



**REPUBLIC OF
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**Submission by South Africa on views related
to Agriculture: Joint work on implementation
of climate action on agriculture and food
security**

March 2023

1. Background

This submission is made pursuant to paragraphs 17 and 18 of the Draft decision -/CP.27¹ Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security

2. Context

The agriculture sector plays a significant role in South Africa's economy, despite its relatively small contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). South Africa has a dual agricultural economy comprising of commercial farming, and subsistence farming in the rural areas. Agriculture is a principal sector for addressing some of South Africa's national priorities such as food security and job creation, especially in rural areas, and is also a leading foreign currency earner.

South Africa's Framework for a Just Transition has identified the agriculture value chain as one of the most at risk from and vulnerable to climate change. Despite this, the agriculture sector is recognized as one of the key drivers of economic growth in the country.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/documents/624317> - decisions from COP 27 have yet to be numbered.

The South African agricultural sector is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due, on the one hand, to our socio-economic context (for example the many land-dependent rural poor), and on the other hand, to an already high-risk natural environment (including high season to season climate variability, extreme weather events, and times of severe water stress).

Following a sector vulnerability assessment on the impact of climate change, the outputs of the research work have indicated that farmers are highly vulnerable and as result, there is a need to increase the adaptive capacity of the sector while reducing GHG emissions. Despite water scarcity in South Africa, the current situation indicates that the demand for irrigation and related technologies is projected to increase as irrigation supports 25% to 30% of national agricultural production. Through various national and sector legislation that include the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (CARA) and programmes such as Land Care, the sector and the Department has prioritized approaches such as Conservation Agriculture (CA) and climate smart approaches that promote best agricultural practices such as reduced and zero tillage and sustainable agriculture.

The South African agricultural sector has prioritized and developed some sector response measures for climate change, its sector policy strategies, climate change and disaster risk management plans; and programmes have focused not only on reducing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions but also on enhancing the resilience of farmers, agricultural production systems while safeguarding national food security. These includes the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation sector plans, Disaster Management plans and the Climate Smart Agriculture strategic framework that are currently being implemented through sector and Departmental programmes and projects. These sector initiatives are geared towards providing farmer support, increasing agricultural adaptive capacity and adding value to the work undertaken to assist the country to a low carbon economy.

South Africa welcomes the opportunity to present its views on the *Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security* as follows:

3. Views on the elements of Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security and new topics related to agriculture and food security

South Africa recommends that Parties should agree on modalities for upscaling climate action under the joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security. These modalities need to be defined in the context of approaches that will promote best

practices and approaches such as sustainable agriculture that enhance the resilience of people, food and agricultural production systems while safeguarding national priorities such as food security. This is in accordance with the South African climate change policy-driven “just transition” to a low carbon and climate resilient society, and takes into account national priorities to tackle poverty, address food security and inequality, particularly for vulnerable groups including the under-resourced rural poor and women and youth farmers who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. It is of paramount importance that through this process we highlight the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change. Over the years we have also had numerous in-session workshops hosted by the SBSTA and SBI jointly, with little implementation, and therefore it is important that in the next steps we develop a practical, pragmatic and implementable approach that will consider climate action on agriculture and food security on the ground.

i. Modalities for the joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security

It is important to note that although there are certain elements, such as early warning systems, which are common to most country’s agricultural systems, climate change impacts and adaptation options are country- and site-specific. Therefore, in order to address climate change at a national or sub-national level, a country specific approach is required. This can only be done by developing modalities that employ a bottom-up approach. For that reason, it is crucial to define and develop modalities that take into account national circumstances, capabilities and local climate change impacts. South Africa therefore recommends that Parties agree on the following elements towards upscaling the implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security:

- a. Create and develop modalities, which are bottom-up in nature, to upscale effective implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security, in order to promote the adoption of sustainable, gender-equitable, and resilient approaches in the agriculture sector;
- b. Facilitate identification of possible sources of support and access to those possible sources of funding for developing countries, to promote climate-resilient development and to support climate action in the agriculture sector;

- c. Ensure access to finance, technologies and capacity building through UNFCCC constituted bodies and the financial mechanism;
- d. Assist countries to develop and implement climate resilient agricultural policies and measures, which are adequately mainstreamed into national development planning and aligned with the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

ii. New topics related to agriculture and food security

South Africa recommends that Parties agree on the following new topics for the in-session workshops referred to in paragraph 15(b) of the decision -/CP.27 (list not exhaustive):

- a) Methods to conduct risk and vulnerability assessments on the impacts of climate change and develop country-specific and regional case studies that indicate linkages between food security, poverty and climate change and the need for these to be considered synergistically;
- b) Modalities, which are bottom-up in nature, in order to practically and pragmatically upscale effective implementation of climate action in the agriculture sector to ensure sustainable, gender-equitable, and resilient approaches at a national and sub-national level;
- c) Methods to identify appropriate and relevant research and technology developments that are needed at country and regional scale on pertinent aspects related to climate change and its effect on small-scale, smallholder and commercial agriculture needs, including the protection, rights and livelihoods of smallholder and subsistence farmers, youth, women and indigenous people in a sustainable manner;
- d) Improved national, regional and international programs to facilitate the identification of early actions necessary to scale up proven country-specific and regional best practices, as well as build capacity and skills, create knowledge and identify priorities for further action. This could include partnerships and integrating local or indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge, for example prediction of rainfall and the sustainable use of plant and animal resources.
- e) Methods and strategies to develop effective and efficient Early Warning Systems (EWS) in developing countries for climate change generated risks and disasters in the agriculture sector.

- f) Develop and recommend activities that promote capacity building and awareness at all levels, including changes in behavior, mindset and attitude, of the multiple advantages of an integrated approach to agriculture against the background of climate change;
- g) Methods to identify possible sources of support and access to the sources of funding for developing countries within the multilateral system, to promote climate-resilient development and generally to support climate change adaptation, and adaptation co-benefits;
- h) Methods to create platforms to ensure the management of climate risks, predictive trends, and tools as well as short, medium and long-term adaptation scenarios on how to achieve universal food systems that reduce food loss and wastes for a growing world population, including building resilience of the agriculture sector against impacts of extreme events, in the context of climate change.