



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement    Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente  
Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде    برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Africa Food Security and Adaptation Conference (AFSAC 2015)

### Africa's Soil the New Frontier:

### *Re-imagining Africa Food Security now and into the Future under a changing climate*

UN Complex, Nairobi, Kenya  
30-31 July, 2015

#### Background and Context

The [2014 Africa Progress Panel report](#) presents the two faces of Africa: robust economic growth and continuing poverty. But the report suggests Africa could change this duality by asking: how can resources make a positive impact on development? While [impressive headline growth figures are reported](#), incomes do not trickle down to improve livelihoods of the majority of the population. [Diversifying sources](#) of growth, to include a strengthened agriculture sector that works with nature and not against it, will go a long way to improving livelihoods, considering that the sector currently employs about [60% of Africa's labour force](#), most of it rural.

Despite the importance of the agricultural sector to Africa's development the continent had a [food import bill of over USD35 billion in 2011](#) (excluding fish). The imports of food [exceed exports by 30 percent](#). Less than 10 countries have managed to achieve the Maputo Declaration goal of allocating 10% of budgetary resources to agriculture or the CAADP goal of achieving 6% annual growth in agricultural GDP, while about 25 percent of the African population (around 245 million persons) still does not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs and between 30 to 40 percent of children less than 5 years continue to suffer from chronic under-nutrition. Additionally it is estimated that some 65% of the agricultural land in Africa is classified as degraded. Given that it can take nature up to 1,000 years to form one centimeter of soil, and with human population and food needs increasing, critical limits are being reached that make soil stewardship an urgent matter for agriculture and food security in Africa.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2014 the first World Soil Day was held as a way of recognizing the importance of soil for sustainable development, and 2015 was declared as the International Year of Soils with the theme Healthy Soils for a Healthy Life.

The [Africa Union Agenda 2063](#) reconfirms that agriculture and food security is a critical priority where increased production, productivity and value addition should remain high on the development agenda of the continent. With [60% of Africa's](#) workforce directly dependent on agriculture for survival - and growing poverty and food insecurity [according to the World Bank](#) - it is where the food is grown that should be the focus.



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At the same time, growing urban populations and the middle class are demanding more nutritious, varied and processed food, creating opportunities for income generation from agriculture. Africa's soil should be its next "oil" in a changing climate. Considering that existing oil and mineral reserves will run out, but Africa's soil and its ecosystems if we work with them not against them will remain, [ecosystem based adaptation \(EBA\) driven-agriculture offers a sustainable and growing source of income.](#)

Going forward, it's imperative to look at whether relying on oil but also soil could provide the most feasible pathway to enhance food security and job creation for the increasingly youthful population under the changing climate, [currently at 200 million and rising to 400 million by 2040.](#) Focusing on ecosystem based adaptation (EBA) driven-agriculture and building climate resilience could unleash the hidden economic assets that can spiral growth, improve food and nutrition security, and create employment to unprecedented levels.

### Workshop Scope and Objectives

This leaves us with four indisputable challenges:

1. Achieving food security by and for the food insecure millions as soon as possible;
2. Repairing and preparing our ecosystems/resource-base in order to feed the estimated, additional 1 billion people in Africa by 2050 and achieve sound economic diversification and growth while contributing significantly to sustainable development;
3. Actualizing the next new frontier pathway through building on some practical action already under way at the regional level as manifested by the [Maputo](#) and [Malabo](#) declarations and putting in place policies that incentivize increased private sector involvement in ecosystem based adaptation (EBA) driven agriculture in order to bring in capital and enhance competitiveness and a business culture
4. Shifting the current paradigms towards reinvesting natural resource revenues into EBA driven agriculture as well as increased investment from oil earnings back into the Earth's ecosystems that feed us.

Using the perspectives and experiences of the participants to map gaps and build inroads between important initiatives, programmes and institutions, the conference will amplify the voice of the unheard and demonstrate the opportunities for Ecosystem based climate-smart, resource-efficient practices that can truly catapult Africa out of the pack of food insecurity.

The key **objectives** of the conference are:

- To determine how EbA can be harnessed to protect and restore Africa's ecosystems as well as integrate it into policy framework to enable improved agricultural production and productivity
- To identify scalable and inclusive business models for EBA driven agriculture that can create opportunities in the entire agricultural value chain
- To identify scalable innovative financing models for EBA driven agriculture that when implemented could stimulate growth, job creation and value chain partnership in Africa



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- To understand the benefits of EBA for job creation and the achievement of the proposed SDGs and what Africa will lose as a continent if EbA is ignored or given little support;
- To identify enabling policies and legislation that will incentivize countries to invest in agriculture, soil conservation and EbA;
- To understand the paradigms that governs the development of agriculture in Africa and gain knowledge on the agents of change who could bring the paradigm shift and associated agenda forward and what needs to be done to mobilize them and facilitate their activities;
- To discuss what needs to be done to incentivize private sector involvement in EBA-driven agriculture to bring in capital and enhance competitiveness.

### Expected Outcomes

- Investments and Policy support for driving EbA driven agricultural productivity and job creation in Africa promoted
- Scalable innovative financing and inclusive business models for EBA driven agriculture explored
- Key opportunities and actions for successful rollout of EBA driven agriculture across the entire continent identified and agreed

### Format of the Conference

The conference will take place over two days, and will consist of a combination of plenary and panel group discussions. Each plenary will be structured around one theme and resourced by high level thinkers from diverse perspectives and sectors. The breakout session will be framed around a set of key questions. All sessions will be interactive, so we will not have any speeches or talks with slides.

Exhibitions (if possible) will also be organized to share in more details experience from countries and organization.

### Organizers and Participants

The conference is co-organized by UNEP, FAO & AUC in collaboration with other UN Agencies, Governments, Private Sector, Research Institution, NGOs, CSOs Scholars, Donors, and Local Governments etc.

### Contact Persons:

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