



# Supporting Climate Smart Agriculture – in Africa and Globally

## Background

Every year, about a billion people experience either chronic or transitory hunger. Undernutrition contributes to the deaths of 2.6 million children annually, and one in six children living in developing countries is chronically undernourished. Statistics like these present a compelling case for action to address unacceptable levels of food and nutrition insecurity. The opportunity exists to empower small-scale producers with the tools and resources necessary to adopt more productive, sustainable and resilient agricultural practices. Addressing systemic inequities will promote the broad and inclusive economic participation that can support smallholders to protect their livelihoods and meet their basic human needs with dignity.

The impacts of climate change on agricultural production and an ever-increasing population heighten the urgency of responding to these opportunities. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has stated that a 50% increase in agricultural production will be necessary to feed the world's estimated 9 billion people by 2050. It is no longer possible to look at the challenges smallholder farmers face separately from climate change and its consequences for the productivity, resilience and ultimate sustainability of agricultural systems.

## Partnering to Scale-Up Climate Smart Agriculture in Africa

Responding to these challenges, the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (AU-NEPAD), is spearheading an Agriculture and Climate Change Programme, known as "25 by 25". Working with the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), AU-NEPAD has set a goal of supporting at least 25 million farm families to adopt and practice Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) by the year 2025.

One component of this program is the Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance, which was launched at the AU Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on June 25, 2014. Convened by AU-NEPAD, this innovative partnership brings together five INGOs and four technical partners<sup>1</sup> who will work together to leverage each individual organization's strengths, technical capacities and local partnerships to facilitate the expansion of CSA to 6 million farming families.

Central to the goals of the Africa CSA Alliance is the explicit focus of all members on improving the lives and livelihoods of smallholder farmers, along with greater equity and sustainability of agricultural systems. To achieve a transformational impact on people, communities and systems, the Africa CSA Alliance will place special emphasis on the access, equity and other constraints faced by African farming households, ensuring the active involvement of women, youth and other vulnerable groups. A central premise for the Alliance is that food security and climate change cannot be addressed in isolation in a context of systemic poverty and marginalization. As such, building farmer capacity and creating linkages to markets, quality extension and financial services, and decision-makers, are fundamental to the Alliance's approach to equity and sustainability.

As national-level commitment is necessary to ensure sustainable outcomes, the Africa CSA Alliance will align with National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) as the entry point to guide programming. AU-NEPAD and the Alliance also plan direct engagement with regional institutions – particularly the Regional Economic Communities – to ensure coordination with regional goals. The Africa CSA Alliance membership will work with local civil society and community-based organizations to ensure truly country-led processes.



## The Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture

As AU-NEPAD was forging the Africa CSA Alliance, the United Nations was also conceptualizing a global response to food security and climate change. In January 2014, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced his intention to create a Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture. The Global Alliance is designed to encourage the adoption of climate smart agricultural practices that increase productivity, enhance adaptation, and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Following the announcement, the UN held a series of meetings with various stakeholders. This consultative process led to the development of a framework which defines the vision, approach and management structure of the Global Alliance.

As described in the framework, the purpose of the Global Alliance is to improve food security and nutrition in the face of climate change. Members will promote action towards the achievement of the CSA “triple win”:

1. Sustainable and equitable increases in agricultural productivity and incomes
2. Greater resilience of food systems and farming livelihoods
3. Reduction, and/or removal of greenhouse gas emissions associated with agriculture, where possible<sup>2</sup>

The Global Alliance focuses on both large and small scale agriculture projects and prioritizes all three of the above objectives. They have invited like-minded organizations across relevant sectors to endorse the framework document and join their effort. In this way, the Alliance aspires to be a voluntary and transparent association of members committed to fostering sustainable change in agricultural practices. Ultimately, the Global Alliance would like to function as a “clearing house”, promoting partnerships, actions and policies which support an integrated approach to the triple win laid out above. An annual forum is planned to measure progress, exchange learning and increase the visibility of Climate Smart Agriculture to high-level decision-makers.<sup>3</sup>

## Climate Smart Agriculture in the African Context

The Africa Climate Smart Agricultural Alliance shares the aim of the Global Alliance to increase food and nutrition security, but with a particular focus on smallholder farmers. As we strive to promote the adoption of CSA techniques to help farmers adapt and cope, we welcome the increased visibility and dialogue on CSA at the global, regional and country levels. We also welcome the opportunities that a high-level learning and exchange platform can provide. The Africa CSA Alliance expects to feed into the platform provided by the Global Alliance, sharing information from our experience with on-the-ground research and implementation, while working to elevate the voice of millions of smallholder farmers in Africa.

The Africa CSA Alliance will seek constructive engagement with the Global Alliance, recognizing that the two entities differ in scope, focus and ways of working. ACSAA's active engagement in the Global Alliance is not an indication of endorsement of the Global Alliance by the individual members the Africa CSA Alliance, each of which will determine membership individually. One critical distinction is that the Africa CSA Alliance will design and implement programs. It will support, in participatory ways, farmer-led initiatives that promote the uptake and practice of CSA by at least 6 million smallholder farmers. For each of its national-level programs, the Africa CSA Alliance will have a concrete set of outputs to deliver. Time frames and indicators of success will be concrete, measurable and transparent.





The sharp focus on smallholder farmers in Africa will allow the Africa CSA Alliance to define Climate Smart Agriculture specifically for the African context, with an emphasis on the first two goals of the triple win:

- Sustainable, reliable and equitable increases in agricultural productivity
- Increased resilience for food systems and agricultural livelihoods

Approaching these two goals as priority will also generate benefits for the sequestration of carbon and possibly the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Many CSA approaches, such as agroforestry and conservation agriculture practices provide benefits beyond supporting increased resilience and yields.

The Africa CSA Alliance will adhere to the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests. Our work will adhere to the social and environmental safeguards necessary to sustainably invest in farmers and farm communities and protect

the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. This refined definition will guide programming and maintain people and livelihoods at the center of the Alliance's work, while addressing the gender and equity issues which limit agricultural development in Africa. The Africa CSA Alliance aims to be inclusive, developing shared understanding, knowledge and partnerships and leveraging existing networks of CSO partners to reach high numbers of farmers with quality interventions.

As the Africa CSA Alliance looks to operationalize at the country level, outreach processes for government, farmers and civil society organizations are under development to ensure broad stakeholder participation. The concrete deliverables serve to establish clear criteria for expanding meaningful partnerships. It is the expressed intent of the Africa CSA Alliance that the outcome-focused and inclusive nature of this approach contributes to the dialogue with the Global Alliance and advance contributions to Climate Smart Agriculture in Africa and beyond.

<sup>1</sup>Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance members are CARE International, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Concern Worldwide, Oxfam, World Vision, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the CGIAR Institutes, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), and the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN).

<sup>2</sup>Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture, revised Framework Document – Interim Secretariat, September 1, 2014

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.