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**Climate Change, Food Security and Right to Food**

**Shahid Najam**

# **Climate Change, Food Security and Right to Food**

**By Shahid Najam, Vice Chairman BIPP**

Climate change and food security are intertwined. Significant changes in climatic conditions affect food security through their impact on all components of global, national and local food systems. More frequent and more intense extreme weather events and droughts, rising sea levels, and increasing irregularities in rainy season patterns are already having immediate impacts on food production, food distribution infrastructure, incidence of food emergencies, livelihood assets and opportunities and human health, in both rural and urban areas.

Climate change and its impact on agriculture and food production directly affect millions of small-scale farmers, fishermen and forest-dependent people who are already vulnerable and short of food. More than 850 million undernourished people in the world, most of whom live in rural areas and earn their living from the agricultural sector are massively vulnerable to climate change. The world indeed has reached a point where global warming, which causes climate change and expansion in the bio-fuel demand at the cost of food crops is threatening to increase the number of hungry significantly. The situation for the poor is further exacerbated due to the volatile phenomenon of fluctuating and rising food prices.

This troika i.e., climate change, its deleterious impact on agriculture and food production, and rising food prices pose a formidable challenge to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to poverty, hunger, food security and nutrition which the humanity seeks to eliminate and/or reduce by 2030.

It is high time to take full cognizance of these issues and emphasize the urgency of the collective need to take appropriate set of mitigation and adaptation measures at the local, national and global levels to address the potentially disastrous impact of climate change.

Agriculture, which both drives and is affected by global warming, should contribute to reducing and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through such measures as:

- reduction of deforestation, improved forest conservation and management,
- agro-forestry for food or energy,
- controlling crop residue and agriculture waste burning,
- soil carbon sequestration,
- restoring land through controlled grazing,
- improving nutrition for ruminant livestock like cattle,
- more efficient management of livestock waste including biogas recovery, and
- conserving soil and water resources by improving their quality, availability and efficiency of use.

Adapting to climate change is also equally important to deal with the risk and fall out of climate change. And the poor, who will be affected the most by climate change must stay involved and must feel that these techniques are addressing their needs.

The adaptation interventions should focus on:

- sustainable and ecological farming practices,
- institution of early warning systems,
- systems to identify climate change "hot spots" and disaster risk management.
- rural investments to reduce the long-term effects of short-term climate variability on food security, through crop insurance,
- policy incentives that encourage farmers to adopt better agricultural and land use practices,
- investment in research to develop climate resistant-sensitive varieties and management practices.

Formulating rational and effective responses to climate challenges in the long run, will entail collective and concerted effort by all e.g., the government, private sector, research institutes, academia and civil society holistically.

Of paramount importance in this effort is to mobilize and generate higher societal resolve to addressing the climate change challenges and, in the process, create a collective conscience which feels the pangs of poverty and is fully committed to reducing the vulnerability of more than 850 million suffering from food insecurity. This will, a priori, require, commitment to and respect of the right of individuals to food; protecting this right from being violated or threatened by vagaries of climate change, and creating conducive agricultural and farming systems to respond to droughts and floods so as to facilitate the fulfillment of the right of poor to food. This could be achieved if the profile of right to food and right to be free from hunger, in the midst of rapidity and severity of climate change, is raised and brought on the national and global priority agenda by enhancing the awareness of policy makers, experts, professionals and indeed the people.

To better adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change, it is also imperative to pursue, through inter-disciplinary approach, strategies and action plans which encompass: climate and climatic impact modeling on farming and forestry, diversification of livelihoods of the poor especially in the fragile eco-systems, weather and climate forecasting, institution of Early Warning and Risk Management Systems, land use planning, food and social security programmes, livestock management, responsible fisheries development and sustainable management of forestry resources.