



10th GFRAS Annual Meeting

Role of RAS in Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management

30 September - 04 October 2019, Negril, Jamaica

Concept Note

Date, Venue and Topic

The 10th GFRAS Annual Meeting, whose topic is "**Role of RAS in Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management**" will take place at Royalton Negril, Jamaica between 30 September and 4 October, 2019. Side Events are planned to take place on September 30th, the main meeting between October 1-3, and a General Assembly on October 4th. The GFRAS Steering Committee will take place between October 5-7. The Annual meeting is co-organized by the Caribbean Agricultural Extension Providers' Network (CAEPNet); Jamaica's Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries (MICAFA), and the Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA). The Caribbean Agricultural Extension Providers' Network will host its Executive Committee Meeting and its annual membership meeting on Sunday, September 29th.

Background

Effective and efficient agricultural extension and rural advisory services (RAS¹) are fundamental to support rural people to face existing and emerging challenges, and to improve their incomes and livelihoods, thus contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. GFRAS was initiated in 2010 to provide advocacy and leadership on pluralistic and demand-driven RAS for sustainable development. The forum includes networks of RAS stakeholders at regional, sub-regional and national levels, and actors from all sectors and domains involved in or related to RAS. The GFRAS Annual Meeting is a key mechanism for GFRAS to foster learning and exchange and to discuss and strengthen the functioning of GFRAS, regional networks and national fora.

The Annual Meeting contributes to addressing the three strategic fields identified in the GFRAS Strategic Framework, namely:

1. Advocacy and support for an enabling policy environment and appropriate investment in RAS
2. Professionalism of RAS

¹ Rural advisory services, also called extension services, are all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in rural settings to assist them in developing their own technical, organisational and management skills and practices so as to improve their livelihoods and well-being. (GFRAS Strategic Framework)

3. Facilitation and enhancement of effective and continuous knowledge generation and exchange.

Since its inception, the GFRAS Annual Meeting has involved a thematic component, field trips and a functional component (focused on network strengthening). Since 2017, the Annual Meeting also includes a policy dialogue session, to better position RAS and GFRAS in international policy debates, highlight the relevance of RAS to achieving international development goals and to increase the visibility of RAS.

Thematic Focus

The Role of RAS in Climate Change & Disaster Risk Management

Mitigation and adaptation are key notions when discussing the Role of RAS in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. While global population is growing, food production needs to meet this increasing demand. Yet, this effort will mainly have to come from developing countries – countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and where food insecurity is already a daily issue for many populations.

Reporting on the impacts of climate change in the United States the Fourth National Climate Assessment (2018) asserts that new risks of intense extreme weather events will provide additional challenges to vulnerable communities: “people who are already vulnerable, including lower-income and other marginalized communities, have lower capacity to prepare for and cope with extreme weather and climate-related events and are expected to experience greater impacts. Prioritizing adaptation actions for the most vulnerable populations would contribute to a more equitable future within and across communities.” (National Climate Assessment, 2018)

Climate change and extreme weather events are globally impacting communities. For example, since 1980 in the United States alone there have been 246 weather and climate disasters where total cost exceeded \$1.6 trillion (NOAA, 2019). Globally, FAO (2016) reports that between 2003 and 2013, the agricultural sector has been the biggest victim of disasters caused by natural hazards. Extreme weather events are defined as unusually longer weather patterns that have devastating impacts on communities. These events can be described as droughts, flood, extreme heat and/or cold, and tornados, drought accounting for 84 percent of damages on the agricultural sector (FAO, 2016).

Predictions that both natural and manmade disasters will increase in severity and number (Graham et al., 2011; IPCC, 2013) indicate that extension and rural advisory service (RAS) providers have a critical role to play in disaster communication and preparedness (Boteler, 2007). It is suggested in Boteler (2007) that extension and RAS agencies can enhance community resiliency and have a significant impact on the results of a disaster. Boteler (2007) expands on the impact by explaining that RAS often plays a critical role in a disaster by providing an already established communication system when other systems have temporarily shut down due to the disaster. This includes partnering (or serving) with the state and local disaster response team, but also with International Organizations that propose among other services technical supports (UN-SPIDER, 2019), guiding materials (FAO, 2015) or the establishment of various preparedness measures - practical and institutional – to be taken in order to mitigate and adapt to potential hazards (FAO, 2019).

Meeting Objectives

Building on the experience of previous GFRAS meetings, the capacity assessments of GFRAS regional networks, and on the expertise, knowledge, and experiences of participants, the three objectives of the 2019 Annual Meeting are to:

- identify and define good practices, best-fit approaches and strategies to develop, strengthen, and maintain resilience in vulnerable communities to climate change and disasters;
- identify and define ways to build the capacities needed at different levels and by different stakeholders (policy, research, education, extension, farmers) to develop, strengthen, and maintain effective risk management in climate change and disasters through preparation, mitigation, and recovery; and to
- identify and define the roles and capacities needed by GFRAS and its regional RAS networks to play an important and meaningful role in developing, strengthening and maintaining effective risk management to climate change and disasters.

Meeting Structure

Thematic Part:

On day 1, the 2019 GFRAS Annual Meeting will provide a broad view discussion on managing risks of climate change and disasters and their impact globally by building resilience in communities and by developing plans for the preparation, mitigation and recovery from disaster impacts. Parallel sessions will then allow participants to discuss further the role of RAS providers in these domains.

Parallel Session 1: Building Resilience in Communities

- Good management practices for RAS to build resilience in communities for climate change and disasters
- Tools and capacities (available and needed) for RAS to take up this role
- Partnerships with other actors
- Barriers and address barriers for RAS to contribute to resiliency building in communities

Parallel Session 2: Preparation, Mitigation, and Recovering from Climate Change Impacts and Disasters

- Good management practices for RAS to contribute to elaborating and implementing plans for preparation, mitigation and recovering from impacts of climate change and disasters
- Tools and capacities (available and needed) for RAS to take up this role
- Partnerships with other actors
- Barriers and address barriers for RAS to contribute to preparation, mitigation and recovering from impacts of climate change and disasters

Parallel Session 3: Supporting RAS providers in contributing to Extension in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

- Gaps and needs of RAS providers to contribute to resilience building and to plans for preparation, mitigation and recovery from impacts of climate change and disasters
- Good management practices in supporting RAS providers in these domains
- Role of various GFRAS networks in supporting RAS providers (country, regional and global level)
- Constraints and addressing constraints for support to RAS providers
- Key opportunities for GFRAS to broaden its role and partnerships in risk management for climate change and disasters

Field Trips

The Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) is Jamaica's chief agricultural extension and rural development agency. RADA is committed to promoting the development of agriculture in Jamaica, as the main engine of economic growth in rural communities, through an efficient, modern and sustainable extension service which will enhance the national economy and improve the quality of life of rural farm families. RADA gears towards enhancing the development of farming through effective, efficient and sustainable extension services. This will be showcased through Field trips that will be defined before the event.

FUNCTIONAL COMPONENT

Strengthening the Capacities of RAS Networks

Regional and sub-regional networks and country fora are the main constituents of GFRAS in implementing its work and in strengthening and advocating for RAS within their regions. They ensure that the work and focus of GFRAS remains grounded, relevant and demand-driven. The GFRAS 2016--2025 Strategic Framework and corresponding five-year operational plan place a strong emphasis on strengthening the capacities of the regional and sub-regional networks and country fora to fulfil these roles. Capacity assessments undertaken in 2016 show that, while the different networks have specific needs and demands depending on their context, they face some common challenges. These include mobilising sufficient funding and skilled human resources and building capacities to advocate effectively for policies and investments that strengthen RAS.

The intensity of impacts of climate change and natural disasters requires that RAS networks and local RAS providers reassess their approach and or involvement in building resiliency, mitigation, and recovery of the communities they serve.

Evaluations of past meetings have shown that peer exchange between networks is perceived as critical for networks to strengthen their own capacities, and the 2019 Annual Meeting will provide space for extensive peer exchange and learning between networks. This will be guided by experts on networks and network functioning and will lead to the development by the networks of realistic roadmaps for action toward the 2020 Annual Meeting.

Policy Dialogue

Building on the results of the exchanges on the first two days, in the afternoon of the third day participants will take part in a policy dialogue which will discuss key elements of climate change

issues in RAS, explore the roles that the enabling environment plays and identifies structural and policy changes needed in order to foster change and implement the recommendations identified in the first days of the meeting. The policy dialogue will take the form of a moderated roundtable discussion among selected key resource persons and a Q&A session with Annual Meeting participants.

Exhibitions and Displays at the Venue

Agricultural displays will be set up and be ready for viewing by 10 am on Monday, Sep. 30th. The exhibitors will include farmers and input suppliers.

Draft agenda and preparation of inputs by participants

The 10th GFRAS Annual Meeting will be a participatory learning event with a range of different types of sessions, including keynotes, panels, presentations in plenary, group work, parallel workshops, short presentations, a share fair and field trips. Participants will be given a wide range of opportunities to provide inputs that will include lessons from practical experience and reviews of evidence. Inputs may take the following forms:

- presentation in one of the parallel sessions
- blogs beforehand and short presentations during the meeting on experience, case studies, stories or evidence related to RAS in climate change and disaster risk management
- a stand at the share fair
- side events or trainings on September 30 or October 1 (see below).

A draft agenda as well as requirements, application process and deadlines, and selection criteria for all inputs and preparatory activities will be made available on the GFRAS website.

Participation and registration

Online registration and the call for inputs will open at the beginning of May and close in mid-July. Participants from all regions of the world working or interested in RAS or in related fields are welcome to attend the meeting. Stakeholders from different sectors – public, private and civil society – are encouraged to register for the meeting, including representatives of farmers' organisations, private companies, research and education institutions, development agencies, media and others.

In order to guarantee a participatory meeting with a focus on networking and exchange, the number of participants will be limited to approximately 150. If more people register, participants will be selected in a way that secures the best possible balance of regions, sub regions, gender, sectors and age. Limited funding will be available to sponsor some representatives from different regions to take part in the meeting. We encourage however participants to seek for self-sponsorship.

There will be a registration fee for all participants, which can be paid online before the meeting, or in cash (USD) directly at the meeting once registration is confirmed. For more information on participation, registration and sponsorship please check the GFRAS website.

Budget and funding

While the main funding for this year's event is provided through GFRAS and the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica, other organisations and institutions can co-fund the event or side events. For more information, please contact the GFRAS Secretariat (annual-meeting@g-fras.org).

Logistics

Logistical information will be continuously updated on the Logistics section of the Annual Meeting website.

Monitoring and evaluation of the annual meeting

The meeting will be evaluated on the final day. The results of the meeting will be also monitored and assessed by the participants, working groups, regional networks and country fora via regular progress reports and annual reports.

Annual meeting organizing committee

The organisation of the 2019 Annual Meeting is strategically guided by an organising committee that comprises representatives of the host as well as all larger GFRAS regional networks: Asia Pacific Island Rural Advisory Services (APIRAS), Red Latinoamericana de Servicios de Extensión Rural (RELASER)/Caribbean Agricultural Extension Providers' Network (CAEPNet), and the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS). The meeting is chaired by the GFRAS Secretariat.

Further reading

Boteler, F. E. 2007. Building disaster-resilient families, communities, and businesses. *Journal of Extension*, 45(6). <https://www.joe.org/joe/2007december/a1.php>

Graham, B., Reilly, W. K., Beinecke, F., Boesch, D. F., Garcia, T. D., & Murray, C. A. 2011. Deep water: The gulf oil disaster and the future of offshore drilling. National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling Report to the President. Washington, D.C. <https://doi.org/10.3723/ut.30.113>

IPCC. 2014. Summary for Policymakers. In *Climate Change 2013 – The Physical Science Basis: Working Group I Contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (pp. 1-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324>

NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters. 2019. <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/>

Reidmiller, D.R., Avery, C.W., Easterling, D.R., Kunkel, K.E., Lewis, K.L.M., Maycock, T.K., & Stewart, B.C. (eds.). 2018. *USGCRP, 2018: Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume II: Report-in-Brief*. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA. <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

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FAO. 2015. Planning Communication for Agricultural Disaster Risk Management a field guide. Rome. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5277e.pdf>

FAO. 2019. Official Website. Prepare and response. <http://www.fao.org/emergencies/how-we-work/prepare-and-respond/en/>

United Nations. 2015. Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York: United Nations. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

UN-SPIDER. 2019. Official Website. Advisory Support. <http://www.un-spider.org/advisory-support/advisory-missions>

Find all further information on the GFRAS Annual Meeting webpage.