

Agriculture, Food Systems and Nature at the COP26

Debriefing meeting for the Dutch network with interest in Food Systems

22 November 2021

This meeting took place following the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, UK, from 31 October - 12 November 2021. It was organised by the Netherlands Food Partnership in collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and Foreign Affairs, as a specific COP26 debriefing with a focus on agriculture, food and nature aspects.

Briefing on COP26

Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Briefing by Marcel van Nijnatten, Lucas du Pré, Heloise van Houten

The COP26 consisted of official negotiations, formal government statements and a 'jamboree' of side-events. As compared to previous COPs, the Dutch delegation observed a clear change of the mood: countries are expected to practice what they preach, and cannot get away any longer with words only. E.g. when acting prime minister Rutte said 'action, action, action' the Dutch government had to step in. Climate denial has gone. Actors were held accountable, by various other players, both from CSOs - which was the normal practice during earlier COPs - and from private sector or peer UN member states.

During the COP26 food systems and farming were clearly on the agenda; biodiversity as well; and the interrelationship with the climate agenda was addressed. Some delegates observed there had never been so much attention for food systems during climate change negotiations.

What were the key processes to highlight:

1. The [Koronivia](#) process. This is the Joint Work on Agriculture agenda of the UNFCCC process (abbreviated KJWA). A few years ago the decision was taken by the COP to address agriculture in the COP, as the agriculture sector affects climate change, while it is also extremely vulnerable to climate change. The past three COPs have included workshops and sessions in the context of the Koronivia process. This facilitated a constructive dialogue of parties, and addressed both mitigation and adaptation aspects. Parties are all very willing to include agriculture in future UNFCCC talks. These will be taken up to the next negotiation moments in respectively Bonn and Egypt (COP27).
2. Nature is one of the key domains for the policy action agenda. The UK and NL have been quite active in this domain, developing a global action agenda. WUR also plays a support role. Nature, land use, and forest related topics were high on the agenda, a/o of the world leaders summit. In the formal negotiations some discussion on nature based solutions was part of the text, while some text on that was taken out again later in the negotiations. Nature based solutions were discussed, and the elimination of deforestation from agrichains.
3. Important pledges were made: a/o the '[Methane pledge](#)' (considered a quick win to win time to reduce GHG) and the '[Deforestation pledge](#)'.
4. Many side events took place. For example on [sustainable livestock](#) and on [saline agriculture](#) which the Netherlands co-hosted. A complete day was dedicated to events on food systems and farming in the European pavilion.
5. Egypt and other African countries will try to create a bigger profile for food systems and agriculture. The topic will gain more space on the agenda during the next COP27.
6. There was not so much specific attention for the UN Food Systems Summit outcomes. Only in the Koronivia events some reference was made to the national pathways for the follow up to the UN FSS. Opportunity is to develop national pathways that combine climate and food action.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Inclusive Green Growth, Cluster Food & Nutrition Security

Remarks by Wijnand van IJssel

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs aligns its activities with the Ministry of Agriculture. MinFA observes that connecting agrifood as part of the COP agenda is a process of growing importance. Gradually, it is becoming part of the agenda. The next COP in Egypt will offer a great chance, particularly for the adaptation agenda. To get firmer commitments on adaptation; and on adaptation funding, which is of high importance. It is important to note that CGIAR's new climate adaptation portfolio is very relevant; see e.g. the [Climate Shot](#) activities in Glasgow.

Permanent Representation Netherlands - Rome

Remarks by Marcel Beukeboom



It is clear progress that there was a full food day at COP26. A few years ago it was only a small session in the context of the Koronivia process. One third of global greenhouse gas emissions is from agriculture : this means we have a task at our hand. What is foreseen for the coming period & what needs to be done:

1. Implement the ideas and findings of the UN FSS
2. FAO is developing a new Climate Change Strategy. This follows a/o the recommendations by FAO office of evaluation, see this [link](#).
3. Various coalitions of the willing are being formed at different speeds, amongst others because the overall negotiations are based on consensus, and these take time. The coalitions are pushing progress on specific topics: the 'beyond oil and gas' alliance, the methane coalition. We could think about dedicated food systems coalitions as well. The Netherlands has a special responsibility in that, including the NFP to play an initiating role.

Other organisations' experiences at the COP26

GAIN, Mieke van Reenen

On the main programme of COP26, food systems were regularly mentioned and taken into account. It would be good if still more attention were given to food systems and to nutrition, and that further agreement would be developed on what needs to stop or to change.

A nuanced discussion is needed on animal-sourced foods, in order to realise a sustainable transition to plant-based diets. The outcome of such discussion would not necessarily be a vegan world for everyone though – as one of the COP26 side events called for.

Hivos, René van Veldhuizen

Side event: Recipe for resilience. It discussed the role of cities, and urban food systems. The [Glasgow declaration](#) was presented. These activities build on the work for UN FSS and express the commitment of cities to identify and monitor action to promote climate action. A [dialogue was organised](#) with farmers from Scotland and 150 others from four different continents, linked to the global 'fork to farm' dialogues. The particular role of local authorities and cities was highlighted during the event.



Rabobank, Suzanne van Tilburg

Agrees with the takeaways and with next steps, as formulated by other speakers.

On carbon emissions and soil health, there was a lot of progress. Barbara Baarsma attended key events related to the food & climate agenda (including a [Soil event](#)). Some progress was made: soil health was acknowledged as a key component in climate negotiations (though not clear whether it reached the COP26 outcome document; *note eds/NFP: it doesn't seem to be included*). It is not so clear what happened to other topics.

As for the follow up activities by coalitions formed during UN FSS and/or COP : it will be important to make a clear choice, to maximise the effect and prevent that coalitions gradually disappear for lack of action. E.g. soil health, true value. Also need to make clear choice about the challenges that we would like to see addressed at COP27.

Q&A and further discussion

- For coalitions on the nexus food & climate, what countries would be an ally for the Netherlands. What process to start building the coalition? A/MinAgri: The allies for the Netherlands could be European countries, plus different allies from other parts of the world depending on the topic. On livestock it could be for example Colombia, Uruguay or Kenya.
- A/MinAgri, continues: We first need to get organised, for the follow up in relation to agriculture, adaptation, land use issues, biodiversity. A/o. regarding the outcomes of the Africa climate summit. Gradually we get more and more clarity on what the agenda of COP27 will be, on initiative of host country Egypt. The Netherlands is also waiting for the new climate strategy at FAO and its meaning. We will have to see what comes out of that. Early next year there will be clarity on the preparations of the Netherlands (MinFA en MinAgri) for COP27 and on the process to include stakeholders. This connection will be kept up one way or another.
- Actual items for the Netherlands:
 - Food Loss and Wastage will be important. That is low hanging fruit.
 - There is movement on the forestry agenda. Related to the land use issue, and to livestock and to commodity trade.
 - Trade, land use and commodity issues will need to be addressed as well.
- When developing coalitions for food & climate action, one may build on the lessons from successful coalitions in other fields. E.g. the powering past coal coalition may serve as an example for food & climate coalitions. Success factors are: multistakeholder collaboration; having very clear concrete objectives; including an end date to the use of black coal. If you translate this to the food and agriculture domain, you may develop similar specific coalition actions (e.g. on FLW, land use and sequestration, deforestation) with concrete objectives and financial indicators. When having those, you could present some concrete steps on progress on the next steps; celebrate successes; have champions; have an effective secretariat (a/o. to present well researched reports on progress).



Next steps

- Clarify next step of special working group Koronivia process. Dutch government to engage with that, in alignment with e.g. FAO. Engagement of other stakeholders to be discussed.
- NL stakeholders may engage with national pathways that follow up to the UN FSS, as discussed in the specific meetings on the UN FSS, as well as with the NDC related planning processes. If these plans are well formulated, these could attract funding. Whether or not food & climate plans are aligned - depends per country.
- Develop preparatory action for COP27. Those with a specific idea to contribute, need to have a clear focus and organise how they coordinate their action (e.g. if it is a coalition plan, use the lessons shared above, and have a secretariat).
- Netherlands government delegates may plan specific working groups in 2022, to be in touch with stakeholders such as those now gathering for the NFP meetings; or such as WUR, to develop preparatory action for COP27.

Key references COP26 & food systems

Series of references selected by NFP, which is only a selection of relevant materials.

- High-level outcomes from the World Leaders Summit and presidency theme days of the two-week programme of COP26. <https://ukcop26.org/the-conference/cop26-outcomes/>
- <https://ukcop26.org/cop-president-concluding-media-statement/>
- <https://unfccc.int/news/cop26-sees-significant-progress-on-issues-related-to-agriculture>
- Is Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture shaping up to be a game changer at COP27? <https://www.fao.org/climate-change/news/detail/en/c/1456122/>
- The World Bank and others launched the [Food Systems, Land Use & Restoration Impact Program](#)
- CCAFS launched the ClimateShot campaign <https://ccafs.cgiar.org/ccafs-cop26> and <https://www.climateshot.earth/>
- Wageningen UR was in 9 events, see overview page [Klimaattop COP26](#)
- Side-event recordings: [From the Ground up: soil health](#) (with participation of Rabobank)



- Side-event recordings:  Towards Sustainable Livestock Systems (with closing remarks by minister Schouten, who shared the ambition of 'a liveable world for future generations')



- St. DOEN announced support to the "[TerraFund for AFR100](#)"
- DSM announced a new production site for its methane-reducing feed additive for ruminants, Bovaer® [in Scotland](#).
- Call by various civil society organisations:
<https://www.nieuweoogst.nl/nieuws/2021/11/02/klimaattop-wakkert-discussie-over-vlees-en-zuivel-weer-aan>
- Outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit:
https://www.nlfoodpartnership.com/insights/Food_Systems_Summit_Outcomes/
- UN Biodiversity Convention. Update on calendar. Originally scheduled for Geneva, Switzerland from 12-28 January 2022, the physical meetings of the resp. bodies SBSTTA (24), SBI (3) and WG2020-3 will be held at a later date in 2022. See press release:
<https://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2021/pr-2021-12-02-sbstta24-sbi3-wg20203-en.pdf>

