



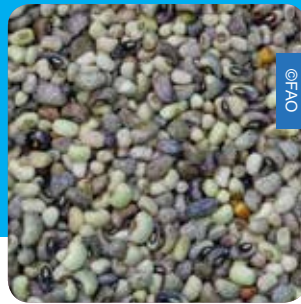
Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change in The Gambia Newsletter

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WELCOME

to the first edition of the “Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change in The Gambia” bi-annual newsletter.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a key global actor on issues relating to food and nutrition, forestry, agriculture and fisheries, with one main aim...hunger eradication. In collaboration with its implementing partners FAO is working to improve the lives of Gambian people, especially those living in rural areas. The Gambia is heavily dependent on subsistence farming and natural resources, and agriculture is the main economic activity. Interventions are therefore aimed at enabling improved nutrition, and promoting increased agricultural production and productivity. Climate change however, presents a real threat to these efforts and can potentially jeopardize the country's main food and agricultural systems. Interventions that fail to build resilience to climate change are doomed to fail.

Recognizing the urgent need to address the impact of increasing climate variability and change, the project 'Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change in The Gambia' (AACC) was developed. The overall objective of the project is to promote sustainable and diversified livelihood strategies for reducing the impact of climate

variability and change in the agriculture and livestock sector.

The Project is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded project of USD 6,288,356 with an additional co-financing amount of USD36 830 000. The project will run for four years (June 2016 - May 2020). FAO stands as the GEF Agency that will provide financial and technical support to the project.

The multimillion dollar project targeted, and will intervene in the hardest hit areas where climate change is visibly endemic, namely; Central River Region (North), Upper River Region (North) and the North Bank Region. The AACC project will be implemented in ten community gardens in the three afore-mentioned regions. Suitable seed varieties, appropriate sustainable farming practices and other inputs will be made available to approximately 40, 000 poor farmers, 70% of whom are women. It is envisaged that the project will contribute significantly towards increasing farmers' resilience to climate variability and change.



Group photo of the Project launch invited guests

THE PROJECT LAUNCH

The Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with FAO officially launched the 4-year GEF funded project **“Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change in The Gambia”** on 17th - 18th October 2017.

The project seeks to;

- I strengthen the Government’s efforts towards better responding to climate risks,
- II promote adaptation measures at local level to reduce risk of economic losses
- III diversify and strengthen beneficiaries’ livelihoods and sources of income.

These combined steps are expected to mitigate climate change risks and vulnerabilities in a cost-efficient way, and deliver adaptation benefits.

The project launch was attended by 80 participants representing the different stakeholders. The project implementing partners include: Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Department of Agriculture (DoA), Department of Livestock Services (DLS), National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI), National Environment Agency (NEA) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

FAO considers food security a necessary pillar of climate change adaptation. It is best placed to (a) provide the relevant multidisciplinary approach and diverse technical guidance necessary to analyze different vulnerable food systems, (b) to assess the impact of climate variability and change which informs the design of adaptation practices.

Statements

In his keynote statement, Omar A. Jallow, Minister of Agriculture spoke about the effects of climate change on agriculture and the wider economy. He made reference to the noticeable impact that increased frequency and severity of climate-related hazards is having on agriculture and the economy. He highlighted the importance of the intervention in promoting sustainable and diversified livelihood strategies, for reducing the impact of climate change and variability in the agriculture and livestock sectors.

In her statement Perpetua Katepa-Kalala, FAO Country Representative underlined FAO’s mandate in bettering the lives of the Gambian population, especially those living in rural areas. She expressed confidence that improved nutrition, and increased agricultural production and productivity would contribute to the growth of the national economy.

PHOTO GALLERY

Project Launch and Inception Workshop



Perpetua Katepa-Kalala,
FAO Country Representative



Omar A. Jallow,
Minister of Agriculture



Lamin Dibba,
Minister of Environment, Climate Change
and Natural Resources



Members of the high table



Inception Workshop participants



Hassan Jallow, Permanent Secretary
of Ministry of Agriculture

Investing in quality control labs to bring transformational solutions in climate change adaptation and mitigation

The National Environment Agency (NEA), under the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources is responsible for coordinating environmental management in The Gambia. Charged with the responsibility to control the use of chemicals and pesticides and to monitor nutrients and chemical profiles of drought tolerant crop varieties, the agency has an established quality assessment/analytical reference laboratory.

As an implementing partner to the project, the NEA will benefit from the project components aimed at strengthening overall institutional and technical capacity, and implementing partner capacity for effective climate change adaptation. The project will make structural and technical improvements to the quality control laboratory.

As a first step towards building NEA's institutional and technical capacity, Professor Mathew Muzi Nindi, (an international consultant from South Africa) was hired to conduct a thorough assessment of the NEA laboratory.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



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Current status of the NEA lab

The assessment covered six key areas, human resources, instrumentation, availability of continuous power supply, capacity for sample preparation, availability of reagents and standards. The assessment found that the laboratory falls below standard in all six assessment areas. The study also showed that there is minimum infrastructure to carry out the work needed to make the lab functional.



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Current status of the NEA lab



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Current status of the NEA lab

Building on the assessment findings, the next step will involve the procurement of all the necessary small apparatus, chemicals and relevant material of the standard required to get the laboratory functioning effectively. Thereafter, appropriate instruments to monitor pesticides and related compounds will be procured with project support. Overall, project support will enable the NEA to better monitor the impact of adaptation practices on natural resources.

THE SHARP TOOL...

bridging the gap between climate resilience measures and coping mechanisms

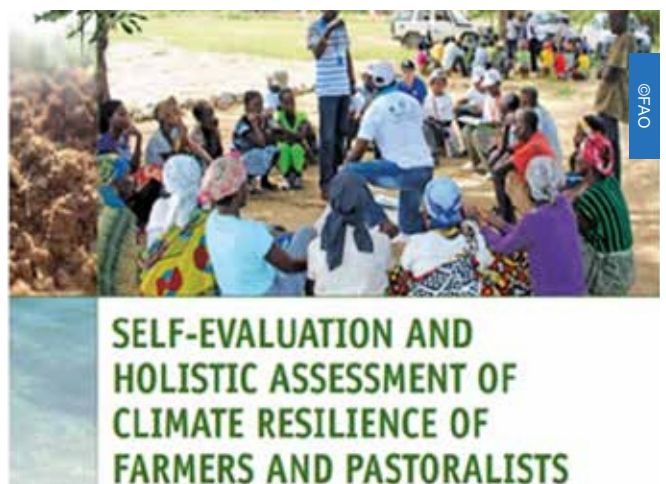
The Gambia is vulnerable to climate change resulting in erratic rainfalls, poor soils, soaring temperatures and aridness. The country's agriculture sector is also consistently subjected to the shocks and aftermath of climate change, primarily because of weak agriculture support services and non-availability of relevant data and information. Against this backdrop, climate change/increased climatic variability is impacting the lives and livelihoods of food producers. It affects all aspects of food security as well as different elements of food systems. While shocks and stresses cannot be stopped, the resilience of those affected can be improved.

The Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of climate Resilience of farmers and Pastoralists (SHARP) tool has been developed. It measures and monitors climate resilience while simultaneously empowering smallholder farmers and pastoralists to develop climate resilience using a participatory approach.

A baseline data collection exercise using the SHARP Tool for the GEF Agriculture and GEF Forestry Projects was launched in November 2017. The survey respondents (beneficiaries of the two GEF projects, who depend on climate-sensitive livelihoods) were profiled using the SHARP tool to gauge their resilience status to climate change and variability. The data was analyzed by a team at FAO headquarters and survey results were shared by international M&E consultant Mr. Innocent Kaba. A one-day validation workshop was later organized by FAO to share the survey results with partners and stakeholders.

Speaking at the validation workshop Lamin Dibba, (Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources) stated that The Gambia is highly vulnerable to climate change and variability and expressed an urgent need for adaptation and mitigation. He added that adapting agriculture to climate change and increasing resilience is high in his ministry's agenda.

Haddy Lamin Njie, (Acting Head of Programmes at FAO), speaking on behalf of the FAO Country Representative highlighted how Gambia's agricultural sector is expected to produce food and income to support food and nutrition security and poverty alleviation for a fast-growing population. At the same time climate change is posing new threats and affecting all aspects of the food security of vulnerable groups, as well as different elements of food systems. She concluded that adaptation is critical in reducing vulnerability that results from current and future climate change impact.



Cover page the SHARP tool book



Omar A Jallow, Agriculture Minister receiving the motor bikes and other equipment for agriculture extension workers

FAO hands over motorbikes and equipment to Government to address mobility challenges

On 17 November, 2017, FAO officially handed over 34 motorbikes and other items to the Ministry of Agriculture, to support the work of extension workers, address mobility challenges, and facilitate effective service delivery.

21 of the motorbikes were procured through the European Union (EU) funded project “Post Crisis-Response to Food and Nutrition Insecurity in The Gambia” while the remaining 13 were procured through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded “Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change project.

Omar A Jallow, Minister of Agriculture received the consignment on behalf of his Ministry at a handing over ceremony held at the FAO premises in Fajara. He commended the Global Environment Facility, the European Union, FAO and the World Food Programme for responding to the needs of the Gambian people. He noted that the assistance would motivate the extension staff and improve agriculture in the country.

Speaking at the ceremony, Perpetua Katepa-Kalala highlighted that the motorbikes were meant to facilitate the movement of the extension agents and supervisors involved in the implementation of these projects in LRR, CRR South, CRR North, URR North and NBR.



Open grazing site in Central River Region

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Peace building through demarcation of cattle tracks

FAO's efforts to eradicate hunger through the enhancement of agricultural production, improvement of food and nutrition security, and strengthened resilience have, and continue to impact Gambians, particularly rural communities positively. The promotion of livestock and crop farming has however inadvertently worsened conflict between the farmers. Population growth and the consequent expansion of settlements has resulted in livestock tracks to rangelands being blocked. Livestock struggles to reach the designated grazing and drinking points and cuts through crop gardens, damaging the crops and grazing on them. This has led to significant conflict between crop and livestock farmers.

To address this, the project intends to adopt strategies to promote sustainable peace between crop and livestock farmers in the country.

As a first step, an unprecedented consultative meeting was convened in the first quarter of 2018. Sustainable ways of addressing the challenges and promoting peaceful coexistence were discussed. Specific project outputs to (I) improve rangelands by promoting different grazing areas and reseeding multi-purpose grass and legume species, and (II) provide livestock water points and improve demarcation of livestock tracks, were shared and discussed with the participants.

It was agreed that more background information on the livestock tracks that were demarcated in the 1970s

was required. The next logical step in the process is to conduct a situational analysis to determine; (I) where and how livestock tracks were previously demarcated and what happened to them, (II) which institutions/people were responsible for the demarcation and whether appropriate strategies, measures and standards were used in the process, (III) if it is prudent to use the old tracks or preferable to demarcate new ones. The findings will inform the next steps to be taken in this peace building initiative.

Sensitisation and general stakeholder awareness raising activities were suggested, as an interim step in resolving the recurrent conflict. A significant number of the participants advocated land reform as a possible solution to the outlined challenges. A study tour to Senegal to learn from their best practices was also proposed.

Watch out for the second edition of the AACC Newsletter for the situational analysis findings, and proposed sustainable strategies for building peace between livestock and crop farmers in the country.



Watering point for livestock in Central River Region

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