

Africa Learning Forum on Adaptation

ALFA Sahel 2020

March 30-31th 2020, Niamey, Niger

Pre-event to the 2nd international science conference on climate change

ALFA Sahel 2020: a forum for joint learning on challenges and opportunities for climate resilience in the Sahel among practitioners, decision-makers and researchers on the theme:

'Climate Resilient Livelihoods and Landscapes in the Sahel/West Africa drylands'

Introduction

There is significant potential for productive and resilient livelihoods and landscapes in the Sahel. National economies and urban centers are growing and most Sahelian countries are seeing sustained increases in per capita livestock and crop production. The people of the Sahel are diverse, with a rich cultural heritage and long tradition of 'multi-user' sustainable land and resource management suited to the semi-arid, Sahelian conditions. Despite this potential, people face many challenges. Sahelian countries continue to be amongst the poorest on earth, and their populations amongst the most vulnerable. [Four of the bottom eight ranked countries in the 2018 Human Development Index are Sahelian countries](#) (Niger, 189/189/; Chad, 186/189; Burkina Faso, 183/189; and Mali, 182/189). Climate change is threatening the livelihoods of farmers, pastoralists and other land and water users, as well the landscapes they collectively depend upon. The combined impacts of climate change (temperatures rising [1.5 times faster](#) than the global average, more frequent and prolonged extreme events, particularly droughts and floods), competition over access to land and water and other natural resources, difficulties in engaging viable alternative livelihood opportunities, increasing hostilities between people who depend on these fragile environments, to name a few, are threatening the region in complex and interconnected ways. As a result, the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel is anticipating what [it describes as](#) "persistent food insecurity" for the foreseeable future.

Achieving resilient livelihoods and landscapes in the Sahel, like drylands elsewhere, is made more complex by high levels of livelihood differentiation amongst people who live in rural areas. Farmers, pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, fisherfolk, hunters and foragers, amongst others, compete over access to land and other natural resources and at the same time provide each other with a range of mutually beneficial services. These different livelihoods intersect with social differences, where ethnicity, gender, age generations and in some instances, religion, all contribute to determining rights and access to resources. As a result, sustainable management and governance of natural resources is highly complex, and the risk of conflict increases as new risks and uncertainties such as climate change add to this complexity. When governments and development programmes focus on sector specific solutions, they risk breaking the intricate inter-connection of diverse and often mobile livelihoods and social categories inherent in managing the fragile Sahel environments, thereby contributing drivers of conflict. New approaches are needed which break-down sectoral silos and seek to strengthen coordinated local decision-making and complementarities across livelihoods, at community level and within the local and national economy, markets and policy environment. This need is prompted by the growing body of evidence that shows that adaptive capacity, collaborative mechanisms, governance and innovation in the face of uncertainty are required to support decision making for long-term and continuous adaptation responses to changing climates.

There is a wealth of knowledge, experience and evidence emerging from development, disaster risk reduction, resilience and climate change adaptation programmes and research that can help to inform a way forward that is responsive to these complexities and diversities and to chart a pathway to climate resilient and secure livelihoods in the Sahel, where critical issues the Sahel faces are addressed in an integrated, multi-actor and locally-owned way.

In this context, ALFA Sahel 2020 brings together actors with direct, practical experience and research evidence with policy makers to address these issues and gain common understandings about the current state of the Sahel, the challenges and opportunities experienced and what a resilient, sustainable and secure future Sahel might look like, with an emphasis on the relationship between farmers and pastoralists.

ALFA Sahel 2020 follows [ALFA2017](#) which provided a platform for interactive learning on adaptation to climate change across Africa from which participants developed a communique with a set of messages for adaptation action, policy and financing. [ALFA2017](#) brought together a wide range of organisations from across Africa to co-create a way forward for approaches to adaptation to climate change.

ALFA Sahel 2020 Objectives

The ALFA Sahel 2020 objective is to generate collective learning and exploration towards **climate-resilient and secure livelihoods, landscapes and development in the Sahel and dryland areas of West Africa**.

ALFA Sahel 2020 provides an interactive platform of diverse concerned actors to exchange learning and discuss difficult questions relating to reducing vulnerability and conflict for rural and mobile communities engaged in pastoralism, agro-pastoralism, farming, fishing and other livelihoods across Sahelian and dryland zones of West African countries.

The event aims for the following outcomes:

1. **Enhanced knowledge** on the intersections, challenges and opportunities for improving climate resilience and security across the diversity of people and landscapes of the Sahelian region
2. **Strengthened cross-disciplinary and multi-level linkages** for continued exchange of knowledge and learning among practitioners, policy makers and researchers.
3. **Enhanced collective commitment** to inclusive and holistic approaches for climate resilience and security across the Sahelian region.

ALFA Sahel 2020 programme and themes

ALFA Sahel 2020 is designed as a 2 day interactive learning forum, in which participants will:

- Learn from the participants' diverse experience, research and evidence relating to climate resilience among diverse vulnerable people and their landscapes in the Sahel.
- Deepen discussions on priority themes and explore drivers, barriers and opportunities for climate resilient and secure people and landscapes.
- Collectively generate messages to inform policy decision makers, donors, programmes and researchers in their efforts to address climate and conflict risks.

We will explore two main themes within this open and flexible agenda:

1. Resilient people: interconnected livelihoods in a future climate
2. Resilient landscapes: natural resource management in multi-user landscapes

Some of the thorny questions the conference may explore are:

- How can farmers and pastoralists, neighbouring ethnic groups, and the women, men and youth in their communities, collectively manage climate risks, sustain livelihoods and regenerate scarce resources they all rely on, without recourse to conflict?
- What is the future for how these multiple resource users make use of, access and govern natural resources across ecosystem landscapes and over time?
- How can complex gender, diversity and cultural dimensions be integrated into solutions?
- What adaptive capacities, governance systems and innovation are needed?

- What is the value and how can we enhance multi-stakeholder, multi-level, multi-sector decision making, and coordination in practice and policies?
- What is needed from the triple nexus linking humanitarian, development and peace efforts in the context of future climate risks and uncertainties?

What you will experience at ALFA Sahel 2020

Participating practitioners, researchers and policy makers will share their expertise, learn from each other and work together through a range of event formats exploring the overarching objective and themes. Panel discussions, sharing of evidence and interactive group sessions will be facilitated in a structured and participatory way to result in co-development of lessons, messages and calls for action by participants. The event objective will be met through a systematic approach to sharing, learning and co-developing outcomes over the two days.

The workshop language will be primarily French. Facilitation will be bilingual and simultaneous interpretation French-English, English-French will be provided. Presentations and plenary sessions will be kept to a minimum to allow for a rich interaction among all participants.

Participation

ALFA Sahel 2020 welcomes practitioners, decision makers and researchers who have hands on experience and / or responsibility in the Sahel, relating to climate resilience, adaptation to climate change, food security, natural resource management and peace building among farmers, agro-pastoralists, pastoralists and other land users.

Participants will be working in the following countries: Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, and the northern dryland areas of Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Cameroon.

They will be working with non-government and civil society organisations, government sector departments, funded adaptation/resilience/peace building programmes, policy decision makers, financial institutions, universities, intergovernmental organizations, research institutes, climate science institutes, meteorological services and African regional institutions (CEDEAO, CILSS etc.).

To enable in-depth discussion and collective learning, numbers are limited and will be balanced across practitioners, policy decision makers and researchers/scientists. Participants will be confirmed based on completed interest to attend registration forms demonstrating the above criteria, relevant experience and commitment to resilience in West Africa. Confirmation of participation will be given by invitation letters by end of January 2020.

Register for ALFA Sahel 2020 by December 15th 2019.

The event takes place immediately prior to the Second International Scientific Conference on Climate Change hosted by AGRHYMET, in Niamey, 1-3rd April 2020. Participants and organisers of ALFA Sahel 2020 will have the opportunity to share learnings and messages developed by practitioners, policymakers and researchers in the discussions held during the AGRYHET conference. The events are organised separately.

For more information, see the ALFA Sahel 2020 weblink here: <https://alfasahel.org/> or contact Sanoussi Abalabe ababale.mahamanesanoussi@care.org, Hadjara Moumine Hadjara.Moumine@care.org or Trésor Kankindi tkankindi@care.dk

Conference Organisers

ALFA Sahel 2020 will be convened by: CARE's Climate Learning and Advocacy for Resilience Programme (CLAR) together with RBM, AREN, CILSS and Agrhymet.