



27TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP- 21-22 SEPTEMBER 2026

**THEME: PROMOTING A RESILIENT AGRICULTURE SECTOR AGAINST CLIMATE
CHANGE IN THE GAMBIA AND OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES**

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ The Climate Reality in The Gambia
- ▶ Climate realities in the Gambia
- ▶ Why Agriculture Must be Resilient
- ▶ Government Strategies and Approaches for Strengthening Resilience
- ▶ Policies and institutional support
- ▶ Examples of initiatives
- ▶ Challenges.



INTRODUCTION

- Agriculture makes up a significant proportion of The Gambia's economy, comprising 25% of its GDP, according to government's Agric Census figures.
- It is estimated that about 75% of workers in The Gambia are employed within the agricultural sector, mainly as smallholder farmers.
- Being the most exposed to Climate shocks, Climate change is making it ever more difficult for smallholder farmers to produce enough food to sustain themselves and their families. Many at times farmers had to seek other work to supplement their farming activities.
- Our choice is clear as a country: “adapt or go hungry” Grow More, Lose Less, Adapt Now. From Vulnerability to Opportunity



INTRODUCTION CONT.

- Young Gambians in particular are leaving rural communities altogether and looking for opportunities in the growing urban areas or across borders, even braving dangerous irregular migration routes to Europe.
- Strengthening the resilience of family farmers and small scale producers in the Gambia involves a multi-pronged approach, including investing in climate-smart and sustainable agricultural practices, strengthening farmer organizations, promoting diversification, and addressing challenges like access to finance and information, empowering them to adapt to challenges like climate shocks and market fluctuations, while also enhancing their productivity and livelihoods.
- The government, its partners, and various organizations are working together to improve food and nutrition security, and overall well-being of these farmers.



CLIMATE REALITY IN THE GAMBIA

- ▶ Rainfall: Erratic; late onset, early cessation, dry spells, floods
- ▶ Temperature: Rising; heat stress on crops and livestock
- ▶ Sea Level Rise: Salinity intrusion in coastal fields
- ▶ Floods and Droughts: Destroyed crops and pastures in the CRR, NBR, and LRR of the Gambia in the last 5 years



WHY AGRICULTURE MUST BE RESILIENT IN THE GAMBIAN CONTEXT

- ▶ **Withstand unpredictable climate shocks**
- ▶ **To ensure national food and nutrition security**
- ▶ **Stabilize the national economy mitigating the below national problems**



GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES FOR STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE

a) Strengthening Farmer Organizations

- The ROOTS, P2P2RS and GIRAV Projects and the Department of Cooperative Development focus on strengthening the technical and organizational capacities of farmers' organizations, particularly those led by women and youth, to improve food and nutrition security and climate change resilience.
- Farmers are empowered to work collectively through their organizations, to improve their bargaining powers and access to resources.

b) Promoting Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices

- Water being our biggest risk and opportunity, adopting efficient water management practices like drip, tidal pump and sprinkler irrigation and in high gear, Adopting drought- tolerant and salt- tolerant crop varieties, and agroforestry help farmers adapt to climate shocks and improve crop yields.

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES CON



c) Diversifying Agricultural practices

- Farmers are encouraged to diversify their crops and livestock. This reduces dependence on single rain-fed crops to climate smart irrigated crops; year round and improve resilience to market fluctuations and climate shocks.

d) Enhancing Access to Finance

- Providing access to credit, grants, Matching Grants and other financial services by ROOTS and GIRAV enable farmers to invest in improved technologies and practices. Risk financing such as crop insurance and other Risk Sharing facilities are piloted GARMISAL project

e) Access to Information

- Ensuring farmers have access to information on climate resilience agricultural practices, market prices, weather, and other relevant topics via community radios, help them make informed decision. Early Warning e.g. DWR + MOALFS + FAO Voice SMS in four local languages on rainfall and other extension messages reaching >20,000 farmers through our e-extension platforms for timely decision making.

STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES CONT



f. Addressing Socio-economic challenges

- Expand financial access : supporting microfinance digital banking and inclusive models targeting small scale farmers
- There are digital platform that provide direct link producers to buyers and retailers and consumers. This cuts out middlemen.
- Promote Farmer Education: extention programs are focused susutainable agronomy, business management and digital technology adoption.
- Strengthening Cooperatives :encourage collective actions through farmer cooperatives to improve inclusivity and negotiating power.
- Addressing issues like gender and youth exclusion, and improving literacy and access to education have empowered farmers to participate more in strengthening the Food Systems.

POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

- ▶ MOAFLS is composed of departments (DOA, DLS, NARI, WALIC, GILMA NSS NFSPMC) that are responsible for implementation of their policies towards the attainment of a home grown sustainable resilient equitable and healthy food system
- ▶ Agriculture and natural Resource Policy (2017-2026) a framework to reduce poverty improve food and nutrition security while protecting the environment.
- ▶ Gambia National agricultural Investment plan (2019-2026) a framework designed to transform the country's food system.
- ▶ Livestock Master plan (2023-2027) roadmap to transform the nation's Livestock Sector
- ▶ National Cooperative Policy (2021-2030) -revitalize the cooperative sector and drive sustainable economic growth.

EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES



a) **ROOTS, P2P2RS, and GIRAV Projects**

- These projects, funded by dev't partners and GOTG, focus on improving food and nutrition security, and building the resilience of small holder farmers in the Gambia against climate shocks. Small holder Farmers benefit from subsidized inputs, land development.

b) **Maruo Farms**

- This Private Sector initiative in Rice Production provides training in climate-smart agricultural practices, access machinery and other resources to support small holder farmers cope with climate change and increase their productivity by honoring the production calendar to be more resilient to climate shocks.
- As of July 2026, >1,680 smallholder farmers work with Maruo Farms, 90% of whom are women.

c) **Small Ruminants Production Enhancement Project**

- This project improved the lives and livelihoods of rural and peri-urban communities by improving production and strengthening productivity and resilience of livestock production, health and marketing systems. Livestock farmers benefit from pasture rangelands, watering points, animals, feed, animal houses, drug outlets and markets.

EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES



d) National Adaptation Plan (NAP)

- The NAP process, which started in the Gambia in 2015 with funding from UNDP, aims to enhance the country's adaptive capacity to climate change.

e) Jobs Skills Finance (JSF) Program

- This initiative helps farmers to realise income that is generated from the JSF Program's cash for work activities which puts money in their savings for future opportunities.
- The JSF Programme includes the construction of storage facilities to support a planned scale-up of operations from expansion of cultivated farmland over the next five years. This goes hand-in-hand with supporting the network of independent growers, who together cultivate to increase the hectares of land put under cultivation.

CHALLENGES

- ▶ **Limited financing of the agricultural sector 10% of national budget to agriculture versus 2% in the Gambia**
- ▶ **Heavy dependence on seasonal rain fed farming**
- ▶ **Severe climate change (short rainy season, low irrigation, extreme weather and rising seas) impacts on crops and livestock.**
- ▶ **Infrastructure and market barriers (post harvest loss, high import reliance, expensive input cost)**
- ▶ **Social and labor constrains (youth disinterest, land and finance hurdles, labor shortages)**