**EVENT:**
Gambia National Day of Resilience & food Security

**DATE:**
5th October 2017

**VENUE:**
Paradise Suites Senegambia

**IN ATTENDANCE**
Permanent Secretary;
Ministry of Environment, Climate Change & Natural Resources;
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture;
UN FAO Country representative;
Gambia EBAFOSA bureau officials;
UNEP Regional Climate Change coordinator;
Country Stakeholders;
Reshaping Africa’s food security and climate resilience through leveraging Ecosystem based Adaptation Assembly Policy Framework

OFFSHOOTS FROM EBAFOSA GAMBIA NATIONAL DAY OF RESILIENCE & FOOD SECURITY

On 5th October, EBAFOSA Gambia commemorated their 1st anniversary since their launch. The objective of this commemoration was to promote EBAFOSA as the priority initiative that will accelerate socioeconomic transformation & combat climate change in the Gambia through establishing the EBA based clean energy powered agro-industrial zones. By this, establish market-driven incentives catalysing transition to low emissions development pathway for the country through practical actions to close both policy and operational gaps. Through this promotion, EBAFOSA Gambia sought to attract support of additional key stakeholders at policy level (to finalize establishment and recognition in government of the inter-agency policy task force) and at operational level to aggregate ground actions towards establishing these clean energy powered agro-industrial zones.

The guests of honour was the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change & Natural Resources, Mr. Lamin Jawara. In his remarks, he noted that the Gambia welcomes the EBAFOSA as it seeks to solve leading challenges in the Gambia. Among these need to achieve food security, create jobs for bulging youth population, combat poverty while simultaneously protecting ecosystems to cumulatively build climate resilience.

He also lauded EBAFOSA as supporting Gambia meet its objectives as signatory to all three Rio conventions – UNFCCC, UNCCD, UNCBD. He further lauded the innovative approach of EBAFOSA, the inclusive partnerships that leverage the strengths of multiple actors and targeted sectors for synergy towards building climate resilience & ushering the Gambia into a low emissions development pathway. He pledged his Ministries support to EBAFOSA Gambia towards ensuring actualization of a low emissions pathway that meets socioeconomic needs alongside climate objectives in the Paris Agreement to unlock multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

On his part, the UN FAO resident representative to the Gambia lauded EBAFOSA for focusing on agriculture as it is the corner stone of economies in Africa and hold the key to accelerated socioeconomic development. She emphasized the urgent need to increase agriculture productivity in the continent to safeguard economies and noted that this will be by taking an integrated rather than silo approach. Her for instance noted that since the 1900s, up to 75% of crop diversity has been lost from fields globally compounding quest for food security.
She further noted the need to maintain soil health & prevent erosion - all meaning the urgent need to mainstream food production approaches that enhance & protect ecosystems. She also noted the need to ensure not only adequate food but adequate distribution networks to make it accessible & affordable. She decried the fact that Africa resorts to importing food that can be produced locally and in the process, depleting its foreign reserves and weakening economies. All these implying need to consider the entire agro-value chain holistically. She noted that Africa is the only region in the world where per capita food production has declined steadily over the years. To remedy, he noted an urgent need to empower multiple population segments - especially women & youth to engage in this value chain & enhance productivity competitively targeting both domestic & international markets. He noted for instance that if women in agriculture had the same access to capital resources as men, the number of food insecure people globally would decline by 150 million.

Noting the need for locally driven solutions to solve such challenges, the UN FAO Deputy Representative lauded EBAFOSA for taking an integrated approach addressing inefficiencies along the entire agro-value chain including health of foundational ecosystems. She also lauded EBAFOSA for providing space for locally driven solutions & one where the capacity of multiple actors critical to maximizing productivity of Africa's food systems - like the women & youth can be built. She concluded by pledging UN FAO's commitment to work with EBAFOSA in the agriculture & natural resources sector towards building climate resilient communities & food systems.

The University of the Gambia also participated in the event. Students pledged to work with EBAFOSA Gambia by volunteering their time & knowledge to build partnerships & networks with experienced professionals and ongoing enterprises so they can enhance their practical skills to engage in enterprises along the EBAFOSA continuum - be it clean energy powered agro-value addition, ICT, financing, marketing & business planning among others.

The Gambia Immigration department also participated in this event. 70% of youth across Africa immigrate illegally in search of socioeconomic opportunities and in the process, loose their lives at sea. Noting the capacity building & socioeconomic opportunities along the agro-industrialization supply chain & continuum that EBAFOSA provides for the youth, the Immigration department pledged to work with EBAFOSA and develop a counselling programme targeting youth illegal immigrants. The objective of this programme will be to counsel youth on socioeconomic opportunities available within the Gambia through EBAFOSA, thus disincentivize illegal immigration.

The event also featured an exhibition by EBAFOSA Gambia stakeholders on how through EBAFOSA, they are bridging gaps to practically enhance food & livelihood security while also combating climate change. And as a result, practicalize a low emissions development pathway. Among key exhibitors was a bio-fertilizer entrepreneur. Through EBAFOSA, he has partnered with livestock farmers to harvest manure & groundnut farmers to harvest shells and using these as raw material, produce bio-fertilizer for sell. Through the EBAFOSA compliance standard which recommends bio-fertilizer and set to be adopted by the National Regulators in 40 countries, the market for bio-fertilizer is set to expand. In addition, an ICT app to link to markets is set to be launched in the Gambia where this bio-fertilizer actor will be mapped out as a supplier. Cumulatively, these market driven actions are set to incentivize bio-fertilizer production, which is a low emission livelihood activity. Another exhibitor was a women cooperative group who have mobilized through EBAFOSA to pool resources & launched a waste-to-energy & fertilizer enterprise. These women are making briquettes & compost manure from agriculture waste from nearby farms.
These products are all recommended in the EBAFOSA compliance standard set to be launched & enforced by the Gambia Bureau of Standard to further incentivize their use. Going forward EBAFOSA is set to map out these women in the mobile app as suppliers of clean energy & bio-fertilizer to users across the Gambia so they can access a wider market, and expand their production. Cassava is the flagship crop that EBAFOSA Gambia is targeting to industrialize & gather lessons to replicate towards industrializing other crop value chains in the Gambia. To this end, two cassava actors exhibited their enterprises and what they hope to achieve through EBAFOSA. A leading challenge facing stakeholder was the prevailing gaps along the cassava supply & value chain. For example, while cassava can be processed and used as raw material for various market products - bread, gari, a local flour etc., producers lack the necessary linkages to markets & supply chains that would enable them produce competitively.

Among key inputs include relevant off-grid clean energy technologies to power processes like flour milling - given that grid-connectivity is low and solar irrigation to enhance yields under declining rainfall. Linkage to consumer markets to cut middlemen who erode revenues & profitability of producers; linkage to affordable bio-fertilizer among others. Actors also noted the need for policies & institutional frameworks to address challenges unique to the cassava sector and need for continued research to enhance productivity.

EBAFOSA is set to address these bottlenecks. For example, the EBAFOSA ICT app will ensure producers are linked to various actors critical to bridging productivity gaps along the value chain - be it suppliers of clean energy, fertilizer etc. The app will also ensure producers are seamlessly linked to various consumer levels mapped out as markets. At the policy level, the inter-ministerial policy task force provides a forum and will prioritize addressing cassava sector policy bottlenecks.

The National Day of resilience in the Gambia demonstrated how different actors - state & non-state as called for under Section 5 of the Paris Agreement & SDG 17, can define their niche in the paradigm of low emissions development. And in the process, contribute to furtherance of the SDGs & Paris Agreement objectives.
Next steps

1. From the partnerships mobilized during the event, the following next steps are prioritized. At policy level EBAFOSA Gambia will mobilize representatives from the Immigration department to participate in the policy task force. The objective will be to work with complementary actors to develop a youth counseling policy to build capacity of at risk youth captured attempting illegal immigration to create livelihood opportunities enterprises based on EBA driven agriculture and clean energy. This will be part of the immigration department strategies to combat illegal immigration that will simultaneously enhance Gambia’s transition to low emissions development. This will be in line with section 5 of the Paris Agreement & SDG 17 which underscored partnerships as critical to actualizing low emissions development.

2. At the operational level, the University of Gambia students from faculties of ICT, business, agriculture, environment, will join ongoing actions with established ICT stakeholders on EBAFOSA Gambia to finalize development & testing of a mobile app to integrate processes & actors along the entire EBA-driven agriculture & clean energy continuum to scale EBA (Article 7) and clean energy to mitigate emissions (Article 4) and SDG13. In the process, capacity of these youth to build enterprises based on clean energy and EBA is enhanced, to buttress Gambia NDC priorities. This is in line with Article 10 of the Paris Agreement on capacity building for country climate actions.

3. The bio-fertilizer entrepreneur will be mapped in the finalized app and linked to markets through the app. This will incentivize increased production of bio-fertilizer a notable low emissions livelihood activity to combat poverty (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2). The women group developing bio-fertilizer and energy briquettes will also be mapped in the ICT app as suppliers of clean energy & bio-fertilizer and linked to markets across Gambia towards incentivizing these low emissions enterprises. These directly buttress Gambia NDC priorities on scaling clean cook stoves as an energy priority, SDG 7 on scaling clean energy and diversified livelihoods as agriculture NDC priority to contribute to Article 3 of the Paris Agreement.

4. Stakeholders of the cassava initiatives who participated in the exhibition will benefit from linkages to clean energy & bio-fertilizer as well as markets through the ICT app being developed to enhance their productivity. In addition, the cassava actors will be among the initial actors who will have their products certified by the EBAFOSA compliance standards being developed. At the policy level, these cassava actors are set to share views with the task force on key areas that need to be addressed to create enabling environment to maximize productivity of the cassava value chain

Congratulations EBAFOSA Gambia!

EBAFOSA Gambia becomes the 3rd National branch to celebrate The National Day of Resilience & Food Security.

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