



**Messages from the accredited side-event on « Climate-Agriculture-Forest:  
Challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in West and Central Africa »**



**Université Félix Houphouët Boigny,  
ENSEA, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire  
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**Issues and objectives**

The main objective of this side event was to bring together the various communities in West and Central Africa and the necessary expertise to highlight the diversity of views, ways and methods on the benefits that appropriate mitigation and adaptation policies and programmes on agriculture and forestry will have in terms of social dimensions (health, food security, gender equality, biodiversity, population dynamics, sustainable development, etc.).

The specific objectives of this side event were:

- To share recent knowledge about effects of climate change on agriculture and forests in Africa and review the knowledge of farmers and foresters on ongoing and future climate change.
- To assess conventional adaptation and mitigation mechanisms and to discuss diversity of local innovations and approaches which aim to contribute to adaptation or mitigation policies and strengthen wet ecosystems resiliency.

This side event was co-organized by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of Ivory Coast (MINESUDD) and by the Institute of Research for Development (IRD, France) in the aim to increase exchanges between academics and stakeholders, between science and society on this crucial issue of climate change: Policy makers from Ivory Coast Government, more than 10 national and international NGOs, participants from private sector such as African Development Bank, civil society, experts from WWF, IUCN, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, CGIAR CRP CCAFS, CORAF/WECARD, National Focal Points of CCAC and on environmental conventions (UNCCC, UNCCD, CBD), Representative of ICSU ROA, University Senghor (Alexandria, Egypt; Direct Partner of International Organization of French Spoken Countries; OIF), scientists from national and international research institutions and universities and from national and regional institutions on agriculture and forestry.

**Messages during the opening ceremony**

After a welcome speech of the Director of ENSEA and of the Mayor of Cocody district, the message of Jean-Marc Hougard, the Representative of IRD in Côte d'Ivoire was to bring more science in the mitigation and adaptation policies, and to support and enhance observing systems and research in climate change. The message of Prof. Albert Lourde, President of the University Senghor was read by Martin Yelkouni, head of the Dept. of Environmental Studies and encourages French spoken countries to be united with the future France presidency for a global agreement. The allocution of Nicolas Frelot, representative of his Excellency the Ambassador of France in Côte d'Ivoire focused on the "Agenda of Solutions" with all national contributions such as INDCs but also, with all initiatives and local innovations from all other stakeholders that contribute to the overall mitigation efforts. Adama Diawara, adviser of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire in charge of Education, Training and Scientific Research confirmed the necessity to enhance integrated pluridisciplinary observing systems to reduce the uncertainties in climate projections in Africa and to contribute to improve mid and long terms development policies. The side-event was opened by Mrs Nasséré Kaba, Executive Director, on behalf of his Excellency Dr Remi Allah-Kouadio, Ministry of MINESUDD. Mrs Nasséré Kaba pointed out the issues of agricultural and forest sectors for the development of the African countries and recalled that although agricultural and forestry systems significantly contribute to global greenhouse gases emission, they constitute an important solution through adaptation and mitigation mechanisms. In agreement with the future France presidency, she argued the assembly to assess all the initiatives at different scales, including local or endogen strategies that contribute to the "Agenda of Solutions".

### ***Messages from session 1: Scientific background and gender issue of the Climate-Agriculture-Forest Nexus***

- The earth system is undergoing a major climate transition, following a pathway that is generally well simulated by climate models at regional scales but not at local scales that are most important for our societies.
- Funding integrated and appropriate multidisciplinary observing systems to monitor this climate and environmental transition to detect changes that are approaching critical thresholds in terms of socio-economic effects and to better guide the diagnoses made from the models is crucial for adaptation and mitigation policies.
- Establish a labelling or certification mechanism of enterprises and of urban and rural communities that implement gender-sensitive solutions in their local development plans to address the resilience of wetlands and of forests to climate change will promote adoption of good environmental practices.

### ***Messages from session 2: Sustainable agricultural practices and respectful of forests and wetlands***

- Actions for land carbon sequestration need to be promoted and enhanced to contribute to the mitigation policies and to food security in Africa.
- Funding of up-scaling climate-smart agriculture initiatives and actions that are gender-sensitive and that will take into account the concerns and needs of vulnerable groups, including women and young people in policies, strategies and interventions will contribute to the sustainable development.

### ***Messages from session 3: Importance and vulnerability of wetlands***

- Biodiversity of West Africa and Central Africa in general and that of wetlands in particular, is very important, very threatened and poorly known (trends, ecosystem services ...). Knowledge and valorization of biodiversity is a prerequisite for the transition to the green economy and sustainable development.
- Develop structuring research centers in biogeosciences in Central Africa and West Africa to better estimate the mitigation potential of agricultural systems, forests and wetlands. There is an urgent need to better quantify the carbon flux and greenhouse gas emissions in aquatic systems and to integrate them into the coupled models.

### ***Messages from session 4: Synergies and Review of national mitigation and adaptation policies***

- Share existing climatic and environmental data and facilitating access to databases for the development of climate services tailored to user needs for decision support and for the development of adaptation and mitigation policies.
- Despite having ratified the various conventions, it is clear that countries often lack the capacities required for successful implementation of adaptation and mitigation policies. It is important to support the development and capacity building and expertise of countries including the development of youth skills including women.

### ***Closing ceremony***

This side-event was closed by a panel composed by Jean-Marc Hougard, Representative of IRD in Côte d'Ivoire, Georges Kouadio, General Director of Environment (MINESUDD) and Séraphin Katy-Coulibaly, General Director of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (Ministry of High-Level Education and Scientific Research).

### ***Key messages from the accredited side-event on "climate, agriculture and forest", Abidjan, 29-30 June:***

**Message 1: Actions for lands carbon sequestration : Solutions for food security**

**Message 2: Actions to enhance and sustain integrated observing systems: Solutions for a better knowledge of the mutations induced by climate change and for a more efficient management of natural resources at national level.**