



Press Release:

Cairo Climate Talks 4th experts' roundtable:

Egypt's agricultural economy should adapt to climate change impacts now

On the 4th monthly roundtable discussion held by Cairo Climate Talks (CCT) on the 26th of February 2012 at the premises of DAAD office in Cairo, experts from Germany and Egypt discussed the adaptation of Egypt's agriculture to the climate change. The German-Egyptian panel named a few consequences of elevation of the world temperature on Egypt's agriculture. These include the rise of sea level, thus the loss of agricultural and if unresolved this will affect food security and poverty.



Prof. Siawuch Amini, Prof. Mohamed Hashem and Ms. Amira El-Ahl (from left to right)

“Egypt will be the second most affected country worldwide after Bangladesh”, Prof. Mohammed Hashem, Centre for Organic Agriculture in Egypt at Cairo University explained. The rise of sea level will cause the flooding of the Nile delta which will increase food insecurity and poverty.

“Egypt's rapidly growing population demands an adaptation of agricultural resources now. Egypt consumes more than 80% of its water resources in agriculture. This makes the concept of sustainable agriculture inevitable for a country like Egypt”, Hashem confirmed.

Yet there exists a gap between the perception of the farmers on one hand and the perception of the global institutions, scientists, policy makers and the United Nations on the other, says Prof. Dr. Siawuch Amini professor for Agricultural Sciences at the University of Kassel.

“There is much research on Climate Change, but figures without context mean nothing”, maintained Prof. Amini. Institutional diversity means not only research, but also should produce and distribute knowledge on adaptation mechanisms outside the ivory towers of academia. “How can farmers adapt themselves to a situation that is almost unknown to them”, Amini asked.

Thus more national and regional cooperation on agricultural issues needs to be coordinated. Adaptation strategies that address the existing structures need to be developed, he suggested.

The discourse on adapting Egypt's agriculture on climate change is overdue, Dr. Matthias Bartels, coordinator of the Program Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the MENA Region at the German Agency for International Cooperation said.

The German expert, who helps on developing institutional strength with regional partners like the Arab League and the ministries of water in Arab countries, thinks that climate change cannot be seen as purely academic. “Climate Change Adaptation needs to be seen through the lens of the international cooperation”, so Bartels.



This is where establishing the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX) can assist the Arab countries in four areas: policy and strategy, institutional framework, tools and methodology and resource management. The biggest challenge is how transform a strategy into reality. “We should act faster than the climate change,” Bartels stated.

Egypt has many agricultural problems, like water salinity, desertification and low water per capita, Dr. Mosaad Kotb, director of the Laboratory for Agricultural Climate at the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation admitted.

Climate Change impacts like extreme weather events, i.e. floods and snow; destruct in addition the agricultural production. When hitting a strategic crop like wheat this can aggravate the food insecurity, Kotb said. Therefore the increase of efficiency of irrigation systems is a must.

Egypt has started a national plan to face the climate change impacts on agriculture to ensure better water management. This includes new irrigation techniques and improvement of waste cycles, Kotb assured.



Active Audience participation in the open discussion

The German-Egyptian panel concluded that scientific solutions to improve agriculture and its productivity are important. Yet this cannot be done without spreading the public awareness on climate change and its impacts. “We cannot afford to discuss the topic in isolation from reality.” Prof. Amini stated.

This is exactly what Cairo Climate Talks is doing. Cairo Climate Talks is a series of monthly events meant to provide a platform to exchange experience, raise awareness and foster cooperation between policymakers, the

business community, the scientific community as well as civil society. It is held in cooperation between the German Embassy in Cairo, the Egyptian Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA), the German Academic Exchange service (DAAD), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Egyptian German High Level Joint Committee for Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Environmental Protection (JCEE).

The next Cairo Climate Talks event will take place on 12th of March 2012, at 7 pm at Sawy Culturewheel in Zamalek. German, British and Egyptian experts will discuss climate change and its impacts on Egypt. A recent study led and published by the British Met Office Hadley Centre addressed specifically Climate Change in Egypt: “Climate: Observations, projections and impacts”.

For further information please contact:

press@cairoclimatetalks.net

01273102143

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