Mr. Rithirak Long, Mr. Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Mr. Carlos Tello Diaz, and Ms. Jennifer Baumwoll

Ms. Caroline Leclerc, Director-General of Food Security and Environment at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, opened the event and spoke to the importance of working together to address the nexus of food security and climate change in vulnerable Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Mr. Carlos Tello Diaz, a journalist and professor at the National University of Mexico, moderated the panel discussion,

which featured: Mr. Rithirak Long, Deputy Secretary General of Ministry of

Environment in Cambodia; Ms. Jennifer Baumwoll, UNDP, Project Coordinator for the CCAF; and, Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, UNDP, Head-Climate Change Adaptation.

Key messages from the interactive panel discussion included:

- *National, sub-national and community level engagement is critical for long term sustainability.* To support sustainable outcomes: climate resilient practices should be integrated into national and sub-national policies; working with local governments is critical, given their access to and existing relationship with targeted, often remote, communities; and, communities need to have ownership of project activities and both the capacity and resources to act.

– Project-related insight: The formation of collectives, especially where communities subsist on communal properties, helps ensure collective ownership of initiatives for investing in, and maintaining, communal lands. This was successfully achieved in Sudan through a structure of Village Development Committees (VDC), where villages established their own small groups of community members who were responsible for designing and implementing



Meeting with Village Development Committees in Mushga, North Kordofan, Sudan

different activities under the project. In Cambodia, the communities formed a collective group to manage water resources as if it had characteristics of private ownership, where exclusivity and/or exclusion of use is possible. This lent itself to efficient use of water. In addition, an individual champion within local communities can often lead to replication of results. In Cambodia, one women farmer was trained in alternative agriculture techniques which she adopted, and other village members followed her successful example.

- *While the scale of the challenge of adaptation is substantial at the global level, simple and targeted interventions can have significant impact at the local level, and result in multiplier benefits beyond the originally expected impacts.* Interventions that lead to higher revenues and greater opportunities for community members are an important first step to long-term sustainability.

– Project-related insight: In both Cambodia and Sudan, the installation of basic irrigation systems with solar pumps led to significant increases in income. For example, in Cambodia incomes increased 300-400%, and other unexpected impacts followed. The community decided to resell water saved to neighboring communities, thereby creating a stream of revenues with which to maintain the improved system. Further, higher farm wastage from enhanced water management system allowed community to install and run a biogas incinerator and produce energy. These activities produced multiplier benefits on health and time savings from fetching water. As with all initiatives, it is important that qualified extension support helps to guide rural villagers on the adoption of the right type of technology that is both viable and enhances resilience. This requires comprehensive assessments, including of the economics underpinning investments, to support replication and scaling up.



Solar pump station supplying water for vegetable gardening in Preah Vihear, Cambodia

- *There are several barriers to scaling up adaptation, and they all need to be addressed to make effective progress.* The availability of finance was cited as a barrier and given the scale of the adaptation challenge the importance of both public and private finance was noted. In addition, the importance of national governments in establishing an enabling environment was highlighted as key, given public policy's pivotal role in creating the necessary conditions for directing and incentivizing private sector investments towards new climate resilient technologies.
- *Gender aspects of climate change should be taken into account in project design to increase the impact of interventions.* In the context of food security, climate change impacts particularly affect women, given their role as farmers and providers of nutrition in societies.



Income Generating Activities like sewing and gardening are helping vulnerable women diversity livelihoods in Niger

- Project-related insight: Micro-finance has proven to be a valuable tool for empowering women to invest in new technologies and methods for increased productivity. To this end, communities involved in the projects in both Sudan and Cambodia established revolving funds for villagers, where women often controlled micro-credit and made decisions on the best investments to benefit their livelihoods. In Niger, the project is training women in additional income generating activities to strengthen their resilience to the impacts of climate on agriculture. Micro-projects on sewing and gardening have been developed to diversify livelihood options. The point was made that alternative livelihood

options must take into account the potential desire of rural communities to eventually move out of agriculture, as incomes increase.

- *There is limited data on the impact of adaptation activities on poverty reduction and broader development objectives.* It is generally agreed that adaptation activities have valuable impacts on poverty reduction and broader development objectives; however, the data is not systematically collected and analyzed to illustrate these impacts with concrete evidence.

- Project-related insight: All projects supported by the Canadian CCAF will ensure systematic tracking and measuring of development impact, to support a better understanding of causality and impact.



Women villagers engage in climate resilient agricultural techniques to grow vegetables in North Kordofan, Sudan

To learn more about the Facility, and follow the progress of the national initiatives, please visit: <http://www.undp-alm.org/projects/canada-undp-climate-change-adaptation-facility>.