



ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA



**THE REGIONAL POLICY  
ENVIRONMENT FOR CLIMATE  
AND AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA:  
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES TO INTEGRATING  
AGROECOLOGY IN CLIMATE ACTION IN FIVE REGIONAL  
ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

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# Acronyms

AFSA	Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa	IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment	IGADD	Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development
AMU/UMA	Arab Maghreb Union	LVB CCASAP	Lake Victoria Basin Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan
ARC2020	Agricultural and Rural Convention	MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
AU	African Union	MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
AUC	African Union Commission	NAIP	National Agriculture Investment Plan
CA	Conservation Agriculture	NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme	NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
CAP	COMESA Agricultural Policy	NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	RAIP	Regional Agriculture Investment Plan
CENSAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States	RAP	Regional Agricultural Policy
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	RECs	Regional Economic Communities
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture	RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization	SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
DREA	Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture	SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
EAC	East African Community	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States	SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
ECOWAP	Agricultural Policy of West African States	STCs	Specialized Technical Committees
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	UN	United Nations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
GMOs	Genetically Modified Organisms	VIA	Vulnerability, Impacts, and Adaptation Assessment
HYVs	High Yielding Varieties		
ICPAC	IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre		
ICPALD	IGAD Centre for Pastoralist Areas and Livestock Development		
IDDRSI	IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative		

# Executive Summary

This report on the regional policy environment for climate change and agriculture in Africa has been developed by AFSA to identify opportunities and challenges for its 'Agroecology for Climate Action' campaign being undertaken in 12 African countries<sup>1</sup>. The overall goal of the campaign is to have agroecology recognized in national, regional and international policy spaces and frameworks as a strategy for climate change adaptation and mitigation in Africa.

The report is based on a review of policies, strategies and plans adopted by the AU and six of its eight RECs meeting the challenges of climate change, agriculture and rural development. The report also examines the role of major non-state actors in influencing agricultural policy at the continental and RECs levels. It identifies entry points for engaging with the AU and RECs in advocating for integration of agroecology in agriculture and climate change policies, highlights challenges to the integration of agroecology in the said frameworks and recommends appropriate strategies for ensuring the success of the campaign.

The report is divided into five sections. The first section introduces the study, explains its conceptual framework and methodology and presents the structure of the report. Section two reviews the background and context to the study. Section three examines the policy context for agriculture and climate change in the AU and its implications for integration of agroecology in climate action. Section four reviews the policies and strategies for agricultural development and climate change adaptation and mitigation in each of the six RECs. Section five presents the main conclusions and recommendations of the study.

The policies of the AU relevant to this analysis are those that address respectively, general overall framework for development; agricultural sector; and climate change adaptation and mitigation. The main instruments for these purposes are, respectively, Agenda 2063; Maputo and Malabo Declarations; CAADP; the Declaration on Climate Change and Development; and the African Strategy on Climate Change. Also of relevance are three key international instruments that AU Member States have signed up to namely, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Agenda 2063 envisions a "prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" underpinned by productive agriculture, healthy ecosystems, well-preserved environment and resilience to climate change. To this end, it calls for modernization of agriculture for improved production and productivity, sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, and combating desertification and climate change. The priority for agriculture is to radically transform, modernize and commercialize the sector for increased production and productivity and value addition in order to

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<sup>1</sup> The 12 countries are Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

enable the continent feed itself and become a net food exporter; while the priority for climate change is to reduce vulnerability using mainly adaptive measures.

The aspirations, strategies and targets for agriculture are elaborated in the Maputo Declaration and Malabo Declaration and CAADP. The Declarations articulate the commitments, while CAADP provides the framework for planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring of progress towards the commitments. Perhaps the most significant policy advance in agriculture was the commitment to allocate at least 10% of national budgetary resources for agriculture and rural development, which was articulated in the Maputo Declaration and reaffirmed in the Malabo Declaration.

Both the AU and its RECs are alive to the link between climate change and agriculture, and have accordingly articulated policy responses to climate change in the context of agriculture and sustainable natural resource management. The policies and strategies of the AU on agriculture and climate change define the agenda for the RECs, and by extension those of their Member States, as the RECs spearhead implementation of AU policies at the regional level. All the six RECs covered by this analysis have elaborated policies on agriculture and rural development as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation that are closely aligned to those of the AU. Policies on agriculture are more developed than those on climate change due to the mobilization within the framework of CAADP that spearheaded development of Regional Agricultural Compacts and Investment Plans.

The policies and strategies of the AU and RECs on agriculture and climate change appear to pursue mutually contradictory objectives, when they articulate commitments to sustainable land management and climate-resilient agriculture, while at the same time pushing for introduction of industrial agriculture and adoption of related technologies that will lead to soil degradation, increase emission of GHGs into the atmosphere and undermine sustainability. Agroecology offers the best approach for African countries to both improve agricultural productivity and maintain the integrity of soils and ecosystems and manage climate change.

The report identifies opportunities, spaces and platforms for advocacy at national, RECs and AU levels to push for integration of agroecology in climate action. Advocacy at the national level should target sector ministries responsible for agriculture and rural development, environment and natural resources and climate change, as well as related Parliamentary Committees. Such advocacy should include budget analysis and expenditure monitoring to ensure, firstly, that African countries are living up to their Maputo and Malabo commitments to budgetary allocations to agriculture; and secondly, to interrogate what, if any, proportions of such budgets are spent on research and extension on agroecology relative to what is spent on industrial agriculture.

At the AU and RECs levels, the advocacy should target Departments and Divisions responsible for agriculture and rural development; and climate change, environment and natural resource management. In this connection, the report singles out the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) and lists counterpart departments and divisions in the different RECs. AFSA should also target periodic meetings of technical and political leaders at Director or Ministerial level responsible for building consensus and developing common positions on different thematic concerns including agriculture, environment, natural resource management and climate change, such as AMCEN, with a view to making inputs and monitoring their deliberations as means of influencing continental, regional and ultimately national policies. Also relevant in this regard are meetings of STCs of the AU, which work closely with departments of the AUC and RECs to prepare AU policies, programmes and projects for submission to the Executive Council, which approves them for adoption by the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

The report makes the following conclusions and recommendations:

## Conclusions

1. The AU and RECs play critical roles in inspiring and shaping national policies and strategies, and are therefore legitimate and critical targets for the 'Agroecology for Climate Action' campaign.
2. Improving agricultural productivity to secure food security and enhance rural development, while adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change are priority concerns of AU, RECs and Member States, which have been articulated in respective policies and strategies.
3. The policy imperative for agriculture and food security in the AU and RECs is to radically transform, modernize and commercialize the sector for increased production and productivity; while the policy imperative for climate change is to promote adaptation as the primary means of addressing its impacts, while also investing in mitigation measures.
4. There is an inherent tension within policies and strategies of the AU and RECs between the commitment to sustainable land and natural resource management on the one hand and the vision of modernization and commercialization of agriculture on the other. The policies envision a highly modernized and industrialized future for African agriculture, and prioritize integration into global value chains and dependence on aid and foreign direct investment (FDI) to achieve it.
5. The push for industrial agriculture and adoption of related technologies such as tractor ploughing, use of herbicides and chemical fertilizers is likely to lead to increased soil degradation and increase emission of GHGs into the atmosphere.
6. Agroecology offers a pathway to modernization of African agriculture that will reconcile the imperatives of increased agricultural production and productivity with those of sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.
7. The main challenge for AFSA and its members is to demonstrate the potential of agroecology for improving production to meet the growing demands for food, fuel and fibre, given that even where policies accept the appropriateness of agroecological practices, they do not consider them adequate to address the urgent need for improved production and productivity.
8. Of the RECs whose policies have been reviewed, only ECOWAS aspires for food sovereignty in its agricultural policies. Yet, even in ECOWAS the tensions between competing policy imperatives is evident in the push for modernization of agriculture based on models of industrial agriculture and associated technologies.
9. In designing and carrying out its campaign, AFSA should be alive to the influence that Green Revolution advocates, such as AGRA, transnational agribusiness investment corporations, multilateral and bilateral donors, private charities, research organization and Western philanthropies exercise over agricultural policy at AU, RECs and national levels, and aim to confront them with appropriate strategies, including by creating alliances with the global agroecology movement.

## Recommendations

1. AFSA should develop a strategy for the campaign informed by this analysis and specifying policy and institutional frameworks to be targeted at AU, RECs and national levels, with messages that are appropriate for the different levels.
2. The campaign should be based on a robust critique of the agricultural modernization model being pushed by policies of the AU and RECs with the support of Green Revolution advocates, to show that it is likely to increase rather than reduce climate change; and a clear demonstration of agroecology as the appropriate approach to modernization of agriculture that will meet the challenge of ensuring increased agricultural productivity for food security and rural development while also maintaining the integrity of soils and ecosystems and contributing to mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
3. AFSA and its members should mobilize public opinion at the national level to exert pressure on political leaders by creating awareness about agroecology among the general public, making them appreciate the connection between the practice and the sustainability of their livelihoods and ecosystems and the threats posed to these by policy responses that are underpinned by imperatives of industrial agriculture.
4. AFSA and its members should create strategic alliances with other like-minded groups such as pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and other Indigenous Peoples (IPs) to ensure that diverse groups within African countries are pushing the agenda for agroecology for climate action.
5. AFSA should support the building of capacity among its members for policy advocacy, influence and monitoring at the three levels, and ensure appropriate allocation of responsibility and coordination for effectiveness.
6. At the national level, the advocacy should target sector ministries responsible for agriculture and rural development, environment and natural resources and climate change; ministries of foreign affairs given their roles as focal points for countries' engagement with RECs and the AU; and legislators.
7. AFSA and its members should consider and make appropriate use of devolved and decentralized systems where these exist as they are close to farmers and grassroots organizations and can be critical allies in influencing national policies.
8. At the AU, the campaign should target DREA as the Department of the AUC that leads efforts for promotion of sustainable environmental management and agricultural development, including adaptation to climate change; while at the RECs the target should be departments, divisions and directorates responsible for these issues (see Table 1)
9. AFSA and its members should make strategic use of periodic forums and meetings of different organs of the AU and RECs, with a particular focus on STCs, AMCEN and other Ministerial and Directors' level meetings convened for purposes of adopting common grounds and establishing consensus among Member States.
10. Given the role and influence of Green Revolution advocates, such as AGRA, transnational agribusiness investment corporations, multilateral and bilateral donors, private charities, research organization and Western philanthropies in pushing the agenda of industrial agriculture in Africa, including through the AU and RECs, AFSA should establish strategic alliances to link its advocacy for agroecology in Africa with the global agroecology movement, with a view to influencing these global actors.



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# 1

## Introduction

This is a report on the regional policy environment for climate change and agriculture in Africa. It has been developed by the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), to identify opportunities and challenges for its 'Agroecology for Climate Action' campaign covering 12 African countries<sup>2</sup>,

the overall goal of which is to have agroecology recognized in national, regional and international policy spaces and frameworks as a strategy for climate change adaptation and mitigation in Africa. The report shall inform the regional level campaign to have agroecology recognized in the African Union (AU) Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) policy spaces.

The report is based on a review of policies, strategies and plans adopted for climate change adaptation, agriculture and rural development by the AU and six RECs, namely: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and South African Development Community (SADC). The review aims to identify entry points for AFSA and its members to engage with the continental and regional frameworks in advocating for integration of agroecology in interventions

### Objectives of the study

1. To create an understanding of existing policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for climate, agriculture, environment and natural resource management at AU and RECs levels.
2. To identify opportunities for AFSA Climate Action campaign to engage with regional climate change policy.
3. To identify opportunities, policy spaces and platforms and recommend strategies for advocacy to integrate agroecology in the regional policy frameworks identified.

<sup>2</sup> The 12 countries are Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe



aimed at addressing the challenges of climate change in Africa, identify challenges to the integration of agroecology in the said frameworks and recommend appropriate strategies for ensuring the success of the campaign. It identifies advocacy spaces and opportunities and recommends strategies that AFSA and its members may use to achieve the campaign objectives (see Box for objectives of the study).

The report is divided into five sections. This section introduces the study, explains its conceptual framework and methodology and presents the structure of the report. Section two reviews the background and context to the study, highlighting the relevance of agroecology to the discourse on agriculture and climate change in Africa. Section three examines the policy context for agriculture and climate change in the AU and analyzes its implications for integration of agroecology in climate action, noting the important role the AU plays in setting the agenda and direction for policy development in the RECs. Section four analyzes policies and strategies of the six RECs for agricultural development and for adaptation to climate change. Attention is drawn at the end of the section to policy opportunities, spaces and platforms for advocacy to integrate agroecology into policies and strategies for climate change adaptation. Section five presents the main conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## 1.1. Conceptual Framework

Agriculture is central to both livelihoods security of citizens and economic development of the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet prospects for the agricultural sector to continue playing its strategic role as the engine of rural transformation is threatened by climate change. Thus, among the most critical challenges for African governments today is how to ensure continued agricultural productivity for food security and development in a context of climate change. As a result, both collectively through the AU and RECs as well as individually, African States are keen to adopt and implement strategies and technologies for agricultural development that hold the promise of addressing these twin challenges.

*Agroecology's holistic approach - incorporating the traditional knowledge and skills of the world's farming communities with cutting edge ecological, agronomic, economic and sociological research has the potential to support strong, democratically based food systems that provide health and livelihoods to small-scale, family farmers and rural communities; as well as environmental benefits.*

FAO, 2016:5

The motivation for this study and the campaign that it shall inform come from concerns that in their search for solutions to the twin challenges of improving agricultural productivity and managing climate change, African countries are opting for measures that, while promising quick solutions, will in the long run cause further environmental damage and undermine the agricultural sector's prospects for securing livelihoods and stimulating economic development. AFSA and its members are particularly concerned that with the support of various actors, African countries are adopting measures for adaptation to climate change that involve industry-focused agricultural development approaches that involve introduction of chemical inputs, GMOs and hybrid seeds and adoption of fossil fuel dependent mechanization in a determined effort to increase production. This approach to agriculture is, in the long run, counter-productive with regards to climate change adaptation and mitigation as it releases carbon stored in the soil, increasing Greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere and causing water pollution.

In place of these industry-based approaches, AFSA calls for the adoption by African countries of agroecology as a more sustainable approach to improving agricultural productivity in a context of increased climate change. Predicated on "a systems approach to agriculture and land use that reinforces the link between agricultural production, ecology and biodiversity" agroecology promotes regeneration, communal ownership of resources and use of local inputs, and minimizes GHG emissions by keeping carbon in the soil (Odhiambo, 2018:373; Pimbert, 2018). Agroecology is a combination of farming practices, scientific discipline and social movement.

As a set of farming practices, agroecology encompasses ecological inputs and processes, and the provision of ecosystem services. Farming practices that use agroecology include organic farming, diversified crop rotations, biological pest control, extensive agro-pastoral systems and agroforestry. These practices contribute to achievement of sustainable agriculture, ensuring increased agricultural productivity without causing harm to the environment and natural resources. They are not fossil-fuel dependent, and thrive on indigenous knowledge and practices, thereby empowering farmers and ensuring economic viability for them and their communities (ARC2020, undated). As a scientific discipline, agroecology takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of agroecosystems, integrating agronomy, ecology, sociology, economics and politics and considering these dimensions at different levels ranging from the local to the global. Agroecology has spawned a global movement of individuals, groups and organizations focused on transforming agri-food towards a more sustainable path.

Agroecology has a direct fit with agriculture in Africa, most of which is practiced by smallholders on family farms, with little or no external inputs, and using traditional knowledge and technologies. These farming practices have persisted in spite of decades of efforts by governments and development partners to 'modernize' African agriculture by transforming it through fossil-dependent agro-industrial practices. The discourse on agriculture and rural development in Africa continues to be shaped by and revolve around these two competing imperatives. The climate crisis has only served to throw the competition into sharp relief, not least because of the intimate link between the prospects of agriculture and the impacts of climate change in Africa.

AFSA's planned Agroecology for Climate Action Campaign shall build on and benefit from increasing recognition and acceptance of agroecology as the appropriate approach for sustainable agriculture in the context of increased climate change. Particularly important in this connection is the recognition

of agroecology by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as a critical pathway to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (FAO, 2018). AFSA will work with its members and other like-minded actors to leverage this recognition and other relevant processes at global, continental, regional and national levels to advocate for integration of agroecology in policies and strategies for adaptation and mitigation to climate change.

This analysis aims to clarify the policy context at the AU and RECs levels to enable AFSA and its members identify available opportunities for the campaign in terms of supportive policies and policy engagement platforms, as well as challenges and constraints that they need to pay attention to if the campaign is to succeed. AFSA appreciates that limited awareness about applicable policies by its members and other elements of civil society is a major constraint to effective advocacy. Through the analysis, AFSA intends to improve the capacity of its members and other civil society organizations (CSOs) to better engage with national, regional and continental frameworks in their push for integration of agroecology in policies and strategies for addressing the challenges of climate change in Africa.

This analysis is informed by the understanding that the intended campaign by AFSA aims to integrate agroecology in both climate change mitigation and adaptation. While climate change mitigation is “an attempt to reduce the rate at which GHGs accumulate in the atmosphere, in order to minimize climate change and its effects’, climate change adaptation involves “adjustments in natural or human systems in response to actual or anticipated changes in climatic conditions and their effects” (Tanner and Horn-Phathanothai, 2014). Agroecology has the potential to contribute to both mitigation and adaptation. Some agroecology innovations, such as shrub based farming and agroforestry help farmers to both adapt to extreme temperatures and erratic rainfall, and to mitigate global warming by sequestering more carbon into soils through photosynthesis and covering the soil.

## 1.2. Methodology and limitations

This study is essentially a desk review. It has involved a review of literature, policies, strategies and programmes of the AU and the RECs that articulate approaches agreed by African countries for promoting agricultural development and addressing the climate crisis. In addition, key relevant instruments agreed at the global level, particularly within the framework of the United Nations (UN) have been reviewed to the extent that they are pertinent to the concerns of the analysis. A complete list of references appears at the end of the study.

The data has been sourced primarily from the internet, in particular the websites of the AU and RECs. Websites of other institutions and organizations working on the twin issues of agriculture and climate change at the continental and regional levels have also been accessed to identify relevant materials. Thus the comprehensiveness of the review is directly dependent on the completeness of the information and data available in the websites that have been used as the source of data. In this connection, access and availability of data has varied across the RECs, as will be evident in the relevant sections. A particular limitation has been language, particularly with respect to the ECCAS website which is in French. The ECCAS website also proved to be the least populated with regards to policies and strategies on agriculture and climate change.

Every effort has been made with the support of AFSA Programme staff to obtain as comprehensive a picture as possible of the prevailing policy context at AU and RECs levels that will bear on the campaign for integration of agroecology in climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions in Africa.

*Agriculture is Africa's greatest potential and can serve as the main engine to propel the continent's growth and transformation*

*Agenda 2063 Framework Document, p.67*

# 2

## Background and context

Agriculture is key to livelihoods of families, as well as economic development of countries in Africa. The population of the continent that lives in rural areas and engages in agriculture is estimated to be in excess of 580 million people. Of this population, about 48 percent derive their livelihoods directly from agriculture. Thus, agriculture is critical to eradication of poverty and hunger, employment creation and security of livelihoods (NEPAD, 2013). Moreover, Africa holds 60 per cent of the world's arable land, meaning that its agriculture is critical to global food security (AUC, 2015).

Most of Africa's agriculture is in the hands of smallholder farmers. It is estimated that smallholder farms represent 80 percent of the all farms in Sub-Saharan Africa, contributing up to 90 percent of the food consumed in the region (Wiggins and Keats, 2013). This means that development of the agricultural sector in Africa is dependent on realizing the full potential of smallholder farming (Kamara et al, 2019). This understanding has informed interventions by development partners as well as African-led initiatives, most notably the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) spearheaded by NEPAD.

Although Africa contributes the least to the causes of global climate change, it is among regions most vulnerable to climate change risks (IPCC, 2007). This is particularly the case in agriculture, where more than 70% of the population practises rain-fed agriculture. Due to climate change, weather patterns are becoming less favourable and less predictable. The frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including droughts, floods, dust storms, severe winds, heat and cold waves, and frost are projected to continue rising, with negative impacts on crop and livestock yields, particularly as a result of increased rainfall variability and patterns.

The devastating impact of climate change on agriculture will have far-reaching implications for livelihoods security and development in Africa given that the continent lacks the safety net of wealthier, industrialized nations. Thus it is that concerns about agricultural transformation in Africa are closely tied to efforts aimed at enhancing resilience through measures aimed at promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The nature of interventions, measures and technologies adopted by governments for mitigation and adaptation to climate change has significant implications for the sustainability of African agriculture. Because climate change is a global agenda, such interventions, measures and technologies tend to emanate from powerful actors on the global stage who then sell them to African countries for application. In agriculture, this means that responses to climate change are largely shaped by interests of industry-focused agriculture, which privilege chemical inputs, fossil fuel dependent mechanization, GMOs and hybrid seeds as means of increasing production. Such approaches and agricultural technologies are not only too costly for most African farmers, they also have deleterious effects on the environment and contribute to increasing GHGs in the atmosphere, thereby exacerbating climate change.

AFSA and its members consider these approaches and technologies to be false solutions to the challenges facing African agriculture in the light of global climate change. Instead, it seeks to promote agroecology as the appropriate approach by which African agriculture may adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Although as a movement, agroecology is only about a decade old in Africa (AFSA, 2016), as a way of farming, it has been practised by farmers and pastoralists in the continent for millennia (FAO, 2016). Agroecology associates the quest for food and nutrition security with culturally appropriate food and food production systems that guarantee the right of farmers to choose what to produce and what to eat.

Agroecology is an appropriate response to climate change for farmers because it is inherently a resilience building approach to land use and natural resource management. Through agroecology farmers are able to take care of soil health, conserve biodiversity and strengthen solidarity within and across communities, practices that are key to enabling effective adaptation and mitigation of the impacts of climate change. By using organic manure, compost, mulches or nitrogen-fixing trees, farmers practicing agroecology enable their soils to hold moisture for long periods, thus mitigating the impacts of drought. Agroecology is focused on increasing the agricultural biodiversity of farms by planting diverse crops, particularly those adapted to climate stresses such as sorghum, millet, cassava, and cowpeas. Through collaborative efforts at the community level including community seed banks, self-help groups and other mutual support arrangements, farmers are able to strengthen solidarity and enhance social cohesion, which enhances resilience (AFSA, 2016).

The potential of agroecology for securing agricultural production against the impacts of climate change has been recognized by key bodies such as FAO. The link between agroecology and climate change has been acknowledged in the global agroecology movement that was launched by FAO in 2014. The international symposium on 'agroecology for food security and nutrition' held in Rome in September 2014 recognized that "agroecology can play a key role in adaptation, enhancing the resilience of the poorest and most vulnerable people living in rural areas of developing countries" (FAO 2016:402).

At the regional level in Africa, frameworks like the AU and the RECs are integral to the process of mainstreaming agroecology into policies, strategies and programmes for addressing the crisis of climate change. These frameworks are becoming increasingly active in inspiring and shaping national level policies and strategies for achievement of sustainable development, which include policies for agricultural development and those on climate change adaptation and mitigation. As such, successful implementation of the AFSA Agroecology for Climate Action Campaign will require effective engagement with the policy processes of these frameworks.

# 3

## **Agriculture and climate change policy at the AU: setting the agenda for RECs**

The starting point for consideration of policies and strategies for agriculture and climate change in Africa is the AU, as it is here that African leaders agree on common approaches to addressing the critical challenges that African countries confront in their quest to improve livelihoods of their citizens and transform their national economies. In this connection, the AU provides a framework for identifying the key issues and challenges, agreeing the strategies and setting the agenda for addressing them, and establishing frameworks to support capacity development, monitoring and knowledge management. Once the Agenda is agreed at the AU level, the RECs then provide support to their Member States to domesticate the imperatives into their national policies for effective implementation. For their part, the RECS also provide a framework for the development of policies and strategies in the different regions, either to adapt what is agreed at the AU to the specific circumstances of the region, or to address particular priorities and challenges unique to the regions.

In this section and the next section, we review respectively policy documents of the AU and the RECs that have a bearing on agriculture and climate change, with a view to establishing their implications for adoption of agroecology for climate action. The review will of necessity focus on a sample of key policies that are of direct relevance to this analysis, as it is not possible or even necessary to review all the policies of any of these institutions.

Although the Constitutive Act of the AU does not specify climate change as an area of common interest to the Member States, it is of direct relevance on account of its implications for food, agricultural and animal resources, livestock production and forestry; water resources and irrigation; and environmental protection, humanitarian action and disaster response and relief, which are three of the areas to common interest to the organization's Member States. Addressing climate change is critical to achievement of the AU's agenda for sustainable rural development, which is overseen by the Specialized Technical Committee on Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters with the support of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) of the AUC.

The relevant policies of the AU for purposes of this analysis fall into three major categories, namely, general overall framework; agricultural sector policies; and climate change adaptation and mitigation policies. The policy instruments under the three categories are, respectively, Agenda 2063; Maputo and Malabo Declarations, and CAADP; and the Declaration on Climate Change and Development, and



the African Strategy on Climate Change. Reference is also made to three key international instruments which AU Member States have signed up to and within the framework of which they ascribe to commitments that touch on agriculture and climate change, namely, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

### 3.1. Overall strategic framework: Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 is the Continental strategic framework for realization of the AU's vision for an integrated, people-centered, prosperous Africa that is at peace with itself. It was developed in response to a directive issued by the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU held in Addis Ababa in May 2013. It was developed within the framework of AU's 50th Anniversary celebrations to set priorities that the AU shall focus on during the next 50 years, informed by lessons learnt during its first 50 years of existence (AUC, 2013).

Agriculture and climate change fall within the first of seven aspirations for the Africa of 2063, which is stated as "prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development"<sup>3</sup>. Among other things, this aspiration envisages an Africa characterized by productive agriculture, healthy ecosystems, well-preserved environment and resilience to climate change. Among the specific areas of focus for realizing this aspiration are modernization of agriculture for improved production and productivity, sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, and combating desertification and climate change.

The priority for agriculture is to radically transform, modernize and commercialize the sector for increased production and productivity and value addition in order to enable the continent feed itself and become a net food exporter. With regards to climate change, the priority is to reduce vulnerability using mainly adaptive measures.

### 3.2. Policies on Agriculture

Following decades of limited attention, interest and investment, agriculture returned to the top of the global development agenda at the turn of the 21st century, and particularly in the aftermath of the 2008 food crisis. In Africa, this trend coincided with the rebranding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the AU. Where the OAU had spearheaded political liberation and the ending of apartheid, the AU sought to consolidate Africa's political independence by focusing on development and economic transformation and strengthening Africa's standing in the community of nations. In this connection, agriculture was recognized as a critical engine for economic transformation of the continent. Adoption of the Maputo Declaration, the launching of CAADP and the Malabo Declarations are the key to this renewed focus on agriculture as the basis for development and economic transformation.

#### 3.2.1. Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, 2003

This Declaration (popularly known as the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa) was adopted by the AU Heads of State and Government at the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Maputo in July 2003. It signaled the renewed commitment by the African leaders to the revitalization of the agricultural sector to enhance food security, security of livelihoods and economic development, placing emphasis on removing constraints to agricultural production and marketing by investments in soil fertility, water management, infrastructure development and control of pests and diseases. The commitment to allocate at least 10% of national budgetary resources for

implementation of policies on agriculture and rural development further demonstrated the resolve to turn a new leaf in African agriculture.

Of particular relevance to this analysis is the fact that the Declaration called for “special policies and strategies targeted at small scale and traditional farmers in rural areas” thereby reaffirming the critical role of traditional farmers and farming approaches to agricultural production and productivity in Africa. Furthermore, the Declaration specified small scale and traditional farmers among the major interest groups for consultations and engagement at national and regional levels on all aspects of agricultural and food production.

### 3.2.2. Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

Although it is a programme rather than a policy or strategy, CAADP is important for this analysis because it is the main mechanism that Africa leaders have agreed on “for mobilization of resources for investment in agricultural growth and rural development”<sup>4</sup>. Endorsed at the same Heads of State Summit held in Maputo in July 2003 as a program of NEPAD, its overall goal is to help African countries reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculture-led development, which eliminates hunger, reduces poverty and food insecurity, and enables expansion of exports. The pursuit of this goal is underpinned by an overall sector strategy of sustainable development coupled with preservation of the natural resource base (NEPAD, 2003). Moreover, CAADP identifies the ‘vagaries of climate and consequent risks’ among the challenges to achieving a productive agriculture.

CAADP interventions are organized around four pillars, three of which are directly relevant to this analysis. The three are: extending the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems; increasing food supply, reducing hunger, and improving responses to food emergency crises; and improving agriculture research, technology dissemination and adoption. Land and water management are key to climate change adaptation. Crosscutting themes of direct relevance are: academic and professional training, and support to farmers’ associations; and information and knowledge systems.

The CAADP approach to agricultural modernization in Africa is focused on what is for the most part a “productivist” model that contrary to the claims of the programme, will not promote sustainable development and preserve the natural resource base, and instead will increase emission of GHGs into the atmosphere and lead to increased climate change. Increased use of tractors in ploughing and application of herbicides and chemical fertilizers degrade the soil and add to emissions. There is an inherent contradiction in purporting to promote sustainable land management while pushing for the adoption of technologies that contribute to soil and environmental degradation. Agroecology offers a win-win alternative to this approach.

The CAADP framework provides opportunities for agroecology with its emphasis on support to smallholders and traditional farmers, which it sees as holding the potential for increased productivity with the right kind of investments and policy facilitation. National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) for CAADP include climate adaptation through climate-smart measures for soil and water management, agroforestry and improved pasture management. Agroecology provides scope for adoption of sustainable integrated soil fertility and land and water management practices envisaged by CAADP. Agroecology can also constitute an integral component of the integrated resource management theme of the research pillar.

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4 Maputo Declaration, para 5

### 3.2.3. Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods

The year 2014, which marked the 10th anniversary of the adoption of CAADP, was designated by the AU as the African Year of Agriculture and Food Security. The theme of the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June that year was “*Transforming Africa’s Agriculture for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods through Harnessing Opportunities for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development*”. The Assembly adopted the Malabo Declaration to reaffirm and build on commitments of the Maputo Declaration with the benefit of experience gained in ten years of implementing CAADP.

The Declaration comprises of eight commitments, including a commitment to ending hunger in Africa by 2025, and a commitment to enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and other related risks. The leaders resolve to encourage and facilitate increased consumption of locally produced food items as one of the strategies for realizing the commitment to ending hunger. Although it makes reference to “farm, pastoral and fisher households” as targets of resilience building, this Declaration makes no reference to traditional farmers and speaks of “smallholder agriculture” rather than smallholder farmers, unlike the Maputo Declaration.

The Declaration ends with a call for action that includes an appeal to “the African stakeholders, including farmers, pastoralists, fishers...” to support and work for realization of the provisions of the Declaration, while also taking advantage of the huge opportunities that it presents. AFSA and its members can take advantage of this appeal to engage with the processes related to the implementation of the Declaration.

### 3.2.4. Global commitments: Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on Biological Diversity

Apart from commitments arising from the instruments adopted within the framework of the AU and RECs, African countries also ascribe to commitments with respect to agriculture and rural development that are negotiated at the global level. Notable among these are the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Convention on Biological Diversity, both of which were negotiated within the framework of the UN.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by Heads of State and Government and High Representatives of Member States of the UN in September 2015. The Agenda articulates 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets for the global community to be achieved by 2030, building on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and completing what they did not achieve.

SDG2 aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Agroecology has the potential to make direct contribution to achievement of four of the seven targets of the goal. These relate to ending hunger and ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round; doubling agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale producers, particularly women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers; ensuring sustainable food production systems and implementing resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, help maintain ecosystems, and strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, while improving land and soil quality; and maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species. This means that support to agroecology provides a pathway for African countries individually and through the AU and RECs to contribute to achievement of SDG2 and its targets.

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) is one of the three Rio Conventions,

so-called because they were agreed at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992<sup>5</sup>. It seeks to promote the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The Convention commits Contracting Parties to protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements<sup>6</sup>. It also makes provisions regarding the handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits<sup>7</sup>. The role of agroecology in biodiversity conservation means that the Convention can be used as a platform for advocating for its adoption.

### **3.3. Policies for addressing the challenges of climate change**

As noted in the review of Agenda 2063, climate change poses a major threat to livelihoods security and development prospects for Africa. Concerns about climate change relate to its impacts on agriculture and on environment and natural resource management. Thus, policy responses to climate change within the AU and RECs are articulated in the context of agriculture and sustainable natural resource management. The two major documents in this regard within the AU are the Declaration on Climate Change and Development in Africa, 2007 and the African Strategy on Climate Change, 2014.

#### **3.3.1. Declaration on Climate Change and Development in Africa, 2007**

The Declaration was adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the AU at the 8th Ordinary Session of their Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2007. It recognizes the risks that climate change poses to the future well-being of African populations, ecosystems and socio-economic progress, the vulnerability of economic and production systems to climate change and climate variability, and the continent's low mitigation and response capacities.

Through the Declaration, African leaders commit to measures aimed at addressing these challenges and establishing appropriate frameworks for sustained adaptation and mitigation to climate change. They commit, among other things, to integrate climate change and climate change adaptation strategies into national and sub-regional development policies, programmes and activities; to undertake targeted awareness raising amongst policy and decision makers as well as civil society with the view to ensuring that climate change considerations are taken into account in all sustainable development initiatives; and to develop and/or strengthen research and development in climate change in Africa to increase the continent's resilience and adaptation capacities.

#### **3.3.2. African Strategy on Climate Change, 2014**

This Strategy was developed by the AUC in compliance with a request made by the AU Executive Council at its 15th Ordinary Session held in Sirte, Libya in June 2009 for the Commission, in collaboration with partners, to develop a comprehensive African Strategy on Climate Change. A draft Strategy was published in May 2014. The 15th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) took note of the draft for approval and onward transmission to the next session of Conference for possible endorsement and thereafter submission to the Summit of the AU for possible adoption. Although it has not been adopted, it gives clear indications of the thinking of the AU as an organization regarding the challenge of climate change and strategies for addressing them.

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5 The other two of the Conventions are UNFCCC and UNCCD

6 Article 10(c)

7 Article 19

The Strategy, which was designed to cover the 20 year period between 2015 and 2035, provides the AU, the RECs, Member States and other stakeholders with strategic guidance to enable them effectively address climate change challenges in Africa. It is organized around four thematic pillars, namely, climate change governance; research, education, awareness raising and advocacy; mainstreaming and integrating climate change imperatives in planning, budgeting and development processes; and promotion of national, regional and international cooperation.

The goal of the Strategy is to provide a framework for integrated and coordinated mechanisms by AU member states and other stakeholders to address challenges and opportunities associated with climate change in Africa, so as to secure livelihoods against the impacts of climate change. It is informed by the commitment of African governments to implement climate change programmes in such a way as to alleviate poverty and achieve sustainable development. Thus, its overall objective is to enable Africa achieve “climate-smart” socio-economic development.

The Strategy envisages recourse to indigenous systems as a source of knowledge and innovation for adaptation and mitigation. It also contains references to case studies that demonstrate the use of indigenous knowledge in agricultural production and natural resource management, including the use of indigenous seeds. However, the Strategy does not clearly articulate measures for integrating traditional knowledge, production systems and institutions in responding to climate change. Nevertheless, the Strategy provides a framework for AFSA and its members to engage with the AU and other stakeholders in advocating for recognition and integration of agroecology in climate change action.

### 3.3.3. Global commitments: UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement

UNFCCC provides the framework for global cooperation under the umbrella of the UN to address the crisis of climate change. Article 2 of the Convention states that its overall objective is to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. Thus, the Convention makes a direct link between climate change and agricultural productivity as well as sustainable economic development.

All African countries are Parties to the Convention, and both individually and within the framework of the AU and RECs they implement initiatives and partnerships to mobilize technical, material and institutional resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Among the areas in which Parties to the Convention commit to cooperate include development and elaboration of integrated plans for agriculture<sup>8</sup>.

The Paris Agreement was adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) of UNFCCC held in Paris, France in December 2015 to enhance implementation of the Convention by strengthening global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. In the Preamble, the Parties to the Agreement recognize “the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change”.

Each party commits to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve, and to pursue domestic mitigation measures, with

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8 Article 4(e)

the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions<sup>9</sup>. The Parties further commit to adaptation through approaches that take into account “traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate”<sup>10</sup>.

NDCs have become key strategic instruments for national planning to reduce emissions, and provide a critical platform for integrating agroecology into climate adaptation action. Together with National Platforms for Adaptation to Climate Change, they constitute a major opportunity for advocacy and policy change, particularly as all countries are set to revise their NDCs in the period leading up to COP 26 due to take place in Glasgow in November 2021. Agroecology offers a pathway to effective use of ‘Nature Based Solutions’ to draw down emissions<sup>11</sup>.

### 3.4. Implications for agroecology in AU agriculture and climate change policies

The extent to which AU policies on agriculture and climate change permit the integration of agroecology is a pointer to the potential for such integration in policies of the RECs and ultimately those of individual countries. RECs essentially implement policies of the AU with necessary adaptations to respond to regional specificities, and within the context of CAADP, regional programmes complement national programmes, “while taking into account the spillovers and regional economies of scale in investment and policy” and to facilitate regional collaboration and synergies, the RECs articulate common principles to be taken into account in national policy designs (ECOWAS 2017:8). Thus, there is a degree of policy coherence from the AU through the RECs to the national level.

In as much as AU policies make positive statements with regards to indigenous knowledge and production systems, there is an inherent tension discernible in its policies between acknowledgement of the relevance and appropriateness of traditional systems on the one hand and commitment to imperatives of modernization and commercialization of agriculture on the other hand. The policies recognize that traditional systems of production and natural resource management are sustainable, but they also envision a highly modernized and industrialized future for African agriculture as the only way to meet the food security demands of a growing population and enhance economic development. The quest for Africa to be integrated into global value chains, combined with dependence on aid and foreign direct investment (FDI) to modernize agriculture privilege approaches of industrial agriculture over traditional farming methods in the implementation of policies.

Thus, for instance, Agenda 2063 envisages a future in which Africa is a major player in the global agro-food economy, having made transition to a low carbon economy through climate smart agriculture. It also anticipates that Africa embraces agricultural biotechnology “which utilize gene-based techniques to improve agriculture productivity, farm management practices, produce more drought, water logging, and disease resistant varieties that help minimize the high costs of agrochemicals, pesticides, and water”<sup>12</sup>.

Nevertheless, the recognition of traditional farming and natural resource management systems in

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9 Article 4(3)

10 Article 7(5)

11 The Special IPCC Report on Land and Climate Change (<https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>) recognizes the potential of “Nature Based Solutions” for drawing down emissions, and though it only mentions agroforestry, there is need to view this potential within the wider framework of Agroecology

12 p.115

the policies provides an entry point for advocating for integration of agroecology in climate action. Indeed, given the prevalence of smallholder agriculture and traditional production systems in Africa, integrating these farmers and their production systems in policy implementation will be critical to realization of the vision of the AU for improved productivity. Moreover, integration of agroecology will be key to achievement of specific targets such as halting and reversing land degradation and desert encroachment to reduce loss of biodiversity and natural habitats by at least 90per cent, and at least 90per cent of farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk practice climate resilient production systems by 2035.

Even though the dream of industrialized agriculture appeals to African policy makers, there is also a clear recognition that “the nature of Africa’s climatic variability and the inherent fragility of its soils pose natural limits to the extent of intensified agricultural production” and that “these limits have to be recognized and subsequent measures applied for mitigation through research and innovation” (NEPAD, 2003:25). Thus, the link between climate change and agriculture provides a break on the ambitions for industrialization of agriculture, and a unique opportunity for policy makers to seriously consider the possibilities that agroecology offers for improved agricultural productivity while sustaining the health and integrity of the ecosystem.

There is a clear need for African policy makers to reconcile these competing imperatives, and agroecology is the alternative that will meet this need. AFSA advocacy should be based on a robust critique of the modernization path being pursued by African policy makers, as it clearly contradicts the vision for sustainable land and natural resource management and climate resilience. The campaign should demonstrate why agroecology provides a more appropriate pathway to modernization of African agriculture that will improve production to meet the growing demands for food, fuel and fibre, while conserving the environment and building resilience to climate change.

# 4

## Agriculture and climate change policy in the RECs

There are eight RECs in Africa, the AU having suspended recognition of any additional ones since 2016<sup>13</sup>. This analysis is focused on six of the eight RECs<sup>14</sup>. The Protocol on Relations between the AU and RECs defines the role of the AU and that of the RECs and their relationship with due regard to the principle of subsidiarity. It stipulates for cooperation among the RECs and between them and the Union through the coordination and harmonization of their policies, measures, programmes and activities in all fields and sectors, including agriculture and environment.

The RECs spearhead implementation of AU policies at the regional level. Thus, Agenda 2063 stipulates that the RECs will serve as the fulcrum for its implementation at the regional level and for this purpose, each REC will adapt the Agenda 2063 results framework to regional realities, facilitate and coordinate implementation by member states and develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework at the regional level. The RECs are mandated to play the same role with respect to the policies on agriculture and climate change. In the remainder of this section, we review the policies of the six RECs on agriculture and climate change to establish the extent to which they can provide entry points for integration of agroecology in climate action. In each case, we focus on the most important policy instruments.

### 4.1. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

The Treaty establishing COMESA, a grouping of 21 states from Eastern and Southern Africa<sup>15</sup>, was ratified in December 1994 following a decision to transform the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States into a Common Market. It promotes economic integration of the region through implementation of common policies and programmes aimed at achieving sustainable growth

<sup>13</sup> Decision on the Moratorium on the Recognition of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), DOC. EX.CL/278 (IX), Assembly/AU/Dec.112 (VII)

<sup>14</sup> The two RECs not included in the analysis are the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU/UMA) and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD)

<sup>15</sup> These are Burundi, Comoros, D.R. Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe



and development. Among its areas of concern is to promote cooperation in agriculture and rural development through adoption of a common agricultural policy to enhance regional food sufficiency, trade in agricultural commodities, research and extension, among others.

COMESA Agricultural Policy (CAP) is in line with CAADP, and aims to achieve the twin objectives of sustainable food security and enhanced regional integration. Thus, COMESA spearheads implementation of CAADP in the region, and to this end, facilitated Member States to set regional priorities based on the four pillars of the Programme, leading to the development of COMESA Regional CAADP Compact. The Compact includes a commitment to promote sustainable agricultural practices through technologies that include soil conservation measures and the optimum use of fertilizers. COMESA also coordinates and facilitates implementation of strategic interventions that individual member countries cannot achieve on their own, and has for this purpose developed the CAADP Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP) for the period 2017 - 2021. The RAIP prioritizes trans-boundary issues to facilitate improved implementation of National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) within the region.

COMESA implements programmes and projects aimed at strengthening adaptation and mitigation in Member States in line with AU imperatives. Beginning 2008, it implemented COMESA Climate Change Initiative with funding support from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), to facilitate effective engagement of its member States in UNFCCC negotiations, and development of a regional position on climate change, among other things.

Between 2010 and 2016, COMESA collaborated with EAC and SADC in implementing the Tripartite Climate Change Programme, the objective of which was to address the impacts of climate change in the COMESA-SADC-EAC regions through successful adaptation and mitigation actions that also build economic and social resilience for present and future generations. The programme sought to enable Member States of the three RECs to increase investments in climate-resilient and carbon-efficient agriculture, with linkages to forestry, land use and energy. The tripartite approach to addressing climate change is poised to continue as it is based on the AU-NEPAD development framework and aligned with CAADP objectives and priorities.

There is scope for advocating for integration of agroecology in COMESA agriculture and climate change policies, as they are underpinned by recognition of the critical role of smallholder producers and a commitment to sustainable natural resource management. There is experience within the region demonstrating that "implementation of Conservation Agriculture (CA) and sustainable land management practices increases the resilience of the agricultural sector to the shocks of climate change as well as ensuring the attainment of improved livelihoods and food security" (COMESA, EAC and SADC, 2011:12).

The main challenge for AFSA and its members in advocating for integration of agroecology in climate action derive from the strong inclination in the policies for adoption of technologies and approaches that are drawn from industrial agriculture. Through the COMPACT and the RAIP, it is evident that COMESA sees in fertilizers and High Yielding Varieties (HYVs) of seeds the answer to declining soil fertility and low productivity. The policies seem to view traditional production methods, including agroecology as inappropriate to these challenges. Thus, in pushing for agroecology, it will be critical to demonstrate the potential that it holds for responding effectively to the challenges of increased productivity, while also preserving the environment.

## 4.2. East African Community (EAC)

The EAC groups together the six East African countries of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda on the basis of provision of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African

Community<sup>16</sup>. Chapters 18 and 19 of the Treaty provide respectively for cooperation on agriculture and food security, and cooperation on environment and natural resources. It is within these two areas of cooperation that there is scope for engaging with the EAC on integration of agroecology in climate action.

Cooperation in agriculture and food security aims to ensure a common agricultural policy; food sufficiency within the Community; increased production of agricultural produce for domestic consumption, exports and as inputs into agro-based industries; and improved post-harvest handling, storage and processing of produce. Through cooperation in environment and natural resource management, Member States aim to preserve, protect and enhance the quality of the environment; contribute towards the sustainability of the environment; ensure sustainable utilization of natural resources; and jointly develop and adopt water resources conservation and management policies that ensure sustenance and preservation of ecosystems.

EAC initiatives for responding to the challenges of climate change are designed and implemented within the framework of these two areas of cooperation. Although the Community has policy, strategy and mater plan on climate change, its policies and strategies on agriculture and nutrition security also recognize address the link between climate change, agriculture and food and nutrition security.

#### 4.2.1. EAC Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Strategy

Both the Policy and Strategy were published in November 2006. The two documents establish a framework to enable the EAC pursue one of the main objectives behind its formation, namely, to ensure sustainable agricultural development and foster economic growth. The Policy articulates the goals, objectives and priorities to be pursued, while the Strategy spells out the strategic interventions that will be pursued to implement the Policy. The two documents operationalize the Community's vision for the agricultural sector, which as stated in EAC Vision 2030 is the promotion of sustainable agricultural production and productivity in the region by strengthening regional cooperation and increasing public and private investment in sustainable agriculture, land management and rural development (EAC, 2016).

The specific objectives of the Policy that are relevant to this analysis include: to achieve food security and improve standards of nutrition by increasing food output, quality and availability; to improve productivity of land and labour through development of new and appropriate technologies; and to promote sustainable use and management of natural resources in order to conserve the environment. Among the policy statements, there are two that can potentially be used as entry points for agroecology. On food security, the Policy commits the EAC and its Member States to "promote research and development of traditional food crops and food processing"<sup>17</sup>; while on land environment, it commits them to "promote sustainable agricultural practices that are environmentally friendly"<sup>18</sup>. Agroecology is an integral part of the production of traditional foods and is an agricultural practice that is sustainable and environmentally friendly.

The Strategy classifies intervention for the agriculture and rural development into five broad categories, of which two – production, and natural resource conservation – are directly relevant to this analysis<sup>19</sup>. The emphasis in production is to ensure increased agricultural productivity through sustainable production methods that build resilience and reduce risks. This is closely linked to sustainable natural resource management. These imperatives are further reinforced by the EAC CAADP Results Framework

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16 As amended on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2006 and 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2007

17 4.1.3 at p.9

18 4.14.3 at p.20

19 The other categories are: trade and commerce; services and infrastructure; and institutional arrangements

as outlined in the EAC RAIP 2018-2025.

Unfortunately, the Strategy does not shed much light on what is to be done, as most of it simply repeats what is stated in the Policy. What is clear however, is that the approach of the EAC to increasing production and productivity is largely dictated by imperatives borrowed from industrialized agriculture. This is evident in the manner in which the Community's Food and Nutrition Security Policy, Strategy and Action Plan all take globalization of food systems as a given without any interrogation or critique of its implications for food systems in the region. In common with the AU and most of the RECs the policies of the Community make no reference at all to food sovereignty, even just as an issue in the global food and nutrition security discourse.

The approach of the EAC Strategy to research on high yielding and drought resistant crops is to "encourage Partner States to take advantage of recent research and development breakthroughs such as tissue culture, modern biotechnology, embryo transfer and agroforestry"<sup>20</sup>. While taking advantage of recent research breakthroughs is a positive idea, the Strategy does not interrogate the appropriateness of some of these innovations and their implications for sustainable agriculture in the context of African smallholder production.

Nevertheless, to the extent that the EAC recognizes the importance of smallholder producers for the prospects of the agricultural sector, commits to encouraging the production and consumption of traditional foods, and is intent on agricultural practices that ensure sustainability of the environment and natural resources, there is scope for engaging with it and its Member States on agroecology and its appropriateness for meeting these objectives. Once again, the challenge for AFSA and its members will be to demonstrate that through agroecology it is possible for the EAC and its Member States to increase production and productivity for food security and exports, and achieve rural development in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner as envisaged in EAC Vision 2050.

#### **4.2.2. EAC Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Master Plan**

The EAC's strategic framework for addressing the challenges of climate change comprises the Climate Change Policy, Climate Change Strategy, and the Climate Change Master Plan 2011-2031. Also relevant is the Lake Victoria Basin Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2023. The overall aim of the strategic framework is to promote sustainable development in the region through harmonized and coordinated climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, programmes and actions.

The East African Community Climate Change Policy was developed following a directive issued by the 11th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State of the EAC held in Arusha in November, 2009. It is an authoritative statement by Partner States collectively affirming recognition of climate change as an urgent and critical problem and stating their commitment to address it through specified actions. Its overall objective is to guide Partner States and other stakeholders on preparation and implementation of measures to address climate change in the region while assuring sustainable social and economic development. The Policy draws on and is aligned to the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC, the Protocol on Environment and Natural Resources Management, the Protocol on Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin, and the UNFCCC, among others to ensure integrated, harmonized and multi-sectoral approach to responding to climate change in the region.

The Policy privileges adaptation as the primary means of responding to climate change, and calls for mainstreaming of climate change issues into national development plans. Adaptation is to be promoted by designing and implementing measures that improve adaptive capacity and resilience of the region to the negative impacts of climate change. The Policy recognizes the potential of indigenous technical

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20 5.1 at p.65

knowledge in responding to climate change and calls for capacity building support to harness it.

Following the publication of the Climate Change Policy, the Community developed the EAC Climate Change Strategy for the period 2011-2016. The Strategy sets out the direction and scope for implementation of the Policy over the five-year period, specifying actions and resources needed to achieve its goal. We have not been able to establish whether the EAC has any plans to update the Strategy, as the timeframe for it has long lapsed. Its provisions nevertheless continue to be relevant.

The goal of the Strategy is to contribute to successful implementation of the Climate Change Policy. For agriculture, Strategy proposes measures that include developing adaptation framework for agriculture to improve agricultural productivity and enhance food security; promoting sustainable agricultural practices through land management, planning and optimal utilization of agricultural resources; supporting development of joint research programs on drought, floods, pests and disease resistant crops and livestock; and promoting sustainable land management practices, including CA and improved production systems such as organic farming.

These measures for the agricultural sector are conducive to integration of agroecology, particularly as the Strategy also calls for promotion of harnessing and integration of indigenous technical knowledge into modern knowledge systems for agricultural production and climate change adaptation.

The EAC Climate Change Master Plan 2011-2031 provides an operational regional framework for adapting to and mitigating climate change in the EAC region in line with the aforementioned policies and strategies. The Master Plan is a comprehensive blue-print taking a long term view of challenges, opportunities and priority actions to combat climate change in the region. Among its objectives are: to provide an effective and integrated response to regional climate change adaptation; to enhance the mitigation potential of Partner States in the energy, infrastructure, agriculture and forestry sectors; and to streamline and harmonize trans-boundary mitigation and adaptation interventions.

The Master Plan draws on the Policy and Strategy for regional level interventions for responding to climate change. Of relevance to this analysis are interventions for agriculture and food security; and ecosystems services and biodiversity. It provides for incorporation of "indigenous/traditional/local knowledge" on adaptation into "modern/scientific knowledge"<sup>21</sup>. But it also prioritizes climate-smart agriculture (CSA) as an approach for the agricultural sector to respond to climate change.

The Lake Victoria Basin Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (LVB CCASAP) also privileges CSA as an adaptation option for the agricultural sector. The strategy, which was developed on the basis of a Vulnerability, Impacts, and Adaptation Assessment (VIA) for the region and the basin aims to build resilience in the LVB at the regional, transboundary, and national levels; compliment ongoing national and regional climate change efforts and priorities; encourage new and innovative private sector support and investments; achieve multiple adaptation benefits across sectors; open opportunities for significant medium-term impact at regional, national, and community levels; and build strong institutional capacity to implement adaptation programs.

The LVB CCASAP calls for building the evidence base to promote CSA, including conducting a cost-benefit analysis and participatory evaluation of CSA best practices in the region. While the objective of this is clearly to promote CSA, the opportunity can be used to generate discussions about the merits and demerits of CSA relative to agroecology as an approach to adapting agriculture to climate change.

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<sup>21</sup> p.72

### 4.3. Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

ECCAS is comprised of 11 central African states<sup>22</sup>. It was formed in October 1983 and in October 1999. It was inactive between 1992 and 1998 due to financial constraints and conflicts involving a number of its Member States. A Summit of the Heads of State and Government held in Libreville, Gabon in 1998 decided to revitalize it, and in October 1999 it was formally designated as a REC of the AU.

The Treaty Establishing ECCAS specifies agriculture and natural resources among the fields in which the Community shall promote and strengthen harmonious cooperation and balanced and self-sustained development among its Member States. Chapter VII of the Treaty provides for cooperation in agriculture with a view to raising the standard of living of rural populations through increased agricultural productivity, creating job opportunities and enhancing food security. Provisions and mechanisms governing such cooperation are detailed in the Protocol on Cooperation in Agricultural Development between Member States of the ECCAS. Similarly, there is a Protocol on Cooperation in Natural Resources between Member States of ECCAS<sup>23</sup>.

It has not been possible to undertake a comprehensive analysis of policies and strategies of ECCAS on agriculture and climate change due to inability to access policy and strategy instruments of the Community. Internet research by the Consultant and efforts to access the documents through personal contacts have borne no fruit, as have attempts to access them through AFSA in the region.

### 4.4. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

ECOWAS, a grouping of fifteen West African countries<sup>24</sup> has been in existence since 1975. It was formed to “promote co-operation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African Continent”<sup>25</sup>. The vision of ECOWAS places emphasis on sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, as it seeks to *create a borderless, peaceful, prosperous and cohesive region, built on good governance and where people have the capacity to access and harness its enormous resources through the creation of opportunities for sustainable development and environmental preservation*. It pursues this vision and its objectives by promoting harmonization and co-ordination of national policies and development and implementation of integration programmes, projects and activities in, among other areas, food, agriculture and natural resources.

#### 4.4.1. ECOWAP: Agricultural Policy of West African States

Chapter IV of ECOWAS Treaty makes detailed provisions on cooperation among Member States in agriculture and food, with emphasis on *inter alia*, ensuring food security and increasing production and productivity in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry to improve conditions of work and generate employment opportunities in rural areas. Also relevant for our purposes is chapter VI of the Treaty, which makes provisions regarding cooperation in environment and natural resources, with a view to protecting, preserving and enhancing the natural environment of the region and cooperating in the event of natural disasters.

22 Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe.

23 We have not been able to trace copies of the Protocols so far

24 The Member States of ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote D’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo

25 Article 3(1)

The Treaty makes no reference to indigenous knowledge, technologies or production and management systems or their potential to contribute to agricultural development, food security and environment and natural resource management. However, the Agricultural Policy of the West African States (ECOWAP) adopted in 2005 contains a specific objective on “reducing food dependence and **achieving food sovereignty** (emphasis added). In the Policy food sovereignty “refers to the region’s right and duty to develop and implement its own food policies based on reducing the dependency on imports of strategic products in food systems and a positive agricultural and agri-food trade balance” (ECOWAS, 2017:25).

ECOWAP recognizes that climate change poses a critical challenge to the vision of increasing agricultural productivity in West Africa while protecting the natural resources base. As it is the framework for implementation of CAADP in the ECOWAS region, and informs the design and implementation of the RAIP and National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs), the fact that ECOWAP seeks to achieve food sovereignty provides a critical entry point for advocacy to integrate agroecology in agricultural as well as climate change policies, programmes and projects at both regional and country levels.

Yet, inasmuch as the commitment to food sovereignty in ECOWAP is a positive indicator for agroecology, the region is subject to the same tensions that exist at the continental level and in other RECs between the imperatives of modernization and industrialization of agriculture on the one hand and the need to ensure sustainable agricultural practices that preserve the integrity of ecosystems on the other hand. Thus, as has been noted with respect to the AU and other RECs, while there is a shared vision for sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation and adaptation to climate change, some of approaches and technologies sought to be employed may undermine the vision or aspects of it. The potential of agroecology to contribute to the totality of the vision should be a major selling point in the AFSA advocacy.

#### 4.4.2. Climate Change in ECOWAS

ECOWAS Environmental Policy of 2008 is the foundational document that informs interventions to promote sustainable management of the environment and natural resources. Article 3 of the Supplementary Act relating to the Policy stipulates that it “shall concern all activities relating to the management of natural resources ..., preservation of the eco-system and biological diversity, prevention and management of technological risks, the climate, pollutions and other environmental risks”. The overall objective of the Policy is to reverse environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources, ameliorate the quality of the living environment, and conserve biological diversity, to ensure a healthy and productive environment and improve the well-being of the ecosystem and the population of the region. It identifies the major environmental and natural resource management challenges for the region, and articulates strategies for addressing them.

The Policy recognizes the relevance of traditional practices to protection, conservation and development of natural resources subject to innovations to address emerging challenges. The Supplementary Act to the Policy further states that “Member States recognize the identity of local communities, their culture and interest in the field of sustainable management of natural resources”<sup>26</sup>. This provides an entry point for advocacy to have agroecology integrated into the policies and programmes for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Although ECOWAS does not have a specific policy or strategy on climate change, the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in all its policies and programmes as stipulated in the Environmental Policy ensures that climate change concerns are addressed in all its work. Moreover, it also implements programmes specifically aimed at addressing the challenges of climate change. For instance, we have

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26 Supplementary Act relating to the ECOWAS Environmental Policy Article 7(2)(j)

seen reference to the Strategic Sub-Regional Program to Reduce Vulnerability and Enhance Adaptation to Climate Change in West Africa, the strategic objective of which was to develop and strengthen the resilience and adaptability of the sub-region to climate change and extreme weather events.

That ECOWAS does not have a specific policy or strategy on climate change means that climate change is addressed within the context of sectors, of which the most directly relevant is the Sector on Agriculture and Environment. This means that advocacy for agroecology has to take a sector approach, which may in fact be to the advantage of AFSA and its members, as it means dealing with technical experts on agriculture, environment and natural resource management, with whom it should be easier to discuss agroecology. However, as has been stated several times, it is important to be alive to the tension within the AU and RECs between the imperatives of modernization and industrialization of agriculture and concerns for sustainable environment and natural resource management.

## 4.5. Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

IGAD is a grouping of eight countries<sup>27</sup> of the Horn of Africa. It was established in 1986 as the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) and transformed into the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in 1995. It was established to coordinate the Member States in responding to the challenges of droughts, food insecurity and environmental degradation. From outset, its primary focus has been on securing agricultural production, food security and sustainable natural resource management in a context defined by increasingly frequent and severe incidences of drought and other extreme weather events.

Food security, natural resource management, agriculture and environment, and climate are key pillars of IGAD's mandate. The aims and objectives set out in the Agreement Establishing IGAD include; to harmonize policies with regard to, *inter alia*, agriculture, and natural resources; achieve regional food security; encourage and assist efforts of Member States to collectively combat drought; and initiate and promote programmes and projects for sustainable development of natural resources and environmental protection. The importance IGAD attaches to agriculture, food security, addressing impacts of climate change (particularly drought) and sustainable environment and natural resource management is evident in the fact that the first eight areas of cooperation specified in Article 13A of the Agreement relate to these areas.

### 4.5.1. IGAD and agriculture

IGAD's work on agriculture and food security is spearheaded by its Agriculture and Environment Division. The IGAD Regional Strategy for the period 2016-2020 adopts a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach, with a strategic thrust on agriculture livestock, fisheries and food security the focus of which is "to boost agricultural production and sustain management of natural resources and the environment to ensure resilient livelihoods and sustained economic growth". This work falls under Pillar 1 of the Strategy on Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, the strategic objective of which is to promote attainment of food security and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, while building resilience to natural disasters such as drought and other climatic and economic shocks.

IGAD facilitated its Member States to develop and sign the IGAD CAADP Compact, identifying action areas for acceleration of agriculture-led economic growth of the region that require regional approach, especially in transboundary areas. A RAIP was developed to support the implementation of the Regional Compact. The vision of the RAIP is stated as "to contribute to the IGAD's vision through restoration of

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27 Djibouti, Eritrea Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda

sustainable agricultural growth, food security and rural development in the region"<sup>28</sup>. Its objectives include to intensify sustainable production systems, and to support the capacity development of actors along value chains. Among the strategic interventions for the Investment Priority Area (IPA) on increasing food production and reducing hunger is "increased use of high technology inputs especially improved seeds, fertilizers and other agro-chemicals (herbicides, etc.)".

There are no references agroecology or any traditional agricultural production methods in IGAD strategies on agriculture. The recently launched IGAD Food Security and Nutrition Response Strategy 2020-2022 does not make any reference to food sovereignty. However, in the livestock sector, the IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) supports traditional livestock husbandry with a focus on genetic improvement of the local livestock breeds for increased livestock production and productivity, consistent with the values of agroecology.

#### **4.5.2. IGAD, environmental protection, natural resource management and climate change**

As we have noted above, IGAD owes its existence to concerns among countries of the Horn of Africa about the impact of drought and other extreme weather events on agriculture, rural development and food security. Sustainable management of the environment and natural resources is a major strategic thrust for IGAD as it has a direct bearing on achievement of agricultural development, food security and rural development, as well as peace and security. Thus, although resilience building activities are domiciled within IGAD's Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment pillar, it is a crosscutting theme that runs across all domains of IGAD operations.

IGAD interventions on environment and natural resource management are guided by its Environment and Natural Resources Strategy, the overall goal of which is to assist and complement the efforts of the member states in environment and natural resources management. IGAD supports its Member States to harmonize their environmental governance frameworks; to generate reliable, timely and readily available environment and natural resources data and information; build capacity for environment and natural resources management; and undertake research on new, appropriate and affordable technologies. The Strategy makes no reference to indigenous knowledge systems for environment and natural resource management

The importance of the climate change agenda within the region saw to the establishment of IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC) as a specialized agency of IGAD in 2003. ICPAC is a regional centre of excellence in climate prediction and applications for climate risk management, environmental management, and sustainable development. Its main objective is to provide timely climate early warning information to IGAD Member States and support specific sector applications for the mitigation of the impacts of climate variability and change.

IGAD's work on climate change is underpinned by concerns about drought and its impacts on livelihoods. Resilience to drought has become a major agenda for IGAD since the drought devastated the region between 2009 and 2011. Following a joint Summit of IGAD and the EAC held in Nairobi in September 2011, IGAD was mandated to spearhead an initiative to enhance drought resilience in the Horn of Africa. As a result, the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) was established.

Three of the seven IDDRSI PIAs are relevant to this analysis, namely, Environment and Natural Resources Management; Livelihoods Support and Basic Social Services; and Research, Knowledge Management and Technology Transfer. Some of the strategies to be employed in implementing these interventions provide entry points for adoption of agroecology. These include: sustainable management of water resources, pasture, land and environment; sustainable ecosystem rehabilitation, biodiversity,



conservation and management; research and human capital development in ecological restoration, ecosystem management, environment and natural resources; promotion of dry land production and productivity; enhancing agricultural production and productivity; and research in indigenous knowledge and technology for climate risk management.

## 4.6. South African Development Community (SADC)

SADC is a grouping of 16 countries<sup>29</sup> from Southern Africa. Founded in 1980 as the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), it was transformed into SADC by the Declaration and Treaty of SADC signed by the Heads of State and Government in August 1992. The main focus of SADCC had been to advance the cause of political liberation and establish a joint front against the *apartheid* regime of South Africa, while SADC was established to promote integration and economic development of the Member States and the region.

The Declaration and Treaty of SADC emphasizes the role of agriculture in national economies of the region, with food security, land and agriculture among the areas of cooperation<sup>30</sup>. The treaty addresses climate change concerns through cooperation in natural resources and environment.

### 4.6.1. SADC regional agriculture policies

By the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in the SADC Region, the leaders of the region committed to promote agriculture as a pillar in national and regional development strategies and programmes in order to attain short, medium and long term objectives in agriculture and food security. Among the short term objectives are provision of agricultural inputs, including quality seeds, fertilizer and other agrochemicals; and increasing production of drought tolerant and disease resistant crops. Medium to long-term strategies include sustainable use and management of natural resources; and research on and dissemination of new technologies of production.

Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) adopted and approved by the SADC Summit in August 2003 defines the implementation framework for the Declaration and Treaty of SADC. It specifies interventions on sustainable food security, with overall goal of ensuring cooperation among Member States to achieve sustainable access to safe and adequate food at all times by all people in the region for an active and healthy life. A Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) defines “common agreed objectives and measures to guide, promote and support actions at regional and national levels in the agricultural sector of the SADC Member States in contribution to regional integration and the attainment of the SADC Common Agenda”<sup>31</sup>.

The RAP prioritizes the objective of enhancing sustainable production, productivity and competitiveness. In this connection, it commits to improving “access to affordable, appropriate and cost-effective productivity-enhancing inputs including improved plant and animal genetic material, and enhanced application of mineral and/or organic nutrients to correct soil fertility”<sup>32</sup>. The Policy recognizes the potential of modern biotechnology including genetic modification technology for improving productivity and contributing to food availability, but acknowledges that “debate about the food safety, environmental safety and socio-economic impacts of genetically modified organisms

29 The countries are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe

30 Article 21(3)

31 p.6

32 p.11

(GMOs) is still vigorous<sup>33</sup>. It commits to facilitating agreement on a harmonized approach to the safe use of modern biotechnology and clarifying how to deal with GMOs; and promoting national capacity and regional collaboration for research in biotechnology and biosafety.

But the RAP also expresses concerns about the loss of plant and animal genetic resources and indigenous innovations that have the potential to contribute to enhancement of agricultural productivity, food security and poverty alleviation while conserving the environment and natural resources. In this connection, it proposes interventions aimed at promoting *ex-situ* and *in-situ* conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture; strengthening national and regional capacity to conserve genetic resources; and promoting the development of crop varieties and animal breeds that are adaptable to climate change and variability. To address declining soil fertility, it proposes adoption of sustainable agricultural practices including CA.

The provisions of the RAP on food security are further amplified by the SADC Food and Nutrition Security Strategy 2015-2025, which was adopted in August 2014. The Strategy recognizes the implications of climate change for food security and calls for facilitation of capacity building on adaptation, and mitigation; and dissemination of information and sharing of best practices on adaptation and mitigation.

It is in the strategies proposed for improving food availability that opportunities exist for advocacy to integrate agroecology in climate action, with some of the strategies being conducive to the promotion of agroecology and others not. The strategies, which target agricultural production and productivity include promoting farmers access to key agricultural inputs such as, improved seed, fertilizer and credit; promoting efficient irrigation systems; improvement of soil fertility through appropriate technologies; promoting diversification and intensification of agricultural production systems; protecting the environment and promoting sustainable use and management of natural resources; strengthening research-farmer-extension linkages to facilitate dissemination and adoption of technologies (including biotechnology) to farmers and other stakeholders; and encouraging the involvement of commercial or large-scale farmers in food crop production through appropriate policies.

These strategies show how SADC like other RECs is struggling to balance the imperatives of modernization and commercialization of agriculture on the one hand and sustainable management of the environment and natural resources on the other hand. Like other RECs, SADC is also implementing CAADP on the basis of Regional CAADP Compact and a RAIP, which exhibits the same tensions between imperatives and strategies that we have noted in the other RECs. AFSA and its members can take advantage of this tension in advocating for agroecology as the way to reconcile these imperatives.

#### 4.6.2. SADC climate change policies

SADC mainstreams climate change in its agricultural and environment and natural resource management policies and strategies. Thus the RAP has a dedicated section on addressing climate change, variability and related vulnerability, which articulates measures to improve the regions' capacity to adapt to and mitigate climate change and variability. The interventions proposed in this regard include strengthening regional research in developing appropriate adaptation strategies for climate variability and change in the agriculture sector; promoting the adoption and incorporation of sound environmental impact mitigation measures in national and regional agricultural policies and programmes; ensuring the effective engagement and participation of the agriculture sector in the international discourse on climate change; and supporting Member States to develop and implement their own climate change policies, strategies and programmes.

Within the context of environment and sustainable development, the RIDSP specifies interventions and measures through which the region addresses the challenges of climate change, including by developing mechanisms for implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) such as UNFCCC, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The intervention area aims to ensure the equitable and sustainable use of the environment and natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

The SADC Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development was developed and approved by the SADC environment ministers in 2013 to promote sustainable use of the environment and natural resources while ensuring effective management and response to the impacts of climate change. It seeks, inter alia, to promote effective management and response to impacts of climate change and variability. To this end, Member States commit to cooperate in, among other areas, developing and implementing coordinated and where feasible joint climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies; and promoting sustainable land management practices.

The Protocol further commits Member States to take measures to conserve ecosystems through sustainable management and utilization, including of agro-biodiversity. In this connection, Member States shall put in place sound biotechnology and biosafety policies to manage organisms, both living and genetically modified. They also commit to promote ecosystem based approaches to secure and manage ecosystems that provide natural buffering mechanisms to risks posed by climate change.

The SADC Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2015 to 2030 provides a framework for harmonized and coordinated actions at national and regional levels to address and respond to impacts of climate change in line with the provisions of the SADC Environment Protocol. The Strategy provides for incorporation of adaptation measures in regional policies to address vulnerability of agriculture to climate change and variability. For purposes of mitigation, it calls for promotion of sustainable green agricultural practices that include CSA. For the biodiversity sector it provides for promotion of scientific and indigenous knowledge on the vulnerability of biodiversity to climate change.

#### **4.7. Other key actors in agriculture and climate policy in Africa**

In considering opportunities and constraints to integrating agroecology in climate action, it is important to keep in mind the influence exercised by certain non-state actors (NSAs) on African governments and RECs in the design and implementation of agricultural policies. Among these are transnational agribusiness investment corporations, multilateral and bilateral donors, private charities, research organization and Western philanthropies. These organizations exercise their influence on governments and RECs both directly through funding and other support that they provide in policy and strategy development, capacity building and even programme and projects implementation.

That African countries, whether individually or through the AU and RECs depend on development assistance in designing policies and strategies on agriculture and food security has implications for the imperatives that inform these instruments. Where there are conflicting perspectives on certain imperatives such as industrialized agriculture and associated technologies such as GMOs, this has the potential to undermine the possibilities for African governments to take positions that are at variance with those advocated by those who provide such support.

Differing perspectives on some of the technologies and approaches recommended for modernizing African agriculture to improve production and productivity define the way different people perceive some of these NSAs and their role in African agriculture. Where some see them as essential partners filling the gap of financial and technical deficit that has undermined agricultural development in Africa, others see them (or at least some of them) as threats to African food and production systems as well as the sustainability of African agriculture. A case in point is the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

Established in 2006 with funding support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, AGRA set out to promote high-yield, input-intensive agriculture in Africa as the basis for a Green Revolution similar to the one that swept across much of Asia and Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, promising to double incomes for 20 million smallholder households in Africa while halving food insecurity in 20 countries by 2020 (AGRA, 2009).

AGRA is reported to have so far received more than \$1 billion in funding, two thirds of it from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and to have disbursed more than \$500 million in grants to 13 priority African countries (Wise, 2020). AGRA is seen by many African countries as a critical partner in their pursuit of agricultural modernization and food security, and has become a major actor in Africa's agricultural policy development, its Annual Agriculture Status Report a critical reference on developments in the sector.

However, not everyone celebrates the role of AGRA in African agriculture. Many African farmer organizations fault it for imposing inappropriate Western technologies on African farmers and thereby undermining the continent's soils, farmers, and food systems. Specifically, African farmers are concerned about the implications of AGRA and its work on food sovereignty, as large commercial farms may come to dominate local markets given the emphasis in policies of governments and RECs on ensuring market access. The huge resources commanded by AGRA give it substantial leverage with RECs and national governments in a context where the agricultural sector is starved of funding for policy development and programme implementation.

What this means is that AFSA and its members have to find a way to confront AGRA and similar NSAs if the advocacy for integration of agroecology into climate action is to succeed. It also calls for AFSA to establish strategic alliances with the global agroecology movement in the execution of this campaign, to ensure that pressure is brought to bear on the relevant global actors that have the potential to influence agriculture and climate change policy in Africa.

## **4.8. Summary of Policy Opportunities, Spaces and Platforms for Advocacy**

Successful implementation of the advocacy by AFSA and its members for integration of agroecology in climate action will depend on clear targeting and strategic use of opportunities, spaces and platforms for advocacy at national, RECs and AU levels. The campaign should be based on a simple and clear message that articulates the challenge, demonstrates the inadequacy and inappropriateness of current policy responses, and shows the potential of agroecology to meet the challenge. In this connection it is important to demonstrate that agroecology can ensure increased agricultural productivity for food security and rural development.

This section identifies some of the major opportunities, spaces and platforms for advocacy.

### **4.8.1. Advocacy at the national level**

The national level is the starting point for policy advocacy, even where the target is the policy of an REC. This is because RECs embody the collective voice of Member States, and it is through them that effective influence can be exercised over their policies. In this connection, it is important to appreciate the respective roles played in the RECs policy making by technical sector staff or Member States, Ministers in charge of respective sectors and of course the Summit of Heads of State and Government. In most RECs, the role of technical staff at headquarters is mainly to facilitate these categories of actors in the policy development process.

Since the main role of policies elaborated at RECs level is to harmonize and coordinate national policies towards achievement of agreed regional policy objectives, there is symbiotic relationship between

national policies and RECs policies, and also between national and RECs policy processes, with each feeding on and influencing the other. Thus, on the one hand advocacy work that AFSA members do at the national level can influence the building of regional consensus that is critical for adoption of policies at the RECs level. And on the other hand, AFSA Members can draw on the policy positions agreed at RECs level to inform advocacy for action at the national level.

At the national level, advocacy by AFSA members should target sector ministries responsible for agriculture and rural development, environment and natural resources and climate change. The configuration of these sectors varies from one country to another and the manner in which the advocacy is structured will equally vary. In most countries of Sub-Saharan (SSA), ministries of agriculture tend to be quite powerful with their priorities often dictating what happens in sectors such environment and natural resource management. Thus, it is critical for AFSA members to engage with agricultural policy and programme development processes not just for purposes of influencing agricultural policy, but also for shaping policy in these other sectors. AFSA members should also engage with Ministries of foreign affairs given their roles as focal points for countries' engagement with RECs and the AU.

The foregoing chapters clearly demonstrate that African countries are alive to the need to improve agricultural productivity, with a focus on smallholder producers. They are also alive to the impacts of climate change on agricultural productivity, and have made commitments at global, AU and RECs levels to integrate climate change measures in planning and implementation of programmes and projects in agriculture and other sectors. The Maputo and Malabo Declarations are perhaps the most critical in this regard given the commitment by African governments to spend at least 10% of their national budgets on agriculture. This specific commitment provides a critical advocacy agenda for AFSA and its members, first to ensure that African countries are living up to this commitment, and secondly, to interrogate what the agriculture budgets are being spent on. AFSA and its members should seek to establish how much of the budgets are invested in research and extension on agroecology as compared to what is invested in industrial agriculture, given that agroecology is far more effective in enabling mitigation and adaptation to climate change than industrial agriculture. The areas in which agricultural budgets are spent are clear pointers to whether African governments are living up to their commitments to integrate climate change in agricultural development, and thus constitute critical areas of engagement for AFSA in its advocacy efforts.

Advocacy at the national level should also target the Legislative arm of government with particular focus on Sessional Committees on relevant sectors – agricultural and rural development, environment and natural resource management, and climate change. In most countries, climate change is addressed as a cross-sectoral issue, and advocacy should be organized accordingly. Opportunities offered by devolved or decentralized governance structures for influencing national policies should be explored in each country and used as appropriate. In each instance, it is important to understand the relevant policy making cycle and the points along the cycle at which the greatest opportunities for influence exist.

A critical factor in successful advocacy for policy change is the mobilization of public opinion in order to exert pressure on political leaders. This entails creating awareness about the issue among the general public and making them appreciate the connection between agroecology and the sustainability of their livelihoods and ecosystems and the threats posed to these by policy responses that are underpinned by imperatives of industrialized agriculture. In this connection, AFSA and its members will need to create strategic alliances with other like-minded groups such as pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and other Indigenous Peoples (IPs).

It is also important to take deliberate measures to build the capacity of AFSA members to equip them with skills for effective advocacy at multiple levels. This will entail strategic planning and sharing of responsibility among members and between them and the secretariat. The success of multi-level advocacy depends on effective coordination of efforts horizontally at each level and vertically across all the levels.

#### 4.8.2. Advocacy at and AU and RECs

The main entry point for advocacy on this agenda at the AU is the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) at the AUC. This is the Department that leads efforts of the AU for promotion of sustainable environmental management and agricultural development. The Department has three divisions, namely: Agriculture and Food Security; Environment, Climate Change, Water, Land and Natural Resources; and Rural Economy. Through the three divisions, and in close partnership with RECs, the Department spearheads development of policies and programmes agriculture and food security, environment and natural resource management, as well as climate change.

AFSA and its members will need to cultivate relations and engage with the three divisions to initiate and sustain interactions with a view to identifying opportunities for integrating agroecology into climate action at the AU and RECs levels. In each REC, they will need to create similar linkages with the relevant departments (see Table below) for the same purpose.

**Table 1: Entry points for advocacy in AUC and RECs**

AUC	Department of Agriculture and Rural Economy
COMESA	Industry and Agriculture Division
EAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture and Food Security Sector</li> <li>• Environment and Natural Resources Sector</li> </ul>
ECCAS	Department of Environment, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development
ECOWAS	Agriculture and Environment Sector
IGAD	Agriculture and Environment Division
SADC	Directorate of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

Cultivating relations with the technical departments of the AUC and RECs makes will make it possible to keep abreast of forums and meetings at which opportunities exist for engaging with relevant policy processes. Within the framework of both the AU and the RECs there are periodic meetings of technical and political leaders at Director or Ministerial level called specifically to build consensus and develop common positions on different thematic concerns including in agriculture, environment, natural resource management and climate change. AMCEN is one such regular gathering at which AU Member States develop common position ahead of major global meetings on MEAs and to monitor progress on environmental goals. Making inputs into and monitoring the deliberations at these meetings is a strategic way to influence continental, regional and ultimately national policies.

Similar attention should be paid to meetings of Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) of the AU. These Committees work closely with departments of the AUC and RECs to prepare AU policies, programmes and projects for submission to the Executive Council, which approves them for adoption by the Summit of Heads of State and Government. Keeping abreast of the calendars and agendas of the different meetings at AU and RECs is critical for identifying opportunities for meaningful engagement in support of the advocacy.

In all these forums and platforms, AFSA and its members should make the case for agroecology as the pathway to modernization of agriculture using ecological processes and science. The opportunity that agroecology offers for increasing productivity, while at the same time promoting the sustainability of soils, biodiversity, building resilience to climate change and promoting healthy diets through diverse and nutritious foods, should be underscored and mainstreamed into the discourse on modernization of agriculture in Africa.

# 5

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This report has reviewed and analyzed the regional policy environment for climate change and agriculture in Africa to identify opportunities and challenges for a continental campaign by AFSA and its members to integrate agroecology into climate action in Africa, targeting the AU and RECs. The review and analysis has focused on the AU and six RECs of SSA.

The review is founded on an acknowledgement of the relevance and importance of agroecology to the practice of agriculture in Africa, most of which is done by smallholders on family farms, with little or no external inputs, and using traditional knowledge and technologies. These farming practices are under pressure from the impacts of climate change. They are also adversely affected by inappropriate policy interventions by African governments that are grounded on imperatives of agricultural modernization based on commercialization and underpinned by technologies and approaches imported from industrialized agriculture. Such approaches and technologies include CSA, pervasive use of agrochemicals, introduction of GMOs and hybrid seeds and adoption of fossil fuel dependent mechanization.

AFSA is concerned about the long-term impacts of these approaches and technologies on the sustainability of African agricultural production and food systems. Its campaign seeks to introduce and advocate for adoption of agroecology as a more sustainable approach to improving agricultural productivity in a context of increased climate change.

The main conclusions of the review are that:

1. The AU and RECs play critical roles in inspiring and shaping national policies and strategies for achieving the objectives of sustainable agricultural development, food security, environment and natural resource management, and climate change. Engaging with them will therefore be critical to the success of the campaign.
2. Improving agricultural productivity to secure food security and enhance rural development, while adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change are priority concerns of AU, RECs and Member States. At the regional level, these priorities are articulated in policies and strategies on agriculture and food security, environment and natural resource management, and climate change.
3. The policy imperative for agriculture and food security in the AU and RECs is to radically transform,

modernize and commercialize the sector for increased production and productivity and value addition in order to enable the continent feed itself and become a net food exporter

4. The policy imperative for climate change is to promote adaptation as the primary means of addressing its impacts, while also investing in mitigation measures; with a focus on sustainable management of natural resources, including agrobiodiversity.
5. While policies of the AU and RECs make positive statements about making use of indigenous knowledge and production systems, there is an inherent tension between this and the vision of modernization and commercialization of agriculture. The policies recognize that traditional systems of production and natural resource management are sustainable, but they also envision a highly modernized and industrialized future for African agriculture as the only way to meet the food security demands of a growing population and enhance economic development, and prioritize integration into global value chains and dependence on aid and foreign direct investment (FDI) to modernize agriculture. The combined effect of all this is to privilege approaches of industrial agriculture over traditional farming methods in the implementation of policies.
6. The push for industrial agriculture and adoption of related technologies such as tractor ploughing, use of herbicides and chemical fertilizers is likely to lead to increased soil degradation and increase emission of GHGs into the atmosphere
7. The need for African governments to reconcile the competing imperatives of increased agricultural production and productivity with the sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems provides an opening for AFSA and its members to advocate for agroecology as the appropriate pathway to modernization of African agriculture.
8. The main challenge for AFSA and its members is to demonstrate the potential of agroecology for improving production to meet the growing demands for food, fuel and fibre, given that even where policies accept the appropriateness of agroecological practices, they do not consider them adequate to address the urgent need for improved production and productivity.
9. Of the RECs whose policies have been reviewed, only ECOWAS aspires for food sovereignty in its agricultural policies. Yet, even in ECOWAS the tensions between competing policy imperatives is evident in, for instance, the creation of the West African Alliance for CSA in 2015.
10. Green Revolution advocates, such as AGRA, transnational agribusiness investment corporations, multilateral and bilateral donors, private charities, research organization and Western philanthropies exercise significant influence over the AU, RECs and national governments in the design of policies on agricultural development, and AFSA will need to target them in its advocacy.

We make the following recommendations to AFSA and its members regarding implementation of the Agroecology for Climate Action Campaign:

1. AFSA should develop a strategy for the campaign informed by this analysis and specifying policy and institutional frameworks to be targeted at AU, RECs and national levels, with messages that are appropriate for the different levels.
2. The campaign should be based on a robust critique of the agricultural modernization model being pushed by policies of the AU and RECs with the support of Green Revolution advocates, to show that it is likely to increase rather than reduce climate change; and a clear demonstration of agroecology as the appropriate approach to modernization of agriculture that will meet the challenge of ensuring increased agricultural productivity for food security and rural development while also maintaining the integrity of soils and ecosystems and contributing to mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
3. AFSA and its members should mobilize public opinion at the national level to exert pressure on political leaders by creating awareness about agroecology among the general public, making them



appreciate the connection the practice and the sustainability of their livelihoods and ecosystems and the threats posed to these by policy responses that are underpinned by imperatives of industrialized agriculture.

4. AFSA and its members should create strategic alliances with other like-minded groups such as pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and other Indigenous Peoples (IPs) to ensure that diverse groups within African countries are pushing the agenda for agroecology for climate action.
5. AFSA should support the building of capacity among its members for policy advocacy, influence and monitoring at the three levels, and ensure appropriate allocation of responsibility and coordination for effectiveness.
6. At the national level, the advocacy should target sector ministries responsible for agriculture and rural development, environment and natural resources and climate change; ministries of foreign affairs given their roles as focal points for countries' engagement with RECs and the AU; and legislators.
7. AFSA and its members should consider and make appropriate use of devolved and decentralized systems where these exist as they are close to farmers and grassroots organizations and can be critical allies in influencing national policies.
8. At the AU, the campaign should target DREA as the Department of the AUC that leads efforts of the AU for promotion of sustainable environmental management and agricultural development, including adaptation to climate change; while at the RECs the target should be departments, divisions and directorates responsible for these issues (see Table 1)
9. AFSA and its members should make strategic use of periodic forums and meetings of different organs of the AU and RECs, with a particular focus on STCs, AMCEN and other Ministerial and Directors' level meetings for adopting common grounds and establishing consensus among Member States.
10. Given the role and influence of Green Revolution advocates, such as AGRA, transnational agribusiness investment corporations, multilateral and bilateral donors, private charities, research organization and Western philanthropies in pushing the agenda of industrial agriculture in Africa, including through the AU and RECs, AFSA should establish strategic alliances to link its advocacy for agroecology in Africa with the global agroecology movement, with a view to influencing these global actors.

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**Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa**

P.O.Box 571 Kampala, Uganda

Email: [afsa@afsafrica.org](mailto:afsa@afsafrica.org)

Web: [www.afsafrica.org](http://www.afsafrica.org)

