

# BEATING FAMINE TODAY

A Product of the Beating Famine 2015 Conference

## At the coalface

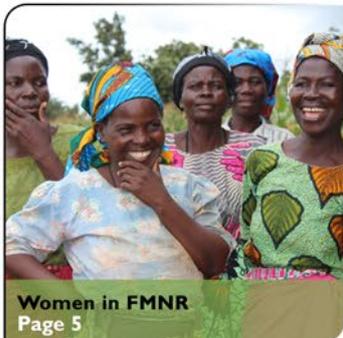
Delegates get a chance to interact with farmers



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Village Headman Kankuwe

Two days after discussing strategies, policies and sharing best practises, delegates attending the Beating Famine Conference had an opportunity to meet farmers who are working at the coalface. These farmers are implementing various forms of technology to conserve the environment, increase productivity and food security.

The visit targeted field projects sponsored by ICRAF. Though in the initial phase (not more than two years old), farmers say they have already seen initial results and are willing to strengthen the initiative and share learning.

“I appreciate what the fertilizers have brought to us, they have changed completely the way how we operate, and a clear example stands right on my back” said the farmer V.H. Kankuwe.

On his back lies a massive production of maize that grow more than two metres high against the one meter long maize that grows in front of his farm.

“So I don’t have to talk much to show you the difference, all you need to do, is look to my back and in front of me,” added Kankuwe.

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Sustainable Food Security through Land Regeneration in a Changing Climate



World Vision



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#BeatingFamine2015

#Malawi

## Interactions with farmers

### ...from front page

The food producer stands in front of a farm- whose owner, has not yet adopted the fertilizing initiatives, neither been trained on how to organize his farm for a much productive farming system.

Expansion of the initiative to additional farmers is planned for the coming seasons, to be led, by already trained farmers.

With ICRAF support, farmers have adopted the tree fertilizing techniques and have applied them along the edges of the their farms to protect their main production, maize and tobacco, and the stakes of the trees are later used for firewood, as well as to grow seeds to be distributed to other farmers.

“After the ICRAF program the training and everything, we started experiencing encouraging results, the group of farmers trained is still short, but we have the plans to expand the skills to others” said the farmer Daniel Chiyembekezo.

At the end of the visit, participants encouraged the farmers to continue with their determined will power, and take advantage of the support to so far given for them to become the local experts that will be responsible for mass dissemination of better practices in the country and the continent.

“You must consider to save, that will help you when the project that supports you phases out, you should be in conditions to continue the same initiatives and make them better on you own” said Shakwaanande Natai, from Tanzania.

Natai says it is discouraging to come to a conclusion that farmers where not able to move forward with a positive initiative just because the project terminated.

On the other hand, farmers thanked the opportunity and said they will commit to guarantee the sustainability of the project.

“Your visit has encouraged us, we would appreciate that the support continues until we are mature, in promoting for instance, experience exchange visits to other farmers so that we can have other visions in food production” said Chiyembekezo.

## Integrate subsidies with FMNR; COMESA calls



Chikakula Miti - COMESA

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), believes that countries under its banner should embrace and find ways to integrate Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) initiatives with agricultural subsidies being implemented in the countries. COMESA’s Chikakula Miti made the call at the ongoing Beating Famine Conference in Lilongwe, Malawi which has now gone into its third day.

This call follows the ‘Malabo Declaration’ of June 2014 during which African Union Heads of State and Governments committed to implement actions that would accelerate agricultural growth and transformation across the continent which aims at eradicating hunger by 2025 as well as having agriculture bailing out over 50% of all poor Africans out of poverty by the same year.

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## Conference in Brief

Day 3 of the Beating Famine Conference still underway in Malawi started on a lighter note with some field visits to four different locations within and outside of Lilongwe. The delegates were divided into four groups;

The first group went to appreciate Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) in Kwindanguwo village, Dowa. The village is in Chivala Extension Planning Area in Traditional Authority Mkukula. This community is mobilizing farmers to re-generate considerable numbers of trees, naturally. During the field visit delegates appreciated the extent to which FMNR is a reality in Malawi and witness women's active involvement in the adoption of FMNR.

The second group visited a community managed forest at Kaungwe in Dowa. There are about 27 sub-villages involved in managing Kaungwe Community Forest which covers a space of 20 hectares.

Another group of delegates visited farmers who are integrating mineral fertilizers with fertilizer trees for sustainable maize production at Khanda Viillage in Lilongwe.

The final group went to Chiwamba in Lilongwe where they appreciated Conservation Agriculture with planted and natural trees.

All the field visits were hosted by several farmers practicing these four interventions using different crops.

In the afternoon, there were mini workshops of various topics including the practical aspects of implementing FMNR, linking input subsidies to the up-scaling of agro-forestry for integrated soil fertility management, scaling up conservation agriculture systems in Southern Africa and a private sector summit on how business links to beating famine, just to mention a few.

On the fourth and final day of the conference participants will focus on scaling up strategies for 2015 and beyond.

## Integrate subsidies with FMNR - COMESA calls

...from page 2

He said that with all the presentations made at the conference, backed by credible research and data, COMESA believe that its member countries can fight persistent hunger. A combination of new technologies with existing farmer-support initiatives that member states are implementing is key.

“There's need for COMESA member states to fully utilise the potential that comes with fertiliser-fodder-fuel wood trees since they are one of the most effective ways for smallholder farmers to reverse land degradation on their farms to reap more yields,” said a seemingly confident Miti who further revealed that his organisation has partnered with World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) to ensure that they support willing countries across the region.

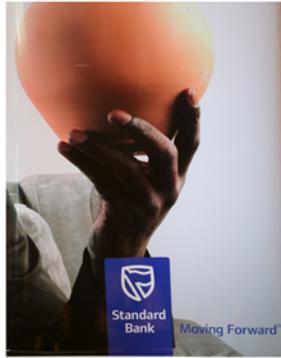
Though he sounded worried on the commitment of other countries to the new agricultural innovations, Miti called on business and political leaders across the region to show agency and make them part and parcel of their development cornerstones.

He cited Zambia and Malawi as some of the countries in Southern Africa that are implementing agricultural subsidies in one way or the other and shared his optimism that the low cost fertiliser trees have the potential of turning around the dreams of many hungry people in the region and beyond.

Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs Advisor for World Vision's Southern Africa Region (SAR), said that the coming in of COMESA will work better and accelerate the rate of adoption of agriculture innovations since the body has a good system of working with countries.

According to a recent IRIN news publication, about 900,000 small-scale farmers are covered by the Fertilizer Input Subsidy Program (FISP) in Zambia and it accounted for roughly 39% of the more than \$231 million of the Zambian 2012-2013 Agricultural budget. Although FISP only targets about 1.5 million or half of all Malawian smallholder farmers, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) reports, the programme is more generous than earlier programmes: the full package includes 5-10 kilogram (kg) of seed and 100kg of fertilizer, which at reasonable yield levels is sufficient to satisfy annual maize needs for an average-sized family of five members.

## Q & A with Andrew Mashanda



Andrew Mashanda - CEO, Standard Bank, Malawi

**Q** What motivated Standard Bank, to be one of the sponsors of the 2015 Beating Famine Conference?

**A** From Standard Bank's point of view, we like to think of ourselves as a very responsible corporate entity. We service multiple savings in this market, all the way from the very complex corporates to the average person in Malawi. When the opportunity came for us to partner other organizations to invest in the 2015 Beating Famine Conference, we found it as an opportunity to demonstrate to the people that will benefit from this conference that Standard Bank is indeed a partner in the social development of Malawi.

**Q** Do you think we can really beat famine in Africa?

**A** I think it is possible! There are enough resources on the continent. If those resources are applied more equitably and more responsibly, I think we can beat famine. If we can only be focused and committed, the continent has enough resources to be able to deal with most of the pressing issues related to farming.



**Q** You were one of the panelists in a session on business and beating famine. How do the two relate to each other?

**A** One of the challenges we face as a bank, particularly in trying to work with communities that are involved in smallholder farming in remote areas, is the issue of them belonging to a value system which is structured. What I have heard today in the discussions is that there are a lot of initiatives taking place in increasing the transparency of the lifecycle from planting to harvest all the way back into input. We have met with entities that we will certainly engage with much more closely in helping the smallholder farmers to increase the amount of money that goes into their pockets after selling their produce.

I was quite impressed to actually listen to people from the development sector worrying about the same things that we worry about. The unfortunate thing is that we don't talk enough. If we can only spend more time in dialogue, looking at where we can come in as corporates, and where the partner agents like development specialists can come in; I think we can potentially find a point where we can connect.

**Q** What is your impression about the 2015 Beating Famine Conference?

**A** As an outsider, I think the conference has been an exceptional success. It has certainly been bigger than what I expected. I am very impressed with the quality of speakers that you have managed to get on the table, the quality of conversation and the content that is being presented. I think a lot of us from the corporate sector will benefit greatly from sitting with some of development specialists that have spent a lot of time trying to understand some of the social economic imperatives to turning the country around and bringing about the change that we are all looking for.

**Q** What is Standard Bank's message on Beating Famine?

**A** My message as a corporate player is that we can beat famine. It is a collective effort between the development sector and us in the corporate sector. What we need to have at the heart of everything we do is how we can grow together as partners in development...

## Women benefiting from FMNR

*"I am a single mother with 3 children and the ability to save money is a bonus. In addition, I am also able to collect fuel wood for cooking right from my maize field which saves costs. I also sell some of the wood to make money".*



Anna Sikoti

Anna Sikoti is a 50 year-old Malawian farmer who says her life has been positively impacted by Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR). She has been a practicing farmer since 1987 as a major source of her income and livelihood.

Anna says that FMNR techniques have helped her survive increasing land degradation that's causing a decrease in crop yield in many parts of the country. So much so that she has even managed to more than double her maize crop yield.

"Deforestation has badly affected us farmers. Rainfall has declined and so has crop yield. FMNR has provided a way for me to overcome this challenge. I have trees in my garden that are helping keep fertility of the soil for my crops to grow and it is something that I learnt through FMNR".

### **But how exactly did Anna come to adopt FMNR?**

Anna told delegates at the 2015 Beating Famine Conference who visited her one-acre maize field to witness and appreciate the impact of community based FMNR, that she began adopting FMNR techniques in 2001 following advice from Total Land Care.

"Total Land Care advised us to take care of existing natural trees growing in our gardens to help restore and keep fertility of the soil. They also gave us skills to take care of the trees that are very easy and cheap".

Anna says that since she began keeping and taking care of natural trees in her garden to restore soil fertility has allowed her to reduce the amount of artificial fertilizer she applies to her crop from 2 bags to 1 bag which has been a good saving.

*"I am a single mother with 3 children and the ability to save money is a bonus. In addition, I am also able to collect fuel wood for cooking right from my maize field which saves costs. I also sell some of the wood to make money".*

While on their tour of Anna's maize garden, one of the delegates of the Beating Famine Conferences commented that strong women involvement in FMNR in Malawi is a very encouraging indicator of how well the technology is being embraced and also scaled up by local communities.

Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator for Chivala Extension Planning Area (EPA), Macnoel Kaipanyama said that farmers throughout his extension area are adopting FMNR.

Local chief in the area, Senior Group Village Head Kwindanguwo also revealed to the delegation that his community has also set up some bylaws to further protect trees and the environment.



Anna interacting with delegates during a field visit

## Feedback from our readers

+Great work. I appreciate the great reporting skills here  
-Bob Kisyula

+That is a powerful thing you got there. You are on fire.  
-Joseph Simukoko

+Great work!!! Amazing stuff!!! This what WV needs.  
-Fordson Kafweku

+This is marvelous and beautiful. I like the presentation and the outlook of the newsletter. Keep the fire burning.  
-Elisha Kapalamula

## Fighting hunger through conservation agriculture



Innocent Katsembwe - Farmer from Chiwamba

In Chiwamba, a rural community located some 38 Kilometers to the east of Lilongwe district in Malawi; farmers have taken a step further to address issues of hunger through conservation agriculture.

Most of these farmers used to realize low yields due to lack of fertilizer as a good percentage of their income was spent on labour particularly during the time when they were preparing their land. Hunger was their biggest challenge.

Innocent Katsembwe is one of the farmers in Chiwamba who earns a living by doing subsistence farming. He grows maize, pigeon peas and other crops. In pursuit of efficiency, Katsembwe in 2011 started practicing conservation agriculture, known in Chichewa as 'mleranthaka.' He has been using crop residue, particularly maize stalks, and his annual yield has increased significantly.

"There are many benefits that I have seen since I started practicing conservation agriculture. I am able to harvest more crops with less labour. My garden no longer requires a lot of water and chemical input," explains Katsembwe, a Total LandCare (TLC) trained farmer.

"I use maize stalks from the previous harvest. They have proved to be effective because they help to maintain soil moisture and top soil," Katsembwe explains.

Since introduction of conservational agriculture, farmers in Chiwamba no longer concentrate on tillage. Soil disturbance in their farms has been minimal. To maintain soil fertility, Katsembwe has also been planting felbedialbida or 'nsangu' and tephrosiavoggii trees supplied by Total LandCare.

"Today, I am a proud farmer. My home no longer lacks food. Apart from this, I managed to buy a new bicycle," he testifies.

According to Grandstone Mlenga, Total LandCare Officer, his organization discourages farmers from burning residues.

"Burning of residues increases mineralization rates. It also leads to depletion of soil organic matter and nutrients," Mlenga explains.

664 households in Chiwamba have received training on conservational agriculture with the integration of planted and natural trees.

## Sharing lessons key to success in land regeneration

Learning from existing successes on landscape restoration is key in scaling up strategies and existing efforts to regenerate agriculture productive resources in Southern Africa.

Chris Reij, a land management specialist made this recommendation on the sidelines of the Beating Famine Conference where participants are deliberating solutions and strategies to end food insecurity through land regeneration.

Reij believes that with this proactive approach, real impact can be realised.

He emphasised that learning from the success stories of countries like Ethiopia and Niger which re-greened more than 500 hectares of degraded land can address the knowledge gap. This can assist Southern Africa to maximise opportunity for success.

In addition, government should put in place policies and legislation that promote and incentivise productivity. Working with the media, development of value chains, and conducting research as means of increasing impact can not be underrated.

National Director of World Vision Malawi, Robert Kisyu-la added that political will is essential but there is also a need for stakeholders to take agency.

Reij is a facilitator of "Africa Re-greening initiatives", which supports farmers to adapt to climate change and develop more productive and sustainable farming systems.

# What did they Say?

Join a live conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #BeatingFamine

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**Paige McClanahan** @paigemcclanahan  
New @COMESA\_lusaka /@ICRAF platform to link fertilizer subsidies to agroforestry practices, helping farmers do more with less #beatingfamine

**FMNR Hub** @FMNRHub  
Beating famine today: articles, interviews and images from the #beatingfamine conference <http://goo.gl/7NatYd> @icraf@evergreenag

**EverGreenAgriculture** @evergreenag  
Any agricultural information network should always have the farmer in mind. #beatingfamine

**Marion Moon** @missmoonke  
@AfricaLandcare the #youth r the future & Ag has a gold mine of opportunities 4us. The movement has started #WandaRevolution#beatingfamine

## Quotable Quotes

**Isaac Nyoka, ICRAF**  
“Ninety percent of people in Southern Africa depend on wood energy for heating and cooking and women who are primary care givers in many farming households spend about 1.5 hours a day collecting firewood.”

**Kofi Annan,**  
“Climate resilient agriculture will help Africa adapt to the effects of climate change; and climate-smart agriculture will enable the continent to contribute towards mitigation efforts.”

## FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

We would like to hear from you. Send comments or feedback to: [lindiwe\\_bandazi@wvi.org](mailto:lindiwe_bandazi@wvi.org)

# Multimedia



Delegates hail field visits



Traditional Leaders urge people to adopt Smart Agriculture



Visiting farmers vow to embrace new technology

# #FromOurLens



Day Three of the Beating Famine Conference



A



B



C



D



E

- A. Face to face with farmers in the field
- B. Excited women in FMNR
- C. Happy birthday Constance!
- D. "This is how we do it", a woman briefs delegates on FMNR
- E. On the way back from the field
- F. Senior Chief Kachindamoto taking notes at the conservation agriculture field visit



F