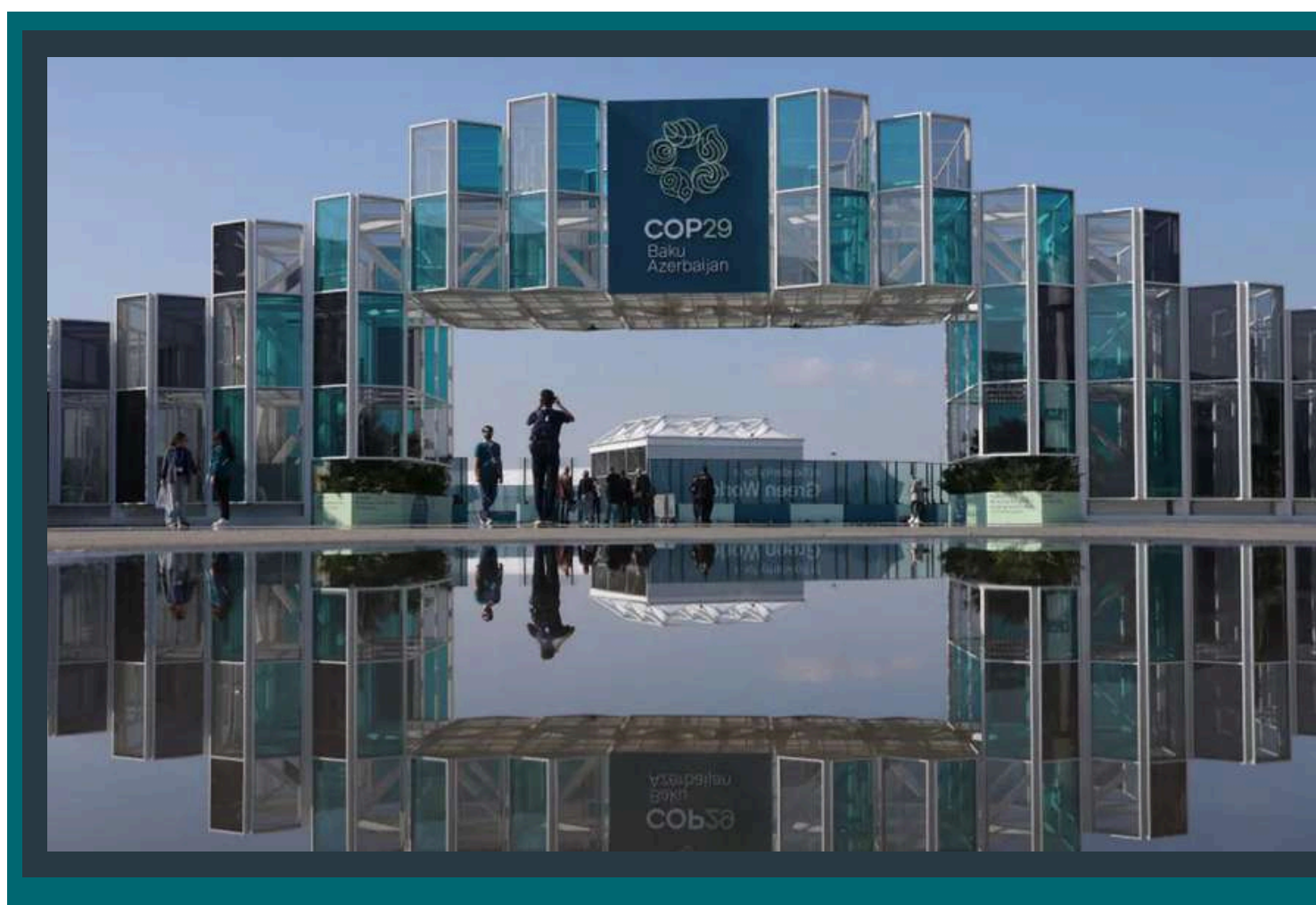


COP29 Event Report

Rightsizing Locally-Led Adaptation (LLA) for Sustainable and Resilient Agricultural Systems

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1. Introduction

The event “Rightsizing Locally-Led Adaptation (LLA) for Sustainable and Resilient Agricultural Systems” aimed to develop a leadership assessment framework to identify and nurture leadership potential within farming communities, particularly in locally-led adaptive (LLA) projects. This initiative seeks to integrate local knowledge, practical tools, and inclusive governance practices to drive sustainable and resilient agricultural systems. The session was held with participants including researchers and representatives from various organizations. Key speakers and panelists included Dr. Mukhlesur Rahman (CNRS), Madiha Chowdhury (ICCCAD), Khaled Eltaweel (UN Food Systems Coordination Hub), Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Nor (Minister for Rural Development, Somalia), Marcela Gomes D’Amato (SOLINFTEC), and Dr. Hemant Ojha (IFSD). The event began with a series of presentations focusing on leadership development and inclusive adaptation strategies in agriculture. This was followed by a panel discussion emphasizing collaborative governance and feedback collection to refine the leadership assessment tool.

2. Summary of the Presentations

2.1. **T. S. Amjath Babu, Agricultural Economist, CIMMYT**, represented the PARIBARTAN project and discussed locally-led approaches for agricultural adaptation in the polders of Bangladesh. He questioned whether locally led organizations could leverage markets to drive adaptive transformation. He emphasized that climate change is intensifying disparities in agroecosystems, affecting gender, finance, water management, and overall resilience. While an emerging adaptation economy offers promising solutions like adaptive seeds, climate-smart tools, and financial services, small-scale farmers often face barriers. Challenges include high transaction costs, infrastructure gaps, and inaccessible markets, leaving many farmers disconnected from these innovations. The Paribartan project’s “Adaptation Marketplace Event” in Dhaka found critical value chain breakages hindering farmer participation. Amjath introduced locally-led “boundary organizations” as potential mediators to bridge these gaps. Such bodies could facilitate technology trials, farmer learning, demand aggregation, and resource mobilization. The Paribartan project is experimenting with this approach through iterative, participatory methods, aiming to make adaptation markets inclusive and effective for smallholders.

2.2 **Dr. Mukhlesur Rahman, Executive Director of CNRS**, highlighted the importance of an all-encompassing, cooperative strategy that prioritizes diverse stakeholders and leverages existing natural resources for successful locally-led adaptation. This approach emphasizes active involvement of community members, whose indigenous knowledge serves as a vital yet often overlooked resource for climate resilience and environmental management.

A more comprehensive and effective adaptation plan can be achieved by bringing together local communities, governmental entities, academic institutions, and civil society groups. Such a multi-stakeholder approach ensures that interventions are technically sound, culturally sensitive, and contextually appropriate.

Community participation was underscored as crucial, with indigenous knowledge systems offering valuable insights into regional ecological dynamics, traditional resource management, and time-tested adaptive methods.

These perspectives enhance the understanding of complex environmental challenges while complementing scientific inquiry. Climate justice and governance were identified as central to this framework, emphasizing fair decision-making processes, transparent resource distribution, and meaningful community engagement to develop sustainable adaptation systems.



2.3. Madiha Chowdhury, Senior Research Officer at ICCCAD, introduced a leadership assessment tool designed to accelerate locally-led adaptation by identifying both established and emerging local farmer leaders during the draft stage of its development.

The strategy integrates structured leadership assessment methods with local knowledge. After a thorough review of 30 key research papers on leadership traits and criteria, a sophisticated framework surpassing conventional leadership identification techniques was developed. Particularly suited for adaptation contexts, the tool captures the unique dynamics of community-based leadership. By synthesizing insights from the selected research, the tool efficiently identifies leadership potential, empowering local communities to lead adaptive initiatives. The ultimate goal is to create a flexible, context-sensitive tool that elevates community voices and supports locally-driven climate adaptation efforts



3. Panel Discussions



Panelists are listed left to right as shown in the picture:

- **Marcela Gomes D'Amato, Sustainability specialist at SOLINFTEC.**
- **Dr. Hemant Ojha, Principal Advisor at the Institute for Study and Development Worldwide (IFSD).**
- **Dr. Khaled Eltaweel, Senior Programme Officer at the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and Senior Coordinator at the FAO Office of the Director-General.**
- **Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Nor, Minister for Resilience and Rural Development, Somalia.**

Dr. Khaled Eltaweel highlighted that developing a leadership assessment tool requires active inclusion of local leaders to ensure relevance and effectiveness. This approach integrates community perspectives, enhances gender responsiveness, and creates a dynamic scoring framework that adapts to local contexts. The tool aims to strengthen farmers' engagement with government mechanisms, ensuring a nuanced and flexible evaluation process.

Dr. Hemant Ojha stressed the importance of scalability and adaptability in leadership assessment tools. He suggested that farmers' unique perspectives can be captured through a four-point rating system, offering a comprehensive evaluation of leadership capacities. This approach moves beyond traditional frameworks, fostering inclusive and dynamic leadership development resources tailored to rural settings. Together, these strategies will aim to empower farmers and advance sustainable agricultural resilience.

Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Nor emphasized that financial barriers, such as difficulty obtaining official documentation and accessing banking services, hinder farmers' economic participation. Mobile banking systems, supported by young volunteers, can bridge the digital divide, providing personalized guidance and fostering digital literacy. Comprehensive financial education empowers farmers, enabling leadership development and innovative agricultural practices, while reshaping rural financial landscapes.

Marcela Gomes D'Amato noted the growing role of digital tools in agriculture, despite only 10% of farmers currently using them. These technologies are improving decision-making, resource management, and quality control. The gradual increase in adoption indicates a transformative shift toward more efficient and resilient agricultural practices through data-driven insights.

4. Key takeaways and ways forward

Several key recommendations emerged from the session to enhance the effectiveness of the leadership assessment tool:

Develop Comprehensive Training

Modules: Tailored training materials should be designed to improve farmers' understanding of how to use the leadership assessment tool effectively. These modules will help users navigate the tool's features, interpret outcomes, and apply insights to leadership development within their communities.

Incorporate a Gender-Responsive

Lens: A gender-inclusive approach is essential to ensure that both women and men have equitable opportunities to be recognized and supported as leaders. This requires integrating criteria that highlight gendered leadership dynamics and addressing any systemic barriers to female leadership.

Enhance Digital Literacy:

Digital literacy training will bridge technological gaps that could hinder tool adoption. By increasing familiarity with digital platforms, farmers will be better equipped to utilize the tool's features, enhancing overall engagement and impact.

The feedback collected will shape refinements to the tool, emphasizing simplicity, cultural relevance, and ease of use. The revised tool will prioritize user-friendly interfaces and align with local practices, ensuring practical applicability in diverse rural contexts.

The improved framework will reflect key session insights:

- **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** The tool will promote partnerships between farmers, local organizations, government agencies, and technical experts to strengthen leadership ecosystems.
- **Dynamic Scoring Systems:** Adaptive scoring mechanisms will evolve with community needs, capturing the fluid nature of leadership potential and contextual changes.
- **Localized Approaches:** Leadership identification methods will be rooted in local knowledge systems, recognizing unique community structures and leadership styles.



By incorporating these enhancements, the leadership assessment tool will better support inclusive, adaptive, and community-driven leadership development, contributing to sustainable agricultural resilience.

5. Conclusion

The session underscored the critical importance of locally-led adaptation (LLA) in building sustainable and resilient agricultural systems. Key insights from the speakers highlighted the transformative power of community-driven approaches, where indigenous knowledge, leadership development, and innovative tools converge to address pressing climate and development challenges.

Dr. Mukhlesur Rahman emphasized the need for collaborative, multi-stakeholder strategies that integrate indigenous wisdom with scientific understanding, creating solutions that are both contextually relevant and globally impactful. Madiha Chowdhury reinforced the idea that leadership must be nurtured within the rich dynamics of community contexts, enabling individuals to drive transformative local adaptation efforts.

The session also highlighted practical barriers faced by rural farmers, as discussed by Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Nor, who stressed the importance of bridging financial and technological divides through mobile banking and youth engagement. Khaled Eltawheel talked about how true leadership assessment is not viewed as a static measurement but as a living dialogue that adapts, listens, and evolves with the community's own rhythms and wisdom.

Marcela Gomes D'Amato focused on the role of digital tools in revolutionizing agricultural decision-making and enhancing sustainable practices, despite current adoption challenges. Dr. Hemant Ojha concluded with a call to challenge traditional perceptions of rural leadership, advocating for tools and frameworks that empower farmers as leaders and key agents of change.

Collectively, these perspectives emphasize the need for dynamic, inclusive approaches to leadership assessment and capacity-building. By fostering community ownership, leveraging local knowledge, and adopting innovative tools, the path toward resilient agricultural systems and empowered rural leadership becomes clearer. Moving forward, integrating these insights will be essential to developing actionable, equitable, and sustainable solutions for locally-led adaptation.

