

Agriculture, Food security and Climate change in the Hague, ministerial roundtable November 4th 2010

Speech from Oxfam Novib, Sabina Voogd

Mr Chair, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates,

My name is Sabina Voogd, and I work for Oxfam Novib which is an affiliate of Oxfam.

I am very thankful that I have been invited for this ministerial meeting, it is very instructive and informative for me. But having me in the room does not mean that all civil society organizations (CSOs) are or feel included in this process.

Oxfam is part of the CSO movement. In the CSO movement there are farmers organizations, scientists, churches and NGOs . It is a big diversity of groups and we all work together, share information and share our work. While I have been here with you in the ministerial meeting all day, CSOs outside have been working on a statement. I will not read out the whole statement to you, but just refer to a few points from it. Please note with me that things said in here and outside are not so different as you might think.

CSOs state that adaptation to climate change has to be the main priority of the conference. Also they focus on small holder farmers, indigenous people and women. According to CSOs these people have not been present, nor consulted, nor genuinely participated in this process. CSOs prefer a “chairman’s summary” over a roadmap.

CSOs reject the endorsement of carbon markets, this is not only done by CSOs, but also in international processes like in the Convention on biological diversity (CBD) and in the UNFCCC, where the climate negotiations are held. At the UNFCCC, developing countries support limiting the use of existing carbon market mechanisms, and oppose the introduction of new ones. Therefore, this conference should refrain from policy prescriptions about carbon markets.

This is because under the UNFCCC, developed countries have legally binding commitments to finance adaptation and mitigation (including for agriculture) in developing countries. So-called innovative « carbon finance » is being promoted by some , so that developed countries can avoid, rather than fulfill their obligations. Instead, many developing countries are demanding that fund-based financing should be the focus. Carbon markets, with their speculative tendencies, inherent instability, combined with the complexity of the agriculture markets could spell disaster for food rights, food security and livelihoods in developing countries.

Tools and strategies needed to address food security, food sovereignty and climate change have been widely discussed in the IAASTD ; in ongoing discussions within the UN FAO committee on World Food Security and key processes led by social movements such as *la via campesina* and other farmers organizations. The Hague conference need not reinvent the wheel.

Mr Chair, I would now like to make a short mentioning of the work that Oxfam is doing in these fields. Four Oxfams took the initiative to build a new program called SCALE. It is based on the recommendations from the IAASTD.

This is a multi-country 10 year program (starting in the first phase in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ethiopia, Vietnam and Cambodia) that links with the coming Oxfam campaign on Food Justice in a resource constrained world. The overall aim of this program is to increase the food security of seasonally food insecure smallholder farmers who produce primarily staple food crops and to increase their ability to adapt to and contribute to the mitigation of climate change. The primary group for intervention are women farmers.

The overall aim of this program will be more sustainable national food systems. This can be reached through reinvigorated smallholder agriculture, and improvements to the natural resource base on which smallholders depend. We will work on (adapted) seeds, low-external input agriculture, “green manure”, agro-forestry. Complementary we will work on mechanisms for risk reduction in production and marketing, food storage at decentralized level and transformation, and market access.

I thank you for your attention.

Conceptually, this joint Oxfam global agricultural program builds on the 2009 OI Briefing Papers “Investing in Poor Farmers Pays” (<http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/investing-in-poor-farmers-pays>) and “People Centered Resilience”(<http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/people-centered-resilience>) and the background paper “Harnessing Agriculture for Development” (<http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/harnessing-agriculture-development>)