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POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR AGROECOLOGY IN GHANA

REVIEW OF POLICIES AND APPROACHES



TOWARDS POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR AGROECOLOGY IN GHANA

REVIEW OF POLICIES AND APPROACHES

ACTIONAID GHANA
PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES
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SYNOPSIS

Developing a policy framework for agroecology in Ghana is not an easy task. In the first instance, there are several actors including state and non-state advocating for agroecology in one form or the other. The understanding and objectives of agroecology are as varied as the number of actors. While some are simply seeking state funding for practices perceived as agroecology, others are calling for the inclusion of organic farm inputs like manure in government subsidy programs and characterizing such calls as advocacy for agroecology. At the level of government agencies, the term agroecology is found in numerous policies and plans where the term is used interchangeably with catch phrases like sustainable agriculture, climate smart agriculture, organic farming among others.

Agroecology entails the application of ecological processes to agricultural production systems, emerged as part of smallholder farmers' struggles to remain autonomous from agri-businesses. Agroecological practices are built on sound ecological principles of improving soil life, nutrients recycling, dynamic management of biodiversity and energy conservation. It is widely seen as the most effective response to environmental degradation and climate change and a realistic option for preserving the production systems of peasant farmers who form the greater majority of the farming population of Ghana.

This report is a review of agroecology in Ghana from the policy context. The review forms part of efforts by ActionAid Ghana to develop effective networks and platforms for a national agroecology policy framework. The networks and platforms are expected to facilitate some form of convergence among actors in terms of defining, and strengthening agroecology through public policies.

The report is written in two parts. The first section summarizes key agricultural and environment-related policies and plans, outlining among other things, the objectives and key targets. The focus in the second part was to examine the extent to which agricultural policies converged or deviated from the core principles of agroecology.

One key feature of almost all policies in Ghana in the last two decades is the recognition of the challenges climate change poses to smallholders. This recognition has often led to the inclusion of programmes either seeking to support mitigation efforts or promote adaptation. From agriculture to climate change policies, to broad national plans and programmes, there are themes purporting to advocate sustainability which in some instances are presented as agroecology.

The Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) documents did not address the issues of sustainable agriculture and resilience in a direct manner even though the policies did stress the importance of sustainable management of resources. Again even though the Agricultural policies, FASDEP I and FASDEP II documents make mention of agro-ecology, they do so only in reference to the agro-ecological zones in Ghana. Both policies articulated government's desire at mainstreaming and supporting the scaling up of sustainable land management practices in addressing objectives around both environmental resilience and agricultural productivity in the country's overall development agenda.

The plans emanating from the FASDEPS, The Medium-Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plans (METASIP I & II) focused to a large extent on sustainable natural resource management with the aim of promoting the sustainable use of land and water for agriculture and also ensuring better security of land tenure. Again, there is no direct mention of agro-ecology even though several policy level actors point to the mention of sustainable agriculture as emphasis on agro-ecology.

The key debate in Ghana is whether Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) championed by the Ministry of Agriculture constitute sustainable agriculture and whether CSA is the right approach to

developing an agricultural system highly dependent on ecosystems and dominated by smallholders. Cooptation of sustainability terminology in policies and passing same as pragmatic programmes towards developing agriculture is now being strongly opposed by civil society including farmer-based organizations.

While policy makers have generally been successful in articulating sustainable agriculture in policy and plans, gains resulting from the implementation of these policies and plans do not match the elaboration in policy.

It was realized that policies and plans in Ghana tended to co-opt agroecology and climate adaptation as options for fine-tuning industrial food systems and making them widely acceptable to increasingly critical civil society and social movements calling for meaningful and binding commitments to agroecology. To achieve significant application of agroecology in both policy and practice, we recommend that civil society and social movement actors in Ghana work collectively to develop strategies and agree on a set of definitions, and avenues for articulating these definitions in public policies.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusiveness is pivotal in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Eleven of the seventeen SDGs have a strong social inclusion component focused on ending poverty, ending hunger, improving health, enhancing education and attaining gender equality (Gupta et.al, 2014). One cardinal principle of inclusive development calls for leaving 'no one behind', which means equitably including the most vulnerable women, men, boys and girls in the development process. The centrality of inclusiveness requires that development agendas and policies focus on developing the resource base and enhancing the capacities of the poor to ensure sustainability of their livelihood systems and their continued engagement with the economic systems.

Agroecology remains the most feasible option for preserving the production systems of peasant farmers who form the greater majority of the farming population of Ghana. Beyond the SDGs, there is need for policy transition at national levels that recognizes agroecology as a key strategy for enhancing climate resilience and sustainable agriculture. This is mainly because majority of citizens especially women are dependent on agroecology practices that need strengthening for sustainability.

Agroecology entails the application of ecological processes to agricultural production systems. This may involve the application of practices that otherwise may not be considered in national agricultural development plans. Contrary to widely held misconceptions, the promotion of agroecology does not entail opposition to use of modern technology and inputs in agriculture. The emphasis of agroecology is on complementarity especially how technology can be used in conjunction with natural, social and human resources to enhance agricultural productivity and preserve the environment. It is also about valuing the indigenous knowledge and practices of ordinary farmers, mainly poorer women and men. Sadly, the misconception that agroecology is anti-technology and the desire to achieve rapid growth in agricultural production has meant that agroecology is relegated to the background in many jurisdictions.

One major challenge of crop production in developing countries such as Ghana is balancing the need for higher yields and maintenance of ecological health over time. As concerns over environmental risks associated with modern farming practices heighten, ecosystem-based agricultural practices are seen as the sustainable means of managing soil fertility and checking the prevalence of pests and diseases on agricultural lands and, enhancing sustainable water management, agro-biodiversity preservation and sustainable natural resources management. The centrality of women's knowledge and practices in this area is particularly critical.

Growing populations place considerable stress on global food supply, requiring significant leaps in agricultural production to keep pace with soaring food demand. Even though the path to increasing agricultural food output remains contentious to a large degree, several developing countries appear to steer their agricultural systems towards intensification and expansionist models, characterised by mono-cropping, use of transgenic crops, intensive irrigation, and over reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The popularity of intensification models appears to be growing despite mounting evidence of the negative impact on ecosystems. Apart from loss of the provisioning services such as fruits, fish, fibre, fuel, fresh water derived from ecosystems, degrading of ecosystems affect supporting services (such as nutrients cycling, soil formation and primary production), cultural services (e.g. aesthetic and education) and regulatory services that maintain the ecological temperature and precipitation within the geographical space of the farm land.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for urgent action and policies for transformational change to end poverty and hunger, while ensuring inclusive growth and sustainability of natural resources. Countries need to transition to sustainable food and agriculture

systems that ensure food and nutrition security for all, allow for social and economic equity, and conserve biodiversity and the ecosystem services on which agriculture depends.

Despite the acclaimed success in reducing hunger and food insecurity for many through application of high-external input and resource-intensive agricultural systems, the associated contribution of same to deforestation, water stress, loss of biodiversity, soil degradation and high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, increasing health and nutrition related problems, increasing inequality, remains a source of concern for advocates for environmental and sustainability issues in food production.

Agroecology is seen by many as a viable option to improve rural livelihoods, promotion of regenerate ecologies and increase the resiliency of communities, while providing healthy and sustainable food. Policy support for agroecology in many countries including Ghana is largely a major challenge.

1.1 Objectives of the Review

In order to support processes towards deepening the recognition of agroecology as a model for agricultural development, ActionAid Ghana commissioned this review to map out policies that relate to agroecology in Ghana and explore options for the development of a national policy framework on agroecology. This initiative of ActionAid Ghana is part of the move by civil society to develop a set of strategies aimed at building, defining, and strengthening agroecology through public policy. This effort is located within the international policy framework of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) which has provided leadership on how agroecology could become a key agriculture policy option at the global level.

Agroecological practices are similar to natural cycles, reduce excessive dependence on external inputs and help create growing ecosystems that foster more regenerative ways of producing food with nature. However, transitioning to agroecology against the backdrop of agri-food systems built on high-input resource intensive farming requires fundamental transformation of policy, practice and research.

The aim of cataloguing agroecological policies in Ghana is to explore options for integrating agroecology in some governmental agendas. The objectives of the mapping exercise are to:

- Identify all policies that relate to or directly focus on agroecology and climate resilient and sustainable agriculture in Ghana including their objectives and time frames and progress in implementation.
- To increase awareness on the need for government to invest in agroecology through sharing of the mapping results.
- Map out all CSOs including women's organisations that work in agroecology to support the process to galvanize efforts to advocate for policy transition towards agroecology.

1.2 Methodology

Data collection: The review included data collection methods such as desk research, one on one interviews and focus group meetings. There was a review of relevant agricultural policy documents such as the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP), the METASIP and the Agriculture Sustainable Land Management Strategy and Action Plan.

Interviews and consultations were conducted from key policy makers in state agencies mandated to develop and implement agricultural policies. The stakeholders consulted include the Policy and Planning and the crop production divisions of MoFA, Forestry Commission (FC), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working on themes related to agroecology, Farmer-Based Organizations (FBO) such as the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG) and women farmer groups.

2.0 AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND AGROECOLOGY IN GHANA

Ghana has long recognised the importance of agroecology for balanced and inclusive development. The mission of MOFA is to promote sustainable agriculture and thriving agribusiness through research and technology development, effective extension and other support services to farmers, processors and traders for improved livelihood. This mission is emphasized in almost all of MOFA's policies and plans.

Since MOFA and other relevant state agencies perceive these policies to represent sustainable agriculture and to some degree the core principles of agroecology, it is important to outline these policies and then interrogate them with the lenses of agroecology in later sections of this report.

Over the last decade, Ghana's government has formulated and implemented quite a number of policies aimed at transforming the country's economy and accelerating the pace of development. Even though many of these policies targeted all sectors of the economy, agriculture remained central because of the sector's contribution to employment, income and GDP in general. In this section, we provide an overview of agricultural and related policy documents, highlighting the extent to which these policies emphasize agroecology in the pursuit of sustainable natural resource management.

Although there are several policies with themes of sustainable agriculture, the most prominent ones are national agricultural policies formulated by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) and climate mitigation and adaptation policies formulated by the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI). At the policy front, Ghana has demonstrated some degree of commitment to using a balanced approach to agricultural development and to building climate resilience at least on paper. Policies in the past two decades have recognized climate change as a threat and sustainable agriculture among the gamut of options for improving resilience.

From policy, Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP I&II) to plans, Medium Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (METASIP I&II), sustainable agriculture remains cardinal. The policies recognize the dependence of Ghana's agriculture on ecology, with extensive crop and livestock systems, rain-fed agriculture, and fish from natural water bodies. In this section of the report, we review agricultural policies in Ghana with emphasis on highlighting the extent of integration of agroecology both in principle and practice.

2.1. Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP)

The Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP) was developed in 2002 as a framework for the implementation of strategies towards the modernisation of the agricultural sector. The strategies in that policy were based on the Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy (prepared in 1996), and were designed to forge linkages in the value chain. FASDEP was reviewed to produce the FASDEP II following recognition that:

- i. the expectation of modernising poor smallholder agriculture was unachievable because of improper targeting of the poor within an environment where the drivers of modernisation, access to credit and technology, good infrastructure, and markets are very limited.
- ii. Problem analysis was weak and did not sufficiently reflect the needs and priorities of client perspectives; and

- iii. The process by which the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) was to stimulate response from other MDAs for interventions that fell outside the domain of MoFA was not specified.

2.2. Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II)

The Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) is a revision of its precursor, the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP I) which was formulated in 2002 as a framework for the modernisation of the agricultural sector. The FASDEPs recognized the dependence of Ghana's agriculture on ecology, with extensive crop and livestock production systems, hunting, rain-fed agriculture, and fish from natural water bodies. Traditional practices such as bush burning, and the improper use of technologies including irrigation and agro-chemicals were perceived as key challenges to agricultural transformation, with the savannah regions among those that are affected the most.



Land degradation, desertification and soil erosion hit hardest at the local level and those most affected are the poor women and men who depend on natural resources for their survival. In particular, work performed by poor women, is strongly affected by environmental degradation.

To address these challenges, FASDEP II proposed the integration of elements on sustainable natural resource use. Specific policy, investment and best practice options will be addressed in ensuring adequate support in the scaling up of appropriate sustainable land and water management practices in the various farming systems in the country.

FASDEP II, even though not directly mentioning agroecology, included a section on Sustainable Management of Land and Environment which highlighted key issues that degraded land and limited

the options to apply agroecological practices. The policy outlined the following as issues that affected sustainable farming:

- i. Sustainable land and water management are not adequately integrated as part of agricultural extension services.
- ii. High environmental degradation and abuse due to inadequate understanding of environmental issues related to agriculture.
- iii. Lack of national agricultural land use policy.
- iv. Ineffective framework for collaboration with appropriate agencies to address environmental issues related to agriculture

The policy proposed a comprehensive list of strategies to address the issues identified. These are:

- i. Mainstream sustainable land and environmental management practices in agricultural sector planning and implementation processes.
- ii. Create awareness about environmental issues among all stakeholders and develop an effective and efficient framework for collaboration with appropriate agencies to ensure environmental compliance.
- iii. Adopt an integrated approach in dealing with environmental issues, including an inclusive partnership-based coordinated approach with active and mutual involvement of NGOs and other civil society organisations, the private sector and development partners.
- iv. Improve incentives and other measures to encourage users of the environment to adopt less exploitative and non-degrading practices in agriculture.
- v. Promote joint planning and implementation of programmes with relevant institutions to address environmental issues in food and agriculture.
- vi. Promote the development of community land use plans and enforce their use, particularly in urban and peri-urban agriculture.
- vii. Improve access of operators in urban agriculture to sustainable land and environmental management practices.
- viii. Stimulate, support and facilitate adaptation and widespread adoption of farming and land use practices which, while in harmony with natural resource resilience, also underpin viable and sustainable production levels.

The immediate challenge with FASDEP II and other policies is the apparent compartmentalisation of approaches even within the same policy document. Sustainable agriculture or agroecology is presented as a standalone objective and not integrated into other approaches. For example, while the same FASDEP II outlined comprehensive sustainable land management strategies under land management, the strategies proposed under crop development policy in the same policy document are heavy on high external input and intensive technology use. FADEP II propose the following under its Crop Development Policy:

- i. Support production of certified seeds/planting materials and increased farmer usage through intensification of awareness campaigns.
- ii. Intensify dissemination of updated crop production technological packages.
- iii. Facilitate the development of high-yielding, disease and pest-resistant varieties and increase supply of certified planting material.
- iv. Ensure that operators of urban agriculture are reached with the needed information technology and inputs.

These strategies appear completely independent of the strategies under sustainable land management policy particularly, strategy 11 which proposes "practices which, while in harmony with natural resource resilience, also underpin viable and sustainable production levels". In order

to maintain consistency with the principles of agroecology, the objectives must first seek agroecology solutions or answers to the problems the policies seek to address.

2.3. National Environment Policy 2014

The importance of environmental management emphasized in the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II) were elaborated by the National Environment Policy (NEP). The policy commits to the principle of optimum sustainable exploitation of the ecosystem resources. The main purpose of the NEP is to help policy makers think about the national policy actions and programmes needed to achieve a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability.

The NEP was established in Ghana's National Environmental Action Plan, which sought to redirect development towards more environmentally sustainable practices. The main objective of the NEP was to improve the environment, living conditions and quality of life for Ghanaians. It aims among other things to:

- i. reconcile economic development with conservation
- ii. promote the sustainable use and maintenance of Ghana's natural resources.
- iii. maintain ecosystem and ecological processes and ensure sound management of natural resources and the environment,
- iv. adequately protect against harmful impacts and destructive practices and preserve biological diversity.

In general, the national environmental policies aim to integrate environmental considerations into sectoral, structural and socio-economic planning at the national, regional, district and grassroots levels and to seek common solutions to environmental problems in West Africa, as well as in the African continent and world as a whole.

In a similar fashion and just like the numerous policies on environment and climate change, the issue is not the lack of mention of agroecology, ecosystems or ecology. The issues have to do with translating the cooptation of agroecology terminology to concrete programmes and allocating significant resources for the implementation of these policies.

2.4. The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2014

The NCCP was based on situation analyses and outlined broad policy vision and objectives with respect to effective adaptation, social development and mitigation in Ghana. It envisioned low carbon growth, effective adaptation to climate change and social development. *The vision was "Ensure a climate-resilient and climate-compatible economy while achieving sustainable development through equitable low-carbon economic growth for Ghana."*

The analysis is done for five thematic areas including: (1) agriculture and food security, (2) disaster preparedness and response, (3) natural resource management, (4) equitable social development and (5) energy, industrial and infrastructural development. Under the first thematic area, agriculture and food security, the proposed programme areas which had implications for agroecology include:

- i. Institutional capacity development for research and dissemination,
- ii. Development and promotion of climate-resilient cropping systems,
- iii. Adaptation of livestock production systems,
- iv. Support to adaptation in the fisheries subsector,
- v. Support to water conservation and irrigation systems,
- vi. Risk transfer and alternative livelihood systems,

- vii. improved post-harvest management and
- viii. improved marketing policies.

2.5. Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP) 2009 – 2015

In 2007, MOFA, worked with stakeholders to complete the revision of its Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP). As the policy itself is a statement of intent, the next step towards the realisation of the policy objectives was the development of a sector plan for the implementation of the broad strategies specified in the policy. This Sector Plan has been developed based on a target agricultural GDP growth of at least 6% annually and government expenditure allocation of at least 10% within the Plan period (2009–2015).

With respect to sustainable agriculture and agroecology, the plan outlined three entry points: food security and emergency preparedness, land management and institutional collaboration. For example, it is envisaged that 62,000 hectares of sustainable water harvesting and agricultural water management schemes will be developed in the Northern and Southern Savannah zones. A programme seeking to facilitate the dissemination and adoption of SLM technologies at the farm level in all the regions was muted under the FASDEP.

2.6. Medium Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (METASIP) II, 2014 – 2017

The Medium-Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan II (2014-2017) was implemented through programmes and sub-programmes that build on lessons learnt from the implementation of METASIP (2011-2015) and GSGDA I to deepen the Value Chain approach. The programmes are developed based on the key development issues identified and prioritised as well as the development of policy objectives adopted and the strategies proposed. The development issues identified included:

- i. Low average yields of staple crops and high post-harvest losses;
- ii. Poor management along the agriculture value chain;
- iii. Low level of agriculture mechanisation and adoption of technology, including fertilizer application;
- iv. Low use of improved planting materials;
- v. Dominance of smallholder farms and over-aged farmers;
- vi. Inadequate investments in agriculture business ventures;
- vii. Inadequate access to appropriate finance by smallholder farmers;
- viii. Overreliance on rain-fed agriculture;
- ix. Low productivity in livestock and poultry industry; and
- x. Inadequate human resources.

Based on the issues identified, the Sector Medium Term Investment Plan was implemented along six programme areas namely:

1. Management and Administration;
2. Food Security and Emergency Preparedness;
3. Increased Growth in Incomes;
4. Marketing of Agricultural Products;
5. Management of Land and Environment; and
6. Science and Technology Applied in Food and Agricultural Development.

Figure 1 presents a summary of the cost estimates of the plan for some selected programmes and sub-programmes. Among the six program areas, the management of land and environment is of particular interest to this review. Figure 1 perhaps underline the challenge of promoting agroecology or sustainable agriculture. The green line (sustainable environment, land and water management) was among the least funded thematic area under the METASIP. Even though this review is not collecting data on funding, there is no reason to believe this trend has not changed.

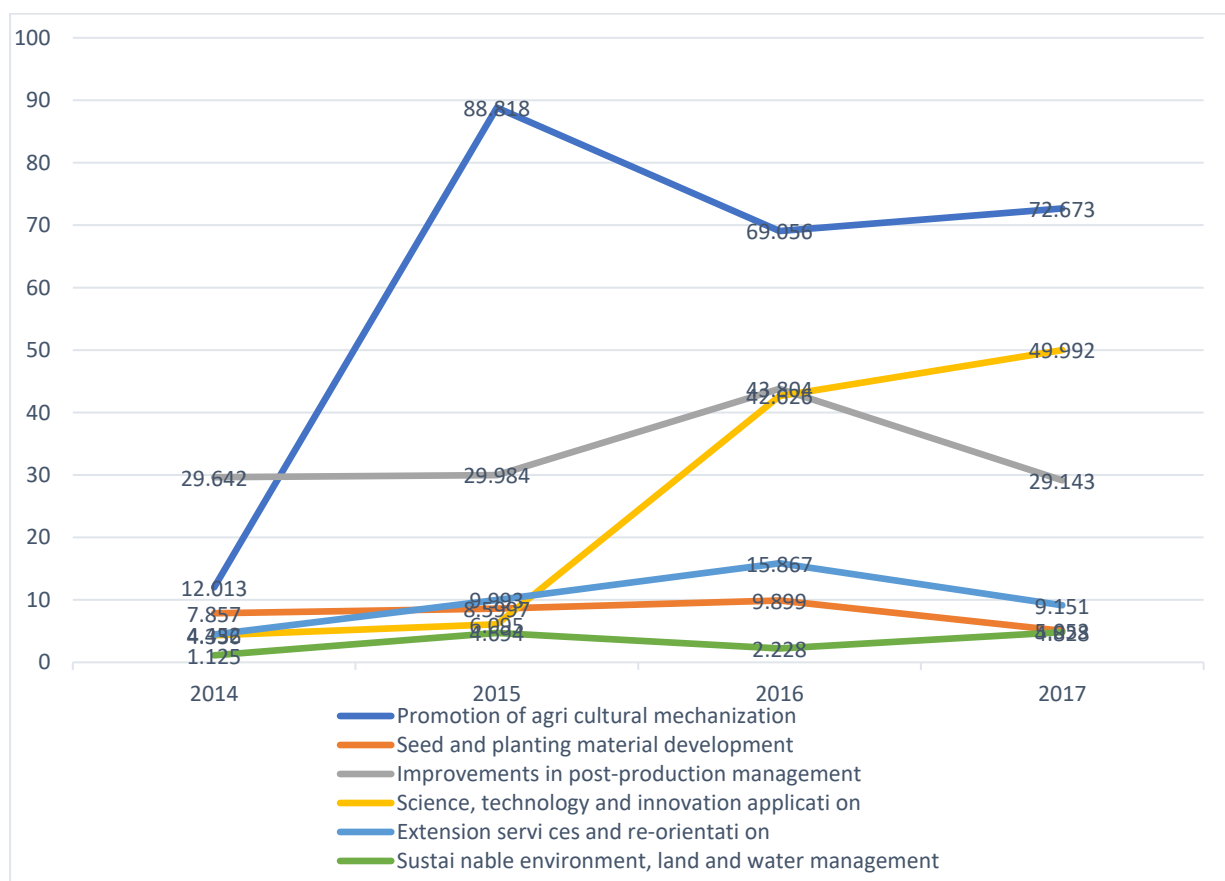


Figure 1: Medium Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan II (2014 - 2017) Cost Estimates (GH¢ 'million)

METASIP II seeks to ensure gender inclusion in sector plans through the implementation of the Gender and Agricultural Development Strategy (GADS). To ensure inclusive development, the Ministry employs the strategy of affirmative action from time to time. This allows the Ministry to target and support the youth, less privileged women and physically challenged farmers.

One of the benefits of asking the gender question in METASIP II is the realisation that machinery have generally not been gender-friendly in the sense that women find some of them difficult to use. Fabrication of equipment must consider gender-related needs.

The Women in Agricultural Development (WIAD) directorate of MoFA, CSIR-FRI and the Universities in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and other nutrition related institutions will be strengthened to reposition nutrition as a cross-cutting issue and facilitate the integration and mainstreaming of nutrition into all national development efforts.

The immediate challenge with the gender focus in METASIP II is how gender inclusion has been made synonymous with the creation of institutions like WIAD and GADS which both fail to go beyond an outline of programmes, activities and budgets addressing immediate and strategic gender needs.

2.7. Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) II – 2014 – 2017

The GSGDA was the precursor of FASDEP and METASIP II. It articulated the development agenda revolving around the climate change issues with respect to, among other things, agriculture and food security. The transformation platforms within the GSGDA II include such key pillars as institutional capacity and management; a growing infrastructure base; an enabling environment for business; social intervention and public safety net to ensure that Ghana's development process is inclusive; and the bulk of the resources is expected to go into finance activities related to the provision of infrastructure and human settlement development (44.5%) and human resource development, employment and productivity (22.4%) and abundance of relatively high-quality labour.

The document highlights the prioritized policy interventions in favour of environmental governance areas such as natural resource management and extraction, biodiversity management, climate variability and change, natural disasters, risks and vulnerability. The GSGDA states that: "Climate variability and change constitute a major threat to national development".

The medium-term priority policies are anchored in the following thematic areas:

- Ensuring and sustaining macroeconomic stability,
- Enhancing competitiveness of Ghana's private sector
- Accelerated agriculture modernisation and sustainable natural resource management
- Oil and gas development
- Infrastructure and human settlements development
- Human Development, Productivity and Employment
- Transparent, Responsive and Accountable Governance

The total cost of implementing the GSGDA was estimated at US\$23,891.459 million (GH¢34,642.62 million), of which 39.4% was expected to go to the implementation of policies and strategies related to "Infrastructure and human settlements development" thematic area; 25.2% to "Human development, employment and productivity" thematic area, while 15.1% was allocated to "Oil and gas development" thematic area. The remaining 20.3% were allocated to "Enhanced competitiveness of Ghana's private sector" thematic area (8%); "Transparent and accountable governance" thematic area (6.4%); "Accelerated agricultural modernisation and natural resource management" thematic area (3.8%) and "Ensuring and sustaining macroeconomic stability" thematic area (2.1%)

To address climate variability concerns, the medium-term policy objective to be pursued is to enhance the capacity of the relevant agencies to adapt to the impacts of climate change, mitigate the impact of climate variability and generally promote green economy. Strategies to be deployed include:

- i. establish a Climate Change Centre to coordinate the development of national capacity for climate change interventions;
- ii. adopt demand and supply measures for adapting the national energy system to the impact of climate change; and
- iii. increase resilience to climate change impact through an early warning system.

The GSGDA II recognized that Ghana had a weak capacity to manage the impacts of natural disasters. The interventions to be implemented therefore aimed at enhancing national capacity to mitigate and reduce the impact of natural disasters, risks and vulnerability.

The strategies to be implemented include:

- i. invest in the development of effective early warning and response systems including key seismological monitoring stations;
- ii. strengthen national capacity to combat frequent droughts, floods, forest and other fire outbreaks;
- iii. enforcing regulations and bye-laws restricting the development of structures in floodplains, water-ways, wetlands, etc.; and
- iv. improve the resilience of the national capital to natural disasters especially floods.

Even though The GSGDA was developed as a broader national development policy framework to guide sectoral and agency level planning, its lack of emphasis of sustainability and weak articulation of a sound agroecology-based agricultural modernisation agenda created room for deviation from the path of environmental sustainability and the pursuit short-term, high external input intensification. Like many other national policy documents, The GSGDA coopted agroecology terminology in order to appear to be pursuing green growth principles and doing little in terms of practice to achieve green growth targets.

2.8. Ghana Strategic Investment Framework (GSIF) for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) 2011 – 2025

Goal and Objective of GSIF

The goal of Ghana's Strategic Investment Framework is to support country priorities in improving natural resource-based livelihoods by reducing land degradation, in line with the Millennium Development Goals 1 (Extreme Poverty and Hunger) and 7 (Extreme Environmental Sustainability). The objective of the GSIF is to mainstream and scale-up sustainable land management decisions and secure ecosystem services and improve rural livelihoods in the country.

Guiding Principles The following key principles guiding the development of the Ghana Strategic Investment Framework for SLM are based on the recognition of traditional perceptions, local needs and national aspirations enshrined in the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II), the Ghana Environment Policy (1994), as well as international guidelines, conventions and agreements:

- Land management that maximizes public benefits
- Sustainable use of land resources
- Improved ecosystem stability and services provision
- Incentive development of harmonization to promote adoption and up-scaling of SLM
- Coordinated planning and orderly development
- International cooperation and partnership
- Active stakeholder participation
- Agricultural intensification
- Gender mainstreaming and sustainable land management

- Governance through strengthening institutions responsible for SLM built on principles of societal participation, gender equality, subsidiarity and decentralization.

Priority Ecosystem Target Areas The three regions of Northern Ghana, Northern, Upper East and Upper West, with Guinea and Sudan savanna agro-ecological zones are the priority areas for initial SLM interventions.

Activities under the GSIF are being implemented under broad components and sub-components. Under component 1 for example, the following were implemented:

Land Use and Soil Management (Agricultural Land Management)

- Forest Plantation Development
- Biodiversity Conservation
- Wildfire Management
- Community Tree Planting Programmes (Wood Fuel Production)
- Rangeland Management
- Integrated Watershed Management
- Drought Management and Mitigation
- Non-agricultural and Off-farm Enterprises

Ghana Strategic Investment Framework (GSIF) For Sustainable Land Management (SLM) is perhaps the only agricultural development plan that can to some degree be described as agroecology friendly. The framework incorporates both principles and practice. The GSIF for SLM prioritizes the building on indigenous knowledge and techniques. SLM techniques are intended to deliver substantial social and ecological benefits. The framework will promote better land management practices that lead to improved water quality and quantity, reduced resource conflict, natural disaster reduction, climate change resilience and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, stabilized ecosystem services, decreased poverty and increased security of long-term economic development and improved health and nutrition.

2.9. Ghana National Climate Change Master Plan

Action Programmes for Implementation: 2015–2020

The NCCP process identified ten Policy Focus Areas for addressing Ghana's climate change challenges and opportunities. Each of these areas has a number of specific programmes for addressing the critical actions necessary to achieve the desired objectives. The Policy Focus Areas are:

1. Develop climate-resilient agriculture and food security systems;
2. Build climate-resilient infrastructure;
3. Increase resilience of vulnerable communities to climate-related risks;
4. Increase carbon sinks;
5. Improve management and resilience of terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems;
6. Address the impact of climate change on human health;
7. Minimize the impact of climate change on access to water and sanitation;
8. Address gender issues in climate change;
9. Address climate change and migration; and
10. Minimize greenhouse gas emissions.

The expectation was that, after sensitization by MESTI and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), operational plans will be produced by implementing units such as District Assemblies, traditional authorities and non-governmental and community-based organizations on the programmes and actions identified by all stakeholders. This would constitute what is described as phase III of the NCCP.

2.10. Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan (2016-2020)

Consistent with the processes outlined in the NCCP, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, as an implementing agency developed a blueprint, National Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan (CAFSAP). The National Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan is based on the numerous policy documents on climate change adaptation and driven by the recognition that climate-smart agricultural practices which constitute the bedrock of food security should be deliberately programmed.

While the National Climate Change Policy provides a broad framework for formulating specific strategies to address local climate change challenges, the Action Plan is an effort to translate to the ground level, the broad national goals and objectives in climate-smart agriculture. MOFA sees National Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan as a crucial tool that would guide the translation of the NCCP into concrete actionable Climate-Smart Agriculture initiatives in all agroecological zones in Ghana.

The immediate challenge with the National Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan is the apparent duplication of programmes and activities outlined in the Ghana National

Plans and Investment Strategies

- i. Integrating Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction into National Development, Policies and Planning in Ghana, 2010
- ii. National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS), 2012
- iii. National Climate Change Master Plan Action Programmes for Implementation: 2015–2020
- iv. National Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan (2016-2020)
- v. Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP) 2011 – 2015
- vi. Ghana Strategic Investment Framework (GSIF) for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) (2011 – 2025)
- vii. National Action Programme to Combat Drought and Desertification

National Level Policies

- i. National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), 2013
- ii. National Environment Policy 2014
- iii. Ghana Irrigation Policy, 2007
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- v. Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP) 2002
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Climate Change Master Plan Action Programmes for Implementation. Given that other stakeholders and implementing agencies may be using the National Climate Change Master Plan as the blueprint, there may be issues of coordination, duplication and use of multiple indicators for monitoring and evaluation.



POLIC
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3. POLICY ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One major feature in climate and agricultural development policies in Ghana is the recognition of the impact of climate change and the dependence of the country's agriculture on natural resources. The drive to harness indigenous knowledge and practices in production land conservation is evident in a number of agricultural development policies and plans. An example is the Ghana Strategic Investment Framework (GSIF) for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) (2011 – 2025). The GSIF for SLM is intended to address land degradation and promote sustainable land management. It is designed to deal with issues such as creation of enabling environment (including policy development and incentives), knowledge generation and dissemination, promotion, adoption and scaling up of SLM practices and coordination of institutions involved in the SLM.

The GSIF for SLM focuses on a wide range of issues on sustainable agriculture but two are of particular importance to this review:

- The focus on providing information and appropriate incentives to increase adoption and scale-up SLM practices, and coordinate the activities of organisations involved in the promotion of SLM at the local level.
- The focus to ensure that development assistance is aligned and donor support of actions to combat land degradation is also undertaken in a coordinated fashion.

Even though Ghana has been relatively successful in terms of articulating issues of agroecology and sustainable agriculture in policy and plans, gains resulting from the implementation of these policies and plans does not match the elaboration in policy. Given that the GSIF for SLM is being implemented with relative success, widespread use of sustainable land management practices should be evident across communities in northern Ghana. The proportion of national agricultural budget and donor funding of SLMs should be significant since the GSIF for SLM is seeking to ensure that development assistance is aligned and donor support of actions to combat land degradation is also undertaken in a coordinated fashion.

A close look at projected funding for key themes under METASIP II (Figure 1) shows that not only is projected funding for sustainable environment, land and water management below other key thematic areas, as well, projected growth in funding for the thematic issues is weak. The trend is similar with other programmes and projects. Why there appears to be divergence between the policy, practice and impacts on the ground are important questions for this review.

The articulation around agroecology appears to be imbedded in the broader sustainable agriculture articulation. Thus, practices that are not necessarily in tandem with the principles of agroecology are considered as agroecology practices. There is the need therefore for national dialogue among stakeholders on the principles that define agroecology and sustainable agriculture. Not providing such a framework would mean policies continue the co-opt practices that contradict agroecology hence making it difficult for the nation to achieve its targets.

3.1 Approach to Policy Formulation and Implementation

With the several policy, plans, programmes and projects on sustainable agriculture and climate adaptation, Ghana should have made significant progress in the development of agroecology and

resilient farming systems even if we achieved 50% success in the implementation of the policies and plans. The comprehensive policies should lead to excellent on-field results and massive impact especially among smallholder farmers who are the target of the policies. The approach to policy implementation may be key to understanding the source of divergence between policy and impacts. Ghana runs a decentralised system of government which means policies are taken up by multiple MMDAs and finally finds expression at the district level where activities are implemented.

Policies are mostly formulated at the Ministry level even though it is not uncommon to find policies formulated at the sector and sub-sector levels. The process involves:

- Policy formulation process (bottom up or at least presented as consultative)
- Development of plans (Implementation & Investment plans) to guide implementation and fundraising
- From the plans specific programmes and projects are produced

Within the decentralization framework, MMDAs are required to mainstream policies under their mandates into programs and activities at the district levels. The mainstreaming may occur at the policy, plan and even program levels. Frameworks for coordination and M&E are then put in place to facilitate coordination of actors and to monitor implementation.

With respect to agroecology, mainstreaming means MMDAs may add sustainable or agroecological plans to other programmes within their jurisdiction. While mainstreaming is touted for ensuring sustainability, there is the tendency for sacrificing details and some programmes for others.

Funding constitutes a key source of divergence between policy and practice. MMDAs may be restricted to implementing policies for which they have been able to secure funding. There is also the likelihood that funding requirements and donor prescriptions may fundamentally alter policies and affect agency ability to pursue policy options. A key example is whether to pursue the generously funded climate smart agriculture policies or to pursue climate resilient sustainable agriculture.

One way of dealing with the divergence between policy and practice is to work towards improving coordination and for government to demonstrate commitment towards funding agroecology. Leaving agroecology to the priority interests of donors opens the country up to industrial lobbyist who may not be concerned with environmental sustainability. Application for funding should therefore go beyond seeking for resources to implement CSA practices. Conversely, we should not abandon agreed agroecology objectives because these do not appeal to donors. This is where ActionAid and other relevant stakeholders need to work towards providing leadership in influencing public policy on agroecology.

3.2 FRAMEWORK FOR AGROECOLOGY

What is often described as agroecological policies in many jurisdictions do not go beyond the incorporation of some so-called sustainable farming practices in a project to be applied at the farm level. This model has been criticised as watering down the very essence of agroecology. Agroecological systems and practices were developed in the context of farmers' struggles to remain autonomous from agri-businesses. This character of agroecology gets lost by the focus on some few practices that can be applied to individual farms, and that do not require a deep transformation of power relations within existing dominant agricultural regimes.

Although this review exercise by definition focuses on the practices in the policy rather than the power relations, it nonetheless sees the transformation of power relations as the long-term option for integrating agroecology into policy. Agro-ecological policies entail more than the identification

of few sustainable farming practices to be implemented along with resource and external input intensive farming agricultural policies.

The production practices of agroecology (such as intercropping, traditional fishing and mobile pastoralism, integrating farming (crops, trees, livestock and fish), sustainable soil and land management (manuring, compost, etc.), farmer managed seed systems and animal breeds, etc.) are based on ecological principles emphasising building life in the soil, recycling nutrients, the dynamic management of biodiversity and energy conservation at all scales. Agroecology drastically reduces use of externally-purchased inputs that must be bought from industry. Rather it seeks to build on the rich traditional knowledge and techniques of farmers, connecting with science and technology in ways that empower local farmers. There is no use of agro-toxics, artificial hormones, GMOs or other dangerous new technologies in agroecology.

The Nyeleni Declaration defines the common vision, principles, and strategies to develop agroecology. It presents an integrated conception of agroecology based on three pillars:

- a scientific discipline,
- an agricultural practice, and
- a social movement.

This conceptualisation of agroecology requires fundamental transformation of practice, policy, and research in order to achieve the democratic control and active participation of all of the different stakeholders involved.

To achieve the tripartite conceptualization of agroecology, civil society and social movement actors in Ghana have to collectively develop a set of strategies to build, define, and strengthen agroecology through public policies. A critical review of policies and plans in Ghana appears to highlight concerted effort to co-opt agroecology and climate adaptation as options for fine-tuning industrial food systems and making them widely acceptable to an increasingly critical civil society and social movements calling for meaningful and binding commitments to agroecology. The cooptation of agroecology has fueled the swirling of policies based on catch phrases such as 'climate-smart agriculture', 'sustainable-' or 'ecological-intensification' and industrial monoculture production, just to mention a few.

Consultations with stakeholders highlight what appears to be divergent goals even among civil society groups in Ghana. NGOs such as CIKOD and PFAG appear to focus on getting government to commit to deploying agroecological practices in ongoing government programmes like the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ). The PFAG wishes to see increased investment in tree planting and the inclusion of organic manure as part of the inputs under the PFJ. PFAG has a demonstration site for training farmers in agroecology. ActionAid on the other hand is articulating a holistic agroecological framework that goes beyond the application of practices to integrating agroecology in national policies as well as transforming power relations in favour of agroecology.

The stance of actors in the MMDAs including the MOFA and Forestry Commission (FC) reinforces support for existing policies. MOFA for example is of the opinion that the National Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan (2016-2020), the GSIF for SLM among other complementary policies adequately address concerns over agroecology. ActionAid and other civil society groups have reservations with attempts to pass climate smart agriculture as agroecology or an approach that can build resilience among smallholders.

There is therefore the need for consensus among all stakeholders if there is to be meaningful progress in terms of developing a policy framework for agroecology. More critical is the need for convergence among civil society groups. Achieving meaningful integration of agroecology at the level of policy and commitment of resources by government to implement agroecological practices would require concerted advocacy. This cannot be achieved if civil society groups do not present a common front and a common set of demands. To this end the following actions could be considered:

- i. ActionAid may have to create a platform or facilitate existing coalitions to develop common approaches and common goals on agroecology.
- ii. Civil society groups in the coalition need to agree on what they are willing to present and advocate to achieve significant application of agroecology practices or work towards policy integration.
- iii. The coalition may work towards identifying benchmarks and baseline for evaluating the application of agroecology both in policy and practice.

Achieving significant application of agroecological farming practices should form part of the short-term goals while the focus in the medium to long-term should be on developing an appropriate framework for agroecology. From our observations, the appetite for policy on agroecology appears low among state actors. The current emphasis on commercialization of agriculture, coupled with significant donor funding for so-called intensification, achieving a scale up agroecological practices would require concerted effort.

Key issues and entry points for the development of a framework for agroecology could include:

1. **Agricultural policies**— existing policies appear to emphasise high-input, resource-intensive farming systems, with much of ongoing research directed at intensive high-external input systems. Agroecology policy should seek a transition from high-input intensive systems to ecology-friendly farming in agricultural policies. Such policies would ensure agroecology and other sustainable agricultural approaches are taken into consideration and would fundamentally change the criteria for evaluating success in agriculture. There is need to go beyond existing output-based indicators of success in agriculture to consider a wider range of measures including environmental protection, areas for tree planting, areas of land conserved and smallholder inclusiveness.
2. Policies to mitigate the negative impacts of many agricultural inputs, including fertilisers, pesticides, anti-microbials, and anti-helminthics, should emphasise agroecological approaches in addition to technological or risk management solutions
3. **Development of plural market systems**— There is the need to develop market models that emphasise local production and consumption. Agroecology would thrive better under community-supported agriculture schemes, e-commerce and participatory guarantee schemes, which reconnect producers and consumers, rural and urban areas.
4. **Public Procurement framework to** promote agroecology and guarantee access to the market for agroecological production. These programmes should be adjusted to take into consideration the specificities and needs of producers, including scale, diversification of production, local values, and local varieties and products. An agroecology procurement framework would limit the volume of conventional input procurement without a corresponding spending to procure or preserve resources relevant for agroecology.

Investment and Inclusive Finance-specific credit lines and investment schemes to help promote agroecological production. Flexible finance and insurance programmes to enable food producers to buy local products and take decisions based on their own needs will support the autonomy and adaptive capacity of producers. A just transition process is needed to support the transition phase by creating the enabling environment through policy and practice that helps farmers to overcome the barriers that food producers face in transitioning to agroecology.

Research, Education and Extension Existing research systems tend to focus on single disciplines, yield improvement of single crops and top-down technology transfer models. Promoting agroecology would require strengthening of rural education and extension systems by supporting farmer to farmer extension models and exploring and promoting different ways of knowledge co-creation.

One of the best indicators of commitment to agroecology is budget and expenditure. Elaborate policies in themselves do not convey much on the practice of agroecology. Figure 1 is a typical example of having elaborate policy prescriptions on sustainable agriculture and not matching the policy emphasis with commitment of resources.

Policy makers will not move forward on agroecology without concerted effort from civil society. Policy makers need to reach a point where they respect and support agroecological processes rather than continuing to support the forces that champion exploitation of the environment for short-term yield gains.

It is not possible to track agricultural policy transitions to agroecology without following the “money trail”. Currently, Ghana’s agricultural and climate adaptation policy appear heavy on sustainable agriculture themes and would be difficult to convince policy makers that the current policy landscape does not adequately address issues of agroecology. It is however possible to examine the commitment to advance agroecology against conventional agriculture through budgetary allocations.

To complete this policy review, government spending on agroecology should be analysed and benchmarks and indicators for tracking government spending created. These indicators are a better measure of policy transitions and can be used as basis to engage stakeholders.

3.3 Potential Stakeholders in Ghana

It is globally acknowledged that achieving policy transition from industrial and high input agricultural systems would require sustained and concerted effort by civil society. This is partly because of misconceptions of agroecology as purely rudimentary, low-technology and yield farming systems. The other part of the story is the huge funding support for developing countries to pursue high-input and chemical-intensive agriculture.

Successful policy transition would be driven by strong networks of different actors. Successfully scaling up agroecology would require commitment at the policy level to allocate finances and redirect investment to more inclusive and diversified food systems. Strengthening the organizations of producers, and forging new partnerships between small-scale producers, entrepreneurs and private sector actors is particularly key for Ghana.

The FAO support to scaling up agroecology facilitates cooperation among governments and stakeholders in promoting agroecology policy and practice. The FAO facilitates cooperation among countries with a solid governance structure in the area by supporting the development of public policies that promote agroecology. The FAO may also play an important role in mobilising funds and resources, connecting donors with networks, and engaging the private sector by providing guidance on agroecology.

The GIZ has long maintained support for policy for several developing countries. In Ghana it has a collaboration with the MOFA in the implementation of a project towards promoting integrated climate risk management and transfer. The project is supporting the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO). Partners are training smallholders in how to deal with the future challenges of climate change by using appropriate agricultural practices. It is also assisting the Ghanaian partners in preparing for accession to the African Risk Capacity (ARC). The ARC makes it possible

for African governments to finance disaster and emergency measures in the event of severe droughts or flooding via an insurance option at the African Union (AU) level.

Although these organizations may not be currently implementing agroecology projects, their orientation to support the development agroecology frameworks makes them very useful partners in addition to existing local organizations and FBOs. ActionAid can play a leading role by facilitating the meeting of these diverse actors to work towards supporting government to develop a framework for agroecological policies in Ghana.

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