

## **Exchange of views with civil society organizations (CSOs) on the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA)**

**Montpellier, the 17th of March 2015**

### Context :

Taking the opportunity of the Global scientific conference on climate smart agriculture (Montpellier, 16-18, March 2015), several CSOs (national and international NGOs as well as CSOs networks and one farmers organization) requested Martin Bwalya, Co-Chair of the GACSA strategic committee, to organize an exchange of views regarding the GACSA. This meeting also involved several country representatives and international organizations also present at the Conference (see Annex 1).

### Main topics discussed :

After a general presentation of GACSA, Martin Bwalya opened the floor for a frank and open discussion.

CSOs attending the meeting underlined three main areas of concern and vigilance that should be addressed in order to build trust between CSOs and the GACSA (see also Annex 2):

1. Debates within the GACSA have been very much focused on the process. CSOs feel that there is a need to engage the discussion on substance, and be more specific on parameters that clarify the conceptual framework of climate smart agriculture, especially the various production systems it intends to promote, including ecological intensive systems like agroecology;
2. GACSA must improve the dialogue and communication with CSOs:
  - CSO members' contribution must be transparently recognized and taken into account in the preparation of future GACSA meetings ;
  - Ways and means for higher civil society participation in the meetings will be key to reflect the diversity of contexts, points of views and approaches;
3. Clarity is needed on the relationship between GACSA and other international fora, especially the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the UNFCCC.

Martin Bwalya insisted on the fact that GACSA should be about dialogue and consultation where members and observers can interact. He also mentioned that a space for the voice of farmers should be ensured and the CSOs have massive potential to mobilize the smallholder constituency. GACSA will be business as usual unless it crosses institutional and sectoral lines to break barriers of institutional alliances. In addition, with regard to CSA concept, it must have “definitional parameters.”

### Way forward

Participants have suggested very concrete steps forward:

1. The Facilitation Unit should increase its engagement with civil society as an equal

stakeholder :

- Somebody in the Facilitation Unit could be in charge of making the link with CSOs and farmers organisation (networking skills is needed). Action: GACSA FU
  - GACSA meetings should provide opportunities for an inclusive dialogue, consultation and exchange of views with civil society organisations and networks (as members or observers): => the GACSA Co-chairs, the FU and all members of the GACSA, including the CSOs, to explore, suggest and help make happen the ways and means that ensure the desired form and quality of the GACSA meetings;
  - GACSA invites CSOs to make recommendations on how it might improve its governance structure and processes;
  - A dedicated meeting between the GACSA Co-chairs and civil society should be organized, for example on the margins of the October 2015 CFS meeting since a large number of CSOs will attend. The meeting will also be open to other GACSA members and observers. The CSO team to liaise with the FU on arrangements for this meeting;
  - Regional meetings should be organized with CSOs and stakeholders on GACSA activities. Funding would be necessary to enhance CSOs' participation;
  - GACSA should provide a written response to the concerns raised by CSOs (both in this meeting and in previous open letters);
2. The Knowledge Action Group should work on a list of parameters that clarify the conceptual framework of climate smart agriculture;
  3. This note will be sent to the Strategic Committee for its consideration at its next meeting
  4. Finally, the note will be shared with CSO network, so that CSOs who were not in the meeting could get access to the contents of discussion.

## **Annex 1 : Meeting Participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Patrice BURGER	Association CARI/ UNCCD CSOs panel
Martin BWALYA	NEPAD/ GACSA Strategic committee (Co-Chair)
David CLEARY	The Nature Conservancy
Vincent DAMERON	Ministry of Agriculture (France)
Dhanish DINESH	CGIAR/CCAFS
Anette FRIIS	CGIAR/CCAFS
Luu thi thu GIANG	CARE International in Vietnam
Mathias GINET	Ministry of Agriculture (France)
Motohiro HAYAMI	Ministry of Agriculture (Japan)
Kevin HENRY	Colorado State University
Ludovic LARBODIERE	Ministry of Agriculture (France)
Mark MANIS	Ministry of Agriculture (USA)
Federica MATTEOLI	FAO
John MULDOWNEY	Ministry of Agriculture (Ireland)
Shimpei MURAKAMI	Asian Farmers Association
Katia ROESCH	AVSF
Philippe TOUCHAIS	Assemblée Permanente des Chambres d'Agriculture
Jean VETTRAINO	Secours Catholique – Caritas France

## **Annex 2 : Main questions and concerns raised by civil society organizations in Montpellier**

### **Definition**

- 1) What definition to the CSA? Can The Alliance say what is not CSA?
- 2) Could we develop the Coherent Conception Framework?

### **Governance and actors**

- 3) How could be promoted the implication of farmers' organization and civil society in the Alliance?
- 4) How to guarantee the equal role of the different stakeholders inside the Alliance? How to address the asymmetry of power?
- 5) What kind of accountability for this Alliance?
- 6) How does the Alliance linked with the other legitimate political spaces like UNFCCC and CFS?

### **Funding**

- 7) Will the CSA reach new funding?
- 8) What links between the GACSA and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (July 2015)<sup>1</sup>.

Other points would be:

- What do the governments and FAO expect/hope from farmers' organization and civil society's participation? And how?
- What could be a participatory approach/agenda of meeting that could enhance the dialogue between farmers'organisation/civil society with the other members of the Alliance?

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<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/overview/third-conference-ffd.html>