

<b>Session title:</b>	New Consensus for Smallholder Farmers
<b>Session number:</b>	23
<b>Type of session:</b>	Zoom Internal Meeting
<b>Day:</b>	Monday, 6 September 2021
<b>Time:</b>	14:30-16:15 EAT
<b>No. of participants:</b>	54 (including several groups of 10+ farmers/farmer organizations)
<b>Session Organizers:</b>	SDG2 Advocacy Hub, IISD, ActionAid, CGIAR, GAFSP, Global Citizen, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, and Wasafiri
<b>Moderator:</b>	Mwandwe Chileshe, Senior Manager for Food Security, Nutrition and Agriculture at <a href="#">Global Citizen</a>
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Asma Lateef, Policy and Advocacy Lead, SDG2 Advocacy Hub
<b>Relevant outcome:</b>	1, 3 and 5
<b>Objectives:</b>	Good food begins with farmers. Smallholder farmers sit at the heart of our food systems yet struggle to earn enough to feed their own families. The UNFSS, N4G and COP26 are opportunities to coordinate action to invest in smallholders' health, livelihoods, productivity and sustainability. Recent reports, including Ceres2030 and the CAADP Biennial Review, global and regional initiatives provide a roadmap. In the absence of a clearly articulated policy consensus across diverse stakeholders, however, these efforts compete for resources and fail to achieve the collective impact needed. This session will explore building a new consensus to move from evidence to action.
<b>Speakers:</b>	
(*Name, Title, Organization)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mary Afan, President of the Small scale Women Farmers Organisation in Nigeria (SWOFON)</li> <li>2. Hon. Godfred Seidu Jasaw, Member of Parliament for WA EAST CONSTITUENCY of the Upper West Region of the Republic of Ghana</li> </ol>	

3. Hon. Kebba. K. Barrow, Majority Leader, National Assembly of The Gambia and former Program Officer, The Association of Non- Governmental Organisations ( TANGO)
4. Dr. Greenwell Matchaya, Akademiya2063
5. Emmanuel Ngore, Coordinator for Partnerships and Networking at the CAADP Youth Network (CYN)
6. Wilfred Oluoch is currently a Data Analyst at the Agricultural Transformational Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, fisheries and cooperatives, Government of Kenya.
7. Francine Picard Mukazi Senior Policy Advisor & Lead, Partnerships for the Economic Law and Policy Programme's Agriculture team, International Institute for Sustainable Development.

### Main highlights:

(\*For Insights and newsletter. To be based on the theme of the day. Fill in in bullet form)

#### KEY CHALLENGES

- Smallholder farmers have lost their investments and livelihoods due to COVID-19
- Women farmers are disproportionately affected—because of lack of access to key services, inputs, and finance and due to safety concerns.
- Women farmers' voices are not at the table—when policies and programs are made for them without consulting them, implementation fails.
- Agriculture budgets are being cut at a time when they are needed the most and could be an investment in lifting smallholder farmers out of hunger and poverty. Very few governments are meeting their Malabo commitments of allocating at least 10% of budget on agriculture and not enough of what is being spent is allocated to smallholder farmers, given that in many countries, they contribute much of the food.
- The quality and timing of agricultural spending is crucial—are smallholder farmers getting the resources when and for what they need them? This is becoming more urgent with climate change when weather patterns are erratic, and the growing seasons increasingly unpredictable.
- Youth face specific challenges: they need to organize themselves in order to ensure their voices are heard but there need to be systems in place to support youth inclusion, in engaging in policy discussions.
- Innovations created by youth are not protected - IP rights are not assured—this is a disincentive for youth to engage in food value chains.
- Smallholders need support and capacity strengthening in how farmlands are prepared, determining what crops to grow, what is the role of technology, organizing into groups, learning from each other and from farmers in other countries in the region or in other regions.
- Accessing finance is very difficult for small-scale farmers, especially women. Smallholders face high interest rates and high risk.
- Data has not been given the priority it deserves. Without data we cannot

adequately support smallholder farmers—we need to understand the specifics of their challenges in order to plan and target programs. Data needs to be given the same priority as other inputs in agriculture, fertilizer for example.

- There is not enough political will to increase agriculture spending and to meet the needs of smallholder farmers.
- Adapting to climate change and building resilience is urgent.

### **INNOVATIONS PROPOSED**

- Youth engagement in agriculture will be strengthened by a unifying message around sustainable development, environmental integrity, restoring ecosystems and adapting to climate change.
- CAADP Biennial Review has informed changes in several countries including in Malawi, where data clusters were created in response to data gaps, in Niger an agency was created to promote public and private partnerships, in Togo, data, nutrition and organic farming were prioritized.
- Ceres2030 provides evidence-based actions to double the incomes and productivity of smallholder farmers. These provide a roadmap for investment and should be prioritized.
- Use SMS platforms for data collection and digitized/computer aided mechanisms.
- Adopt and strengthen agroecological approaches to build climate resilience.
- Technology should be developed in consultation with smallholder farmers, especially women, including testing and modification to increase usability and uptake and to solve market access issues.
- Extension services should recruit more women.
- Extension agents should use technology, including adopting mobile extension services and toll-free centres for smallholder farmers to call.
- Establish farmers schools headed by women for capacity building among other things.
- Simplify production, processing and storage mechanisms, taking into account the specific needs of women smallholder farmers.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS/ NEXT STEPS**

- All stakeholders should use the CAADP Biennial Review to inform decision-making and policy reform, for advocacy and oversight, and to strengthen accountability for smallholder farmers. To facilitate this, results of the Biennial Review should be simplified and publicized to stakeholders in local languages.
- Improve the alignment between regional and national implementation of CAADP.
- Policymakers/parliamentarians should engage small-scale producers, especially women and family farmers directly to understand their priorities and needs.
- Empower national assemblies/parliamentarians to provide greater oversight and to legislate through advocacy and capacity strengthening.
- Prioritize capacity strengthening on an ongoing basis to learn and share best

practices across countries and contexts.

- Invest in data and data collection systems.

These challenges, innovations, recommendations, and insights should inform a new policy consensus for smallholder farmers.

### Session Summary:

(\*To go in final report. Max 300 words. Fill in prose)

Smallholder farmers are the heart of local, national and regional food systems in Africa. Yet by every measure, they are being left behind: the majority live in hunger and poverty and suffer poorer health outcomes; their children are more likely to be malnourished; most still depend on rainfall for irrigation; and lack access to inputs, finance, and markets. With need to step up action to meet the ambition of the Malabo Declaration, made more urgent by climate change, panelists shared their insights about smallholder agriculture, the findings of the CAADP Biennial Review (BR), needed policy reforms and how a new policy consensus, led by small-scale farmers, might be transformative and part of the solution, uniting stakeholders.

Mary Afan spoke about COVID-19's impact: smallholder farmers, especially women, in Nigeria, have lost their investment. The budget for agriculture has been cut. Funding for smallholders' lags other spending. When smallholders are feeding local communities, she said "governments should be begging us how can we help smallholders become more productive." Women farmers face growing insecurity, and policies are designed without their input. She said: "You cannot plan for me in my absence." Emmanuel Ngore added youth must organize but they need systematic ways to meaningfully engage in policy processes. Youth innovation faces barriers such as lack of enforcement of intellectual property rights.

Wilfred Oluoch, Greenwell Matchaya and Francine Picard highlighted the importance of good data and data systems to understand the specific issues facing smallholders and using research and evidence in Ceres2030 and the BR to inform policy decisions. The BR is driving change in some countries but could be more widely used by decisionmakers and civil society. Honorable Barrow and Jasaw, parliamentarians from The Gambia and Ghana respectively, underscored the importance of political will, oversight and civil society in educating legislators and advocacy.

### Tweetable quotes with timestamp:

(\*For podcast and to go to AGRF Communication for social media. Minimum 3 per session)

- "We know what to do, we have the solutions. There are no more excuses not to act. We need to collaborate, including directly with smallholder farmers." – Francine Picard, 1:07:05-1:07:10

- “Data is key. If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it. Data is going to be a key asset in ensuring that we’re making urgently needed progress.” – Wilfred Oluoch, 48:53-49:05
- “It is important to scrutinise the quality of budget allocation to the agricultural sector, which is often inadequate to drive the outcomes we urgently need.” – Hon. Godfred Seidu Jasaw, 26:43

### How has the session contributed to the AGRF outcomes?

\*(For end of AGRF communique/ Press release. List 3 - 5 top outcomes)

- Related to AGRF Outcome 1: Equitable and sustainable food systems transformation will require accelerated action to improve the productivity and livelihoods of smallholder farmers. This session brought together smallholder farmers/farmer organizations, youth, parliamentarians and government officials, and researchers across the African continent to discuss the specific challenges facing small scale rural producers, women farmers, and family farmers and to understand how the evidence in the CAADP Biennial Review and Ceres2030 can drive progress towards more inclusive agricultural transformation in the region.
- Related to AGRF Outcome 3: Speakers highlighted the importance of data and data systems, meaningful engagement of smallholder farmers, especially women and youth, in policy development and implementation, targeted extension and capacity strengthening approaches for women smallholders, better understanding and using the evidence and data in the CAADP Biennial Review for policy reform, advocacy and oversight at the country level.
- Related to AGRF Outcome 5: Participants also spoke to the need to build a new consensus for smallholder farmers—to ensure that their challenges and their role in food systems transformation are recognized at the UN Food Systems Summit, COP26, Nutrition for Growth and beyond; to build political will to invest in smallholders; and to align policy actions at the national and regional level.

### COMMITMENTS

To continue this important conversation about making sure that the needs, priorities, voices of smallholder farmers are at the center of food systems transformation and inform a new policy consensus for smallholder farmers.