



Minutes of the conference
“**A**groforestry: feeding the world in
an age of climate change”
Organised by MEP Kriton Arsenis

29 January 2013, Brussels

Opening statement

By MEP Kriton Arsenis (S&D, Greece)

MEP Arsenis wondered how agroforestry can help us in the face of climate change. He stated that if we don't change our policies and habits radically, it will be extremely difficult to adapt to new changes.

Presentation

By Prof. Dennis Garrity, UN Drylands Ambassador, World Agroforestry Centre

Most drylands have been overwhelmed by the crisis. Terrorism and political instability are mainly concentrated in drylands. This violence undermines development processes. Furthermore, population doubles every twenty years.

“Drylands should receive particular attention”, argued Prof. Dennis.

Scientists began to work with farmers towards transforming agricultural systems into agroforestry systems.

Prof. Garrity highlighted the tremendous potential of agroforestry: modest investments can have big impacts.

It was noted that 17 countries are engaged with the World Agroforestry Centre in Africa in order to scale up agroforestry. Solutions are based on science while building upon indigenous practices and knowledge.



Minutes: Agroforestry, feeding the world

Prof. Garrity qualified agroforestry as a “climate resilient agriculture”.

Presentation

By Dr Chris Reij, World Resources Institute

Dr Reij referred to a study on long term trends in agriculture. It has been noticed that farmers have invested massively in agroforestry. Agroforestry improves soil fertility and makes a difference in terms of income, since the annual value of the leaves of one mature baobab ranges from 28 to 70 dollars. Another benefit brought by agroforestry is litter production. Without trees, farmers have to transport massive amount of litters.

Dr Reij underlined that agroforestry is the future of agriculture in drylands. The role of Governments should consist of putting in place supportive policies and legislations. Unlike twenty years ago, we know what to do and how to do it. “Agroforestry improves food security and livelihoods in Africa”, concluded Dr Reij.

Presentation

By Kristian Schmidt, Director of Human and Society Development, DG DEVCO, European Commission

Food production will have to increase by 70% by 2050 in order to feed the growing world population. DG DEVCO gives a prominent role to agroforestry in its Agendas for change, especially in the Sahel. Initiatives designed to foster resilience have been developed.

The World Agroforestry Centre is one of the key partners receiving funding from the European Commission.

Mr Schmidt is convinced that agroforestry is part of the solution for a sustainable agriculture.

Reactions

MEP Arsenis is convinced that agroforestry is a “cost effective solution and a good way to spend public money”.

Mr Worms from the World Agroforestry Centre recalled that agroforestry gives nutritional value to food, allows coping with climate change and empowering farmers to use new techniques.

MEP Keith Taylor (UK, Greens) pointed out that “Agroforestry is a sustainable form of farming”. Agroforestry should be part of the toolkit to fight hunger in the world. The multi benefits of agroforestry should be fully recognized.

Mr Schmidt (DG DEVCO) does not think that there is a problem of coherence with the CAP because Africa and the EU have their own problems. The European Commission is finalizing a communication on nutrition. Agroforestry is one of the tools.

Presentation

By Prof. Roger Leakey, Vice Chairman, International Tree Foundation

Participatory approach involving local farmers is of paramount importance. Talking to them enables to identify the best trees. Around 50 species are under domestication in the world. Poverty drives land degradation and vice versa. It is impossible to achieve good crop yields because of land degradation. Agroforestry plays a key role in improving crop yields.

Moreover, new products derived from agroforestry open up the doors to the sale of new products in new markets.

Presentation

By Dr. Zac Tchoundjeu, Buffet Conservation Aware Winner, West Africa Head, World Agroforestry Centre

ICRAF West and Central African nodes are diverse. One of the common characteristics is that this area is a hotspot for biodiversity and poverty. There is a clear link between environmental problems and instability.

Dr. Tchoundjeu considers that domesticated species should be based on local knowledge and science. He is in favor of establishing a strong partnership between farmers, scientists and companies. Food crops seed diversification and soil fertility management are always at the heart of the “Farmers to farming training”.

It was noted that the tree domestication enables to roll back environmental degradation and deforestation. It also contributes to mitigating climate change. Dr Tchoundjeu concluded that science helps solve problems identified by farmers.

Presentation

By Dr. Artur Runge Metzger, Director of international and Climate Strategy, DG CLIM, European Commission

Can agroforestry be acknowledged in climate policies? Regrettably, there is no proper recognition. Dr Metzger recalled that the indirect land use change (ILUC) is one of the most difficult parts in the negotiations. Unlike the International level, accounting for crop management should become compulsory in the EU in the near future.

Dr Metzger reiterated the support of the European Commission to the full accounting of agricultural practices. Then you give the right incentive to farmers to opt for agroforestry.

Discussion

A representative of DG Agriculture stressed that at a time of the negotiations on the CAP reform, experiences from Africa could help strengthen the agroforestry's role at the EU level.

On behalf of **EURAF**, **Mr Watté** expressed satisfaction to see agroforestry included in the ecological focused area in the Council's position. However, EURAF would be even happier if the European Parliament could take the same path.