

Global Soil Week 2019:

Creating an Enabling Environment for Sustainable and Climate Resilient Agriculture in Africa

ICRAF Campus, Nairobi, 27 – 30 May 2019

Concept Note

Background: Enabling Environments for Sustainable and Climate Resilient Agriculture

There is widespread acknowledgement of the need to move towards more inclusive and more sustainable rural transformation. Political commitments such as the African Union's Malabo Declaration on Agriculture and Agenda 2063, the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, the Bonn Challenge, and country's NDCs are a vivid expression of governments acknowledging the need to make rural development more inclusive and sustainable. Experience so far shows that up-scaling of sustainable land management practices is not achieved by increased funding to replicate successful pilots nor by policy dialogue on national level alone. In order to live up to political commitments to implement progressive rural development policies there is a need to pair lessons learned from pilot projects with deliberate investments in creating an enabling environment that sustains sustainable land management efforts over time. Such investments support a broader adoption of lessons learned for inclusive and sustainable agricultural development.

Despite ongoing efforts, there is an increasingly urgent need for inclusive investments in sustainable land management in Sub-Saharan Africa to ensure food security of smallholder farmers. In 2017, 20% of Africa's population was considered undernourished, i.e. people facing chronic food deprivation; the continent's population is to increase by 1.3 billion in the next 30 years; about 60% of its population depends directly on ecosystem services as a source of income, energy, medicine, and food; three-quarters of the continent's poor population live on drylands that are highly susceptible to further degradation of land and corresponding ecosystem services. Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world where the overall number of extremely poor people is increasing rather than decreasing and it is expected that 9 in 10 extremely poor people will live in this region by 2030. Projected climate change impacts see reductions in productivity of staple crops. Even under a 1.5° or 2°C climate change pathway some parts of the African continent are expected to experience temperature increases which could reach up to 4°C. Despite efforts to strengthen the resilience of especially smallholder farmers to the effects of climate change, this represents a fundamental challenge to current farming systems and is very likely to exacerbate challenges in achieving food security.

Sustainability of investments and adoption of improved agricultural practices at a broader scale require addressing the missing middle between pilot projects and national programming – it requires creating an enabling environment at the local level. It is a well-established finding that the sustainability and large-scale adoption of improved land management practices is often affected by lack of capacities within local institutions and inconsistent implementation of national policies. Incongruent land use planning, market distortions and lack of market access, inadequate extension and service delivery mechanisms, or insecure land rights are major stumbling blocks on the way towards a sustainable and climate resilient agriculture. Way too often, end of project means end of sustainable land management investments as local realities are not properly considered. The GSW 2019 will therefore focus on specific strategies that are needed to create an enabling environment for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture in Africa.

Objectives

To contribute to creating enabling environments for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture in Africa, the objectives of the Global Soil Week are:

- To emphasize that progress in ending hunger in rural areas, in enhancing the adaptive capacity of smallholder farms, achieving land degradation neutrality, and in managing biodiversity and natural resources in a sustainable way depends on an enabling environment for smallholder farms that often is yet to be created.
- To sharpen our joint understanding of an enabling environment that is needed to make investments in sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture sustain over time and to be adopted at a broader scale.
- To show that progress in creating an enabling environment for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture is possible, even through small scale investments in locally driven learning and innovation processes.
- To create a dialogue between representatives of relevant regional initiatives, national Governments, municipalities, and civil society on their respective roles and contributions in making this enabling environment for sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture come about.

Methodology: An Action-oriented Dialogue to Create Enabling Environments

The design of the Global Soil Week 2019 emerged from an inclusive preparatory process. Building on the outcomes of the African Soil Seminar 2016, preparatory consultation meetings for GSW 2019 were held during the 2018 High-level Political Forum in New York, at the Africa Global Landscapes Forum 2018, and at a dedicated seminar in January 2019 in Nairobi. Participants included a broad range of stakeholders from government, civil society, research institutes, and community-based organizations. In terms of origin, these events were able to count on the presence of representatives from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zambia. The methodology presented below is a result of these discussions.

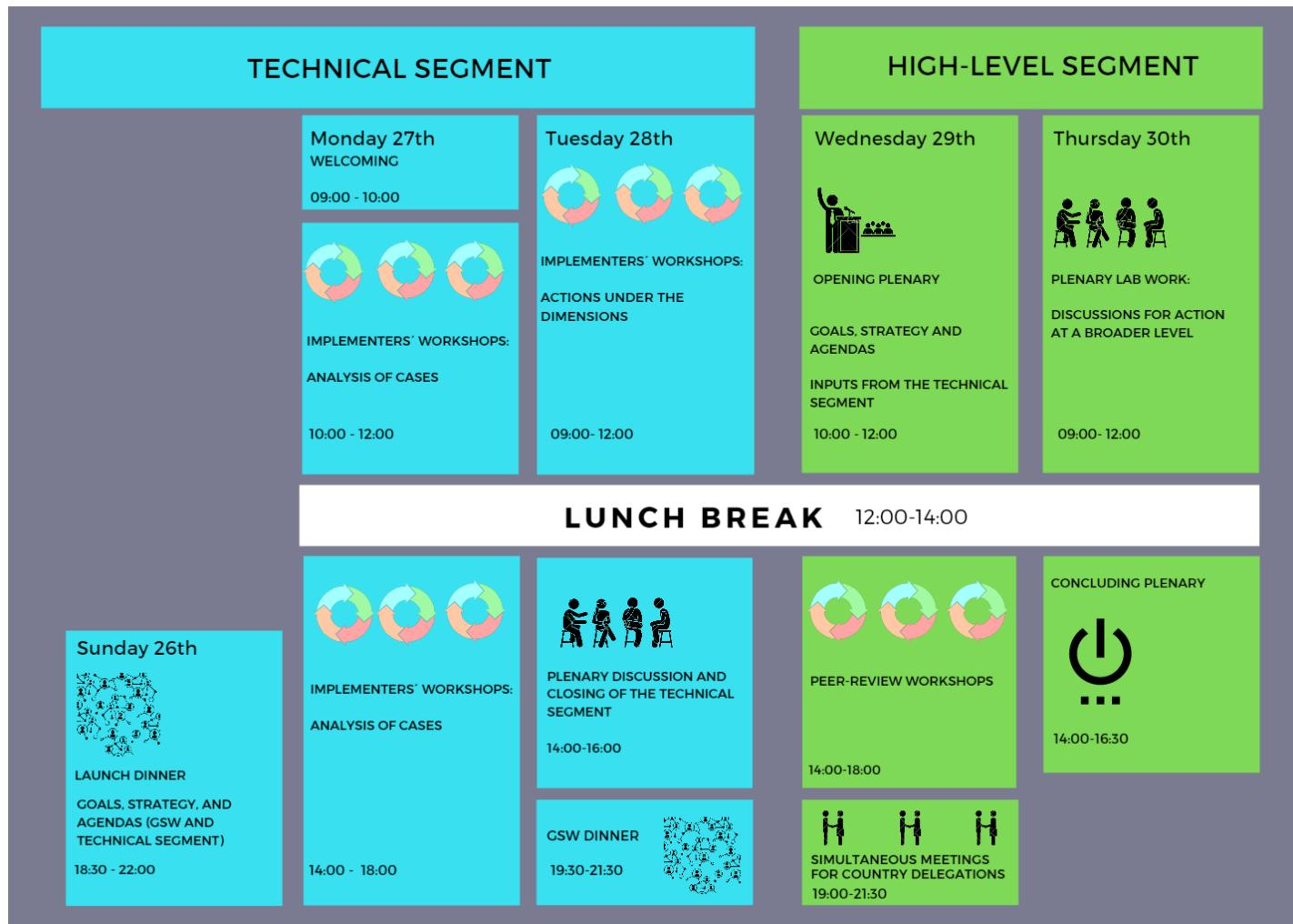
The Global Soil Week will provide for an action-oriented dialogue to create enabling environments for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture in Africa. The consultation meetings emphasized the need to build on the results of other platforms – such as the Global Landscapes Forum – and move towards a discussion on specific actions to address well-known implementation challenges. Therefore, the Global Soil Week will build evidence from the bottom up. Beginning with a review of local level experiences in implementing projects and programmes to make agriculture more sustainable and climate resilient, participants of the Global Soil Week will collectively identify specific responses to those challenges. In the terminology proposed by the Global Soil Week, participants will identify dimensions of an enabling environment for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture, an agriculture that is contributing its share to achieving land degradation neutrality. Discussions so far have highlighted the following dimensions of an enabling environment: equitable financing mechanisms; accessible extension and other delivery services; adaptive governance structures and cooperation models; land governance; and sustainable consumption and production. To conclude, the Global Soil Week will facilitate a discussion between participants on how to concretely move ahead in addressing these.

Considering the above background and focus, the GSW 2019 will pursue these objectives in two phases:

1. During a 2-day preparatory **Technical Segment**, a smaller group of technical experts will review implementation experiences based on presentations of case studies. The case studies are prepared beforehand by the partners of Global Soil Week in coordination with TMG staff. This review will lay the basis for a discussion along the different dimensions of an enabling environment in working groups (e.g., financing mechanisms, extensions services, or land governance). The goal is to jointly identify and develop actions to create the necessary enabling environments.

2. The subsequent two-day **High-level Event** will be an opportunity for up to 180 participants to build on the results of the technical segment. During **workshop sessions**, they will review the proposed actions which will subsequently be fed into a plenary session. **The plenary session** offers a platform for an exchange between national governments, regional programmes, and other participant of the Global Soil Week to derive roles and responsibilities in implementing those strategies. Proceeding like this, the GSW 2019 aims to generate actionable outputs by directly addressing key stakeholders relevant to the identified strategies.

Draft Agenda



A Brief History of the Global Soil Week

The Global Soil Week (GSW) brings together a diverse range of actors to initiate and strengthen policies and actions on sustainable soil management and responsible land governance. Since its beginning in 2012, the focus and design of the GSW has continuously evolved in order to respond to and shape ongoing policy debates and sustainable land management programming. The first Global Soil Weeks were focused on awareness raising to support putting soils on the political agenda. As the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the GSW 2017 focused on supporting reviews of land and soil related SDGs at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF). In particular, the Global Soil Week contributed to the negotiations on land degradation neutrality and ways to achieve it. After requests from partner countries for a regional event, the African Soil Seminar was held in Nairobi in 2016 with the governments of Kenya, Ethiopia, Benin, and Burkina Faso as co-hosts. NEPAD acted as a regional level co-host during the African Soil Seminar. Building on the experience and outcomes of previous GSWs, the GSW 2019 will focus on creating enabling environments for sustainable and climate resilient agriculture in Africa.

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