

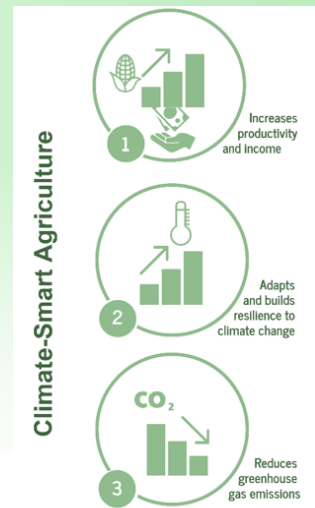


POLICY ADVISORY NOTE

Climate Smart Agriculture Policy Advocacy - Malawi

Climate change is expected to worsen in the next several years resulting in longer dry spells and more floods thereby raising a concern for the agriculture sector. On June 7, 2018, the Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) collaborated with its Malawi Node Hosting Institution, the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) and the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM) to organize a national policy dialogue on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA). The dialogue aimed at bringing together state and non-state stakeholders to review elements included in the work of the

Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to jointly address issues related to agriculture. The dialogue thus builds on the United Nations Conference on Climate Change held in May 2018 in Bonn Germany. Through the National Agriculture Policy and the National Agriculture Investment Plan Malawi identifies Sustainable Agricultural Production and Productivity as one of the key policy priority areas; with a specific focus on promoting investments in climate-smart agriculture and sustainable land and water management.



Priorities for the Agricultural Development

In this context, climate-smart agriculture (CSA) becomes vital from a food security and developmental perspective.

Methods and approaches for assessing adaptation, adaptation co-benefits and resilience

Malawi's fragile ecosystems are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, thereby negatively affecting livelihoods. This is exacerbated by socio-economic factors such as a narrow economic base, dependence on rain-fed agriculture, high reliance on biomass energy and low adaptive capacity. Current efforts are inadequate to effectively scale up farmers' adoption evidenced by heavy reliance on rain fed agriculture.

Improved soil carbon, soil health and soil fertility under grassland and cropland as well as integrated systems

Healthy soils provide the largest store of terrestrial carbon. When managed

sustainably, soils can play an important role in climate change mitigation by storing carbon and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, if managed poorly through unsustainable agricultural practices, carbon can be released into the atmosphere. The steady conversion of grass and forest land to crop and grazing lands over the years has resulted in historic losses of soil carbon worldwide. However, by adopting soil conservation practices, there is major potential to decrease the emission of greenhouse gases from agriculture and build resilience to climate change. There is need therefore to incentivise farmers to manage soil carbon.

Improved nutrient use and manure management towards sustainable and resilient agricultural systems

Sub-Saharan African farmers including those in Malawi use fewer modern inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers and other agro-chemicals, machinery, and irrigation. Limited access to basic farm supplies has made it virtually impossible for small-scale farmers to increase their yield or incomes. Empowerment of rural farmers with improved farm inputs and seeds, including increased use of manure is one of the best ways of ensuring growth of the agricultural sector which is mostly dominated by subsistence farmers in Malawi. Substantial gains have been made in crop genetics, but these do not translate into increased production without complementary investments in soil, water and pest management.

Nitrogen is the key driver for cereal crop performance across most environments, both in terms of yield and stability of yield. Understanding nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) thus becomes a need in ensuring success in climate change adaptation and agricultural development.

Improved livestock management systems

Livestock production is key to food security in Malawi as it provides meat, milk and eggs plus other goods and services, such as animal manure and traction. Livestock production is key to enhancing the resilience of farmers however, livestock contributes to more greenhouse gas emissions than most other food sources through feed

production, enteric fermentation, animal waste and land-use change. Fueled by human population growth, higher incomes and urbanization, demand for meat, milk and eggs in low- and middle income countries is rising. Thus, there is considerable scope for reducing emissions and creating off-sets. Ninety-two developing countries including Malawi have included livestock in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Climate Agreement. Malawi therefore needs effective policies, strong institutions and the adoption of advanced practices.

Socioeconomic and food security dimensions of climate change in the agricultural sector

Rural communities in Malawi have difficulty in coping with the effects of climate change which cause them to heavily depend on humanitarian assistance. There is need for inclusive initiatives to respond to climate change that involve and take into account the needs of the communities for purposes of sustainability. Poverty in Malawi is widely understood to be a key factor that increases the propensity for individuals and households to be harmed by climatic shocks and stresses. Malawi must therefore be determined through the UN Strategic development goals and the Malawi Development Strategy to end poverty and hunger in all their forms.

Key Messages and Recommendations

The Climate Smart Agriculture National Policy Dialogue came up with the following key recommendations:

Disjointed approach to CSA

- (1) Enhance collaboration among all key players and address the challenge of disjointed policies through a holistic approach to CSA policies and strategies as well as harmonized messages to farmers.
- (2) Consider the whole ecosystem with the objective of overcoming inherent barriers that exist. This must take into account the villages and its inhabitants as members of the ecosystem. It is also important to use district level structures for district level oversight.
- (3) CSA interventions must include income as well. This implies ensuring that farmers are granted access to markets for their produce, which in turn will equip them to effectively adopt CSA technologies.

Mismatch on Investments: Link Research, Policy and Action

- (1) All key players must take into account National Agriculture Investment Plan priority areas as they relate to CSA and align their own strategies accordingly. They should ensure that the priority areas are reflected in their own strategies and programs.

- (2) Government should prioritize climate change and be quick to respond to emerging climate related issues that affect farmers and provide the support that they need to build their resilience.
- (3) There is need to align the national budget to NAIP through adequate resources towards all CSA related activities; and public expenditure management around CSA must show investments that will benefit farmers.
- (4) There is need for more research around CSA and use of research findings as evidence for policy development and programming.

Weak agricultural Extension System

- (1) There is need to prioritize public extension services by ensuring that they reach all farmers across the nation. Extension services must be adequately funded to meet the needs of farmers. Delivery of messages must also include health and nutrition messages as these are integral for CSA.
- (2) There is need to establish a knowledge management system for CSA to ensure that messages are disseminated and best practices are promoted.