

Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Sustainability Summit

Dates: 16th and 17th March 2017

Venue: Intercontinental Hotel, Lusaka, Zambia

Background

Increasing greenhouse gas levels and associated rises in temperature and climate variability pose a major threat to food systems across the globe (IPCC 2013). There is, therefore, urgent need to identify strategies to make agri-food systems more resilient to the effects of a rapidly changing climate. Nowhere is this more important than in Africa, where temperature and rainfall patterns are discernibly changing (Engelbrecht et al., 2015; Hua et al., 2016; Souverijns et al., 2016) and where vulnerability to climate-induced shocks are acute. African farmers, consumers and the agri-food systems are particularly vulnerable to climate-related shocks due to the region's reliance on rain-fed agricultural production systems, infrastructure and transport systems that often cannot efficiently handle the region's food import needs during crises, and the low incomes, assets and coping abilities of a large share of the region's population.

Governments, the private sector, and development partners do all have important roles to play in supporting climate adaptation and resiliency efforts in Africa. To date, the terms of stakeholder engagement at the nexus between climate change agriculture have been largely framed by three dominant paradigms: "climate-smart agriculture" (CSA), "market-smart" development (MS), and sustainable intensification (SI). Yet, despite the increasing use of these terms in development programs and government policies, there is a lack of clarity over what they mean in practice, particularly in the context of Africa's varied and rapidly changing agri-food systems.

There is need to identify evidence based strategies that can stabilize supplies, access to food, and livelihoods in the face of increasingly variable climates. The identified strategies also need to be adapted and feasibly adopted by low-resource farmers and communities to the wide range of micro-climates and conditions found in Sub-Saharan Africa. Unless there is identification, adoption and adaptation of such strategies, terms like CSA, MS and SI are at risk of becoming slogans that are not specific enough to effectively guide government and donor policies and programs.

These concerns raise important questions regarding ways of responding to climate change in order to protect Africa's future livelihoods and development objectives. Framing adaptation and mitigation plans that are climate resilient will require multi-sectoral cooperation. Stakeholder evidence in identifying existing knowledge gaps in the various sectors is critical in addressing cross cutting issues affecting agriculture productivity and natural resources. Practitioners are aware of effective and sustainable solutions in different contexts and understanding of what works best in these settings is crucial in policy reform.

As mentioned earlier, although there is variation across regions and within countries on the likely scenarios of the effects of climate change on agriculture, there is scope to draw lessons and adaptation strategies.

It is against this background that the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI), VUNA (meaning ‘harvest’ in many Southern African countries), and the Department of Science and Technology/National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence in Food Security (DST-NRF Center of Excellence) hosted by the University of the Western Cape and the University of Pretoria have partnered to hold a Regional Sustainability Summit.

The Summit will bring together experts and policy makers from Zambia, the region, and the international community to share and debate research findings, highlight promising response strategies, and identify unresolved issues for future research.

Objectives of the Summit

1. To present and discuss available research evidence that may assist African governments put in place or strengthen strategies that anticipate increasing climate variability, and promote sustainable agricultural productivity, growth, and energy supplies, while maintaining and improving the natural resource base;
2. To identify the key knowledge gaps on climate resilience (mitigation and adaptation);
3. To present and discuss policy options that will create incentives for farmers in the region to adopt practices that will improve and maintain agricultural productivity while maintaining and improving upon the natural resource base; and,
4. To present and discuss how best durable agri-food, energy, and ecological systems in the region can be maintained in the light of anticipated human-induced climate change;
5. To promote key outcomes and insights to policy-makers (including through a “policy insights” note to be produced after the conference.

Proposed Roles of Organizations

1. IAPRI

IAPRI is a non-profit Zambian company limited by guarantee that works collaboratively with public and private stakeholders in the agricultural sector. IAPRI's mandate is to utilize empirical evidence to advise and guide the Government of the Republic of Zambia and other stakeholders on agricultural investments and policies. The overarching goal of IAPRI's policy analysis and outreach efforts is to provide advice on policies and investments in the agricultural sector that can effectively stimulate inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction. This is achieved through three core operational activities:

Producing trusted, impartial, and high-quality research on agricultural, food, and natural resource policy issues in Zambia and the wider southern Africa region; Integrating research findings into national, regional, and international programs and to promote policy strategies for sustainable agricultural growth in order to cut hunger and poverty in Zambia; supporting the development and strengthening of capacity for policy research, analysis; and, outreach to public and private institutions in Zambia.

IAPRI's role will be:

- (i) To coordinate Summit logistics.
- (ii) To lead the coordination and production of Summit proceedings footage
- (iii) To jointly provide material and financial support in collaboration with VUNA and the DST-NRF Center of Excellence in Food Security.

2. VUNA

VUNA helps farmers in East and Southern Africa adapt to the negative impacts of climate change. It exists to transform the agriculture sector so that smallholder farmers are able to improve their livelihoods in the face of current and future climate shocks. VUNA achieves this goal by strengthening the 'climate smart agriculture' (CSA) evidence-base, piloting ways to link farmers and private companies in agricultural value chains, and improving the conditions, which enable successful farming.

VUNA's role will be:

- (i) To set foundations for a regional approach, connect countries to build the climate resilience of farmers, and improve food security for both rural and urban communities;
- (ii) To coordinate and present experiences in implementing CSA Programs in Eastern and Southern Africa; and
- (iv) To jointly provide material and financial support in collaboration with IAPRI and the DST-NRF Center of Excellence in Food Security.

3. The DST-NRF Center of Excellence in Food Security

The Department of Science and Technology/National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence in Food Security, is a virtual organization that brings together the expertise of numerous South African and international institutions and over 100 researchers across various disciplines.

The DST-NRF Center of Excellence in Food Security's role will be:

- (i) To lobby for a multi-stakeholder regional approach to tackling climate resilience in the region;
- (ii) To share lessons learnt on best approaches towards a multi-stakeholder approach; and,
- (iii) To jointly provide material and financial support in collaboration with VUNA and IAPRI.

7. References

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Hua, W., L. Zhou, H. Chen, S. Nicholson, A. Raghavendra and Y. Jiang. 2016. Possible causes of the Central Equatorial African long-term drought. *Environmental Research Letters*, 11(12),

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