

Agriculture must become 'climate-smart,' says UN agency



The vulnerability of farming communities to climate-related disasters needs to be reduced.

28 October 2010 – A new United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) **report** calls for agriculture in developing countries to become 'climate-smart' to cope with the twin challenges of climate change and population growth.

Climate change is expected to curb agricultural productivity, stability and incomes in many areas already coping with high levels of food insecurity, but the new publication says world farming production must soar by 70 per cent in the next four decades to meet the food needs of the world's population.

"Increasing agricultural production, reducing post-harvest losses, and improving food distribution channels in the developing world have always been major challenges," **said** Alexander Mueller, FAO Assistant Director-General for Agriculture.

"Climate change raises the bar significantly – a major transformation of agriculture is needed."

He pointed to effective, climate-smart practices already in place in some countries which could be widely implemented in developing countries.

The report urges changes in areas including the food production sector, which must produce more food, waste less and make it easier for farmers to get their produce to consumers.

Farming must also become more resilient to floods, droughts and other disruptive events, which will require improving farm management and use of natural resources, such as water, land and forests.

Better warning and insurance systems must be in place, the publication says, to reverse the vulnerability of farming communities to climate-related disasters. Agriculture must also reduce its own environmental impacts, including lowering its own greenhouse gas emissions, without compromising food security and rural development.

FAO cautioned that at present, resources are insufficient to prepare farmers for climate change, especially in poorer nations.

The new report underlines the need for stepped up investment in research and development for appropriate technologies and incentives to ensure that climate-smart farming practices are implemented.

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