

Promoting National Drought Management Policies in the countries of Central America

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Abstract

In 2013, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) hosted a High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP). In the HMNDP, policy makers and experts agreed on guidelines for countries to elaborate National Drought Policies¹. In collaboration with the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC) a Capacity Development initiative on National Drought Management Policies (NDMP) was launched in several regions of the globe, including Latin America and the Caribbean². Following on this initiative, FAO Office for Mesoamerica provides support to fine-tune and implement National Drought Management Strategies in Central American countries. Drought National Plans include actions linked to the four pillars of FAO's Livelihoods Resilience Framework³: i) regulatory improvements and institutional capacities for agro-climatic risk management; ii) agro-climatic information systems supporting policy and technical/productive decisions (such as the adaptation of FAO's Agricultural Stress Index System); iii) climate smart agriculture technologies validated and implemented in the field; iv) response and rehabilitation coordinated among key stakeholders at regional, national and sub-national levels. As a request from the Ministers of Agriculture, FAO supported the Central American Agriculture Council to formulate an 'Institutional Capacity Building System on Agro-climatic Risk Management', in collaboration with CCAFS-CGIAR, ECLAC and IICA. FAO's major concern is the sustainability of this capacity building system and the further implementation of National Drought Management Plans. For this purpose, FAO is conducting an analysis of 'Agricultural Policies and Risk Management' to advice countries on policy options to channel public investment – and facilitate private investment – in risk management. Some initial findings show that Central American countries invest only 10 to 15% of Total Agricultural Transfers in General Services Support. General Services Support contributes to improve total factor productivity and provides the basis for risk management. Examples of these services include: infrastructure, research & development, education, marketing - promotion programs and public stockholding. Increased investment in General Services Support, with climate change considerations, is certainly a central piece for the implementation of National Drought Plans.

¹ <http://www.hmndp.org/>

² <http://www.ais.unwater.org/ais/course/view.php?id=37>

³ <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/documents/resources-detail/en/c/157579/>