



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON  
**Climate Change,  
Agriculture and  
Food Security**



Reporting Climate Change, Agriculture &  
Food Security: Challenges & Opportunities for the  
Philippine Media

Media Seminar



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Splash Mountain Resort Hotel  
Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines

## Challenges and opportunities for the Philippine media

**Leo Sebastian**, regional program leader

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Climate Change, Agriculture, and Food Security (CCAFS) is a 10-year strategic research partnership of the CGIAR and Future Earth. It is led by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) globally, and by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Southeast Asia. It brings together the world's leading scientists in climate science, agricultural science, development research, and earth system science.

### **Key points:**

The capacity of the agriculture sector to cope with climate change and minimize its risks and vulnerability against further damage urgently needs strengthening.

CCAFS aims to catalyze behavioral change in next users—most especially ministries, research institutions, and the private sector—that will lead to better mobilization of climate change innovations, practices, policies, and processes. For behavior change and impacts to happen, strong stakeholder engagement and communication support, especially from the media, should be forged.

CCAFS' strategic communication objective is getting climate change into agriculture policies and agriculture into climate change policies. Through the help of the media, we hope to engage policymakers and key stakeholders to include agriculture in the climate change and agriculture agenda and to mobilize stakeholders for collective action toward mitigation and adaptation.

## Session 1: Science Innovations for Climate Change, Agriculture & Food Security

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### Food security through Asian roots and tubers

Julieta Roa

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#### Key points:

- The advocacy for root and tuber crops (RTCs) for improving the health and quality of life of poor farming households makes use of several approaches: participatory market chain, farmer business school, and FoodSTART methodologies—all participatory, systems oriented, takes the users' perspective, interdisciplinary, and value-adding.
- Collaborative partnership is a key mode of development engagement with national programs and local partners.
- Capacity development of partners and target beneficiaries is a key feature of development initiatives.
- RTC-based food systems for food security, livelihood, and climate-smart agriculture are recurring themes of CIP's projects in Asia.
- Chain approach has increasingly become the framework in making markets work better for the poor.
- Mix of innovations (e.g., technological, commercial, and institutional) is crucial.
- Communication (e.g., knowledge products, learning workshop) in all engagements is critical for enhanced learning and development.

#### Quotes:

"Root and tuber crops for improving the health, quality of life, and resilience especially of poor smallholder farming households." (Julieta Roa)

"In the Philippines, many people do not realize how nutritious and valuable sweetpotato is and how useful the crop is for disaster recovery, especially for the resilience of rural communities after disasters such as that brought by Typhoon Yolanda." (Christopher Wheatley)

"In the Visayas and other Yolanda-affected areas, sweetpotato was a very valuable food resource. It has nutritional advantage from high-levels of Vitamin A, anthocyanins, and dietary fiber that can all contribute to diets of rural people in these times of disaster. In normal times, it offers a very good source of income through market links, value chains that are developing alongside the food industry, and a nutrient-rich food option for urban consumers as well." (Christopher Wheatley)

# Science Innovations for Climate Change, Agriculture, and Food Security Focusing on Rice Production

Reiner Wassmann

Head, Climate Change Unit, IRRI

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## Summary:

The effects of climate change, e.g., rising temperature, have a direct adverse effect on rice yield. There are several ways, including breeding heat-resistant rice, to address this challenge.

## Key points:

- Climate change threatens rice through rising temperatures (heat), too much or too little rainfall, and erratic weather patterns. There are several entry points for intervention, such as varietal improvement (breeding) and managing water use. Through precision-breeding, traits like heat resistance can now be incorporated into high-yielding and popular varieties to prevent heat stress, which has been found to reduce yield, in rice.
- Water-saving technologies, such as alternate wetting and drying, mitigate the effects of climate change by lowering the volume of water needed to grow rice and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This benefits farmers in low-lying areas who are left with little or no water supply.
- Outscaling climate change adaptation efforts will involve multiple stakeholders, and will be greatly helped by communicating the benefits of adapting mitigating technologies, such as AWD, and planting heat-resistant rice. In the Philippines, climate change adaptation is an important component of disaster risk management.

## Quote:

"We have to see how we can integrate our work and approaches into a broader disaster-risk management." (Reiner Wassmann)

## Climate Change Research @ ICRAF PH

Rodel D. Lasco, country coordinator

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## Summary

Trees on farms enhance the coping capacity of smallholder farmers to climate risks. Agroforestry and trees help mitigate climate change.

## Key Points

- Smallholder farmers in developing countries depend on climate systems as they largely practice rainfed agriculture and forestry. However, the changing temperature and seasonal patterns expose them to risks which cause crop failure and affect their livelihood and health.
- Agroforestry is a sustainable type of land use that enhances the smallholder farmers' ability to adapt to climate change. It holds lots of benefits including soil nutrition, increasing crop yield and reducing soil erosion and water loss.
- Studies done by ICRAF scientists have shown, however, that farmers especially those in the upland areas, do not really appreciate the economic and environmental benefits of trees. This debunks beliefs that upland farmers (and farmers in general) appreciate trees. If they are to fully maximize the benefits of trees, they must first know and appreciate the importance of trees.

Trees not only assist in adapting to climate change, but also in mitigating its impacts. Trees store carbon, a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming and climate change. If these trees are cut down, more carbon is released into the atmosphere.

Community-based forestry management (CBFM) is one way to help sequester more carbon in trees. A study shows that a total of 2.7 million tons of carbon per year is stored in the CBFM sites in the country.

#### Quotes

“The more trees in a landscape, the more resilient these smallholder farmers will be.”

“The reality is not all farmers love trees.”

“When we cut trees, they release carbon and contribute to climate change. When we plant trees, they store carbon.”

## WorldFish Philippine Country Office Presentation

Maripaz L. Perez, regional director for Asia, and country manager

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#### Summary

WorldFish is the lead research center in fisheries and aquaculture in the CGIAR system. The center addresses challenges of food security and income sufficiency for sectors reliant on these industries. The work of WorldFish on climate change highlights the effects of this phenomenon on fisheries and aquaculture, and how the center helps stakeholders adapt to such environmental changes.

#### Key Points:

- The Philippines is extremely vulnerable to climate change. There is an existing irony that in a country where many of the poor rely on fishing for food and income, fish are often overlooked in climate change discussions.
- Discussion on the effects of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture centered on the important issues of sea level rise; increased frequency and/or intensity of storms; higher water temperatures and changes in ocean currents; changes in water pH level; rise in sea surface temperatures; and water stress or the gradual reduction of available water.
- Some implications of climate change effects in this area include infrastructure damage; reduced freshwater availability; increased hazard risk in fishing; loss of fish stocks; increased operational costs; and biodiversity loss.

Climate change research at WorldFish follows the following process: 1) diagnosing vulnerability; 2) understanding current coping mechanisms and adaptive responses; 3) contributing to mitigation; and 4) building capacity to respond and adapt at varying scales.

#### Quote

“When it comes to climate change, fish is often overlooked, when in fact most of the poor in the country rely on fisheries for a living.”

# Mainstreaming Climate Change in Philippine Agriculture

Eliseo Ponce

Consultant, DA Climate Change Program

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## Summary:

The Philippine Department of Agriculture's Adaptation and Mitigation Initiatives in Agriculture (AMIA) was formed to help mainstream awareness of climate change mitigation and adaptation into the department's programs. Existing laws and strong policy support upstream (department management and the president of the republic) encourages a paradigm shift that has helped bring this appreciation of climate change mitigation and adaptation options.

## Key points:

- In the Philippine setting, legal basis for the climate change program of the Department of Agriculture is rooted in the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA), which states the importance of considering climate change in agriculture; the Climate Change Act of 2009; and the Disaster Risk Reduction Act of 2010.
- Policy pronouncements by the country's leadership, including by President Benigno Aquino and Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala, support the idea of responsible use of our natural resources and continued collaboration of concerned public institutions to mainstream climate change information. This calls for a shift in how projects outcomes are measured. Resilience has become an outcome variable for all DA programs.
- AMIA, the DA program to mainstream climate change awareness into its projects, will provide a communication strategy to focus on adaptation and mitigation in climate change on agriculture, and to help facilitate multisector partnerships to more easily reach stakeholders. To do this, it will shift paradigms and mindset toward appreciating the importance of climate change preparedness and develop strategic mainstreaming frameworks.

## Quote:

"For a climate change-ready Philippine agriculture sector, it will take a stable department that appreciates the importance of mainstreaming climate change resilience in its policies."

## Climate change and organic agriculture

Leilani Katimbang-Limpin, executive director, Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP)

## Summary

Organic agriculture can be considered a strategy to mitigate climate change. This approach to farming includes a set of principles--covering health, ecology, and fairness--aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and rendering agriculture more sustainable.

## Key points

- Organic agriculture highlights the importance of maintaining and/or improving soil fertility.
- While there are varying climatic conditions, the practice of organic agriculture helps in managing the micro-environment.
- High temperatures lead to high evapotranspiration; thus, more water would be needed in crop management. But one can alter the microclimate to ensure the availability of water, promoting good plant growth.
- OCCP is a private, independent, non-stock, and nonprofit organic standard setting and organic certification body.

## Quotes:

"Other production systems do not promote the maintenance and improvement of soil fertility in the same manner that organic agriculture promotes it."

"You can see that when you go inside an organic farm, it is cooler than a conventional farm."

“You can see that when you go inside an organic farm, it is cooler than that of a conventional farm.”

“Other production systems do not promote the maintenance and improvement of soil fertility in the same manner in which organic agriculture promotes it.”

“You can see that when you go inside an organic farm, it is cooler than that of a conventional farm.”

## Session 2: Science Innovations for Climate Change, Agriculture & Food Security

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### A climate change awareness and behavior change communications campaign

Mardy Halcon , campaign director

Redraw the Line

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#### Summary:

Since the launch of the *Redraw the Line* campaign in 2011, it has taken on the enormous challenge of changing behavior and motivating people in the Asian region to take positive action on climate change. The campaign was initiated by The Media Alliance, with support from the Asian Development Bank and the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency in response to the challenges posed by climate change.

The primary focus of the communication campaign is to expand the use of clean energy options, increase energy efficiency, encourage greater use of low-carbon transportation options, and promote sustainable consumption habits among people and communities.

Samples of public service announcements (PSAs) were presented.

#### Key points:

- Climate change PSAs get free airtime in five countries (Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Lao PDR, and Bangladesh). It required a huge amount of work forging collaborations with partner institutions to achieve this end. Mainstreaming climate change remains a challenge.

#### Initiatives:

A campaign that focuses on specific areas in climate change areas, with the aim of promoting and encouraging (A) the use of clean energy options and increasing energy efficiency, (B) the use of low-carbon transportation, and (C) sustainable consumption habits by raising awareness of sustainable alternatives.

Partnering with the media and other groups. Partners provide free airtime for PSAs on climate change. New PSAs will start airing August 2014 in five countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Lao PDR, and Bangladesh).

*No Impact Week*, a weeklong carbon cleanse activity, was launched in universities and intermediate schools. The campaign reaches out to students to give them an option to assess their lifestyles and consider changing behavior.

Redraw the Line’s key strategies include tapping social media platforms to promote the campaign. Their ambassadors amplify messages in their own channels and networks, thus strengthen the brand name.

#### Quote:

“We tap partners with similar advocacies to jointly organize events, share knowledge and good practices, and conduct other parallel activities.”



## Experiences of climate change reporting in the Philippines

Booma Cruz , general manager/producer

Probe Productions, Inc.

### Summary:

In the Philippines, climate change has become a hot issue with the frequent occurrence of disasters. Yet, many underlying stories remain unexplored and unreported. Filipinos, in general, have yet to learn more about climate change. Reporters need to accurately and effectively get related messages across to be able to influence and educate people.

### Key points:

- Media outfits often do not have dedicated journalists to report on climate change.
- In writing/reporting about climate change, it is important to make uninteresting topics interesting to capture the readers'/listeners' attention.

In explaining climate change concepts, writing should be as simple as possible (think grade school-level students).

### Quotes:

“As a journalist, our job is not to just write good prose, but to make the uninteresting interesting.”

“The simpler the story, the better.”

“There are no stupid questions, just maybe stupid answers.”

## Communicating climate change, variability, and extremes: Impact on Philippine agriculture

Rosa Perez, climate change specialist, ADB

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### Summary

Climate change, variability, and extremes are all distinct from one another; all three affect agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in the Philippines and are thus threats to the food supply.

### Key points

- Climate change is often confused with climate variability or extreme weather events. Thus, the public almost always attribute disasters to climate change.
- Extreme climate means that wet areas become wetter and dry areas become drier. This affects productivity of agricultural lands, and especially affects water-intensive crops such as rice.
- The El Niño/Southern Oscillation (EN/SO), a manifestation of climate variability, affects (A) fisheries because of changes in seawater temperature and (B) agriculture because it changes rainfall patterns. During EN years, typhoons are much stronger and rice production dips consistently. Some climate change mitigation options can do a lot to aid agriculture and secure the food supply, and some adaptation options can potentially cushion the adverse effects of climate change.

### Quote

“Agriculture is affected by climate change, variability, and extremes, but it is also a huge emitter of GHGs and thus contributes to global warming.”

## Reporting Climate Change, Agriculture & Food Security: Challenges & Opportunities for PH Media

Rex Navarro

Consultant, CCAFS

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### Summary:

Communicating messages for better appreciation of the effects of climate change involves the use of new and old media. The same is involved in developing coalitions of communicators around scientific products and knowledge that are directed at mitigating the effects of and improving adaptation to climate change.

### Key points:

- Media is crucial in engaging stakeholders and in communicating climate change adaptation and mitigation. Social media—the ‘new media’—should be used to get the message out there.
  - Link the knowledge generated through research with action by connecting information with media/extension and policymakers. These linkages, fueled by new scientific understanding of mitigation and adaptation practices, will be made effective by strong partnerships and enabling policies.
- Continue to communicate and engage by sharing information, exchanging knowledge, persuading, and influencing.

### Quote:

"The human side of the effects of climate change is in the pictures that came out of Tacloban after it was overrun by Typhoon Yolanda. It is time to walk the talk—to build coalitions and make those most vulnerable resilient to the effects of climate change." (Rex Navarro)

"Science can close the yield gap that besets areas vulnerable to climate change." (Rex Navarro)

## Radio broadcasting for climate change

Louie Tabing , chairman

Philippine Federation of Rural Broadcasters (PFRB) and

Farmer-broadcaster, DZMM 630khz

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### Summary:

Ka Louie, a well-known broadcast journalist in the Philippines and across Asia, shared practical tips on how radio broadcasting can potentially be used to deliver climate change messages.

### Key points:

- Climate change can be entertaining, too, and we should not present it like an academic presenter would. On the other hand, you don't have to be comical, be a star, or give a joke. The important thing is that your material is interesting delivered in an interesting manner. Always propose short, well-prepared, and purposive materials to be able to convey messages on this topic.
- When featuring scientific or technical concepts, put your message inside the mental frame of your listeners and try to create pictures in their minds. People listening to radio are usually doing other things at the same time so it is important to get and sustain attention.
- It is crucial to maintain credibility. Once people switch you off, it will be difficult to get them back to listen. Most of all, provide inspiration to listeners by featuring success stories of ordinary people who have made it big using products or tools of science and technology.

### Quotes:

“Climate change affects us all no matter what our status in life; we have to walk our talk.”

“The reality of radio is that people assume it is a very simple medium but it is also challenged by competition and, in commercial radio, if your program is not doing well in the ratings game, if there are no loyal listeners, it will fail. You will win the loyalty of listeners if you are truthful, if what you say is important, and if you talk about everyday topics that make a lot of sense.”

“Compared to writing, a less personal medium and for which one needs certain literary skills, writing for radio is simply ‘people talking to people.’”

“In radio, you have to “be you, be new, and be true.” One has to be sincere and able to ‘touch’ the audience. Nurturing a relationship with listeners takes premium. Radio is an entertainment medium. While educating, it should also be entertaining to the listeners or else they will switch to drama and music. “

## An NGO perspective

Fr. Francis Lucas, president and CEO, Catholic Media Network

### Summary

To get rural folk to buy into climate change mitigation and adaptation prescriptions, their perceptions have to align with the experts’.

### Key points

- Causes as scientific explanations are secondary to impact.
- Communication has a lot to do with perception and perception changes, e.g., people commonly think disasters won't really happen, or only happens to other people.
- People in rural areas want to know about the climate, not the weather; they are concerned with the immediate, not the long term.

### Quote from speaker

“The most vulnerable are the last to recover.”