Some Considerations about Advancing Agriculture Process in a Post-2012 Agreement

Gabriela POPOVICIU, Andra LAZĂR

University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru, Bihor, e-mail: gpopoviciu@uoradea.ro

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SUMMARY

The post-2012 negotiations provide an opportunity to incorporate agriculture as an integral part of the regime and encourage greater participation on the part of developing countries in reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions in the sector. Significant cost-effective reductions are available in the agricultural sector in the short- and medium-term, but there is no guarantee that countries will design an agreement that effectively includes agriculture. While many countries object to this type of accounting, the post-2012 international agreement should strive to have comprehensive and comparable reporting and measurement between countries.

In addition to reducing GHG emissions, agricultural mitigation measures have other social, economic and environmental benefits, particularly in regard to sustainable development and food security. The 2009 “New Delhi Declaration on Conservation Agriculture” recognizes the importance of conservation agriculture that encourages minimum mechanical disturbance of the soil. The declaration requests that conservation agriculture be the central mechanism for agricultural sector climate change mitigation in a post-2012 agreement (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2009). Also, the same document considers that the conservation of agriculture could be a solution for facing the labour shortage problems, while being a beneficial agronomic system, sustainable and profitable.

Including agriculture in a post-2012 agreement should be an opportunity to improve national circumstances and to broaden the access to benefits in developing countries. In many such countries, the carbon market could offer significant opportunities to support agricultural programs. As well, yield improvement measures can enhance food security by increasing productivity while contributing to a higher income for farmers, and thus help to diminish poverty.

Financial and technical support is required to help developing countries address climate change in the agricultural sector. Actions can have multiple benefits, can help redressing rural poverty and improve soil quality, and also can help farmers to adapt to the climate changes.

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