High Level Panel

Climate Smart Agriculture and Reducing Food Losses and Waste

The African Union - European Union Agriculture Ministers Conference

2 July 2017, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy

CONCEPT NOTE

Context

There is an inextricable link between Africa's economic growth, poverty, agriculture and food insecurity, on one hand and climate and climate variability, on the other. Unless bold and decisive action is taken, climate variability and change will jeopardize or reverse Africa's development achievements. Increasingly frequent droughts, floods, and cyclones threaten to drive Africans into poverty and create inescapable poverty traps, affecting most the already vulnerable rural and poorer communities. With climate change predicted to have significant repercussions for agriculture, climate smart agriculture (CSA) offers a valuable approach for responding to the challenges posed by climate change and achieving sustainable development. The African Heads of State recognized the importance of CSA in the Malabo Declaration (June 2014) which sets a goal of at least 25 million farm households practicing CSA by 2025 (referred to as Vision 25x25).

Looking at the overall agricultural and food systems value chain, climate change is impacting on the capacity and abilities to minimize post-harvest food losses and waste. Changes and extremes in temperature as well as new or more prevalent diseases, natural occurring toxins and pests will only go to make worse the situation on food losses and waste. It is a sobering fact of modern life that while in some countries food is scarce, others collectively waste food with a total value of about US$1 trillion (€ 735 billion). Expressed by weight, around a third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted due to several factors. This amount can meet the annual food requirements of about 48 million people and exceeds the annual value of grain imports into Africa and the value of total food aid received in sub-Saharan Africa over the past decade.

According to figures released by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), food loss and waste accounts for about 4.4 gigatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year. In fact, food loss and waste generates more than four times as much annual greenhouse gas emissions as aviation, and is comparable to emissions from road transport. Thus food loss and waste not only creates a distortion in food availability and exacerbates rising food prices but also puts unnecessary pressure on the environment. Avoiding food loss and waste would therefore avoid unnecessary greenhouse-gas emissions and help mitigate climate change.

In this context, climate smart agriculture (CSA) provides the opportunity for countries to innovate and secure policy environment, as well as technical and financial conditions necessary to sustainably increase

agricultural productivity and incomes. It also helps in building resilience of agricultural and food systems to adapt to climate change, and engage practices that reduce and remove GHGs - for a win-win between increased productivity in agriculture and food systems and climate resilience, on the other hand. Thus CSA has the potential to deliver solutions that generate both private (food security, returns to agriculture) and public (mitigation) benefits.

Objectives and outcomes

The main objective of the Climate Smart Agriculture and Food Loss and Waste session is to provide an opportunity to share and learn from each other on good practices, technologies and indeed what is working and why in the efforts to building resilience to risks and scale up CSA in various agro-ecological systems and landscapes. Additional to learning from each other, the Session will expose some innovative and successful CSA practices, approaches and support policies which, with additional support, could be expanded and up-take accelerated, thereby getting a critical mass of communities and landscapes involved. The Session will enlighten participants on envisaged measures for promoting investment, including the private sector, scaling up climate smart agriculture practices, reducing food loss and waste and mainstreaming CSA into national development planning process.

More specific objectives will be to:

- Offer a platform for all stakeholders to debate on relevant actions, learn and reflect on key policies, strategies and other measures necessary for scaling up CSA practices and reduce food loss and waste,
- Share best practices and approaches for mainstreaming CSA and reducing food loss and waste in the national/agricultural development planning; Share climate smart innovations that contribute to post-harvest losses reduction
- Present and share AUC and NEPAD Agency initiatives in supporting transformative and widespread scaling up of CSA in line with Agenda 2063 and Malabo Declaration on agriculture transformation
- Discuss and build consensus on the needed partnerships to implement AU Malabo declaration on reducing post-harvest losses.

The African Union through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is supporting implementation of CSA in Africa through the Agriculture Climate Change Programme and other related initiatives. These efforts will stimulate and galvanize multi-sectorial and trans-national efforts to leverage political, policy, technical and financing action to support the scaling up of CSA to achieve Vision 25 x 25.