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Headline: Climate-smart farming way to go, says expert

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MANILA, Philippines—There is a need for the Philippines to change its age-old agricultural systems to adapt to climate change, according to an expert from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Hideki Kanamaru of FAO's Climate, Energy and Tenure Division said "climate-smart agriculture" is something that members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) must take up in order to ensure a steady and stable supply of food in the face of changing weather patterns.

Food security and climate change are two major challenges faced by mankind, warned Kanamaru.

He said climate-smart agriculture consists of intensifying production systems to achieve productivity increases, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation.

This means farmers should adopt new technologies, practices and techniques that are responsive to the changes in the environment. One example is to plant more resilient food crops and manage soil fertility. Climate-smart agriculture also involves better weather forecasting.

But, according to Kanamaru, adopting new technologies and mitigation practices is hampered by a lack of tenure security and limited property rights.

"Limited information and limited local experiences available about new practices due to low levels of support for agriculture research and extension, for example, may prevent adoption. Upfront investment costs can be high, while on-farm benefits may not be realized until medium to long terms in the future," he said in a statement released by the Department of Agriculture.

There must be support from policies and institutions to make the transition to climate-smart agriculture, he added.

Kanamaru, who spoke recently at an Apec symposium on climate change held in the country, said the transformation of agricultural systems should aim to make production systems and rural livelihoods more resilient to climate change.

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