

# The 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council (GC) of UNAPCAEM

14-15 December, 2009

Bangkok, Thailand

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## I. Background

In many parts of the world most farmers and rural populations are relatively disadvantaged and lack adequate opportunities to exchange information and learn about, environmentally and socially appropriate approaches that would improve their livelihoods and achieve sustainable agriculture and rural development. Agriculture continues to be the main livelihood of the poor, providing employment for 60 per cent of the working population in Asia and the Pacific. Given current agricultural employment numbers, it is of utmost importance that future policy and programmes undertaken interweave approaches that promote sustainable livelihoods, address climate change, and contribute to food security.

We now face unprecedented and immense challenges posed by accelerating climate change and food insecurity. In addition to being a significant user of land and consumer of fossil fuel, agriculture contributes directly to greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the three main causes of the increase in greenhouse gases observed over the past 250 years have been fossil fuels, land use, and agriculture<sup>1</sup>.

In the area of food insecurity, the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific is home to the largest number of food insecure people in the world. More than 64 per cent of the world's undernourished adults and children live here and every year 1.9 million children under the age of 5 die of malnutrition. A number of trends will only increase our food insecurity over time. Our region's population continues to increase, while the growth rate for food productivity is declining. At some point the demand will start to exceed the supply, exacerbating a food crisis that continues to threaten the region.

As the above illustrates, a synergy needs to come into place where poverty reduction continues in step with environmentally sustainable agricultural growth.

## II. Objective

Aware of the above daunting challenges, the objective of the Fifth Session of the Governing Council (GC) of UNAPCAEM is to assess the Centre's work programme and achievements, as well as discuss the way forward. The Session to be held in the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Bangkok, Thailand from 14-16 December 2009. Senior elected representatives from Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, and Viet Nam (Governing Council members for 2009-2012) are requested to review the Work Report of 2009 and the work plan of 2010 of the Centre, and consider and endorse the report of the fifth session of the Technical Committee (TC) of the Centre held from 14-16 October 2009 in Los Baños, the Philippines. The Council is also requested to review, consider and provide direction for UNAPCAEM's programme of work for the next biennium 2010-2011. The Council will also review the administrative and financial status of APCAEM-ESCAP. Member countries that provided financial contributions to the Centre and relevant UN agencies are also invited to attend.

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<sup>1</sup> Climate Institute (2009), <http://www.climate.org/topics/agriculture.html>

### **III. About APCAEM-ESCAP**

**UNAPCAEM is a subsidiary body of ESCAP located in Beijing, China. It's mandate is to promote technology transfer for food security and sustainable agriculture, with a focus on three cluster programmes, namely, agricultural engineering, food chain management, and agro-based development and trade.**

**For more information please contact:**

**UNAPCAEM**

**Ms. Ai Yuxin**

**Senior Expert and Officer-in-Charge**

**UNAPCAEM**

**A-7/F, China International Science and Technology Convention Centre**

**No. 12. Yumin Road, Chaoyang District**

**Beijing 100029, P.R. China**

**Tel: (86-10) 82253581**

**Fax: (86-10) 82253584**

**Email: [info@unapcaem.org](mailto:info@unapcaem.org)**