

## **Statement to Civil Society Organizations on Concerns over CSA and GACSA**

The Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA) has noted the open letters issued by Civil Society Organisations and other expressions of concern about CSA and GACSA. In the spirit of dialogue and GACSA's interest to continually facilitate the global discourse around Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA), the Alliance remains committed to specially discuss the issues raised. In this regard, the co-Chairs and the Facilitation Unit have been organizing a series of meetings with the CSOs, first in March 2015 in Montpellier, followed up with two others in July and in October 2015 at the FAO Head Quarters in Rome.

GACSA was launched in September 2014 in the margins of the UN Climate Summit. The Alliance held its inaugural Annual Forum in December 2014, during which the 2015 Inception Year Work Plan was endorsed. The members focused on setting up the governance and operational structures, and on defining a longer term action plan to bring the Alliance's value addition to national and regional efforts for scaling up Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA).

There is diversity of opinions, perceptions and understanding of the CSA concept, as well as of the nature and role of GACSA in advancing widespread adoption of CSA. GACSA recognizes this diversity and, in fact, believes that open and constructive dialogue is a positive thing for the greater good – particularly as concerns interests and aspirations of the voiceless, the poor and marginalized communities.

GACSA has not spared any opportunity to engage or facilitate dialogue across various interests and stakeholder constituencies. Equally important is highlighting areas of agreement to ensure that the predicament of small holders in general and women in particular constitute the main reason for our efforts to advance CSA.

We commit to continue with these open dialogues to build a common platform based on mutual respect, and to find practical solutions to the issues of concern. However, we also register that not all concerned parties are ready to participate at the table. Others have not had the opportunity to be present at these dialogues. This letter is therefore a sincere attempt to reach out to civil society partners who have expressed concerns over CSA in general, and GACSA in particular. To all of you we state the following:

- i. We acknowledge your concerns as expressed in the various letters and commentaries, and appreciate your taking these issues at heart. This shows that we have a common interest to work towards improving global food security in a climate-conscious manner, even if our approaches are different.
- ii. We admit that some of these concerns raised need to be carefully looked into. We stand ready to revisit the issues that have caused genuine concerns.
- iii. We appreciate your openness in expressing your views and in accepting to come forth for dialogue. This, in our view, is the best way to find common ground for moving forward. We remain open for more dialogue as we journey along.

- iv. We appreciate the differences in views and opinions. We see these differences as an opportunity for enriched discussions towards building robust and sustainable systems (political, social, economic, technical, etc.) to ensure resilience of societies to climate adversities from the perspective of agriculture and food security.
- v. We acknowledge that Climate-Smart Agriculture is not the only approach for addressing the climate challenge to food security. We recognize the existence of other approaches as well. Allow us to state that we see the different approaches as complementary rather than contradictory to each other. Therefore we would like to work towards bringing out, and tapping into the synergies among them. We re-iterate our commitment to continue engaging with all interested parties in the pursuit of our goals. We therefore invite you all to participate in developing practical steps on the way forward.

We sincerely hope that our dialogue with the CSOs in Paris during COP21 in December 2015 will move us into a deep and productive relationship, to the betterment of those we all want to serve.

Yours Sincerely

**Martin Bwalya**  
Co-chair, GACSA



**Inge Herman Rydland**  
Co-chair, GACSA

