

Experts call for urgent action to protect small and marginal farmers in India from a global temperature rise of 1.5 C

- *Semi-arid regions are amongst the most vulnerable to climate change*
- *Efficient water management and a focus on halting soil degradation is need of the hour*
- *Easily accessible and farmer friendly financing options for rainfed/small-holder farmers*
- *an integrated approach essential to address climate change effects on agriculture and food security*

6th October, Pune

Pressure is mounting on governments and industries to act quickly and contain the impacts of climate change. This week, the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is meeting in Incheon, South Korea** to release its special report on a 1.5 C global temperature rise. While researchers and academicians debate on the niceties of the Summary for Policy Makers, the vulnerable and affected farming community is ramping up its demands for protection and incentives to continue with a severely affected but critical livelihood activity. **Farmers in India stormed into the capital, New Delhi**, with a long list of demands including fair prices for crops, better insurance coverage, loan waivers for seasons where output was poor or destroyed by weather and market aberrations.

In this context, a group of experts from Agricultural research institutes, international universities, relevant department in Government of India and Maharashtra, NGOs and farmers gathered to discuss the urgent issues and suggest 'pathways of change' at the '**Adapting Agriculture in Semi-arid India to a Global Temperature Rise of 1.5°C**' consultation organized by **Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR)** on October 3-4, 2018 in Pune.

The conference considered the implications of climate change on the following sectors:

1. Land Use and Land Cover Changes
2. Water Resources
3. Agriculture Production Systems, and
4. Climate Financial Services

In the opening session, **Deepak Singla**, IAS, Soil and Water and Commissioner, GoM, spoke about India needing to learn much from Israel for its success with using water efficiently in agriculture. **Christian Siderius**, Wageningen University & Research, highlighted that a global 1.5 degree rise could mean even higher temperatures and extreme weather scenarios in localized contexts. **Dr. S.D. Attri**, Deputy Director General, Indian Meteorological Department spoke about the urgent need to expand Agrimet

Field Units from the current 130 to 660, so that there is one in every district to better forecast locale specific weather variations.

Prof. Purnamita Dasgupta, chair of Environmental Economics at the IEG and contributor to the current IPCC special report on 1.5 C, said that while India may have made much progress in lifting people above the poverty line, climate change is a threat that could reverse this achievement. **Dr. Richard Thomas**, Senior Scientific advisor, Economics of Land Degradation, spoke about the need for achieving land degradation neutrality, especially in the context of rising global temperatures. And **Dr. B. Venkateswarlu**, retired Vice-Chancellor, VNMAU and ex-Director, CRIDA, urged the government to consider “an integrated response to climate change” and not just discrete, un-connected activities.

At the closing session, **U.D. Shirsalkar**, CGM, NABARD,, stressed on the need for extension services to be improved to bridge the link between research and implementation. **Dr. K. P Vishwanatha**, Vice-Chancellor MPKV, suggested group farming and FPOs to solve the issues related to small-holder farmers and achieve a doubling of farm income. And finally, **Eknath Dawale**, Principal Secretary, Agriculture, Government of Maharashtra concluded with an exhortation to promote water-budgeting and precision farming at scale.

The event also marked the completion of 25 years for WOTR as a premier institution in the field of participatory Watershed Development and Climate Change Adaptation. WOTR engages at the intersection of practice, knowledge and policy across scales and in collaboration with stakeholders from across sectors. For more information, please visit: <https://www.wotr.org/trainings/international-consultation-adapting-agriculture-semi-arid-india-global-temperature-rise-15>

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