SESSION 3 GUIDED DISCUSSION

Chair: Mr Shaun Coffey

CEO Crawford Fund for Food Security

Chair:

Thank you, Graham, if you can stay online, we've got a couple of questions we'd like you to address.

Firstly, one of the things that struck me from your presentations and the discussions during the morning, we seem to be talking about the need to change the terms climate resilience and climate adaptation.

Dr Aditi Mukherji :

It can be used in an interchangeable way: do we pursue resilience or do we pursue adaptation? So, thank you for that question. My understanding is that resilience, as a term combines both mitigation and adaptation. So, while adaptation is simply: how do you adapt to a changing climate, mitigation is how do you adapt while also decreasing the emission of greenhouse gas? Because it's become increasingly clear that there is no way we can adapt our way out of this climate crisis as long as the greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere keep increasing, adaptation will have its limits, both physical limits, but also financial, ecological, and other limits. So I feel that resilience is a more holistic term that somehow includes both mitigation and adaptation, and underlines the fact that both have to go hand in hand. One without the other would be like a one-legged stool

Chair:

Thank you. Graham, do you have anything to add to that?

Professor Graham Sem:

Climate resilience, I think we have used it here interchangeably. And I agree that here it covers both adaptation and mitigation. In the Pacific, people have proposed the co-benefits between adaptation and mitigation to increase resilience. So, yes in this case, it is the same thing when we talk about adaptation.

Chair:

Thank you. One of the juxtapositions I see in the two presentations, Aditi, you've talked about the fact that we're approaching threshold modes, and we may be running out of time.

You've both identified technologies that can be scaled. What do we need to do to create more ambitious deadlines to make this change happen?

Dr Aditi Mukherji

Well, that's a very hard question. It's very clear what causes climate change and the impacts of climate change

The more we delay, the more we try to put a fine spin on that science or to interpret it in the way we wish, the more delays we are causing. So, I think let's be honest and understand the severity of the situation. Which brings us to the political will, because some of these decisions will be hard decisions.

And in parliamentary democracies where governments change every five years, there are obvious difficulties. And therefore comes a need for awareness among the public.

So there's nothing better than asking your elected representative for climate action. I would think we understand the science. There is just so much climate misinformation out there. So to have the ability to distil what the scientific consensus is versus what the Facebook post is saying is super important, and then use that evidence to lobby for a change, for a positive change, because I feel that's the fundamental thing here. Everything else is just a delaying tactic. I think that's an important point about internalising the science and having an effects-based approach, particularly to policy development.

Chair:

We've talked a lot about partnerships in the conference and how do we actually involve local communities more in developing real partnerships? As opposed to merely bilateral collaborations? How do we involve local communities more in developing partnerships for climate resilience?

Professor Graham Sem:

That's a very good question. Agriculture is an activity that most local communities are involved in. And so there must be a pathway for them to be engaged. Most of the partnerships that we have at the moment are at the higher level, at the government-to-government level or bilateral partnerships.

I think we need to get down to the community level. But the communities have a hierarchy that is in place. They can't just have a partnership with an organisation or a program in Australia, for instance. Australia. The way to do this better is probably using non-government organisations because they actually work better, delivering partnerships with the local communities.

But it's an area that needs to work. And I think, experience has already shown that the non-government organisations are doing this better. And the governments in this case. So maybe that's a way of getting down to the local communities better through non-government actors.

Chair:

We've talked a lot about opportunities here, setting targets and what end points might be, and what are the essential tasks of leadership to identify the path and take the first few steps. Given your experience and observations over a very large part of the world, what would you see as the most profitable first steps that we could be taking following a meeting like this?

Dr Aditi Mukherji

Okay, that's a hard one. Maybe I can start with a very narrow, specific kind of observation that I also made during my presentation. And the fact is that we know that there are solutions, but we, at the same time, know that those solutions are not cost-effective. So making solutions cost-effective requires a whole lot of R&D investments.

So I would actually think that this is a very good opportunity for the agriculture sector to go

out there and argue for more, not less, in agriculture. But these investments will not be the business-as-usual investments, where the only focus is increasing yield, because that's how we have done in the agriculture sector for the last 58 years.

Our focus has been increasingly on just yields, but now the focus has to be on yields with co-benefits of reduced emissions. So I feel we should be arguing for greater R&D investment. This morning, our keynote speaker showed us how the budgets of some of the leading organisations, including the CGIAR, have stagnated over the years. So, I think that targeted interventions around the links between climate change and food security, and the links with R&D are needed.

There is a greater tendency for climate misinformation to move towards more authoritative forms of government or more right-wing. And I think as citizens, and me as a scientist, we need to be vigilant to identify when climate misinformation is happening, calling those out.

So I think those of us who are still lucky to live in democratic societies have a very short, narrow window of opportunity to agitate for that change. So just don't do research, be an activist and agitate for that change that needs to happen. But I think it requires much more thought. Thank you

Chair:

That's a good place to finish. Can I ask you to join me in thanking Aditi and Graham? Thank you.