IFOAM report on the Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change

The Hague, the Netherlands - 31st October - 5th November 2010

Executive Summary
The aim of the conference was to produce a roadmap for action for agriculture. Hardly any civil society organizations were invited, key countries like China and Brazil were not present and the delegates were dominated by agribusiness interests. Hosted by the Netherlands Government in cooperation with the Governments of Ethiopia, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Vietnam, the World Bank and the FAO did however provide a global forum for agricultural initiatives addressing climate change and food security to be collated and discussed. It also brought together two very important policy debates together that IFOAM is heavily involved in at UN level – climate change (UNFCCC) and food security (FAO CFS). Its timing ahead of the Cancun climate conference in late November, where important decisions that affect agriculture both directly and indirectly are likely to be made, also made participation in this conference critical.

IFOAM with other Civil Society Organizations helped to thwart a push for food security and climate change strategies based on top-down second green revolution based 'solutions'. Given the absence of important countries and many key CSO stakeholders were excluded the CSOs challenged the legitimacy of the conference. As a consequence the proposed 'Roadmap for Action' was downgraded to a 'Chairs Summary'. The two IFOAM side events and important keynote speakers such as Kanayo Nwanze (IFAD President) ensured that the final version was more balanced and included Organic Agriculture in its wide-ranging list of recommendations.

The experience in Hague where the conference set-up favored developed countries and agribusiness corporations shows the critical importance of CSO vigilance and participation (IFOAM had to fight to get an invite). This is particularly important given that the UNFCCC climate negotiations are considering agriculture in expanded market mechanisms including the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The UN will also explore the type of agricultural practices and systems that might be supported under such financial mechanisms if the proposed agriculture working group is approved in Cancun.

The agribusiness lobby is working hard to make sure their top down, predominately developed country owned technological 'solutions' will be promoted by the UN over ecological and people based solutions. In conjunction with the financial sector they are also lobbying aggressively for the expansion of carbon markets endorsed by the UN which will not only expand the market for their agricultural technologies but also help fund (incentivize) the transfer of their technologies to the South through the generation of carbon credits. It is therefore critical that CSOs collaborate to bring greater transparency and balance to international debates on agriculture – especially those connected to UN negotiations where agreements could legitimize and incentivize the imposition of industrial agriculture as the expense of the needs of local people and their ecosystems.

CSO Cooperation to rebalance the conference
IFOAM worked closely with the CSOs present in The Hague, such as IATP, TWN, ActionAid and Oxfam and collectively denounced the legitimacy of both the conference and the roadmap. The first draft of the 'roadmap for action' however was dominated by green revolution "solutions" and on mitigation, which is attractive to markets, rather than adaptation which is what is needed by farmers –especially in The South. Its focus was so narrow it couldn't be claimed to have been 'collectively developed,' even by those present at the Conference.

> *"Our understanding of the problems and solutions differs fundamentally from the framing posed by the organizers. We believe that adaptation has to be the main priority of this conference. The agricultural challenges faced by the poorest and most vulnerable, in Africa but also in Asia, in small-island states, in Latin America, are adaptation challenges. While sustainable farming practices can provide mitigation benefits, the climate crisis is caused first and foremost by the emissions of rich countries and we reject that small farmers are meant now to take on the mitigation responsibilities of the North."* - Extract from CSO statement on the first draft of the "Roadmap for Action"

There was also considerable concern amongst delegates about the impact on food security if agriculture entered a regulatory carbon market such as under the CDM. The major concern was with regard to speculation on carbon prices that could destabilize food prices even further (FAO have recently warned of further food price hikes). IATP have specific expertise in the potential impact of carbon markets on agriculture and food security:

> *Many have argued that carbon markets are necessary because developed countries no longer have the public resources for climate finance. It's important to note that one reason developed countries are facing such financial constraints is the recent bailout of the financial services industry following a decade of its deregulation and spectacular near-collapse. We are deeply concerned that the global community is now being asked to trust this failed and unrepentant industry—which has fought regulation following its bailout—to provide adequate climate finance through carbon trading. We believe that carbon markets will not result in reliable and timely financing for the critical projects around the world that are needed to adapt to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And, having studied the role of poorly regulated financial markets in the global food crisis of 2007-08, we are concerned that such markets will not only shift the burden of mitigation to developing countries, but will also adversely affect food security, and undermine many important efforts to deal with both climate change and rising global hunger* – for full IATP article click here.

Implement rather than ignore IAASTD
The CSOs called for the conference to implement rather than ignore IAASTD findings:

> *Initiated by the World Bank and FAO, sponsored by additional UN agencies and approved by 58 governments, the IAASTD drew on the work of over 400 experts*

over a six year process. As a result, the IAASTD contains some of the most complete and authoritative sets of policy and investment options to strengthen the productivity and resilience of the world's food and agricultural systems, while prioritizing social equity and sustainability. Its findings were welcomed by many of the developing countries that suffer the effects of hunger and food insecurity most severely. The Conference ignores at its peril the IAASTD. The World Bank and the FAO should be championing the IAASTD, rather than attempting to ignore or subvert it.

Organic Agriculture included in final outcome document

The final outcome of the conference rather than being a "Roadmap for Action" became a non-binding Chair's summary and rather than claiming a "shared understanding" instead was watered down to simply "Understanding the Challenges". This was a victory for democracy in itself but it was also significant in that the final document moved away from the 2nd Green Revolution focus called for by keynote speakers such as Kofi Annan, Louis Fresco and private sector companies to a broader range of solutions that firmly included and specifically mentioned organic agriculture.

The inclusion of Organic Agriculture was due to the presence of CSOs, the two IFOAM side events on community based adaptation and on Organic Agriculture Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Food Security held in conjunction with Hivos, Christian Aid, NOGAMU, CEDECO, Louis Bolk Institute and RTOACC that raised awareness of ecological and participatory based solutions to climate change and food security – based on the principles of organic agriculture and the conviction of influential keynote speakers including Kanayo Nwanze (IFAD President) and Robert Watson (Director of IAASTD).

The conference outcomes in terms of UN negotiations

The final document however turns out to be a very useful tool to understand the wide range of initiatives and "solutions" likely to be pushed in international climate change and food security agreements. It is therefore of particular importance within the climate negotiations specifically within the Kyoto Protocol negotiation track (Chapter II - Land use, land-use change and forestry – paragraph 8 – page 21) where agriculture is being considered for inclusion in an expanded clean development mechanism and in terms of specific potential agricultural technologies or systems AND under the Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention on Climate Change negotiation track (Chapter IX - Cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions in agriculture – page 70). It is also important in the context of the revamped FAO Committee on Food Security especially the development of a Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition.

World Bank

At The Hague conference the World Bank promoted its role in funding agriculture soil carbon sequestration projects (BioCarbon Fund). The BioCarbon Fund is an initiative with public and private contributions, administered by the World Bank. It purchases emission reductions from afforestation and reforestation projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), as well as from land-use sector projects outside the CDM. These include projects that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and increase carbon sequestration in soils through improved agriculture practices. In addition, the BioCarbon Fund, created to help open the carbon market, develops methodologies and tools that are in the public domain (reference).

The Bank held a ceremony in The Hague to mark the signing of an Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement (ERPA) to purchase carbon credits generated from its Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project that is a pilot designed to improve food security, help address climate change, and improve the lives and livelihoods of rural dwellers that live in poverty. The Project is not only the first project that sells soil carbon credits in Africa, it is also paving the way for a new approach to carbon accounting methodologies, according to the World Bank. According to the World Bank the ERPA adds the benefits of carbon finance to a sustainable agricultural land management project that increases the productivity of the Kenyan farmers and also sequesters carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Developed with the support of the World Bank, the project generates carbon credits which are sold to the Bank-administered BioCarbon Fund. The direct benefit to local communities is over $350,000 with an initial payment of $80,000 to be made in the first year, 2011(reference).

The Project, implemented by the Swedish non-governmental organization Vi Agroforestry, is located on 45,000 hectares in the Nyanza Province and Western Province of Kenya. There, small-holder farmers and small-scale business entrepreneurs are trained in diverse cropland management techniques such as covering crops, crop rotation, compost management, and agro-forestry. These practices increase the yield of the land and generate additional sources of income for the farmers through the payment for environmental services in the form of carbon credits (reference).

The World Bank has presented the Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project at various international conferences – including at UNFCCC CoP15. This presentation illustrates that carbon revenues are relatively small compared to the additional income from the crop response related to the adoption of sustainable land management (SLM) practices. Slide 6 illustrates 4 different farm management systems ranging from no external (package 1) to high external input based practices (package 3). The high external package shows greater net farm incomes based on higher yields despite presumably higher costs. There is however no ever organic farming based “package”. The World Bank is advocating that if carbon payments can be structured as an upfront payment they can cover the critical investment time lag, i.e. the period between adopting SLM and the yield response. In other words advance carbon payments can be used by farmers to improve practices that lead to increased yields and improved farm generated incomes at the same time sequestering the carbon that is used to generate credit to repay the upfront payments.

The Kenya Agricultural Carbon Project is a very interesting development model. However it seems somewhat overly dependent on relatively low carbon payments to achieve such important outcomes in terms of food security and poverty reduction. The key to the project is capacity building in SLM but it is not clear how much this costs and whether it is built into the farm expenses. It is all very well to simplify things to carbon payments that provide funds for inputs but what about the capacity building? As the pilot has been based on high external input practices what the impact capacity building in ecological intensification would have had in terms of yields and net income as well as carbon sequestration is not known. In other words it's not clear how much the income improved because of capacity building versus use of external inputs – could similar incomes be achieved via a lower cost but ecologically intensified organic system? How does this project compare to the outcomes in terms of food security, poverty reduction, carbon sequestration and farm resilience achieved through the Export Promotion of Organic Products from Africa (EPOPA) program which provided high impact and significant improvements in the livelihood of some 27,000 farmers from Uganda and Tanzania (download the EPOPA book - Organic Exports - a way to a better life?).

This is a promising model which should be expanded to include an organic package and / or one that transitions out of a high external input system into an organic system. It also demonstrates what can be done when funds are provided for capacity building in SLM. This project is for the voluntary market but as it based on the VCS standard it could potentially be upgraded to meet the standards of a regulatory based mechanism such as those of a CDM expanded to include crop management. More on the World Bank at The Hague click here

Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR).
At the Hague Conference CGIAR announced the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change which is an initiative that's builds on the Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security Programme (CCAFS) – a 10-year joint research initiative of CGIAR and the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP). The initiative on climate change, agriculture and food security, developed with the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP), involves all CGIAR Centers plus a "wide" coalition of partners. It intends to offer developing country farmers new options for coping with current climate variability, adapting to emerging impacts in the coming decades and mitigating climate change through a "carbon-friendly" agriculture that also strengthens food security and reduces poverty.

The new CGIAR Consortium Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) will be formally launched after Agriculture and Rural Development Day (4 December 2010,) from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at the Gran Melia Hotel, in Cancún**,** Mexico. The CCAFS research program will also be promoted at 3:30 pm at the Development and Climate Film Festival, at Cancún Caribe Park Royal Grand – watch a trailer of "Two Degrees Up". List of all CGIAR CCAFS events at CoP16

The Commission which is being financially supported by the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development intends to have a panel of nine senior scientists to act as commissioners that will deliver "a clear set of findings" and policy recommendations on agriculture and climate change to feed into processes such as the UNFCCC COP17 (in late 2011 in South Africa) and the Rio +20 Earth Summit in Brazil in 2012. The Commission intends to identify what policy changes and actions are needed to help the world achieve sustainable agriculture in the face of climate change. Specifically, the Commission will focus on bringing together existing evidence on sustainable agriculture that contributes to food security and poverty reduction, and helps respond to climate change adaptation and mitigation goals. The Commission is expected to commence its work early in 2011 and to deliver its findings for use by decision makers on climate change and agriculture policies by December 2011.

While many stakeholders were at the Hague conference others were in Washington announcing a new agreement to establish a multi-donor trust fund (the CGIAR Fund), connecting donors with the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers. CGIAR Fund donors agreed to support two new strategic research programs – including CCAFS. The CGIAR Fund Chair is also Vice President for Sustainable Development at the World Bank.

Other initiatives of particular interest that were profiled at the Hague Conference

- IFAD Climate Change Strategy including country strategies and programs to systematically reflect climate and environment risks and opportunities
- Initiative by The Netherlands, Terrestrial Carbon Group and other partners to enable integration of land use planning in country climate and food strategies. Support to a multi-country, 5-year initiative to enable integration of land use and planning considerations in the development of sustainable food production, low emission development (LED's) and adaptation strategies.
- Plans to accelerate the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) by increasing financial support to country agricultural investment plan towards climate-smart agriculture and food security and climate-proofing. CAADP is recognized under the proposed "*Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition*"
- 7 year program addressing adaptation and mitigation, together with productivity and food security. Supports integration and local ownership and activities such as zero grazing, intensification, improved irrigation, extension and research, value chain coordination, post harvest loss reduction and land rights (all within the CAADP framework) by Rwanda
- Development of Rwanda led Forest and Agriculture Landscape Initiative by Rwanda, World Bank, IUNC, UNFF and other CPF members
- Inventory and evaluation of Integrated Agricultural Landscape Initiatives by EcoAgriculture Partners**.** Lessons learned about effective organization, governance, planning and monitoring should be synthesized, and used to inform policy and institutional changes.
- Significant research and development program to upscale Evergreen Agriculture in multiple countries in Africa by World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), IFAD,

Malawi, Zambia, Niger and Burkina Faso – click here for booklet - Creating an evergreen Agriculture in Africa for food security and environmental resilience

- Proposed joint programming initiative by research organizations and EU member states on Agriculture, Food Security, and Climate Change to bring together key research organizations and funders in Europe, for a more multifunctional and sustainable food production for different agro-ecological zones and regions.
- Innovative carbon smart agriculture projects for small holders by Africa Agricultural Climate Facility, RFA, NCRC Ghana, Rockefeller Foundation
- Intention to convene a pan-African expert panel to explore the possibility of setting up a financial mechanism for African climate-smart agriculture and food security by the African Union Commission and CTA
- Convening an international agro-forestry investment forum: “Landscape management and restoration” by Kenya, World Bank, ICRAF, PROFOR
- Developing and implementing a strategic plan for climate resilience, integrating improved weather information, climate governance, water management, locally-developed land management, agricultural productivity, social protection, and risk reduction measures under the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience by Niger
- Developing and implementing a strategic plan for climate resilience, including agriculture, land and water management and improved weather and risk management systems under the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience by Zambia