

The necessity for a dialogue with CSOs who rejected Global Alliance for CSA

- A revised proposal and a concept note
for the 2nd physical Strategic Committee meeting
of Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture -

By Shimpei Murakami
Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable rural Development (AFA)

A proposal

We, AFA would like to put the following agenda as a proposal for the 2nd physical Strategic Committee meeting of GACSA on 14 October 2015 in Rome.

The contents of the agenda are:

- 1) Set up a Task force for having continuous dialogue with the CSOs who express strong concerns against GACSA
(We, AFA are ready to facilitate the Task force.)

 - 2) Set up a round table for more clear definition of Climate Smart Agriculture as well as Environmental criteria, Social safeguard criteria, etc.
(It can be an agenda for the first Knowledge Action group.)
- Background and reasons are mentioned in a concept note.

A concept note

Back ground

A few weeks before on 23rd September 2014 when Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture is launched at UN Climate Summit, there was a web site launched. The site is *Climate Smart Agriculture Concerns* (<http://www.climatesmartagconcerns.info>). The site is run by the CSOs who had attended series of the consultative meetings for setting up Global Alliance for CSA (GACSA), especially at Hanoi in June and Hague in July 2014. The CSOs have raised questions and expressed concerns on GACSA throughout the meetings. Those questions and concerns are summarized in “*the open letter*” at the web site <http://www.climatesmartagconcerns.info/open-letter.html>. However, there was no dialogue between the CSOs and the organizing committee of the consultative meetings. It might be due to lack of the time, or there is no round table to discuss. And a few days before GACSA launched, the CSOs have uploaded “*the rejection Letter*” against GACSA in the web site <http://www.climatesmartagconcerns.info/rejection-letter.html>. Signatories of the rejection letter are more than 100 CSOs. Most of them have been seriously committed in the field of Sustainable agriculture and Sustainable development.

The points of the CSOs concerns are:

- 1) Vagueness of CSA definition (present definition of CSA can accept any type of agriculture as climate smart agriculture);
 - Some scientists who initiated CSA also expressed critical concerns about Vagueness of CSA definition. *Introduction: history of the concept of climate-smart agriculture* clearly mentioned <http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/2048-7010-2-12.pdf>
- 2) No environmental criteria (deforestation, agro chemicals, hormone, GMOs, etc)
- 3) No Social criteria which (land grabbing by cooperats, GM seeds, etc) ;
- 4) Governance (unequal power relation, resourceful organizations’ domination, etc)

On 18-19 September 2014 (just 4 days before UN Climate summit), there was the International Symposium on Agroecology at FAO in Rome. There were around 250 participants who are practitioners, extensionists, social workers, scientists and policy makers, who have been interested in and involved in Agroecological approach. Agroecology emphasizes on creating sound agro-ecosystem in the farm land (through increase of Bio-diversity, Re-cycle of Organic matter and Vegetative soil cover), Sustainable productivity with minimum external inputs, and Social justice for small farmers, women in rural communities.

Series of active presentations, discussions, and exchanges had been taken place in the symposium. During the sessions, several participants mentioned about CSA, but all of their comments were quite negative, especially, about the Vagueness of CSA definition, No environmental criteria, No social safeguard criteria, etc.

At the closing ceremony, Director General of FAO has expressed his appreciation to the symposium. He mentioned about UN Climate summit and GACSA, and said “the concept of Agroecology need to be the center for Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture”. However, it seems that almost nobody is interested in GACSA.

On 24th September 2014 in New Yoke, the Inaugural Meeting for GACSA was held. During the meeting, there was a panel discussion with 5 panelists. When the chair asked “what is the most important thing for the inception year”. Four panelists out of five expressed the necessity of clear definition of Climate Smart Agriculture.

In the End of the Inaugural meeting, Delegate of France arrived and was asked a speech. In the speech, she put emphasis on the dialogue with the CSOs, and said “It is very necessary for GACSA to reply to the questions and concerns raised by the CSOs.

Who are the CSOs

We, Asian farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) have quite good relationship with the CSOs who rejected GACSA. They are the friends and the partners in the field of Sustainable Agriculture, which is Environmentally Sound, Economically Viable and Socially Just.

They are the people who have started and been practicing Sustainable Agriculture (Organic farming, Bio-dynamic agriculture, Permaculture, Natural farming, Agroecology, etc.) for more than forty years. They are the people who have experienced and realized negative impacts of the Green Revolution such as Pollution of environment, Health hazard, Degradation of soil, Frequent pest outbreak, Declining productivity, Increasing in external inputs and Socially negative impacts as well. They are the people who have realized the importance of sound ecosystem in the agricultural land and innovated many kinds of sustainable agricultural techniques. Most of the climate resilient agricultural practices are developed in sustainable agriculture movement.

And they are the people who have been ignored, neglected and denied by scientists and policy makers who have been involved in the mainstream of conventional agriculture, namely Green Revolution. However, they are the people who have been willingly sharing with others on their experiences, concepts, techniques and sustainable way of livelihood as well.

As We, AFA are the friend of the CSOs and the Agroecology, we understand why they

criticized GACSA so strongly. Sincerely speaking, the concerns raised by the CSOs, especially problems of vagueness of CSA, lack of environmental and social criteria are our concerns too.

While, we also understand the good will of GACSA, such as food security and sovereignty for small farmers and women in rural community. We appreciate unique organizational character which are “open to all”, “transparent sharing and discussions for consensus” and “comfortable atmosphere where one can speak freely.

Therefore, We, AFA propose the agenda for the 2nd Physical Strategic Committee meeting of GACSA on 14 October 2015 in Rome.

Note: This proposal and concept note was proposed for the 1st Physical Strategic Committee meeting of GACSA on 11 March 2015 in Dubai. However, due to unavoidable reasons, it was not shared with SC members. Therefore it is revised and proposed again.