



The Commonwealth



Concept Note

Webinar

Enhancing Coordination on Sustainable Land Management and Scaling-up Best Practices for Increased Climate Resilience in Africa

Thursday 9 September 2021; 10:00 - 12:00 BST

Background

The Commonwealth Secretariat is hosting this webinar to enhance coordinated action towards sustainable land management (SLM) by increasing awareness and advocating for country-driven climate finance access for Commonwealth member countries. The event will bring together government officials, technical experts, researchers, international financial institutions, private sector and civil society stakeholders to discuss best practices in SLM for increased climate resilience in Africa.

This event will be the second of a series of regional engagements under the **Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands (CALL)** in support of the proposed **Commonwealth Living Lands Charter**. The Secretariat hosted the first regional engagement in partnership with the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change Regional Coordination Centre St. George's (UNFCCC RCC-St George's) and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), on "[Enhancing a Coordinated Approach on Financing for Climate Action on Land in the Caribbean](#)" on 27th April 2021.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is playing a leadership role and using its convening power to support member countries in synergising implementation of the commitments agreed to under the three Rio Conventions – the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). It is supporting collaborative partnerships with national, regional and international organisations to unite in taking multi-level adaptation and mitigation actions, including sustainable land management and wider nature-based solutions.

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) entails the use of land resources, including soils, water, animals and plants, to produce goods to meet changing human needs, while simultaneously ensuring the long-term productive potential of these resources and the maintenance of their environmental functions¹. Combatting the loss and damage to the quality of environment resulting from land degradation requires sound and integrated management of forests,

¹ <http://www.fao.org/land-water/land/sustainable-land-management/en/>

water resources crop and grazing lands, and restoration of organic soil content. These promote co-benefits such as improvements to the health and well-being of dependent communities by addressing biodiversity loss, climate change, and desertification.

Land represents one of Africa's most vital natural resources, particularly one on which livelihoods are critically dependent to provide food and water security, fuel, transportation, employment, shelter and cultural identity. It also supports animal and plant life forming the basis for biological diversity. The [2020 IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land](#) found that climate change and land degradation are interlinked and exponentially exacerbated by extreme and more intense weather events, compounded by sea-level rise. Declining soil, water and air quality hinders agricultural yield, thus increasing food insecurity and vulnerabilities which trigger social conflicts among land users.

The [UNEP 2020 Adaptation Gap Report](#) recognised drought and water scarcity as the most significant hazard in the region. In 2017/18, it was found that globally only 24% or US\$7 billion of public funding was dedicated to climate adaptation, primarily for agriculture, forestry, land use (AFOLU), and natural resource management. Of this, a small portion goes towards nature-based solutions (NbS) with 73% NbS initiatives in the region undertaken in rural areas. Land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change must be combatted to enhance sustainability, resilience and ensure inclusive growth through NbS.

SLM requires tackling complex issues such as addressing water, food and energy nexus, as well as sensitive issues regarding rights over and accesses to lands and other natural resources. Climate change is affecting food and water security across Africa with impacts particularly exacerbated in dryland ecosystems productivity. The effects also adversely impact vulnerable groups with women and girls disproportionately affected due to their societal roles and responsibilities. Therefore, a system for resource planning and management needs to integrate perspectives of vulnerable groups including youth and women.

Recognizing the interconnected challenges presented by climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification, the [G20 Environment Ministers' meeting](#) in Naples on 22nd of July 2021, committed to increasing their efforts to address these challenges and to tackle them in a synergetic and complementary manner. Furthermore, Decision 492 (XXII) of the African Union Assembly on, 'Enhancing the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification', invites Member States, international, regional and sub-regional organizations "to consider Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) as a means of achieving synergy in the implementation of Agenda 2063, the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

This event is an opportunity to maximise the understanding and potential of SLM practices in achieving climate, land and biodiversity targets by developing partnerships to drive ambitious, coordinated and accelerated action along with the sharing of knowledge, scientific information, expertise and experience between public and private sector actors and civil society.

Event Objectives

Considering the increasing environmental threats and setbacks as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this event will be an opportunity for participating entities to explore avenues for synergistic development across sectors that will help achieve the targets of the three Rio Conventions in African member states.

The event aims to:

1. Recognise the importance of SLM, and wider NbS, as an ecosystem-based approach to addressing climate change and the many co-benefits that can improve social, environmental and economic conditions;
2. Understand the gaps and challenges hindering SLM in the region, particularly in the context of institutional structure, policy backing, monitoring and evaluation measures and allocation of land across sectors, whilst at the same time capturing what has worked well for replication and scaling up of best practices;
3. Highlight the social challenges faced by vulnerable groups in the region that affect SLM and incorporate traditional knowledge and perspectives, along with gender and youth considerations in policy measures and project development;
4. Explore finance instruments and mechanisms which can simplify access to finance to address climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss by maximising partnerships between the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) and partner development organisations, financial institutions, and government agencies.

Desired Outcomes

As a result of this webinar, participating entities will have:

- Established a foundation for collaborative action and partnerships between the Commonwealth Secretariat through its CCFAH, regional partners and financial institutions in mobilising financing to accelerate sustainable land management efforts to address climate change, biodiversity and land degradation issues for Commonwealth member countries in Africa;
- Clearer understanding of the human and institutional challenges hindering the development and implementation of sustainable land management for member states in Africa and ways to bridge such gaps;
- An enhanced understanding in the value of an integrated approach in dealing with the 3 Rio Conventions in a coordinated manner.

Expected Participation

Attendance at this webinar is expected from and not limited to the following institutions:

- Commonwealth Secretariat including Commonwealth National Climate Finance Advisers and their respective Government Supervisors and counterparts
- Technical Experts from the three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCCD, UNCBD)
- Respective Government Focal Points of the three Rio Conventions from the African Commonwealth Member States
- Commonwealth Accredited Organisations working on land-related projects and initiatives such as the Commonwealth Forestry Association (CFA)
- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- African Union Development Agency New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA NEPAD)
- Africa Research and Impact Network (ARIN)
- CGIAR
- Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) Africa
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) Africa
- Green Climate Fund (GCF)
- Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- International Center for Agriculture Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
- UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre Lomé
- UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre Kampala
- World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
- World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT)
- Civil Society Organisations dedicated to representing women, youth and indigenous people in land-related causes
- Private sector organisations working on SLM projects and initiatives

Agenda - Thursday 9 September 2021; 10:00 - 12:00 BST

Timing (2 hrs)	Item
10:00–10:05 (5 mins)	<u>Welcome and Introduction</u> Dr. Ruth Kattumuri - Senior Director, Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat
10:05–10:10 (5 mins)	<u>Video: Context Setting on the Need for Coordinated Action on Land</u> Ministerial High-Level Event Summary Video including Key Messages from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth • Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary UNFCC • Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UNCCD • Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary, UNCBD
10:10–10:20 (10 mins)	<u>Overview Presentation on A Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands</u> Mr. Unnikrishnan Nair, Head of Climate Change, Commonwealth Secretariat
10:20–10:45 (25 mins)	<u>Country Experiences on Achieving and Enhancing Coordination on Sustainable Land Management</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Lynn Kota - National Project Director - SMLP, Eswatini Water & Agricultural Development Enterprise, Government of Eswatini • Mr. Poojanraj Khurun - Deputy Conservator of Forests, Government of Mauritius • Mr. Paulus Ashili - Chief Conservation Scientist, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Government of Namibia • Mrs. Marie-May Muzungaile - Director General, Biodiversity Conservation and Management Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change & Environment, Government of Seychelles • Mr. Ephraim Shitima - Director, Department of Climate Change and Natural Resource Management Department, Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, Government of Zambia
10:45–11:20 (35 mins)	<u>Moderated Panel Discussion and Q&A Session 1:</u> <u>Scaling-up Best Nature-based Solutions/Sustainable Land Management Practices for Increased Climate Resilience in Africa</u> Moderated by Dr. kai Kim Chiang - Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser, Seychelles <u>Access to Finance for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Implementation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Gareth Phillips - Manager, Climate & Environmental Finance, African Development Bank • Mr. Julius Atulinde - Climate Finance Expert, UNFCCC EADB RCC Kampala • Mr. Petteri Vuorinen - Senior Forest and Land Use Specialist, Division of Mitigation and Adaptation, Green Climate Fund
11:20–11:55 (35 mins)	<u>Moderated Panel Discussion and Q&A Session 2:</u> <u>Sustainable Land Management as an Integrated Approach in Addressing Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss and Land Degradation</u> Moderated by Ms. Cathrine Mutambirwa - Programme Coordinator, LDN and Land Restoration at Global Mechanism of the UNCCD <u>Capacity Building: Technical Assistance, Evidence-based Analysis and Knowledge Sharing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Manyewu Mutamba - Head (Ag.), Food Systems and Rural Resources Unit, African Union Development Agency New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) • Dr. Birhanu Zemadim Birhanu - Senior Scientist - Landscapes, Soil Fertility and Water Management, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) • Dr. Cécile Ndjebet - President, African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF)
11:55–12:00 (5 mins)	<u>Closing Remarks and Way Forward</u> H.E. Yamina Karitanyi, High Commissioner for the Republic of Rwanda to the United Kingdom
Moderator: Ms. Uzoamaka Nwamarah - Adviser, Climate Section, Commonwealth Secretariat	

Speaker Bios

Dr Ruth Kattumuri



Dr Ruth Kattumuri is the Senior Director of the Economic, Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate at the Commonwealth Secretariat. She has extensive experience working with premier international institutions in senior management, sustainable development, public policy impact and public-private partnerships.

At the London School of Economics (LSE), Dr Kattumuri founded and has been Co-Director of the India Observatory, an Associate of the Grantham Research Centre for Climate Change, and a Distinguished Policy Fellow. She has engaged with Climate Change policy with the highest ministerial level in India and China for over fifteen years. She has also been a Director of Asia Research Centre at the LSE and has been a Visiting Professor at various Universities in Asia including in China and India.

Formerly, as professor of Computer Science and Statistics at the University of Madras, India, Ruth has pioneered efforts toward innovation and advancement of information technology for the country during the early years of its development. Dr Kattumuri leads trans-disciplinary evidence-based research, policy impact and private sector leadership on various aspects of sustainable and inclusive development including climate change; entrepreneurship; technology and innovation.

Her Excellency Yamina Karitanyi



H.E. Yamina Karitanyi is currently the High Commissioner for the Republic of Rwanda to the United Kingdom, and non-resident Ambassador to Ireland since December 2015.

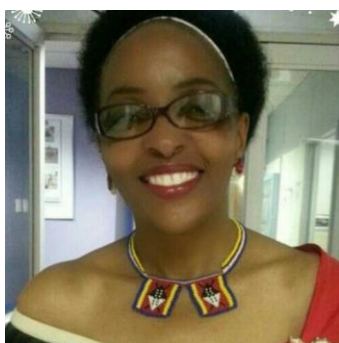
Prior to her posting in London, Ms. Yamina Karitanyi was at the helm of the Tourism and Conservation portfolios at the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). During her tenure as Head of Tourism and Conservation, the Department saw innovative new products enhanced in Tourism, including the re-integration of Lions in Akagera National Parks and Rwanda's conservation achievements have been highlighted on the global scene.

Ms. Karitanyi was appointed High Commissioner for the Republic of Rwanda to the Republic of Kenya, in May 2012, having previously served as Minister Counsellor at the mission since August 2010. During her tour of duty as High Commissioner to Kenya, trade and diplomatic relations between Rwanda and Kenya were enhanced significantly.

Having held various senior positions over 10 years at GoodWorks International, a strategic consulting and advisory firm that services multinational corporations and governments, in the USA and East Africa, prior to which she was Marketing Analyst at Carrier Corporation, Ms. Karitanyi has a proven track record in international business, operations management, business negotiations and diplomacy.

H.E. Yamina Karitanyi holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Studies from Buffalo State College, USA, and an MBA from Rochester Institute of Technology, USA. She is fluent in English, French, Kinyarwanda and Swahili.

Ms. Lynn Kota



Ms. Lynn Kota is the National Project Director of a two-pronged project funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Government of Eswatini (GoE). She is also a Project Manager (in kind), for a previously European Union (EU) funded Project, the Sustainable Land Management Project (SLAM).

She holds an MSc in Environmental Science, an MBA in Business Administration, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate Degree in the Environmental Sciences, focusing mainly on the linkages between optimal environmental conservation, adaptation to and mitigation of the impacts of climate change with the rural economy.

Ms. Kota has facilitated dialogue on land issues among different stakeholders within the Government of Eswatini, including GoE Ministries. She has also facilitated a series of learning tours of Chiefs and Princes responsible for land in different Chiefdoms to different countries in East and Southern Africa aiming to raise exposure on land management issues and develop concrete ideas on how to ensure optimal land management and administration in the respective Chiefdoms.

Mr. Poojanraj Khurun



Mr. Poojanraj Khurun is the Deputy Conservator of Forests for the Government of Mauritius. He has over 20 years of experience in the field of natural resources management, sustainable development, renewable energy projects, climate change and adaptation.

He holds a BSc in Biology with a specialisation in Environmental Sciences from the University of Mauritius, a Post Graduate degree in Forest Management from the India Institute of Forest Management and is pursuing a Doctorate degree at the University of Antananarivo. He is fluent in English, French and Hindi.

Mr. Paulus Ashill



Mr. Paulus Ashili is the Chief Conservation Scientist in the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism of the Government of Namibia. He is the head of the Climate Change Unit in the Ministry. The Unit is entrusted with the overall coordination of climate change activities and ensures that the country complies with UNFCCC obligations. He also works very closely with the UNCBD and UNCCD conventions to ensure that synergies between the 3 Rio conventions are enhanced. Mr. Ashili holds a master's degree in Ecology and Environmental Science.

Mrs. Marie-May Muzungaile



Mrs. Marie-May Muzungaile is currently the Director General of the Biodiversity Conservation and Management Division within the Seychelles Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change & Environment. She has also, since 2012, been the National focal Point for the UNCBD, where she coordinated the drafting of the second National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP).

She is a trained Conservation Biologist who has been actively involved in national biodiversity conservation and environmental management, and development of environmental policies and legislation. She has been active in conservation works both at governmental and non-governmental organisation platforms in the Seychelles over the past 10 years. Biodiversity conservation is a passion that is close to her heart.

Specialties: Biodiversity conservation; UNCBD; NBSAP; waste management; environmental management, national environmental policy, environmental legislation, MEAs.

Mr. Ephraim Shitima



Mr. Ephraim Shitima is the Director of the Department of Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Department in the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in Zambia. He is also Zambia's National Focal Point under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He has served as Zambia's Focal point under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as well as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

He is an expert on national and intentional climate change policy and practice with experience spanning over 15 years in policy formulation, implementation as well as climate change negotiations under the multilateral UNFCCC negotiation process. He has worked for the Zambian Government on environmental issues for over 18 years with short breaks on secondment to Climate Change Facilitation Unit (CCFU) from 2009 -2012, supported by UNDP, and also coordinated the Africa Regional Climate Change Adaptation Initiative (AAI) for WWF by promoting mainstreaming climate change adaptation in conservation plans for seven countries in Eastern and Southern Africa from 2013-2014.

Mr. Gareth Phillips



Mr. Gareth Phillips is Manager of the Climate and Environment Finance Division in the African Development Bank.

He has over 25 years' experience in climate change and sustainability. Trained as a Forester, Gareth has worked in a wide variety of sectors on GHG accounting, inventory verification, the Clean Development Mechanism and Emission Trading Systems. Gareth's work currently includes Paris Alignment within the MDBs, the development of the Adaptation Benefits Mechanism, and promoting Green Banks in Africa.

Mr. Julius Atulinde



Mr. Julius Atulinde is a Climate Finance Expert at the Regional Collaboration Centre (RCC) Kampala established by the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the East Africa Development Bank (EADB). For over seven years, he has been supporting design and implementation of development projects. Currently, he supports the Needs Based climate Finance (NBF) project in the Eastern and Southern Africa.

Prior to joining RCC Kampala, Julius worked with a consultancy firm, where he supported costing, financial and economic analysis of over fifteen development projects in ten countries in the Eastern and Western Africa. He has profound interest in, and an in-depth understanding of, the contemporary international climate finance issues.

Mr. Petteri Vuorinen



Mr. Petteri Vuorinen has recently joined Green Climate Fund (GCF) as a Senior Forest and Land Use specialist. His duties include the expansion and evolution of GCF's FLU portfolio and pipeline, managing the review of the funding proposals, and providing technical oversight of the portfolio of investments in low emissions and climate resilient Forest and Land Use. He is leading the development of sectoral guidelines, promoting innovative investment models to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, and designing and implementing REDD+ results-based payments programmes with relevant internal and external stakeholders.

Mr. Vuorinen graduated from University of Helsinki Finland in 2001 (M.Sc.). He has over 20 years of international work experience related to sustainable forest resources management, mainly at FAO. He has worked extensively in and with developing countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central America and Near East, as well as countries in transition in Eastern Europe from field- to ministerial level.

He has more than 10 years of experience in providing technical inputs and policy advice on climate change adaptation & mitigation, formulating national strategies and action plans, and managing projects relating to them. Further he has strong experience in REDD+, forest fire management (including community-based approaches) and global and national forest assessments. He has working knowledge of how to develop and foster pro-poor, participatory and gender-sensitive approaches.

Mr. Vuorinen has organized numerous international workshops, facilitated, and lectured in various training courses and given keynote presentations in international conferences. He has written, edited, and compiled various FAO publications, guidelines, background papers and news releases.

Dr. kai Kim Chiang



Dr. kai Kim Chiang serves as the Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser for Seychelles where she provides strategic and technical support to strengthen institutional processes and structures within Seychelles to seek, receive and utilise climate finance. She has more than 17 years of experience in mainstreaming disaster and climate resilience into national and sub-national planning processes in South and Southeast Asia. This includes supporting emerging and least developed countries to develop their National Adaptation Programmes of Action, their National Adaptation Plans, climate resilience strategies and funding proposals.

kai Kim has worked with counterparts from the Ministry of Finance in Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan, the budget and planning division of the Ministry of Agriculture of Livestock Development in Nepal, and the Central Banks of Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka to mainstream climate risks into the budgeting process and guidelines for the in-country banking sector. She has served as a Programme Leader for the DFID-funded Climate Proofing Growth and Development programme.

kai Kim also has experience engaging the private sector in addressing environmental issues and climate and disaster risks, identifying and understanding the barriers that limit the engagement of the private sector in climate change adaptation issues in SE Asia, providing support to the Green Climate Fund in engaging the insurance sector, and ensuring that the private sector operations of the Asian Development Bank are climate resilient and meets the needs of the most vulnerable.

Dr. Manyewu Mutamba



Dr. Manyewu Mutamba has more than 20 years' experience in research and development work on climate change adaptation and mitigation, sustainable food systems, and resource and ecosystems management. He currently leads the Food Systems and Rural Resources Unit at AUDA-NEPAD. His portfolio includes projects on food systems transformation, climate smart agriculture, ecosystems-based adaptation, and forest landscape restoration. Dr Mutamba leads the design, implementation, and evaluation of regional and continental programmes across Africa. He has a detailed understanding of the continent's socio-economic context, natural and agro-ecosystems, climate risks and trends, and current adaptation

and mitigation efforts.

Dr Mutamba is a member of a panel of experts advising the Africa Group of Negotiators on technical issues related to agriculture within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He also served as a Senior Fellow of the Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security Program (CCAFS) of the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR), advising and evaluating CCAFS's global programme in East and West Africa, Asia and Latin America. Dr Mutamba holds a PhD in Environmental Science, and an MSc and BSc (Hon) in Agricultural Economics.

Dr. Cécile Ndjebet



Dr. Cécile Ndjebet is one of the well-known leaders of CSOs in Africa, an international women's rights advocate and gender specialist. With 35 years of field experience, Cécile started her professional career as a Cameroonian Civil servant in 1986. She has been devoted to women's rights issues and is involved in the national, regional and international forestry, REDD+ and climate change processes for the past 15 years.

In 2009, to promote women's direct and effective participation in natural resources management in Africa, Cécile, together with a group of African Women Rights advocates, founded the African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF), with 20 member countries from West and Central Africa. The mission of REFACOF is to promote women's rights in Africa and advocate to shape policies and practices for gender equity in relation to land and forest tenure.

In 2012, Cécile was elected Climate Change Champion of the Central African Commission on Forests (COMIFAC). In May 2021, she was selected as Advisory Board member of the UN Decade on Ecosystems restoration, 2020-2030.

Cécile is an Agronomist and Social Forester by profession. Gender specialist and Women Leadership trainer and adviser; she holds an MSc in Social Forestry from Wageningen Agricultural University in The Netherlands. She is a PhD Doctorate at the Central Africa Catholic University working on "Gender relations, access to land and socio-economic situation of women in the Cameroon rural coast".

Dr. Birhanu Zemadim Birhanu



Dr Birhanu Zemadim Birhanu is a Research Cluster Leader for Landscapes, Soil Fertility and Water Management under the Global Program Resilient Farm and Food Systems, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Dr. Birhanu has a specialty in Land and Water Resources Management with over 12 years' project management experience in Eastern and Western Africa. A former Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), he has been a project manager for multiple donors funded projects over the years.

He was part of the development, implementation and evaluation of multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional donor funded projects and scientific works related to hydrology, food security, agricultural land and water management technologies in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mali, and Niger. Few of the global projects managed by Dr. Birhanu over the past years include; (i) USAID funded Feed the Future project in Mali (Africa RISING), (ii) BIOVISION Foundation funded project on Enabling a Resilient and Prosperous Community Through Participatory Watershed Management Practices in the Semiarid region of Central Tanzania, and (iii) The CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystem in Mali, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

He is a recipient of multiple awards for his scientific contributions, project management, and resource mobilization works including ICRISAT's 2014 and 2018 Outstanding Partnership Award, and 2017 and 2018 Best Scientific Paper Award. He is a Certified Water Resources

Management Specialist by the Ethiopian Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy, and has authored and co-authored multiple publications in scientific journals, proceedings, blogs and media outlets.

Areas of expertise: Agricultural Land and Water Management, Hydrology, Participatory Watershed Management, Field to Landscape Scale Technology Evaluation and Scaling, Numerical Modelling & Capacity Building.

Ms. Cathrine Mutambirwa



Ms Cathrine Mutambirwa is the Programme Coordinator for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and Land Restoration at the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). She is responsible for managing the LDN Target Setting Programme and the preparation of transformative projects and programmes (TPP) to support countries to implement the Convention while ensuring synergies with the other Rio Conventions.

With more than 18 years' work experience, Cathrine previously worked for the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa and Africa Coordination as the Transboundary Water and Environment Programme Manager responsible for project delivery and development of an environment project portfolio. Prior to joining GWP, she worked for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), South Africa Office, as Senior Programme Officer responsible for the development and implementation of the Southern Africa regional project portfolio for the Water and Wetlands and the People and Landscapes thematic areas.

Mr. Unnikrishnan Divakaran Nair



Mr. Unnikrishnan Divakaran Nair is the Head of Climate Change at the Commonwealth Secretariat. Before joining the Commonwealth, he led the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) India and was responsible for facilitating the strategic delivery and execution of GGGI initiatives in country. Prior to that, he served the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat in Bonn as the officer responsible for the climate finance and National Adaptation Plans (NAP) process for Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Unnikrishnan also had a long stint with GIZ India, as Senior

Adviser, managing the climate finance and natural resource management vertical under Indo-German bilateral cooperation.

Unnikrishnan is a development professional with an educational background in agriculture and climate science, with over 20 years of experience in the areas of Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation, Project Development and Implementation, Policies on Climate Finance, International Accreditation to Climate Funds including the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and expertise in climate vulnerability and livelihood issues in Agriculture, Water and Forestry in the Rural Development Context of India and LDCs. He has worked with a range of organizations from the civil society to community-based organizations to private sector, bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Ms. Uzoamaka Nwamarah



Uzoamaka Nwamarah is the Adviser on Climate Change at the Commonwealth Secretariat and supports the coordination and implementation of the Secretariat's Climate Change Programme, including its flagship Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH). She is the Secretariat's lead on the Global Nationally Determined Contributions Climate Action Enhancement Programme and provides technical advisory services to support member countries implement their national climate plans under the Paris Agreement to the UNFCCC.

Her international experience spans across the globe where she has worked with national governments, regional bodies and international financial institutions, advising and supporting them in designing and implementing low carbon and climate resilient policies, strategies, programmes and projects, together with climate finance resource mobilisation. She is well experienced in strengthening institutional and human capacity on climate change including work on climate finance tracking and reporting.

Prior to joining the Commonwealth Secretariat, Uzoamaka was a Principal Climate Finance Consultant with Atkins UK, Senior Climate Change Specialist with the African Development Bank in Tunisia and Ivory Coast, Energy Policy Consultant with Camco UK and Sustainable Energy Officer with the East Midlands Regional Assembly UK. She has a master's degree in Environmental Science and Technology - Energy Policy, from Imperial College London, United Kingdom, and a first degree in Geology from the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria.

Uzoamaka is an Associate Member of the Energy Institute, on the vetted experts roster of the United Nations Development Programme for Climate Resilience, a Steering Committee Member for the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) Climate Change Programme and is also a qualified Project Manager with Prince 2 Practitioner certification. Uzoamaka is a finalist at the 2021 Black British Business Awards (BBBAwards) in the STEM (science, tech, engineering and maths) Senior Leader category.