

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2020

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONTRIBUTION OF CSA TO FOOD SYSTEMS

It is time for nature and to support life on Earth and human development. Join GACSA on this World Environment Day 2020, and let us join hands to save the environment and care for nature. The global response to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that collective action is doable. Addressing food systems transformation is a collective action. On this **World Environment Day**, as the overarching body for CSA alliances the world over, through its Action Groups (*Knowledge, Enabling Environment, Investment*), and its network of CSA Alliances, including the Africa CSA Alliance (ACSAA); Asia Regional Alliance (ASEAN-CRN); East Africa CSA Alliance (EACSAA); North America CSA Alliance (NACSAA); Pacific CSA Alliance (PCSAA); Regional Alliance in Europe; Southern Africa CSA Alliance (SACSAA); and the West Africa CSA Alliance (WACSAA), GACSA is calling for multi-sectoral cooperation to drive positive change; alignment and inclusiveness; innovation beyond agricultural production; and platforms for action-based approaches.

Many experts have highlighted that we are facing a global health crisis unlike any, and it is much more than a health crisis. It is a [human crisis](#). Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, food insecurity was already a severe problem with significant challenges and risks for [food systems](#). The advent of COVID-19 as a new driving force is redefining the world food situation, interlocked with challenges that are shaking food systems to the core.

With a compromised global food system, coupled with the increasing severity of the effects of climate change on agriculture, one of the most significant emerging challenges is to safeguard livelihoods in many parts of the globe. Hence, responding to a COVID-19 related food crisis and protecting the most vulnerable from poor health and environmental degradation are [top of the agenda](#). As we build momentum towards the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, it is imperative to take into account the changing climate at policy and program design level, and the need to transform food systems. The sustainable transformation of the agricultural sector is key to achieving food security, and it is [essential to frame climate change responses within this priority](#). In this regard, the need for Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) in the context of food security and rural development cannot be overlooked.

CSA focuses on three main pillars:

1. Sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes;
2. Building resilience and adaptation to the impacts of climate change; and
3. Contributing to climate change mitigation and reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible.

CSA helps to guide actions needed to transform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in a changing climate. CSA is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather flexible and accommodating to allow users to tailor context-specific solutions to local circumstances and drive sustainable agriculture under climate change.

Climate change is a 'threat multiplier' which increases existing livelihood threats and vulnerabilities for farmers. The principles that CSA follows interlink the challenges of achieving sustainability, increasing food security, and responding to climate change. As a result, there is need for a better understanding of the interconnections between agriculture and food systems and the wider landscapes and ecosystems, and the recent pandemic. The deeper appreciation of the interconnected risks should drive a major scaling up and out of successful 'multiple-benefit' CSA approaches to sustainable agriculture and food systems. CSA goes beyond agricultural practices and technologies, including enabling policies and institutions as well as identifying financing mechanisms. Hence, the need to draw attention to the opportunities for attaining considerable synergies and integrating adaptation, potential mitigation into the planning and implementation of agricultural policies, planning, and investments.

The contribution of [agriculture to economic development](#) is enormous and central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In celebrating the World Environment Day, GACSA presents an opportunity for continuous engagement, and spearheads efforts to galvanize the right commitment of stakeholders towards food systems transformation.

CALL TO ACTION

Food systems are being re-defined by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A well-coordinated global response and multi-sectoral actions could benefit agriculture and food systems going forward.

To maintain and accelerate progress on the transformation of food system, GACSA is promoting and coordinating a series of knowledge exchange webinars with its network of regional CSA alliances and Action Groups, to support and promote best bet practices. There is need to bridge the gap and stimulate interfaces between and among stakeholders to develop local perspectives on climate-proofing farming and agricultural practices. All key players must act to meet the immediate needs, long term solutions, and support recovery and build resilience.

GACSA invites like-minded institutions and partners to share best practices with us at: GACSA-Facilitation-Unit@fao.org

Facilitation Unit
The Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture