

**FOOD SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE**  
LINKING SCIENCE, DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY FOR ADAPTATION



**AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
2 - 4 April 2008, University of Oxford, UK

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

The goal of the conference, which included over 230 participants from 50 countries, raised issues of optimal synergism between research and policy communities addressing food security and environment by:

- (i) Presenting and discussing research on environmental change, food security and food systems, and decision support dialogues from GECAFS broad international community, including findings from associated conceptual and regional research.
- (ii) Bringing together scientists and policy makers from diverse backgrounds to forge new partnerships.

About 40 per cent of papers accepted came from the developing world.

### **Themes:**

- Concepts and methods for research on food systems; vulnerability and adaptation; scenarios; and decision support
- Regional research from the Indo-Gangetic Plain, Southern Africa, Caribbean, Europe
- Links to the development agenda and policy process
- Emerging issues and frameworks for analysis and policy development of adaptation options for food systems to Global Environmental Change.

### **Outputs:**

- 20 Conference sessions including case studies, climate forecasting and decision support for food security, panel discussions on responses of food systems and food industry strategies for GEC adaptation and mitigation, as well as an open plenary discussion with the media, governance, resilience and tradeoffs between ecosystem services, food security and economic growth, etc.
- Selected papers in a Special Issue of *'Environmental Science and Policy'*
- Enhanced networking, including stronger policy/science frameworks

Most of the presentations are now on [www.gecafs.org/FoodConferencePresentations.htm](http://www.gecafs.org/FoodConferencePresentations.htm)

## Major conclusions:

Technological fixes alone will not solve the food security challenge, and the major environmental changes bringing additional threats to food security need a whole food system approach, not just a focus on agricultural practices. The conference also highlighted the importance of global food trade in reducing vulnerability to environmental change, while also noting the non-production aspects of the food system (e.g. road and rail networks) can also be vulnerable to environmental change, on top of the obvious environmental stresses now facing agriculture in many parts of the world.. The conference also broached food storage – another important component of the food system. Uncertainties in food supply will necessitate some stockpiling, which could be more effective if done on a regional level rather than local. But political road-blocks can be problematic. Gaining a better understanding of the top-way interactions between food security and Global Environmental Change will require a sustained interdisciplinary effort by the ESSP community.

The Organisers are extremely grateful to the donors who supported the Conference:

