



ZAMBIA CONFERENCE REPORT
Video Conference on High Value Agriculture in Eastern and Southern Africa:
Environment and Sustainability in Horticulture (13 October 2010)
By Munguzwe Hichaambwa and Chance Kabaghe

Introduction

Public awareness about climate change and carbon emissions has alerted consumer preferences in Europe, and impacted imports of fresh produce, particularly via air from distant continents such as Africa. Thus African producers need to increase their capacity to understand and respond to this issue, and the horticulture industry will need to examine what long term consequences of climate change mean for the industry. This video conference focused on the overlap between climate change and horticulture culture, particularly through the prism of increased demands on dwindling supply of water and present valuable information on about how governments and the donor community are responding to climate change in the Agricultural sector in Africa.

The conference was attended by participants from Madagascar, Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda and Kenya. The team in Zambia included three participants from the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) who were on hand to brief others about the COMESA Climate Change Initiative.

COMESA Climate Change Initiative

The African Union recognizes that climate change is a major threat to sustainable growth and development in the continent and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At its January 2007 Summit, the Union highlighted the scale of the problem and called for an urgent international response. The Summit, also, called for the integration of climate change adaptation strategies into African national and sub-regional development policies, programmes and activities. Within the African Union framework, regional economic communities (RECs), such as COMESA, are the continental building blocs with a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development. In response to the call, COMESA in 2008 put in place a comprehensive Climate Change Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to achieve economic prosperity and climate change protection. The overall objective of the initiative is to address climate change and its impacts in a manner that builds economic and social resilience for present and future generations. The specific objectives are to:

- a. Consolidate a shared vision for Africa on climate change and a common and informed voice for the continent in the Post Kyoto Climate Change negotiations and beyond.
- b. Foster regional and national cooperation to address climate change and its impacts.
- c. Promote integration of climate change considerations into regional, national policies, sectoral planning and development and budgeting.

- d. Enhance human and institutional capacities of COMESA Secretariat, specialized institutions and Member States to effectively address the challenges of climate change.
- e. Mobilize African and international scientific and technical communities to increase knowledge base and its management to support informed decision making processes.
- f. Promote and enhance collaboration, synergy, partnerships and effective participation of
- g. Governments, business community, civil society and other stakeholders in climate change
- h. matters.
- i. Provide a framework for the establishment of an African BioCarbon Facility that combines market-based offsets, public and private funds.

COMESA, in this initiative, is taking a tripartite approach in addressing climate change issues by working closely with the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). COMESA puts great interest in ensuring that African interests are taken into account during global climate change negotiations and making agricultural production systems climate smart.

Synthesis of issues

Importance of policies to address climate change

The importance of creating policies to address climate change in all countries was noted. This is more so that the frequency of extreme weather (floods, droughts, etc) has increased and that it is important to be prepared when these occur. With regard to the carbon foot print, it was learnt that consumers in Europe are increasingly looking for low carbon products which offers great opportunities for African producers in countries such as Kenya where the carbon foot print is actually lower than that of Europe and the United States of America. However, consumers in these countries are not aware of this. African producers can further reduce the carbon foot print by producing crops which are well suited to their environments so much that little external inputs or energy sources would be required for their production and productivity.

Financial support to National Adaptation Plans of Action to climate change (NAPA)

Countries that have started implementing NAPAs reported availability of funds to support such activities from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Global Environmental Fund, the World Bank and the European Union. Others also exist such as the land climate assistance programme in Mozambique coordinated by the Netherlands Embassy and it was learnt that interested participants can contact the environment focal point persons in Netherlands Embassies in their countries.

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) on environmental issues in horticulture

Mozambique and Kenya reported successful PPPs on environmental issues in the horticultural sector. In Mozambique, there is a task force comprising of representatives from the public and private sectors as well as donors which meets once a month to discuss issues related to agriculture, identifying problems and charts ways forward to address the identified issues. In Kenya, the National Task Force on Horticulture provides a forum for multi-sector stakeholder consultation on all relevant issues and also meets once a month. In addition, the private sector alliance engages the Kenyan Government on a regular and continuous basis providing valuable inputs into national developmental issues.

Success of organic agriculture in Uganda

Crop production using organic agriculture techniques is climate smart and presents great opportunities for African producers considering consumers in Europe are opting for low carbon products. In Uganda, the National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda (NOAMU) brings together farmers, traders and exporters to develop market chains for organic products. Certification of products is done locally which reduces the certification costs. There is also increasing demand for these products in the local supermarkets. Universities in that country have started offering a fully fledged course in organic agriculture for extension workers. These courses are however not available for distance learning at present. The Government has also drafted a National Organic Agriculture Policy.

The Organic Producers and Processors Association of Zambia (OPPAZ) also has a network of members who produce and process organic products for the export and local market. The association ensures quality and sustainability in the farms that are certified as members. Zambia's naturally fertile soil allows for high quality produce, and enough yield to sustain export and a growing domestic market. But no national level efforts are being made to raise the profile of organic agriculture in the country.

Crop production without use of chemicals is facilitated by use of biological fertilizers and pesticides in countries such as Madagascar (where private companies produce these) while the use of chemicals is taken as a last resort under integrated pest management (IPM) for which many governments are trying to increase awareness among smallholder farmers.

Customs duty exemptions for horticultural equipment

Exemption from duty on imported agricultural equipment is allowed in most countries that participated in the conference as long as justification is made to the Minister of Agriculture who can then recommend for the exemption. Participants felt that importation of equipment for climate change adaptation and mitigation such as green houses should be good justification for exemption from duty. In Kenya, exemption from duty is granted as long as material to be imported has been ascertained for agricultural use by the ministry of agriculture. However, there is also increased use of local materials for building the framework of the green houses. In fact there is an increase in the number of smallholder erecting and using small green houses in that country though stakeholders still feel there is need to facilitate increased access to relevant information for more and sustained production.

Use of appropriate technology to address climate change

Breeding drought tolerant crops or varieties has been going on in many countries for some time now and is helping mitigate climate change. Local vegetable seeds are being bred in Kenya and are being promoted for production, marketing and consumption even in urban areas where they are more likely to be forgotten in preference to exotic ones. Ultimately, local crops and varieties bred/selected within the local environment will be the best adapted to climate change. Crops such as amaranthus, the African egg plant, etc have been commercialized in countries such as Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania and Zambia.

Use of other advanced technology such as biotechnology to address climate changes issues can not be avoided. The current problem is that these technologies are driven by multinational corporations who tend to be blind to the requirements of the markets and merely push for returns on investments. Technology is one of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) pillars for development and it is thus very

important to research, develop and disseminate these technologies. Africa greatly needs access to markets of its products produced under climatically smart environments using appropriate technology. COMESA maintains a database of projects applying appropriate technology for climate change adaptation and mitigation and encourages the sharing of this information across the continent.

Integration of different stakeholders in responding to climate change

The importance of integrating different stakeholders in responding to climate change can not be over emphasized. COMESA, in its climate change initiative has embraced this as a cornerstone to all responses encompassing the EAC and SADC. It aims at harmonizing response programmes for the whole continent, and even jointly implements some programmes while others are implemented at country level to address peculiarities of the countries involved.

Lessons learnt and way forward

The seriousness of the impacts of climate change can not be over emphasized for agriculture in general and especially for the horticultural sector. A lot needs to be done in the country with regard to preparedness to response to climate change starting from integration of various stakeholders in the development of the National Country Response Strategy (NCRS) through information sharing, investment in appropriate technology and lastly, but not the least, regional integration.

The absence of a national apex institution looking at the interests of the horticultural sector in Zambia is greatly hampering the impacts of various ad hoc responses by various stakeholders in the sector to climate change. With insights from this conference, it is imperative that the Horticultural Association or Task Force that is being formed take environmental sustainability and climate change issues on board. Strong linkages will have to be made with institutions such as the Climate Change Facilitation Unit (CCFU) of the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources (MTNER), the Environmental Council of Zambia (ECZ), the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO), the Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD), The Zambia Export Growers Association (ZEGA), OPPAZ, the Zambia National Farmers' Union (ZNFU) and other promoters and practitioners of organic or conservation agriculture.

An inventory of technologies being applied by different players in different parts of the country in response to climate change as well as their effectiveness will have to be developed for easier accessibility and scaling up. This information sharing will have to be extended to the region as whole through the usual structures within COMESA.

Log Frame on Plan of Action

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD Coordinator	ASSUMPTION	INDICATOR
Improved sector linkages with the NCRS development process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact with the CCFU to be more conversant with the response strategy development process • Participate in CCFU activities in order to articulate sectoral issues 	To be advised. Meanwhile the Food Security Research Project will coordinate this.	The MTENR and indeed the CCFU will be amenable to such overtures	Greater participation of the sector in the response formulation process
Enhance/promote networking and information sharing among players using various strategies in response to climate change in the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize sensitization workshops, seminars, etc among identified stakeholders • Develop and maintain a database of technologies used in response to climate change in the sector 	To be advised. Meanwhile the Food Security Research Project will coordinate this.	Various institutions such as OPPAZ, MACO, MTNER, ECZ, ZMD, CCFU, etc are willing to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops and other sensitization activities conducted • Networking forum established • Database on various responses to climate change developed and maintained
Development of a mechanism for regional integration through COMESA for issues related to climate change in the sector	Identify a focal point person or institution from the established network of stakeholders	To be advised. Meanwhile the Food Security Research Project will coordinate this.	Various institutions such as OPPAZ, MACO, MTNER, ECZ, ZMD, CCFU, etc are willing to participate	Established line of communication/ and/or networking between the national and regional levels

Participant list

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