

Summary of Session 2 discussions

Session 2 discussion was initiated by a number of invited experts:

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Dr Ajay Kumar, India
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Key points included:

- There is a need to look at national policies for food security in the context of regional policies and those of neighbouring countries.
- Need to link GECAFS results into government systems.
- A gap exists between risk perception and adaptation capacity.
- Food production must be seen in the context of fibre and fuel production due to competition for land and other natural resources; water management and land tenure are key issues.
- Increasing greenhouse gas emissions are a concern requiring enhanced waste management.
- Market aspects are a problem for non rice/wheat products: the wholesale market is regulated but the retail market is unregulated.
- A key issue is the pricing of electricity for irrigation pumping in Punjab.
- There is a need for regional water policies and river monitoring stations.

The open discussion session raised a number of issues relating to the GECAFS research presented:

- GECAFS provides a good framework for analysis of the current state of the food system and its drivers of change; adaptation strategies emerge as one considers the vulnerability points in the whole food system.
- The research methodology needs further standardisation to help with cross site comparison.
- The nature of stakeholder consultation conducted at the research sites needs further elaboration.
- The role of the landless population and the role of livestock need enhanced prominence.
- The potential for GECAFS research to build on earlier work from IIASA/FAO is clear; food production is obviously critical but there are other aspects that need to be considered when discussing food security more generally and especially at regional level.

- The link to NAPAs needs to be further developed.
- The opportunities of collaborating with further research skills in the region need to be explored.
- The importance of clarifying the spatial levels at which research is undertaken and the links between them.

The open discussion session also underlined a number of issues relating to global environmental change and food security in the region:

- The role of poor transport and packaging and other logistics and supply chain issues is clearly critical and needs further research.
- The need to promote agro-meteorological information at village level.
- The importance of early warning systems in relation to research, development and policy.
- The importance of groundwater extraction as a key issue in terms of water resources, energy use contributing to climate change and equitable access to energy for pumping.
- The importance of stressing purchasing power in relation to food production.
- The need to consider food security of south Asia as a whole and the role that the IGP plays in this.

Major follow up research objectives:

- Synthesise the work across the five sites.
- Apply the food systems framework at the regional level.
- Map existing adaptation mechanisms that are part of policies to cope with stresses.
- Integrate more effectively food security, water, biodiversity and health issues.