

BEATING FAMINE TODAY

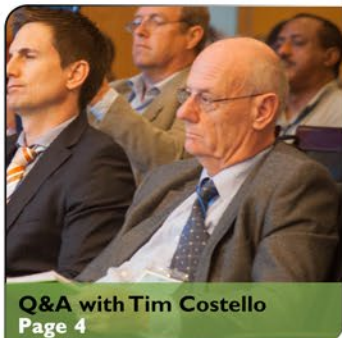
A Product of the Beating Famine 2015 Conference

The grand finale!

Tour of change to come, conference drafts declaration



Technologies drive Action Plans
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All the delegates in one picture

The 546 delegates who attended the Beating Famine 2015 Conference at Bingu International Conference Centre in Lilongwe and Malawi have capped a successful four days of deliberations with a draft declaration.

The declaration is a representation of the collective aspirations of 28 countries and 240 organisations concerned with the environment and determined to heal the land for food security.

As he read out the draft declaration, Dennis Garriy, Drylands Ambassador for United

Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) emphasised that, "this declaration is important for governments who make decisions that affect the future of farming. In that respect, it will be a great tool that can assist delegates to dialogue with national, regional and global stakeholders."

The declaration acknowledges current efforts aimed at better land management as well as restoration of the environment, and the progress made by Southern Africa towards the same. It is cognisant of climate change and its effects, and proposes climate smart programmes.

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Sustainable Food Security through Land
Regeneration in a Changing Climate



World Vision



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#BeatingFamine2015

#Malawi

Conference drafts a declaration ...from front page

Notably, the declaration highlights the role of women as farmers and recognises that women and youths are the least empowered. It proposes the promotion of gender equality in agriculture.

So far countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Rwanda have committed to restoring a collective 350 million hectares of agricultural and forestry land by 2030. It is expected that more Southern Africa countries will take similar steps.

Garrity added that, "Southern Africa is encouraged to create regional platforms such as the Great Green Wall of the Sahel."

Some of the key issues contained in the declaration, include a call to NGOs to focus on assisting communities to formulate national resource management plans. The rationalisation of food and agricultural policies must be a priority for governments as well as ensuring the processes include the church and cultural leaders.

The most salient aspect throughout the conference, which has been reiterated in the declaration, is the scaling up of the best practises for integrated soil fertility. This must be taken up as quickly as possible.

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The other key outcomes of the conference include a focus on alignment with international aspirations and targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the new climate agreement but with a unique Southern African voice. The participants stressed the need to roll out scientifically proven and grassroots solutions and put these within an enabling policy environment that draws on the strengths of Southern Africa's vibrant youth and civil society movement.

Adoption of technologies drive action plans



Kondwani Phoya - Ulimi Family Farms Trust

Different groups sat and discussed best mechanisms to improve agriculture productivity in Africa and outlined different options that can assist the continent to beat famine.

The facilitators divided the participants into different groups which included donor organisations, research institutions, implementing organisations and policy makers. The action plans established goals, deadlines and implementation strategies for different countries to shape their future work in beating famine.

Southern Africa region action plans will combine different technologies to improve agriculture techniques in order to boost production.

These technologies include FMNR, re-greening, conservation agriculture, EverGreen Agriculture, Holistic Grazing Management and agroforestry. They can be harnessed with mobile technologies to restore land, water and biological diversity, regenerating trees, increasing crop yields and ultimately restoring hope through improving livelihoods and food security for Africa.

Conference in Brief

The 2015 Beating Conference finally closed on the evening of Friday the 17th of April 2015 with the drafting of a declaration to cement the deliberations of the four day event. This declaration is a commitment by different stakeholders to beat famine in Southern Africa.

Prior to the drafting of the declaration participants had an opportunity to participate in two plenaries that brought together government officials and donor representatives. There was general consensus that beating famine is business unusual and there is need to resource it accordingly.

Delegates also finalised their national and regional scaling strategies that will assist them to beat famine now and beyond 2015. Some of these strategies will be further discussed by the Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture in Africa.

Overall, participants said that the conference had achieved the objectives it had set for itself for instance highlighting key agricultural and land management practises to address the crisis of wide spread land degradation in Southern Africa which is a threat to food security.

Rebecca Wahome, Deputy Director of Agriculture and Crops in the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya said the conference provided a great learning opportunity and platform to share experiences.



Go to page 9 and 10 for a recap of the conference in pictures

Adoption of technologies drive action plans

...from page 2

Somalia and Somaliland plans among other things, to use mass media organisations to reach 80% of their productivity group and disseminate information on FMNR technologies.

The conference host, Malawi, is looking forward to engage the youth and women into the production chain. The action plan details that the country will create platforms in the next three months that will explore local existing technologies.

While the declaration is now being finalised, the draft declaration recognises that children, youth and women, are important in the production chain. However, they are the less empowered in the process.

“In Malawi, many female farmers own a mobile phone. If explored, mobile technologies can be used to share agriculture information. It can be used as a platform to discuss challenges and innovations for farmers,” said Kondwani Phoya from Ulimi Family Farms Trust.

Malawi is committed to create networks of farmers, policy makers and civil society organisations that will allow an easy flow of useful information in the production chain.

“One thing we would like to do is to present to the farmers a range of technology opportunities and let them select the one they think can be best for them. They should also be empowered to make such decisions,” Phoya added.

By 2020 Malawi expects to reduce food insecurity by 80%, combining technologies such as FMNR, Conservation Agriculture, including water management.

Mozambique represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agrarian Investigation Institute detailed in its action plan how it will increase food security; production; income generation as well as promoting evergreen agriculture at national level.

“We are going to adopt some of the technologies Malawi is already implementing especially FMNR. We will integrate this into a research project that is already in progress in the southern part of the country” said Alberto Massingue, from the Agrarian Investigation Institute.

“Thanks for making us a virtual part of the conference it was interesting to follow the proceedings through the newsletter”
- Tirhani Manganyi, WV SARO



Tim Costello - CEO World Vision Australia

Q *World Vision focuses a lot on protecting the rights of the children. And today we are talking about beating famine. What is the link?*

A Children are born and brought up by families. In Malawi and the whole of Africa, there are many families that depend on agriculture and farming. When you hear about farms getting smaller, droughts getting longer and when the rains come, there are floods; this drastically affects the well-being of children in terms of their health, nutrition and education.

Q *How are you going to make sure that children are involved in this programming?*

A Children are interested in how their family makes a living. Every day, they watch what their parents are doing including farming activities. The basic scripting of life happens with your parents not with your teachers or someone else. When we are teaching about Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration, for example, children come in straight away. They are observing the changing context. When there is a shift in mindsets, for instance that when you cut a tree down, you need to regenerate it, children get excited and remind their parents about this. So we are going to be working with children as we work with their parents.

Q *What was the main idea behind encouraging FMNR in Malawi?*

A Malawi has the greatest reforestation happening in Africa. The Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development mentioned figures that are just terrifying on the destruction of forests and degradation of land. The reason is that it is a small country with a big population. Malawi really becomes a test case for us; as we are asking, can we reverse this? Can it be a model for Southern Africa? That is why Malawi is so important for this.

Q *What are you expecting from this conference?*

A We are expecting that from this conference we can see change. Actually we are now convinced that it is true that all farmers can use the natural resources to get better crops. They can actually increase their yields because of the more leaves from the trees that create nitrogen and organic fertilizer. It is something that every farmer can start doing tomorrow.

Q *How are you personally going to help make an impact so people can say I learnt something from that conference?*

A Australia has a lot of dryland farming so this is very relevant for us. But most importantly as a world Vision person, it took a long time for me to be convinced that this actually works. Now to own the process and to be the advocate of these technologies in and beyond World Vision is what I see as my role.

"Africa has a very low carbon footprint but is running hard on adaptation measures as climate change bites and hurts small land holders. Teaching them to restore trees is the key for both land regeneration and better yield in crops to lift them out of poverty."
- Tim Costello

BLEANSA to focus on information sharing

“BLEANSA reviews experiences gained from past research, refine and optimize Evergreen agriculture, distil the experiences into policy recommendations, and share them widely.”



Hamilton Chimala - Agricultural Communications Branch

BLEANSA an acronym for Building a Large Evergreen Agriculture Network for Southern Africa is a network of organisations and innovation platforms for coordination of research and development in agroforestry. According to Dr. Isaac Nyoka in his Evergreen Agriculture Network for Southern Africa side event during the Beating Famine conference, “BLEANSA reviews experiences gained from past research, refine and optimize Evergreen agriculture, distil the experiences into policy recommendations, and share them widely.”

The network is working to sensitise policy makers to develop policies which facilitate the wide-scale promotion and adoption of Evergreen agriculture and mobilising extension staff, farmers and other land users and scale-up Evergreen agriculture in Southern Africa. It is also investigating and piloting alternative farm income streams from trees to optimise the economic, environmental and social outcomes of Evergreen agriculture application.

BLEANSA is building the Research and Development (R&D) capacity of the national institutions in Evergreen agriculture. The countries currently working under the network are Botswana, South Africa (Limpopo province), Mozambique and Malawi. It is managed by a Project Steering Committee, a Technical Advisory Group and ICRAF secretariat.

BLEANSA's long-term goal is to be an Evergreen agriculture and agroforestry information hub for Southern Africa. However, this will not be easy. According to Joyce Lepetu from the College of Agriculture in Botswana – a network member – a lot of information on agroforestry has been produced over the years and is available in manuals, publications and research

papers. However, it is not accessible to farmers in a format and through platforms that they can access.

Hamilton Chimala, the Deputy Director-Communication at the Department of Agricultural Extension Services, Malawi opined that the region will need to come up with innovative solutions that will avail agricultural information to farmers easily, in their local languages. “We need to provide farmers with the right tools and knowledge that will help them improve productivity and income on their farms,” Mr. Chimala stated. Mr. Chimala is currently working on an agroforestry information sharing model that farmers can access through dedicated television and radio channels.

In Malawi, as is the case in most Southern Africa countries, information on agroforestry is inaccessible or obsolete where available. Farmers are still using knowledge shared 20 years ago. With new challenges like climate change affecting farmers, new knowledge has been generated to mitigate this. It is this new knowledge that many smallholder farmers need to access to cushion themselves against effects of climate change and improve their productivity.



Participant peruses through a publication

The network is working with other development agencies to lobby policy makers to develop policies which facilitate the wide-scale promotion and adoption of Evergreen agriculture and agroforestry.

Participants offered some recommendations on growing the network. First, the network must facilitate the development of national agroforestry policy in the member countries. This will place BLEANSA right in the heart of all agroforestry dialogues.

Secondly, agroforestry information should be synthesised for easy comprehension by farmers. This will demand inno-

BLEANSA to focus on information sharing

...from page 5

vative ideas and a departure from past thinking. Social networking platforms should be harnessed.

Thirdly, the network should broaden its membership to include NGOs, farmer groups, private sector players and the media. The network should start addressing national and regional initiatives.

The network is funded by the Government of Flanders through the Flemish International Cooperation Agency (FICA).

Climate Smart Agriculture can increase food production in Malawi



George Phiri - Technical Coordinator, FAO

The face of agriculture is changing, due to effects of climate change. In Malawi, small holder farmers have not been spared. For example, there is shortage of water due to erratic rains, floods resulting from excess rains and heavy erosion and results in land degradation and poor soil quality.

Malawi used to receive its first rains as early as October but now the rains are coming between mid and late December. Most rivers have also changed the pattern of flowing perennially and are now flowing seasonally. Effects of climate change are also evidenced by the drying up of most wetlands and swamps.

The challenges highlighted have contributed to Malawi's food insecurity and nutritional challenges.

In his presentation titled 'Scaling up Climate Smart Agriculture in Malawi' George Phiri, Technical Coordinator at Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) said Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) is one of the key solutions that can help farmers to avert the challenges.

CSA encompasses a wide range of agriculture based practises and technologies that have the potential to increase food production. It reduces emission and enhances carbon storage in agricultural soils and biomass.

Some of the agriculture based practises and technologies include conservation agriculture; agro-forestry; inter-cropping; soil and water conservation; introduction of high yield and resistant varieties of seeds; irrigation and planting of nitrogen fixing crops.

CSA assists farmers to attain high yields in times of adverse climate conditions. It builds resilience in communities and contributes to food security.

"There is need to invest in Climate Smart Agriculture," said Phiri in his presentation. He hinted that government through Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) has several activities planned that have high CSA potential.

If Malawi has to survive the impacts of climate change and also maintain vitality of its natural resources, then CSA is the answer.

After the Beating Famine Conference some participants will be part of a two day Alliance for CSA in Africa meeting. The Alliance is helping to empower six million small-holder farm households in Africa to benefit from practising CSA by 2021

Food for thought

World Vision Kenya's Caroline Njiru says that to further entice other African Governments into adopting the new technologies such as Farmer Managed Natural Re-generation (FMNR), Smart Agriculture and re-Greening, there is need for researchers in the region to invest in credible research that will quantify the economic benefits that countries adopting new technologies stand to make, and the losses coming by doing otherwise.

"With research," said Njiru, we can be able to build a case that FMNR is working and even give it a kind of economic value and see what are we saving our Government when we do FMNR and if we don't do it," Njiru, the FMNR Project Manager for World Vision Kenya emphasised.

From food response to food production



Maxwell Sibhenzana - Food Programming and Management Group

Responding to disasters, from now on, will need the integration of forestry, agriculture and aid activities to ensure that organisations build resilient communities. Southern Africa can do it. This was said by Technical Director for Programmes at World Vision Southern Africa Region's (SAR) Food Programming and Management Group (FPMG), Maxwell Sibhenzana on the final day of the Beating Famine Conference.

Sibhenzana's unit is responsible for designing and implementing food assistance projects for relief, development and advocacy. Programmes include food-in-kind distribution (through locally and globally sourced food), cash and voucher-based programming supporting vulnerable group feeding, integrated school feeding and food for assets and food for work to strengthen household and community resilience.

Southern Africa is currently responding to climate induced disasters in parts of Malawi and Mozambique. The erratic rainfall this season, as most farmers depend on rain for agriculture, means that the region is facing a possible drought.

Having attended the Beating Famine Conference, Sibhenzana is of the view that Southern Africa must cross breed food assistance projects with forest management as one way of reducing dependence on aid organisations. In addition, it is important to have other communities to be food secure so that there is food for other communities in conflict areas. "We can do something about climate induced disasters that compromise food production and nutrition", Sibhenzana said.

"The work that FPMG is doing should be seen as a catalyst for communities to do more. We want communities to be aiding each other when one has not produced enough food. The technologies discussed here are relevant to our context and we should push for their adoption. They are part of the solution to ending extreme hunger and a hunger free Southern Africa," he underscored.

This conference could not have come at a better time as Southern Africa intensifies discussions on how to build resilient communities and food security at household level is achieved.

Find ways to make agriculture appealing to youth

According to McKinsey and Company's, latest statistics indicate that Africa has the fastest population growth rate. By 2030, Africa will represent 40% of the world's population and currently, it has the largest rate of youth in the world.

"If we are discussing about beating famine and we recognise that youth's contribution is important in our continent, we should deliberately find ways to make agriculture appealing to youth" said Marion Moon, a 31 year old entrepreneur in organic products in Kenya.

Moon, together with Sid Mohan from the World Agro-Forestry Centre facilitated a live debate in a room highly dominated by the youth, challenging them to take an interest in agriculture. "If we look at the numbers, most of our population is youth. Our continent's economy relies on agriculture and we therefore need to find mechanisms to join these two forces" added Moon.

However, the youth hardly demonstrate interest in agriculture related business. Participants in this session agreed that there is need to use new technologies and disseminate information that can attract the youth to agriculture.

The education sector was pointed out as critical when dealing with agriculture. Most of the time, agriculture is a form of punishment in school. Children therefore develop a negative attitude towards agriculture. There is a need to change that mindset and for the school curriculum to be used to turn this situation around.

Again, there should be promotion of the best producers in different agriculture domains, in order to create business models that will assist to demystify that agriculture, is nothing but only a tough and dirty job.

Moon's message is that the youth must practise agriculture and earn a living out of it.

What did they Say?

Join a live conversation on Twitter using the hashtag **#BeatingFamine**

You can also catch us on **facebook** for conference updates

Follow us on **twitter** @WorldVisionSARO

Glen Tyler @paigemcclanahan

We need to come together to preserve ecosystem services. - Mrs Nathai Head of Environment, Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture. #beatingfamine



Idrissa Pros Nkwanda

Grand finale day! Much has been learnt #beatingfamine



Rebecca Wahome

Climate smart agriculture is not a one-ministry affair - need to work together. #beatingfamine



Leo De Pedro

Got inspired with session on #beatingfamine conference taking place in Malawi, making agriculture appealing to #youth



Quotable Quotes

Anne Tvinnereim – Head, Food Security, Norad

“We need to involve ministries of finance and not just ministries directly concerned with agriculture. Finance is key to achieving what has been set out here. The Norwegian Government will continue to support efforts and solutions that will help to feed the growing population and also in the building of networks.”



Aiden Fitzpatrick, Head of Development Embassy of Ireland, Malawi

“If we can move resources that we currently put into reactive actions and put them into technologies that restore the environment, we could do so much better. Prevention is better than cure.”



FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

We would like to hear from you. Send comments or feedback to: lindiwe_bandazi@wvi.org

Multimedia



Southern Africa committed to ending famine



Malawi and Africa will beat famine



Africa can do it... from food response to food production

#FromOurLens



Beating Famine Conference Highlights



A. World Vision Southern Africa Senior Director of Operation during field visits

B. Networking during lunch time

C. Contemplating - one the editorial team members at work

D. Group work to come up with country strategies

#FromOurLens



Beating Famine Conference Highlights

...continues



A



B



C

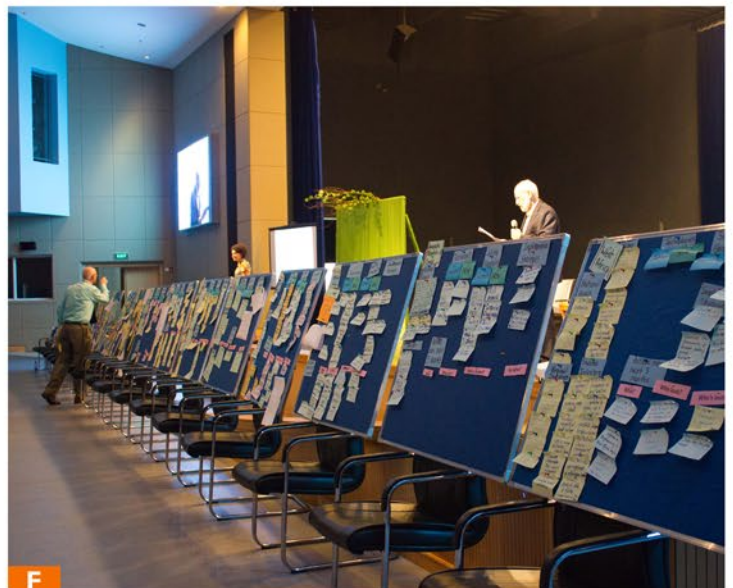


D



E

- A.** Dr. Jeremias Mowo from ICRAF
- B.** Paige McCclanahan (in black top) from ICRAF tweets away!
- C.** Sarah Mackenzie - the phenomenal organiser who pulled things together
- D.** Vanessa Kapeleta (in black jacket) worked around the clock with the ushers
- E.** The World Vision Germany team had their presence felt at the conference
- F.** Consolidating national action plans



F