Event Report

Africa Climate Week session:
Colliding climate and conflict risks: Building resilience from an integrated approach in fragile and most vulnerable places

Accra International Conference Centre

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Contents

Summary

The session “Colliding climate and conflict risks: building resilience from an integrated approach in fragile and most vulnerable places” took place within a GRP/FAO side event “Stepping Up Action on Building Climate Resilient Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa” preceding the UN Africa Climate Week, Ghana, 18-22 March 2019.

The session aimed to highlight ongoing actions on the ground in Africa to tackle food insecurity and conflict risks. Specific focus of the session was on how to 1) address the challenges to the implementation of these actions and 2) how to bring them to scale.

The session started with inspiration talks by three participants, presenting concrete examples transformative actions for food security and stability. These inspiration talks included the importance of providing opportunities for women, of local knowledge and solution co-production and of agro-ecological solutions for social-ecological resilience to climate change. Following the inspiration talks, participants presented and discussed the challenges and opportunities for scaling their own initiatives around smaller round-table discussions. These roundtable discussions brought forward mismatches between important initiatives and needs at local levels and top down structures and policies; tensions, differences and incompatibilities across local-level initiatives for sustainable agriculture; and risks, challenges and possible solutions to the increasing tensions between farmers and pastoralists.

Importantly, increased community cohesion was discussed as a cross-cutting backbone to the effective implementation and amplification of resilient agriculture and food systems in Africa.

Key points: What does this mean for resilient development?

1. Support community cohesion and the ability of communities to self-organise, aggregate and act together
2. Support the development of locally-driven ideas and peer-to-peer capacity building
3. Introduce equitable, non-traditional and innovative funding schemes reachable for local-scale actors (e.g. farmers)
4. Facilitate access to information, e.g. through user-friendly technological solutions, addressing language barriers and illiteracy
5. Support participatory conflict resolution platforms
6. Target corruption hampering the implementation of sustainability policies

Introduction

The session “Colliding climate and conflict risks: building resilience from an integrated approach in fragile and most vulnerable places” took place within a GRP/FAO side event “Stepping Up Action on Building Climate Resilient Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa” preceding the UN Africa Climate Week, Ghana, 18-22 March 2019.

The session explored how to unleash the potential of ongoing actions on the ground in Africa to tackle food insecurity and conflict risks. Specific focus of the session was on how to address the challenges to their implementation and how to bring them to scale, transforming lock-ins and unsustainable practices into desired futures.

The session built on and contributed to enriching recent findings of the African Dialogues on the Sustainable Development Goals, towards informing the policy, research and action agendas leading up to the UN Secretary General’s 2019 Climate Action Summit, the Global Commission on Adaptation and beyond.

Background

Climate change has direct impacts on food and water security, the frequency and amplitude of disasters, and on peace and stability. Climate change also acts as a 'threat multiplier' in a complex set of preconditions that could amplify societal problems of inequality, poverty, and conflict. Globally, food insecurity is for the first time in decades on the rise, increasing from 108 million people facing severe hunger in 2014 to 124 million in 2017, spread across 51 countries. Global trends also indicate more frequent food production shocks that can spill over across regions and food production sectors. Hotspots for such shocks are vulnerable and fragile areas, in which the exposure to environmental change is high, have decreased social capacity to respond to change, degradation of natural capital and consequent erosion of ecosystem resilience, or both. The relationship between extreme weather events and recent rise in geopolitical instability and conflicts has been shown to be a major driver behind this trend of rising food insecurity.

Due to their already vulnerable state, places where conflict and extreme weather are a systemic risk require urgent action for building and nurturing long-term local resilience for food and water security. The urgency is all the more critical: indeed, fragile and conflict affected states show the slowest progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Also, the food system has a central role in meeting the climate targets and mitigating potential future impacts of extreme weather events in these fragile areas. Food systems and agriculture are both the cause and the solution to the climate and food security challenges. This interdependency shows a need for transformations to resilient food systems and agriculture. Importantly, the interdependency between food and climate needs to be acknowledged and urgently placed at the center of global political and knowledge processes, such as the UN Climate Action Summit.

Looking across the regions, it is notable that parts of sub-Saharan Africa, South-Eastern Asia and Western Asia have seen combined trends of increased droughts, increased conflict and worsened food-security. For example, 41% of shocks in livestock production in sub-Saharan Africa are attributable to conflicts and nearly 50% of shocks in crop production systems in the same region are attributable to extreme climate events. The expected increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events in the near future can lead to further food and water scarcity, as well as the re-allocation of resources across political borders, which might create new - or aggravate existing - geopolitical tensions. Building and nurturing climate resilience for food security in those areas is essential to ensure that these communities can navigate current and future environmental change away from systemic collapse towards transformed sustainable and resilient management of resources. In an increasingly globally connected world, building local resilience goes beyond local governance and management and requires collaboration and concerted action of multiple actors across scales and sectors.

An example of a local-scale initiative connecting climate resilience and food security with a potential for scaling are community-level agricultural cooperatives. In addition to applying state-of-the-art agricultural approaches, they help to address inequalities and empower multiple groups in society, including women and youth. Furthermore, cooperatives can facilitate blending traditional agricultural approaches and knowledge with modern approaches and technologies. Nevertheless, such initiatives currently face

multiple challenges, such as the pressure for quick production increases, lack of infrastructure, capital and structured markets.

This session aimed to explore how to unleash the potential of ongoing actions for sustainable agriculture on the ground in Africa, how to address challenges to their implementation and how to bring them to scale, transforming lock-ins and unsustainable practices into desired futures. Scaling climate resilience agriculture actions for transformation and impact can be done in multiple ways, with various trade-offs and benefits (Fig 1). This session will specifically focus on how ongoing initiatives can achieve local aspirations and needs while also ensuring progress at the national, regional and global levels toward sustainability goals.

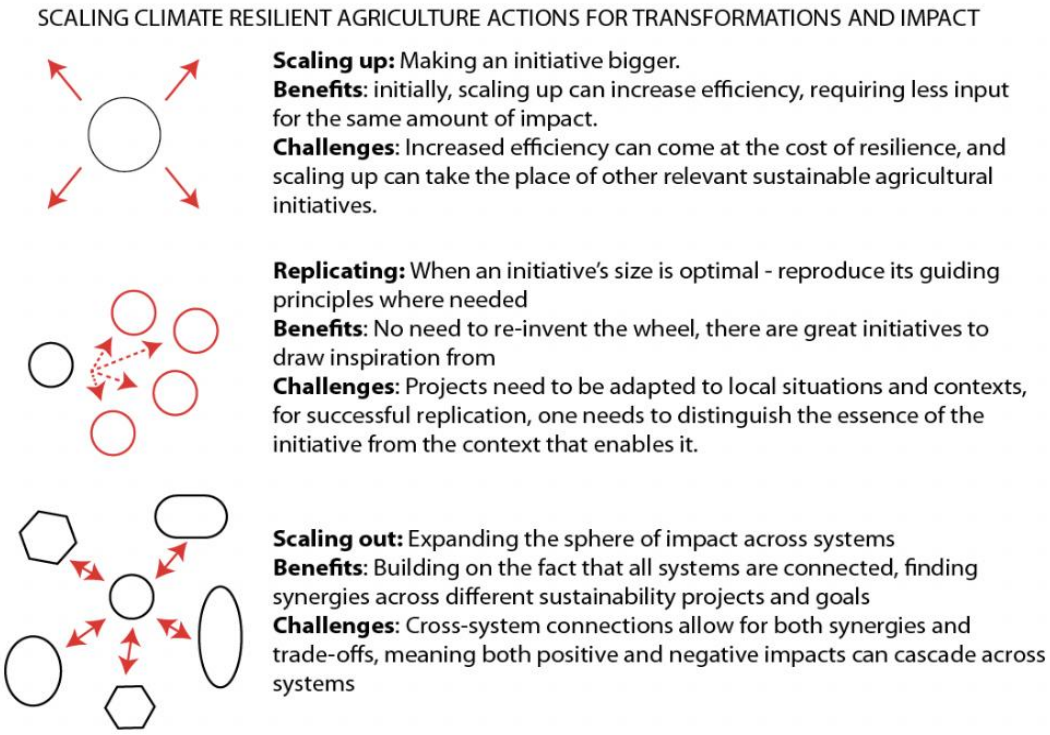


Figure 1: Scaling for transformation and impact

Session agenda

Moderator: Andrea Downing, GRAID at Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC)

Agenda Item	Content
Welcome and Introduction	**Andrea Downing**, Stockholm Resilience Centre
Inspiration Talks	**Mariama Sonko,** Chair of the international movement "We Are the Solution", a network of 800 Rural Women's Associations in seven countries of West Africa. **Nelson Agyemang,** Secretary General of WFO member organisation from Ghana (COFAG), facilitator of WFO working group on innovation **Caroline Odera,** Farmer Representative, Nyando Climate-Smart Village
Discussion groups	Identification of implemented actions addressing climate impacts on food and water security and their barriers. 1. Individual post-it exercise (a green post-it for an action, a red post-it for a barrier) 2. A round of a quick (2 min) summaries of each one's actions 3. Discussion: How these could be scaled? a. What made scaling up possible? b. Cross-comparison of experiences Each discussion group lead by the Head of the table: 1. **Million Belay**, International Panel of Experts on the Sustainable of Food Systems (IPES-Food) 2. **Erin Roberts,** Overseas Development Institute (ODI) 3. **Christine Forster,** Mercy Corps 4. **Peter Gubbels,** Groundswell International 5. **Michael Alandu**, CARE 6. **Michele Leone**, International Development Research Centre (IDRC) 7. **John Recha**, CGIAR
Synthesis and wrap-up	Roundup from the Heads of the tables of emergent actions

The session was attended by over 40 participants including governmental and non-governmental organisations, international organisations, the private sector and farmer representatives.

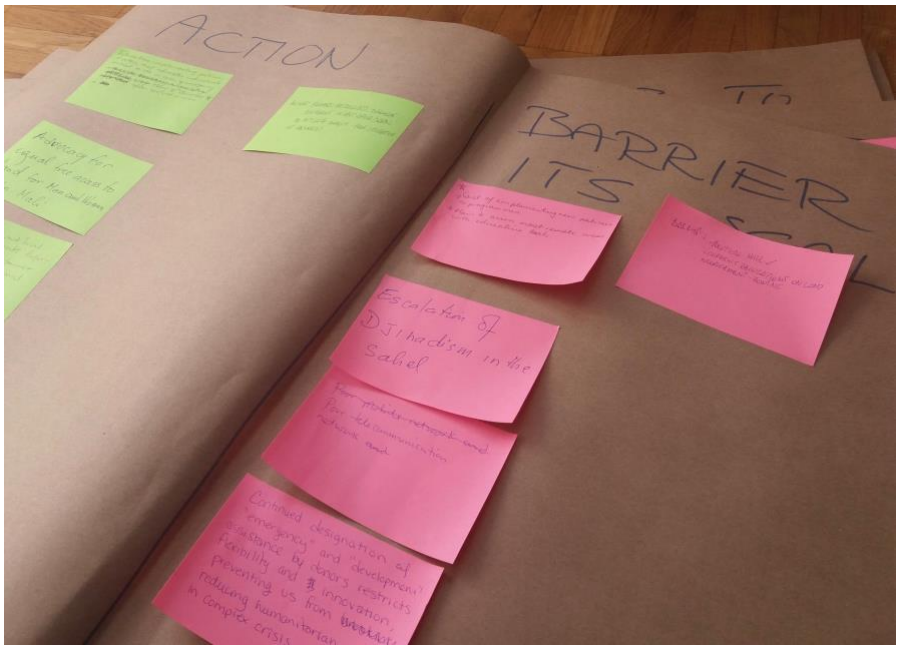
Methods

The session consisted of inspiration talks and subsequent group discussions as outlined above.

The materials from each of the seven discussion tables included:

1. Brief descriptions of successful actions addressing climate impacts on food and water security on post-its from each table
2. Notes from the group discussions by assigned note-takers.
3. Reflections of the discussions by the Heads of the tables.

The available materials were subsequently analysed and synthesised applying the Three Horizon framework, similarly to previous dialogues with food-system actors in Africa[1]. The Three Horizons framework[2] is an intuitive way to discuss multiple visions of desirable futures, the seeds of such future at present and the barriers to their scaling.



[1] Aguiar A P D, Collste D, Galafassi D, Harmackova Z V, Houngbedji K, Mesfin M, Ndahiro D, Pereira L, Selomane O, van der Leeuw S 2019. The Second African Dialogue on the World In 2050: How to attain the SDGs within planetary boundaries: Agriculture and food systems. Report on a Multi-Actor Dialogue for TWI2050, 30 – 31 October 2018, Kigali, Rwanda. Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa and SwedBio/Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University.

[2] Sharpe et al. 2016

Results

Visions

The visions identified based on the promising actions outlined by the participants were as follows:

1	**Transformed agricultural systems** that are socially and ecologically sustainable
2	**Investments** in farming
3	Ecological **innovations** for sustainable and resilient farming
4	Equitable and accessible **funding** mechanisms for farmers, novel **financial instruments**
5	**Informed and educated individuals** through Capacity building, knowledge transfer, access to information and knowledge
6	Systemic and contextual **management and planning** for peace, climate and food security, collaboration across scales and levels
7	**Agricultural systems** that are valued for more than their economic output - also for their contribution to resilience to climate change and food security
8	**Inclusion** of all parts of society, **equal** resource ownership and access to **resources**, inclusion of all types of knowledge
9	Deliberation in communities, **coordinated and cohesive communities**, community sharing
10	Resilient **landscapes**
11	Socially and ecologically sustainable production, ownership and multiplication of **seeds**

Actions and Barriers

Actions

The majority of currently implemented actions target the visions of 'coordinated and cohesive communities' (e.g. through farmers-pastoralists dialogue platforms in West Africa/Sahel to mitigate conflict) and 'informed and educated individuals' (e.g. delivery of timely and local climate information to guide farmer decisions and seasonal planning). Another group of actions were focused on a different cluster of future visions: 'ecological innovations for sustainable and resilient farming', 'equitable funding mechanisms for farmers' and 'novel financial instruments'. Visions least addressed by current promising actions were 'resilient landscapes', 'transformed agricultural systems' (contributing to not only food production, but also social and environmental sustainability and resilience). There was a vast shortage of actions towards '(mainstream) investments in farming'. Despite a lack of current actions in this direction, it was emphasised that it is vital to

promote a progressive sequencing and combination of "agroecological" innovations, (not just focusing on a single aspect, e.g. seeds, or one technology) to gradually transform with farmers themselves, their farming system (i.e. to approach resilience in a systemic, process-based way, not through a single technology or issue alone).

Barriers

The identified barriers closely mirrored the challenges. Most barriers were related to reaching a higher level of deliberation in communities and building coordinated, inclusive, equitable and cohesive communities, as well as facilitating education and information access to individuals through capacity building and knowledge transfer. Specifically, it was noted that conflicts, spatial remoteness and lack of infrastructure hamper access to information and education. In addition, the combination of traditional types of knowledge and “external” knowledge reaching communities proves difficult in some situations, from simpler language difference but also as knowledge brokers from outside communities may not earn community trust, or alternatively, when communities are unwilling to reassess their traditional approaches (again). Nevertheless, the lack of communication even within a local community was mentioned as well.

Multiple barriers related to farming - from both the perspective of accessible funding (small-scale “seed” funding for innovations and large-scale funding to develop farming infrastructure) and ecological innovations for sustainable and resilient farming. Examples include high cost of utilising sustainable technologies and land development, as well as governmental policies favouring chemical fertilisers, hybrid seeds, mechanisation agrochemical focused on cash crops (cotton, peanuts, cocoa) that undermine soil fertility and adaptation (e.g. Green Revolution approach).

A broad category of barriers related to the land tenure system, particularly the issues of land rights, especially for women and youth.

Table 1: Actions and visions

	Transformed agricultural systems	Investments in farming	Ecological innovations	Equitable and accessible funding	Informed and educated individuals	Systemic and contextual management and planning	Multifunctional agricultural systems	Inclusion and equal access	Coordinated and cohesive communities	Resilient landscapes	Ownership of seeds
Utilizing sustainable methods for agriculture (fertilizers that do not deplete the soil; disease-resistant seeds, etc)			x								
Provision of funds [for] low lying fields (in rice farming)		x									
Creation of ridges on farms to keep rainwater from running off. The secure water availability to ensure better crop growth.			x								
Policy on agro-ecology in a district in Kenya			x								
Tree based soil fertility management (farmer managed natural regeneration)			x								
Table banking: Table banking is an art of buying shares in a round table meeting, then loaning it to members straight away (money is banked at the table)				x							
Water harvesting			x								
Education complementing policies in place that educates individuals => What to do in cases of emergency => How to redevelop after conflict or crisis					x						

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Advocacy for equal free access to land for men and women in Mali								x	x		
Delivery of timely and local climate information to guide farmer decisions and seasonal planning					x						
Localized contextualized risk and resilience analyses in complex, protracted crises that identify opportunity to address the drivers/effects of conflict alongside action to build climate resilience for improved food nutrition security that endures.						x					
Farmers-pastoralists dialogue platforms in West Africa/Sahel to mitigate conflict - poor utilisation of resources						x			x		
Use of remittances for resilient agriculture. Even to finance table banking or "sacco" groups				x							
Decentralisation of farming resources, e.g. seeds									x		x
Youth leadership and involvement in community restoration projects (garnering excitement and actions by young people towards climate smart activities)								x			

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Use of drone technology to map out farms to know possible areas that can be vulnerable.			x								
Having focus groups in communities									x		
Interest/initiative programmes to grab knowledge on such issues [action or barrier?]					x						
Transboundary adaptation initiatives (e.g. Great Green wall river basin initiatives)						x					
Interest-free loans Indigenous knowledge				x				x			
Sustainable soil management						x				x	
Awareness creation at the grass root level Creating local Community of Climate Change resilience Early rain/weather warning system					x						
Community actions on localised situations for resilience to CC									x		
Promotion of a progressive sequencing and combination of "agroecological" innovations, (not just seed, or one technology) to gradually transform with farmers themselves, their	x										

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farming system (i.e. Resilience is a system, not one technology alone)											
Protecting farmers seeds											x
Financing of necessary technological innovations in rural environments				x			x				
A solution for agriculture is promoting farmers' agroecology that is resilient to the impacts of climate change - and to consume what we produce	x										
Need to have a multiple criteria for assessing agriculture, not just economic/profit/production but also sustainability (soil/environment resilience to climate change, nutrition)							x				
Document indigenous knowledge on farming and climate resilience								x			
Managing the relationship between farmers and pastoralists using community governance mechanisms									x		
Education of farmers in their local dialect to understand the table banking system					x						
Create a seed control secretariat.									x		x

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Empowerment and resource mobilisation for improved outputs Data to track progress					x			x			
The table banking => The [?] use the farmers and products as a payback loan after harvesting the farm products				x							
Extension officers actively going to rural areas to educate them on better and more environmentally friendly means of farming.					x						
Each farmer needs to change: Sensitization of farmers Supporting farmer in their income generating activities					x						
Public-private platforms and multi-stakeholder changes									x		
Farmers should come up with many intervention Towards the success									x		
Encouraging the use of improved seeds by farmers to adapt to climate change											x
Make sure that soil analysis is done frequently to determine the mineral deficiency.			x							x	

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Participatory action bottom up through VRRO									x		

Table 1: Barriers and visions

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Tree based soil fertility management (farmer managed natural regeneration)			x								
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Water harvesting			x								
Education complementing policies in place that educates individuals => What to do in cases of emergency => How to redevelop after conflict or crisis					x						
Advocacy for equal free access to land for men and women in Mali								x	x		
Delivery of timely and local climate information to guide farmer decisions and seasonal planning					x						
Localized contextualized risk and resilience analyses in complex, protracted crises that identify opportunity to address the drivers/effects of conflict alongside action to build climate resilience for improved food nutrition security that endures.						x					

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Use of remittances for resilient agriculture. Even to finance table banking or "sacco" groups				x							
Decentralisation of farming resources, e.g. seeds									x		x
Youth leadership and involvement in community restoration projects (garnering excitement and actions by young people towards climate smart activities)								x			
Use of drone technology to map out farms to know possible areas that can be vulnerable.			x								
Having focus groups in communities									x		
Interest/initiative programmes to grab knowledge on such issues					x						
Transboundary adaptation initiatives (e.g. Great Green wall river basin initiatives)						x					

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Interest-free loans Indigenous knowledge				x				x			
Sustainable soil management						x				x	
Awareness creation in the grass root level Creating local Community of Climate Change resilience Early rain and weather warning tools.					x						
Community actions on localised situations for resilience to CC									x		
Promotion of a progressive sequencing and combination of "agroecological" innovations, (not just seed, or one technology) to gradually transform with farmers themselves, their farming system (i.e. Resilience is a system, not one technology alone)	x										
Protecting farmers seeds											x
Financing of necessary technological innovations in rural environments				x			x				
A solution for agriculture is promoting farmers' agroecology that is resilient to the impacts of	x										

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climate change - and to consume what we produce											
Need to have a multiple criteria for assessing agriculture, not just economic/profit/production but also sustainability (soil/environment resilience to climate change, nutrition)							x				
Document indigenous knowledge on farming and climate resilience								x			
Managing the relationship between farmers and pastoralists using community governance mechanisms									x		
Education of farmers in their local dialect to understand the table banking system					x						
Create a seed control secretariat.									x		x
Empowerment and resource mobilisation for improved outputs Data to track progress					x			x			
Table banking				x							

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Extension officers actively going to rural areas to educate them on better and more environmentally friendly means of farming.					x						
Each farmer needs to change: Sensitization of farmers Supporting farmer in their income generating activities					x						
Public-private platforms and multi-stakeholder changes									x		
Farmers should come up with many intervention Towards the success									x		
Encouraging the use of improved seeds by farmers to adapt to climate change											x
Make sure that soil analysis is done frequently to determine the mineral deficiency.			x							x	
Participatory action bottom up through VRRO									x		

Discussion: Upscaling

The broader discussions held at each table were not all captured in the post-its, but using notes taken at each table, and after post-meeting conversations with participants and 'table heads' held throughout the day, and even by email in following days, we managed to get a sense of some deeper challenges or debates that were sparked at the tables. We here address those that complement the post-it analysis, as we grouped them in three categories: 1) Tensions; 2) Barriers and 3) Scaling.

1. Tensions

A large focus of the actions and initiatives lies in **enabling, empowering and promoting local-level initiatives and structures**. However, participants were keen to observe that **local structures and initiatives should not all be romanticised**, and that certain structures - for example those that underlie, create and reinforce social inequalities – should be broken. For this, development interventions need to both promote local initiatives while being aware of and recognise structural inequalities, else they would only contribute to these structures.

An important **tension** came up across two tables, one discussing how to make '**smart agriculture**' more effective and the other table where the participants sought to make **agro-ecological solutions** dominate. Here, both parties felt that their concepts of choice were misunderstood and mis-used. The 'smart agriculture' - supporting table clarified that the term was not synonymous with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and that there is more nuance to the approach. The 'agro-ecology' table expressed that agro-ecology is not synonymous with subsistence farming, and that advances in this field do produce and rely on innovations. These two groups also faced conflicting challenges. The smart-agriculture proponents' starting point was that there are enough policies for agriculture, the challenge to the effectiveness of smart-agriculture lies in the **lack of implementation of** these **policies** - notably through corruption and low resources for enforcement. Agro-ecology proponents' argued about the ***quality* of the policies**, expressing that these policies support industrial, modernistic approaches, and that such policies, as well as the seeds, fertilizers and technologies of smart-ecology are themselves barriers to the implementation and success of agro-ecological solutions.

These smart-agriculture - agro-ecology discussions took place at separate tables, and the disagreements were only barely touched upon during the 'reconvening' part of the workshop and after the meeting, through individual reporting back. In this sense, the discussion never aimed to achieve agreement. Nonetheless, actions from both parties showed some agreement relating to **seed ownership** – that farmers and communities should own and share seeds, and that scientists should dispense more knowledge and information about seeds, and best cropping practices, from their research.

A third tension arose on the topic of **education**. Though lack of education and illiteracy appeared as barriers to scaling local actions, participants expressed that 'education' as a solution had become a panacea that was ill-defined and in itself could become a barrier to implementing sustainability initiatives. Of course, participants agreed that education and achieving literacy is important, yet they disagreed that it was sufficient to achieving climate resilience, peace and food security. A focus on education could detract from solutions (an example was given of the discovery by an illiterate woman of the fertilising

properties of a specific indigenous plant through systematic experimentation - she may not have made that discovery had an intervention focused on teaching her to read). For participants, education needed to come hand in hand with **access to information and data** (for instance drone imagery, or high-resolution weather predictions), and with a **platform to share information** between scientists, researchers, communities, indigenous people. Education as a solution should come with an *aim*, one of which was to understand the dynamics that drive conflict and climate change together, and their cascading impacts.

The subject of **conflicts between pastoralists and farmers** generated deep discussions. Some related to **solutions**: implementing ranching methods to alternate land between farmers and pastoralists, so pastoralists could access land and continue to use mobility as a tool for their resilience, while fertilising land that in turn could be used by farmers. Another solution pertained to creating dialogue platforms for pastoralists and farmers to discuss their challenges and needs. The discussion on the farmer-pastoralist conflicts also pointed to some of the **challenges and causes** of conflicts: weak governance and management that fails to address the conflicts, to implement perceived solutions, but also enables unplanned agricultural expansion, which further fuels conflict. The participants also spoke of **risk**, noting that though small-scale and local, these conflicts were becoming more widespread and were connected to more violent crime and conflict, serving to the contagion of radicalism and terrorism.

2. Barriers

A recurring topic across tables was the **disconnect between the global and the local, from multiple, connected perspectives**. Communication - as global processes are not in local or indigenous **languages**, or where donors and recipients speak disconnected languages. The top-down global to local approach, which fails to provide accessible or context-relevant information on problems of climate change, top-down solutions have little **ownership in local communities**, and through lack of information there is little means at a local level to effect necessary changes towards climate resilience. Participants cited a **lack of platforms to share** indigenous, local and scientific **knowledge**, or for local and indigenous communities to contribute knowledge for climate policy, which resulted in poorly aligned incentives and interests.

3. Scaling

Two complementary pathways of scaling of climate-resilient agriculture were discussed, one involving the **use of popular media and high-profile 'role models'** to create awareness and engagement in complex problematics of climate change. Ghana's Miss Agriculture was a participant in the overall event and personified that role, aiming to remind of the importance and value of agriculture, and the role youth can contribute to it. The second approach discussed was the **peer-to-peer capacity building**, community-to community sharing, creating knowledge and sharing sustainable approaches by mobilising at the community level for adaptive management.

Conclusions

Key points: What does this mean for resilient development?

1. Support community cohesion and the ability of communities to self-organise, aggregate and act together
2. Support the development of locally-driven ideas and peer-to-peer capacity building
3. Introduce equitable, non-traditional and innovative funding schemes reachable for local-scale actors (e.g. farmers)
4. Facilitate access to information, e.g. through user-friendly technological solutions, addressing language barriers and illiteracy
5. Support participatory conflict resolution platforms
6. Target corruption hampering the implementation of sustainability policies

The session "Colliding climate and conflict risks: building resilience from an integrated approach in fragile and most vulnerable places" was part of a whole day on "Stepping Up Action on Building Climate Resilient Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa". It aimed to identify local scale resilience and sustainability initiatives and how they can contribute to larger scale - at the regional, national, continental and global levels – sustainable development in the face of climate change.

In the session, participants successfully pointed to **mismatches between important initiatives and needs at local levels and top down structures and policies**. For instance, the lack of financial mechanisms for farmers; technological solutions that lead to further dependence of farmers on such technologies and a parallel lack of solutions that enable independent, local understanding of wider-scale processes of climate change and market development. At the same time, **the need for community cohesion and collaboration**, the power of such a vision and its realisation, as well as the ownership of solutions that lead to this vision is a strong message that comes from the local communities present in this session, and others (c.f. African dialogues).

GRAID

At Stockholm Resilience Centre