

# CISANET STRATEGIC PLAN 2019–2023

Together for Vibrant Agriculture



**CIVIL SOCIETY AGRICULTURE NETWORK**

FEBRUARY 2019





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CISANET VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

**Vision:** To be a leading Network that effectively coordinates and fosters collaboration among non-state actors towards Malawi's agricultural transformation.

**Mission:** Promote agricultural development and sustainable livelihoods for the rural poor by influencing desired change in policies, practices and attitudes of Government, donors, civil society and other stakeholders through effective and results focused advocacy, research and Networking.

### Core Values:

- i. Inclusiveness,
- ii. Transparency,
- iii. Accountability,
- iv. Integrity,
- v. Independence,
- vi. Sustainability and;
- vii. Pro-poor.

## KEY PRIORITIES AND THEMATIC AREAS

**Strategic Priorities:** To effectively coordinate the Network, the CISANET secretariat will focus on five key strategic priorities as outlined below:

- i. Mutual Accountability and Transparency in the Agriculture Sector
- i. Capacity Building and Organization Development
- ii. Policy Research and Analysis
- iii. Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Sharing
- iv. Communication, Networking, and Member Engagement

**Thematic Areas:** As a Network, CISANET's advocacy strategy will concentrate on the following thematic areas:

- i. Access to Profitable Markets
- ii. Livestock, Aquaculture, and Dairy Development
- iii. Resilient and Nutrition Smart Agriculture

## STRATEGIC FOCUS

The new Strategic Plan aims at transforming CISANET towards an evidence based, results focused, accountable, and impactful Network that is fit for purpose. In response to feedback from stakeholders on the role of CISANET, the strategic plan represents a shift from CISANET's role as an NGO that just implements projects similar to its Network members; to a coordinating body of civil society organizations within its Network. Thus, the key role of CISANET will be to enhance the collaboration of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) towards their contribution to the National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP). The strategic plan will guide the definition of themes, the areas of focus and the allocation of financial, human, and leadership resources. The development of the strategic plan signals the Network's determination to apply more focus and rigor, through outcomes orientation, to its investments and clearly link its investments to the envisioned achievements of the NAP and NAIP.

## AGRICULTURE POLICY ENVIRONMENT CONTEXT

The NAP and the NAIP provide a clear and comprehensive policy guidance for agriculture development in Malawi, and aim at addressing the current challenges that make meaningful agricultural development difficult. The policy provides the relevant guidance for all sector players for effecting increased production, productivity and real farm incomes. Notwithstanding, over the years, existence of agriculture related policies has not guaranteed the development of the sector. Malawi Government has consistently exceeded the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) recommendation of allocating at least 10% of the national budget towards the agriculture sector for the past five Financial Years (FY), 2013/14 to 2017/18. However, the growth rates in the agriculture sector in Malawi demonstrate a discrepancy between investments made in the sector and the level of growth attained. Attributing factors that hamper the growth of the sector include a mismatch in investment priorities, lack of transparency and accountability on the investments and climate related shocks.

## FOREWORD

We are pleased to present to you the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) 2019 -2023 Strategic Plan approved by the CISANET Board on February 7, 2019. The document represents the concerted efforts of the Network members and stakeholders, whose valuable input has been incorporated in this document. We take this opportunity to thank all of them for giving us so much food for thought during the process of consultation and drafting of the Strategic Plan.

As Malawi strives for a vibrant agriculture sector, CISANET's vision is to be a leading Network that effectively coordinates and fosters collaboration among non-state actors towards Malawi's agricultural transformation. It has always been our mission to promote agricultural development and sustainable livelihoods for the rural poor by influencing desired change in policies, practices and attitudes of Government, donors, civil society and other stakeholders through effective and results focused advocacy, research and networking.

CISANET appreciates Government's commitment to improve the performance of the Agriculture sector through the development of the National Agriculture Policy and the National Agriculture Investment Plan. Nevertheless, CISANET notes that substantial agriculture expenditures over the years have not yet translated into growth of the sector .

To achieve positive growth of the sector, Malawi needs to (1) strengthen investments that would reverse the declining growth in the agriculture GDP; (2) provide for all budgets required to enhance resilience to climate related risks in the agriculture

sector; (3) create an enabling environment for facilitation and promotion of profitable agricultural markets; and (4) reinforce mutual accountability and transparency. CISANET believes therefore that Government needs strong and coordinated support from the civil society towards these actions alongside other key stakeholders including the academia, development partners and the private sector.

This Strategic Plan aims at transforming CISANET towards an evidence based, results focused, accountable, and impactful Network that effectively coordinates all civil society organizations and district networks within its Network towards their contribution to the National Agriculture Policy and National Agriculture Investment Plan.

We are sure that, with the collaboration of our members, partners and other stakeholders the goals we aspire to accomplish will in time translate into milestones of which we can be proud. By investing in the vision of CISANET, we are investing to build a better future for Malawi through a vibrant agriculture sector. We would therefore like to invite you to join hands with us to help this unique Network achieve its goals through partnering with us or participation in our activities.

Thank you heartily for taking an interest in the future of CISANET.



Pamela Kuwali  
**National Director**



Dyborn Chibonga  
**CISANET Board Chairman**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	i
CISANET VISION, MISSION AND GOALS .....	i
KEY PRIORITIES AND THEMATIC AREAS.....	i
STRATEGIC FOCUS.....	i
AGRICULTURE POLICY ENVIRONMENT CONTEXT .....	i
FOREWORD .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iii
ACRONYMS .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. Overview .....	1
1.2. Background .....	1
1.3. Mandate .....	1
2. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS.....	2
2.1. Economic Context.....	2
2.2. Political Context.....	2
2.3. Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Context.....	2
2.3.1. The Agriculture Sector Contribution to the Economy .....	2
2.3.2. Agriculture Profitability.....	2
2.3.3. Agriculture Inputs .....	3
2.3.4. Food Security and Nutrition.....	3
2.3.5. Transparency and Accountability in the Agriculture Sector.....	4
3. AGRICULTURE RELATED POLICIES.....	5
3.1. National Policies .....	5
3.2. International Commitments.....	5
4. CISANET'S ACHIEVEMENTS.....	7
4.1. Creation of Space for Non-State Actors (NSAs) Involvement in Policy Processes.....	7
4.2. Voice for NSAs in the Sector .....	7
4.3. Contributing to the Formulation of Agriculture Related Policies and regulatory frameworks .....	7
4.4. Influencing increases in National Budgetary Allocation to Agriculture.....	7
4.5. Enhancing mutual accountability in the sector.....	7
5. LESSONS LEARNT .....	8
5.1. CISANET'S comparative advantages.....	8
5.1.1. Pooling Resources.....	8
5.1.2. Evidence Based Policy Advocacy.....	8
5.1.3. Platform for Agricultural Players.....	8
5.1.4. Existence of governance structures .....	8
5.2. CISANET's Areas for improvement.....	8
5.2.1. Weak linkage between the Secretariat and the Network Members .....	8
5.2.2. Human Resource Capacity Requirement.....	8
5.2.3. Sustainable Funding Model .....	8
5.2.4. Visibility.....	8
5.3. CISANET's Opportunities for Addressing Malawi's Agriculture Challenges.....	9
5.3.1. Agriculture as Key Priority Sector .....	9
5.3.2. Global Interest.....	9
5.3.3. National Recognition .....	9

5.3.4.	Coordination .....	9
5.3.5.	Policy Advocacy .....	9
6.	CISANET's STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND THEMATIC AREAS.....	10
6.1.	Strategic Priorities .....	10
Priority 1:	Mutual Accountability and Transparency in the Agriculture Sector .....	10
Priority 2:	Capacity Building and Organization Development.....	10
Priority 3:	Policy Research and Analysis .....	11
Priority 4:	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Sharing.....	11
Priority 5:	Communication, Networking and Member Engagement.....	12
6.2.	Thematic Areas.....	12
6.2.1.	Thematic Area 1: Access to Profitable Markets.....	12
6.2.2.	Thematic Area 2: Livestock, Aquaculture and Dairy Development .....	12
6.2.3.	Thematic Area 3: Resilient and Nutrition Friendly Agriculture .....	12
7.	ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES.....	14
8.	DELIVERING THE STRATEGY.....	15
8.1.	Strategic Enablers .....	15
8.1.1.	Fit for a Purpose Team .....	15
8.1.2.	A Sustainable Business Plan.....	15
8.1.3.	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.....	15
8.1.4.	Communication and Visibility Plan .....	15
8.1.5.	Member Engagement .....	15
8.1.6.	Risk Mitigation.....	15
8.2.	Implementation Plan.....	15
8.2.1.	Revamping the CISANET thematic groups.....	15
8.2.2.	Policy technical support to Government .....	16
8.2.3.	Issue scoping .....	16
8.2.4.	Thematic policy dialogues and policy advisory note .....	16
8.2.5.	Interface meetings with parliamentarians.....	16
8.2.6.	Sessions with the private sector .....	16
8.2.7.	Budget analysis and budget tracking.....	16
8.2.8.	Policy repository and other policy and regulatory framework updates.....	16
8.2.9.	Capacity building trainings on policy advocacy with CISANET members (District Networks) .....	16
8.2.10.	Media outreach (op-eds, press release, newspaper articles, and radio programs).....	17
8.3.	Cross Cutting Issues.....	17
8.4.	Partnerships .....	17
8.4.1.	Government Ministries and Departments.....	17
8.4.2.	Member Organizations and other NSO .....	17
8.4.3.	Development Partners .....	17
8.4.4.	Farmer Organizations.....	17
8.4.5.	The Private Sector.....	17
8.4.6.	The Media.....	17
8.4.7.	Academia and Research Institutions.....	17
8.4.8.	Regional and International Affiliations.....	17
	Appendix I: BRIEFS ON AGRICULTURE AND RELATED POLICIES .....	18
	Appendix II: THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT PLAN (NAIP) .....	21
	Appendix III: Strategy (Thematic Areas) Alignment with National Policies and International Instruments.....	22

---

## ACRONYMS

BRR	Biennial Review Report
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program
CISANET	Civil Society Agriculture Network
CNC	Coalition for Non-State Actors
CONGOMA	Council for Non-Governmental Organizations of Malawi
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAHLD	Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development
DCAFS	Donor Committee on Agriculture and Food Security
FANPARN	Food and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network
FUM	Farmers Union of Malawi
GDP	Growth Development Product
HDR	Human Development Report
IFRPRI	International Food Policy Research and Institute
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
MCCCI	Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry
MGDS III	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III
NASFAM	National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSAs	Non-State Actors
UNIMA	University of Malawi

---

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Programs for the NAIP .....	21
Table 2: Intervention areas and expected outcomes for NAIP .....	21
Table 3: CISANET Strategic Plan alignment key National and International policies and instruments .....	22

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Overview

The Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) is a grouping of civil society organizations established in 2001 to facilitate the engagement of the civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the agriculture sector with Government over policy issues affecting the sector. CISANET's membership comprises local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), farmer organizations and interested individuals. As a Network of organization, CISANET is coordinated by a secretariat that is headed by a National Director who reports to the Board of Trustees that is accountable to the General Assembly of members. CISANET operates both at the national and local levels and also contributes to regional policy advocacy as the Malawi node host for Food and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANPARN) and Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program Coalition for Non-State Actors (CAADP CNC). At the national level, CISANET operates through thematic groups, while at the district level, CISANET operates through District CSO Networks.

## 1.2. Background

CISANET is registered as an NGO with the NGO Board and is also a member of the Council for Non-Governmental Organizations of Malawi (CONGOMA). The Network was formed to respond to a need that became apparent after the onset of the multiparty democracy in Malawi and also the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in 2000, which among others recognized the civil society as a partner of Government for successful implementation of its programs by providing necessary independent checks and balances and also supporting Government in the agriculture sector.

## 1.3. Mandate

The core mandate of CISANET is to provide leadership among Non-State Actors (NSAs) in agriculture policy analysis and advocacy. The organization provides space for NSAs working or interested in the agriculture sector to constructively engage Government for policy influence focusing at positively impacting agricultural production and productivity, marketing as well as food and nutrition security. CISANET aims at ensuring that NSAs in the agriculture sector have a voice and are able to contribute towards agriculture policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In addition, CISANET aims at providing alternative views as well as checks and balances to Government for increased mutual transparency and accountability in the agriculture sector. From its establishment, CISANET has been instrumental in the creation of space for NSAs in policy processes both at the local and national level. CISANET is recognized as the voice for NSAs in the agriculture sector. The Network has actively participated in formulation and implementation of agriculture related policies, was instrumental in lobbying for the increase of budgetary allocation to the agriculture sector and is currently focusing on playing an active role in reinforcing mutual accountability.

## 2. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Economic Context

Malawi is one of the least developed countries according to the Human Development Report (HDR) of 2016 that ranked the country on position 170 in the world<sup>1</sup>. Per capita income has grown at an average of a little more than 1.5 percent between 1995 and 2014, below the average of 2.8 percent for non-resource-rich African economies. While not strictly a fragile state, Malawi displays many of the characteristics of fragile and conflict affected countries, particularly in terms of how its governance institutions function. The economy is dominated by the agricultural sector, which accounts for about a third of the country's Growth Domestic Product (GDP), and drives livelihoods for two thirds of the population. Over the past decades, the country's development progress has been negatively affected by shocks leaving the country in a cycle of vulnerability. Both climate-related external shocks, and domestic political and governance shocks, have collectively contributed to economic stagnation and a low pace of poverty reduction.

### 2.2. Political Context

Malawi has a multi-party political system where elections are held every five years. There are three arms of Government namely the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature which are supposed to work independently. This system of Government is supposed to be participatory where the other parties represented in parliament are supposed to provide alternative thinking and checks and balances to the executive branch. As part of the process of consolidating democracy and as a strategy for realizing the country's development goal of poverty reduction, the Malawi Government decentralized its political and administrative authority and functions to district level. The initiative is part of Government's comprehensive desire to take citizens on board and transfer power to the local people to drive the development agenda. The benefits of decentralization include: increased Government response, greater community participation, more flexible and less expensive provision of goods and service. Despite the challenges with the process and management of the decentralization process in Malawi, decentralization provides a window of opportunity to increase stakeholder and farmer participation in the decision-making in the

agriculture sector. Farmers, if well capacitated can have a voice in determining the agriculture agenda for Malawi.

### 2.3. Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Context

#### 2.3.1. The Agriculture Sector Contribution to the Economy

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III identifies agriculture as a key driver for economic growth, as it contributes about 39 per cent of GDP and contributes about 80 per cent of all exports. However, the sector has experienced low to negative growth rates between 2014 and 2016. According to the Malawi Annual Economic Report 2017, agriculture, forestry and fishing sector in Malawi grew at 6.3 percent, -1.0 percent and -0.2 percent respectively between 2014 and 2016. The growth rates in the agriculture sector in Malawi demonstrate a discrepancy between investments made in the sector and the level of growth attained. The initial growth projection for the sector was 6.8 percent and 3.4 percent respectively for 2017 and 2018. The CAADP) framework recommends that, the minimal 10 percent investment in the agriculture sector should, ideally, be matched by a minimal 6 percent annual Agricultural GDP growth rate.

Several factors including low productivity and low profitability hinder meaningful agriculture growth and development in Malawi. Agricultural production has not been sufficient to match the rapid population growth. Unfavorable weather conditions, low uptake and use of improved technologies are said to impinge on crop productivity in Malawi. For instance, Chirwa et. al. (2010) reported that the gap between the actual and potential yield ranged between 38 and 53 percent for cereals and between 40 and 75 percent for legumes. This among other factors has constrained the country from taking advantage of available export opportunities to develop and increase her export base.

#### 2.3.2. Agriculture Profitability

Agriculture profitability is low due to dysfunctional output markets for agriculture products. This is a result of a number of factors including: under-developed value chains, fragmented output supply, low and unpredictable prices, high transaction costs, poorly functioning cooperatives and other farmer

<sup>1</sup> UNDP – HDI 2016

organizations, deficient or missing infrastructure, low private and public sector investments, and inadequate and skewed access to market information. Out of desperation, oversupply of commodities and, at times, sheer greed of traders, farmers often offer prices that are below cost of production and at times below Government set minimum prices. In 2017/2018 season, for instance, traders were offering and buying maize at prices ranging between MK50 to MK100 per kilogram against a Government-set minimum price of MK150 per kilogram.

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of farmer organizations formed to support farmer's access to input and output markets. Nevertheless, efforts to organize farmers to bulk up supply and standardize quality have proved expensive and not always rewarding. Hence, farmers are left to operate as individuals resulting in them incurring high transaction costs, failing to access profitable markets and being ripped off due to lack of bargaining power when selling produce.

Profitability of agricultural enterprises in Malawi has also been affected by poor post-harvest commodity handling and quality management. Most farmers generally have limited knowledge of post-harvest crop management practices and they lack access to improved commodity storage facilities and technologies. This undermines their ability to meet the volume, quality standards and grades often demanded by structured markets including export markets.

### **2.3.3. Agriculture Inputs**

There have been growing concerns on the functionality of input markets in Malawi which limits the availability and accessibility of inputs for farmers, especially smallholder farmers. The sharp rise of inputs prices coupled with limited access to agricultural credit facilities further limits access to agricultural inputs for many farmers. Specifically, smallholder farmers' access to credit has been limited ever since the collapse of the Smallholder Credit Administration (SACA) in 1994. Limited access to inputs coupled with inadequate availability of and access to innovative and high-quality agricultural extension and advisory services have constrained many farmers from achieving optimal agricultural

production and productivity.

### **2.3.4. Food Security and Nutrition**

Malawi's food security is generally defined in terms of adequate production of and access to maize, the country's staple crop. Majority of households in Malawi rely on self-produced maize and as such food security is mainly defined in terms of adequate household production and access to maize. Maize is grown by over 80 percent of farm households and accounts for 60 percent of calorie consumption of the households. Dependence on rain-fed crop production, small land holding size, limited use of modern inputs, and poor access to markets means that many households are not able to meet their yearly subsistence requirements. In addition, crop production and productivity in Malawi has not increased sufficiently to match growing domestic food demand due to high population growth. Most of smallholder farmer households run out of food in December meaning that they do not have food for 3 months until the next harvest. These households are, therefore, food insecure every year.

The climatic shocks that Malawi has experienced over the last decades have exacerbated the food security situation for most smallholder households. For example, the country experienced a number of climate change-related hazards over the past decades (in 1992, 1994, 2002, 2004 and 2015) demonstrating the vulnerability of the economy to weather related shocks. Considering the already precarious food situation of many households that are not able to produce enough for themselves even in a year with favorable rainfall, the droughts and flooding that seem to alternate in recent times has completely broken their resilience.

Lack of adequate food, compounded by lack of diversified diets (which are mostly maize based), has meant child malnutrition has remained high in Malawi with 37 per cent of children under-five years of age being said to be stunted and 3 per cent said to be wasted (DHS 2015). Most if this malnutrition is said to emanate from under-nutrition: – meaning that children are not given adequate nutritious food for their proper development. In addition, food safety has also been an issue, particularly with regard to high levels of aflatoxins in maize, groundnuts and other crops.

### 2.3.5. Transparency and Accountability in the Agriculture Sector

Effective investments and growth of the agriculture sector and the wider economy are affected by lack of transparency and accountability on public and private related investments. There is generally lack of mechanisms for ensuring transparency and accountability in agricultural investments and agricultural programs implementation. Besides

transparency and accountability on resource investments, the sector faces challenges in monitoring and evaluation thereby failing to account on the extent to which the investments contribute to the sector policy goals and objectives. There are concerns of corrupt practices at various levels in the sector that undermine the level of implementation of policies hence limiting the growth of the agriculture sector.



*CISANET has helped to strengthen the capacity of Dairy Farmers to adhere to quality standards for profitable dairy marketing.*

## 3. AGRICULTURE RELATED POLICIES

Government has developed policies, programs and strategies aimed at regulating, coordinating and spearheading stimulation of agriculture development and growth in Malawi. While the policies and strategies have shifted their focus and content, over time, their enduring theme has been to increase agriculture production and productivity with a view of attaining food self-sufficiency and spurring national economic development. In addition, Malawi is a signatory to international agriculture instruments which aim at increasing agriculture production and development. Some of these strategies and policies are highlighted below:

### 3.1. National Policies

The National Agriculture Policy (NAP) and the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) provide a clear and comprehensive policy guidance for agriculture development in Malawi and aim at addressing the current challenges that make meaningful agricultural development difficult. The broad policy goal of the NAP revolves around guiding and championing the collective efforts by all the sector players in transforming the agriculture sector in Malawi. The policy provides the guidance for effecting increased production, productivity and real farm incomes. The NAIP is the implementation vehicle for the NAP and it guides the investment focus of resources in the sector.

Concurrently, Government has developed other agriculture policies that are aimed at supporting agricultural growth and development including: National Livestock Development Policy; National Irrigation Policy (NIP); National Seed Policy; National Fertilizer Policy; National Export Strategy and National Multi-sector Nutrition Policy among others. The seed and fertilizer policies provide guidance and regulation for the input market to enable farmers' access quality inputs for increased productivity and production of various crops. The NIP provides a framework for effective development of irrigation farming in Malawi. NIP is to contribute to sustainable national economic growth and development through enhanced irrigated agriculture production and productivity, as a way of reducing over-dependency on rain fed agriculture production.

The National Livestock Development Policy on the other hand is aimed at ensuring that the nation

experiences sustainable livestock development that contributes to the nutritional wellbeing of all Malawians. The National Multi-sector Nutrition Policy provides a framework to guide utilization of all food crops and livestock to enhance the nutrition wellbeing of the population. After all is done, the National Export Strategy provides the roadmap for expanding the market for agriculture products through exports. All these policies if implemented effectively are focused on increased and sustainable agricultural production that will spur economic growth while increasing food self-sufficiency for enhanced nutrition status of all Malawians.

### 3.2. International Commitments

In addition to the above national policies, Malawi is also a signatory to international instruments on agriculture development including the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), a pan-African framework that provides a set of principles and broadly defined strategies to help countries critically review their own situations and identify investment opportunities with optimal impact and returns. To sustain momentum for CAADP in 2013 African countries convened in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea and looked back at ten years of CAADP implementation. The Malabo Declaration on accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity, and improved livelihoods reaffirmed the central commitment of the CAADP, namely, to allocate 10 percent of public resources to agriculture. It also specified more clearly a range of commitments in agriculture, such as increased irrigation and mechanization or curtailing post-harvest losses among others. The full list and briefs on the policies are appended in Appendix I.

Malawi Government has consistently exceeded the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) recommendation of allocating at least 10 percent of the national budget towards the agriculture sector for the past five financial years (FY), 2013/14 to 2017/18. When computed as a share of the total national budget, agriculture has accounted for an average of 17 percent of the national budget between the years 2013/14 to 2017/18 FYs respectively. Nevertheless, the average growth rate in those four years has not matched the investments with some years recording a downward trend. For example,

GoM (2017) reported that the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector has grown at 6.3 percent, -1.0 percent and -0.2 percent from 2014 to 2016 respectively. Meanwhile, the CAADP framework recommends that the minimal 10 percent investment in the agriculture sector should be matched by a minimal 6 percent annual growth rate. Clearly, the growth

rates in the agriculture sector in Malawi demonstrate a discrepancy between investments made in the sector and the level of growth attained. Factors that hamper the growth of the sector include a mismatch in investment priorities, lack of transparency and accountability on investments and climate related shocks.



*In 2018 CISANET facilitated a highly successful policy dialogue on Empowerment of Women in Agriculture and provided training to 60 women farmers on Entrepreneurship.*

## 4. CISANET'S ACHIEVEMENTS

### 4.1. Creation of Space for Non-State Actors (NSAs) Involvement in Policy Processes

CISANET has through the national dialogues, district dialogues and thematic dialogues created space for NSAs and farmer involvement in agricultural policy processes. NSAs and farmers have participated in policy development processes such as the National Agriculture Policy, National Agriculture Investment Plan, Rice Development Strategy, draft Food and Nutrition bill, draft National Livestock Development Policy, draft Seed Bill, and draft Fertilizer Bill to mention but a few.

### 4.2. Voice for NSAs in the Sector

CISANET is a recognized source of voice and knowledge for NSAs in the agriculture sector. CISANET has through national dialogues, district dialogues and thematic dialogues created space for NSAs participation in national and district government processes. Through district dialogues, NSAs have tracked district council budgets, and created forums for interface with councils on identified issues requiring the attention of councils. At national level, CISANET has contributed to public debate on national policy processes related to agriculture including providing relevant policy options to the Government.

### 4.3. Contributing to the Formulation of Agriculture Related Policies and regulatory frameworks

CISANET has been a major player and force in shaping agriculture policy through its advocacy. CISANET has worked very hard to influence agriculture policies, strategies and plans to make them more responsive to the needs of the farmers and the accompanying stakeholders in Malawi. CISANET has participated in formulation and review of major Government policies over the last five years and these include; National Agriculture Policy, National Agriculture Investment Plan, National Seed Policy, FISP reforms, Fertilizer Policy, draft National Livestock Development Policy, draft Seed Bill, and draft Fertilizer Bill. CISANET has also shaped the direction of policy discussions on the following: draft Food and Nutrition Bill, Establishment of the National Milk Marketing Board, review of the Control of Goods Act, and National Extension Strategy.

### 4.4. Influencing increases in National Budgetary Allocation to Agriculture

Over the years CISANET has played a central role in influencing budgetary allocations to the agricultural Sector in line with internationally agreed protocols. As a result, the budgetary allocations for agriculture increased from 4 percent of the total budget to, currently allocating, more than 10 percent of the national budget. Albeit with resource constraint, CISANET has followed up on the allocations to ensure that the budgeted resources are actually disbursed to the sector and that the resources are actually used for their intended purpose. This means that CISANET does not only get involved at policy formulation but also works hard to track implementation of the agricultural policies in Malawi.

### 4.5. Enhancing mutual accountability in the sector.

CISANET has also worked with district CSO Networks in budget tracking of agriculture related district budgets and programs. At national level, CISANET has been involved in budget analysis for the agriculture sector in order to detect and understand adherence of budgetary allocations Government policy priorities. With the development of the NAIP, CISANET is also analyzing CSO investments in the agriculture sector to quantify CSO contribution to the set objectives of the NAP, in line with the NAIP. CISANET has had interface meetings with relevant Parliamentary Committees to enhance transparency and accountability of agriculture resources. Recently, CISANET worked with the joint Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Public Accounts to investigate on alleged misconduct of agriculture players in the maize procurement deal from Zambia by ADMARC and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD).

## 5. LESSONS LEARNT

### 5.1. CISANET'S comparative advantages

#### 5.1.1. Pooling Resources

CISANET is a fully registered and established Network with a broad-based membership of all players in the agriculture sector. The various players make CISANET strong because they offer the Network a wide base of technical skills and abilities to make a difference in the agriculture sector. Evidence shows that CSOs are more effective when they work together in coalitions, pooling resources and coordinating their advocacy and lobbying efforts. CISANET provides a platform for CSOs and all other interested parties in agriculture sector to have a strong voice and influence for the development of the sector.

#### 5.1.2. Evidence Based Policy Advocacy

Evidence based policy advocacy enhance CISANET's legitimacy, transparency and helps it to focus on equity of policy and decision-making in the agriculture sector. Evidence based policy advocacy by CISANET ensures that the Government is able to take into consideration the interests of all sectors of society and helps CISANET gain their support. CISANET has the potential to collect, collate, select, and publicize information on a variety of specialized issues in agriculture development, food security, disasters and climate change which Government and development partners can use to further agriculture development and growth.

#### 5.1.3. Platform for Agricultural Players

CISANET operates in a very unique in the agriculture sector, coordinating policy advocacy and reform to improve the livelihoods of the farmers and reduce poverty. CISANET gives a voice to all stakeholders in the agriculture sector including the farmers and ensures that their input and views are considered when formulating policies and plans for the sector. The presence of the its members in all corners of the nation means that CISANET has capacity to act swiftly and flexibly to target the most vulnerable farmers and build support and political will to attain food security and good nutrition status for all people in the country. The participatory nature of the Network means it is responsive to local needs of the poor which is a prerequisite for sustained development.

#### 5.1.4. Existence of governance structures

CISANET has an established office with qualified staff and board of trustees CISANET has elaborate financial and human resource policies and principles that ensure good governance of the organization. The CISANET board is committed to play their required policy oversight and guidance role to the organization.

### 5.2. CISANET's Areas for improvement

#### 5.2.1. Weak linkage between the Secretariat and the Network Members

CISANET secretariat was established to coordinate the implementation of objectives and activities of the Network. Thus, in all its operations the secretariat must serve the board, the members, and Malawian farmers. Over the last few years however, the link between the secretariat and the members has been weak. CISANET Secretariat, therefore, needs to strengthen its link with the members by galvanizing their participation in the Network activities.

#### 5.2.2. Human Resource Capacity Requirement

CISANET can only play its role effectively if its secretariat has adequate capacity i.e. all positions are properly filled with the right personnel. CISANET will undertake salary structure review to make the organization competitive on the job market and attract the right human resources and maintain them at the organization. This will ensure that the organization is adequately staffed with qualified personnel to reduce the burden on the existing staff.

#### 5.2.3. Sustainable Funding Model

Currently, CISANET Secretariat relies on two key funding pillars: membership fees and development partner funded projects. To be able to deliver on its mandate, the Secretariat needs to widen its funding base with multiple resourcing pillars to ensure sustainable funding for its core activities.

#### 5.2.4. Visibility

CISANET has performed remarkably well in contributing to the agriculture sector in Malawi through a number of policy advocacy initiatives including policy studies, policy briefs, dialogue meetings; and contributions to policy papers. There is need to develop a communication and visibility

plan that will help stakeholders learn more about the work of CISANET.

### **5.3. CISANET's Opportunities for Addressing Malawi's Agriculture Challenges**

#### **5.3.1. Agriculture as Key Priority Sector**

The Malawi Government identifies agriculture as the key driver for economic growth. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (MGDS III) recognizes agriculture as a sector that can significantly support industrial development. Given the necessary resources to effectively develop it, agriculture has the potential to contribute to increasing wealth for Malawians. The MGDSIII places agriculture, water development and climate change as the first priority area among the five key priority areas.

#### **5.3.2. Global Interest**

There is growing international recognition and interest in agriculture development for wealth creation. Development focused international bodies including the UN, aid agencies, international NGOs, charity foundations and others are increasingly recognizing investments into agriculture as key to addressing the poverty challenge. This therefore means that CISANET has a big potential for external or international support for its work. This implies CISANET has an opportunity to strategically align with some of these organizations in its endeavors.

#### **5.3.3. National Recognition**

As an umbrella body of all NGOs working in the agriculture sector in Malawi, CISANET is

well recognized as one of the major players in agriculture by the Government, the media, development partners, the private sector and the public at large. The Malawi Government has created structures and mechanisms for CISANET's involvement in planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Government efforts in developing the agriculture sector. CISANET is present in several agriculture sector technical working groups which provide a window for its input in the sector.

#### **5.3.4. Coordination**

The fact that CISANET is a platform for all non-state actors working in the agriculture sector provides a big opportunity for the involvement of all civil society organizations to play a meaningful part in the development of the agriculture sector. The broad-based membership gives CISANET a lot of leverage and constituency to influence agriculture policies and programs. Member organizations have a variety of agricultural and other expertise that CISANET can tap into to increase resources going into the sector.

#### **5.3.5. Policy Advocacy**

As a policy advocacy organization, CISANET has all opportunities to interact with the Government to advocate for inclusive and farmer friendly policies for the sector. CISANET through its evidence-based policy advocacy has a great window of opportunity to analyze and generate evidence on all policies and plans that the Government formulates for necessary changes and adjustments to respond to the farmers' needs and requirements.

## 6. CISANET's STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND THEMATIC AREAS

This strategic plan has two parts: strategic priorities and strategic thematic areas. While the CISANET secretariat will be responsible for coordinating all the activities of the Network particularly those associated with the strategic priorities, members of the Network on the other hand will group into thematic areas and will collaborate with the secretariat to plan and implement an advocacy strategy in line with the themes. Thus, the strategic priorities will act as pillars to support the Network as it implements its advocacy strategy on selected themes.

### 6.1. Strategic Priorities

CISANET will have five strategic priorities and these will guide the activities of the CISANET secretariat as it coordinates the Network. Below are the priority areas:

#### Priority 1: Mutual Accountability and Transparency in the Agriculture Sector

The National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) is the investment framework for Malawi's agricultural sector for five years (2018 -2022) and it is founded on the MGDS III, the CAADP compact, the Malabo Declaration and the National Agriculture Policy (NAP). Whilst the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) will be the lead implementing agency for the NAIP, other ministries, departments and agencies will also play important roles.

The NAIP provides a framework to coordinate and prioritise investments by Government agencies, development partners, civil society, farmer organizations and the private sector. The challenge however is that not all key stakeholders in the Agriculture Sector have a clear understanding of the NAIP objectives, programs and indicators, although they are expected to align their programs to the investment framework. Although the NAIP is founded on principles of mutual accountability and transparency, there is lack of a mechanism to effectively coordinate this. On one hand, non-state actors together with local and national committees on agriculture, as the demand side, lack effective coordination and collaboration to hold Government to account and demand transparency on agricultural investments and performance of the sector. On the other hand, Government as the supply side has

difficulties to track investments and contributions of non-state actors towards the performance of the agriculture sector to accurately assess the performance of the sector. This gap in accountability and transparency in turn affects planning, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the sector.

CISANET therefore intends to support Government in reinforcing mutual accountability and transparency by strengthening the coordination and collaboration of Government on one hand and non-state actors on the other in their contribution towards the performance of the agriculture sector.

CISANET will achieve this through three strategic objectives as follows:

**Strategic objective 1:** To increase awareness of the NAIP and re-alignment of sector players' plans and programs to NAIP priorities.

**Strategic Objective 2:** To enhance collaboration among sector players in contributing to the implementation of the NAP and NAIP.

**Strategic Objective 3:** To enhance monitoring of the implementation of the national public agriculture budget and NAIP by Government and NGOs.

#### Priority 2: Capacity Building and Organization Development

The 2017 CAADP Biennial Review Report (BRR) shows that Malawi is on track on its commitments to improve the performance of the agriculture sector. Nevertheless, this positive rating is, to a large extent, based on the completion of agricultural policy formulation (the NAP and the NAIP) as well as the country's commitment to substantial agriculture expenditure as a share of total public expenditure. As evidenced by the downward growth trend for the sector, Malawi still falls short on critical policy actions that are important for transforming the sector. Priority actions based on the BRR recommendations for Malawi include: (1) strengthening investments that would reverse the declining growth in the agriculture GDP; (2) providing for all budgets required to enhance resilience to climate related risks in the agriculture sector; (3) creating an enabling environment for facilitation and promotion of

profitable agricultural markets; and (4) reinforcing mutual accountability and transparency. CSOs have a crucial role to influence Government towards these actions and monitor their implementation. The challenge, however, is that most CSOs need strengthening of their capacity to effectively influence and monitor policy processes.

CISANET will, therefore, facilitate the development of capacity of local CSOs and farmers organizations within its Network in agricultural policy advocacy. CISANET will facilitate local CSOs and farmer organizations' general understanding of policy process and national programming in agriculture for them to conduct effective advocacy by engaging local authorities on their own. This will increase their understanding of the role they play and assist them to effectively play their advocacy role at the local level. Under this Strategic Priority there are the following Strategic Objectives:

**Strategic Objective 1:** To enhance local CSOs' and farmer organizations capacity within the district Networks capacity to effectively engage local authorities on agriculture policy and development.

**Strategic Objective 2:** To improve district CSOs' and farmer organizations' capacity for policy advocacy and general understanding of agricultural policy processes and programming.

### Priority 3: Policy Research and Analysis

CISANET will actively ensure that all its policy advocacy work is evidence based by supporting facts presented with findings from research. CISANET will achieve this by either using findings from research institutions or commissioning studies where evidence is not available.

There is a lot of ongoing policy research on agriculture that is conducted by policy institutions; however, there is a gap between evidence from research findings and policy-making due to lack of a clear link between the research institutions and the policy-making process. As a policy advocacy organization, CISANET will strengthen its links with policy research institutions including Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), University of Malawi (UNIMA), International Food Policy Research and Institute

(IFRPRI) and others to ensure that their research work is effectively utilized for evidence-based policy advocacy; but also, to propose topics for research. Further, CISANET is the hosting country node for the regional policy research organization, the FANRPAN. Where possible and necessary, CISANET will make use of evidence generated from FANRPAN research and policy analysis activities.

Evidence from policy research will feed into CISANET's policy advocacy products, for making recommendations to policy officials both at the local and the central level, including: issues papers; policy dialogues; policy briefs; policy advisory notes; and talking points.

**Strategic Objective 1:** To establish formal links with research institutions for collaboration.

**Strategic Objective 2:** To embark on a relevant and evidence-based policy advocacy campaign

### Priority 4: Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Sharing

CISANET will collaborate with the MoAIWD in the monitoring and evaluation of the NAP and NAIP and policies that support them. CISANET will build on its participation in the Agriculture Joint Sector Review to feed into the existing M&E framework for the sector. CISANET will strengthen its capacity to monitor the activities of non-state actors in their contribution to the NAIP and will synthesize and present this information to Government as part of the assessment of the performance of the agriculture sector. This information will also feed into the CAADP Biennial Review for Malawi.

CISANET will also facilitate learning of agricultural best practices among key players in the sector through sharing of information products using its website and other communication tools including updates, newsletters, web articles and social media. Strategic objective under this Priority include:

**Strategic Objective 1:** To contribute towards monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the agriculture sector.

**Strategic Objective 2:** To facilitate learning and sharing of agricultural best practices among non-state actors.

## Priority 5: Communication, Networking and Member Engagement

CISANET will continue to strengthen its link with its members and ensure that its activities provide value to the members as they provide an opportunity for them to contribute effectively to the growth of agriculture sector in Malawi. CISANET will position itself as a knowledge and information hub and repository on agriculture policy related issues and will endeavor to ensure that members and stakeholders access this information. With time, CISANET will accumulate a wealth of data and policy documents on agriculture and related sectors which can also serve non-members doing research or seeking relating to policies in the agriculture sector.

CISANET will also provide space for dialogue for members on agricultural policy issues. CISANET will reactivate the thematic groups as a platform to widen members' participation in the Network. CISANET will also collaborate with members on various policy advocacy related activities with its members including: commissioning studies, policy dialogues, policy engagement meetings and other activities. CISANET will pursue two strategic objectives under priority 5 including:

**Strategic Objective 1:** To establish and sustain vibrant CISANET Thematic Groups

**Strategic Objective 2:** To strengthen engagement with members for their active participation in CISANET activities

## 6.2. Thematic Areas

CISANET will have three thematic areas and these will guide grouping of the members into thematic groups and associated advocacy activities.

### 6.2.1. Thematic Area 1: Access to Profitable Markets

**Strategic Goal 1: Create a vibrant agricultural market that promotes value addition for agricultural produce in Malawi.**

*Strategic Objective 1:* Promote value addition and agribusiness mentality among the farmers along the value chains.

*Strategic Objective 2:* Advocate for an enabling environment for promotion of agriculture markets and trade for farmers at local and international levels.

*Strategic Objective 3:* Strengthen agriculture marketing information system that reaches all farmers in Malawi.

*Strategic Objective 4:* Increase and strengthen farmer cooperatives and associations

### Strategic Goal 2: Promote improvements in the quality and grading standards for all agricultural commodities

*Strategic Objective 1:* Increase farmer knowledge on the quality of agricultural produce and grading standards.

*Strategic Objective 2:* Reduce post-harvest crop losses and post-quality reduction.

*Strategic Objective 3:* Strengthen the national quality and standards systems for agricultural produce.

### 6.2.2. Thematic Area 2: Livestock, Aquaculture and Dairy Development

**Strategic Goal 1: To create a vibrant livestock sector with clear synergies among sub sector and other value chain players.**

*Strategic Objective 1:* Promote investments into livestock production and welfare.

*Strategic Objective 2:* Promote fish farming among smallholder farmers where relevant.

*Strategic Objective 3:* Promote investment in the development of the dairy industry.

### 6.2.3. Thematic Area 3: Resilient and Nutrition Friendly Agriculture

**Strategic Goal 1: Promotion of climate smart agriculture related policies and their implementation.**

*Strategic Objective 1:* Reduce the effects

---

of climate change and environmental degradation on agriculture production and productivity.

*Strategic Objective 2:* Increase land under irrigation and the rate of production of crops using irrigation farming.

*Strategic Objective 3:* Improve smallholder farmers' access to improved agricultural technologies and access to farm inputs for crop production.

*Strategic Objective 4:* Increase coverage, relevance and quality of agricultural extension and advisory services.

**Strategic Goal 2: Promotion of nutrition friendly agriculture related policies and their implementation.**

*Strategic Objective 1:* Promote nutrition sensitive agriculture, crop diversification and utilization of nutritious foods.

*Strategic Objective 2:* Promote effective prioritization, coordination and implementation of nutrition interventions

## 7. ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES

This strategy has been developed with full awareness of the national agriculture policies and plans as well as the international policies and instruments that Malawi is a signatory to. The strategy is, therefore, fully aligned with both national and global policies and instruments. The strategy is aligned to the MGDS III, NAP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. Appendix III contains a table that maps the alignment of the CISANET strategic plan to these policies and instruments.



*CISANET has been a key player in advocating for the right to food; prisons and other public institutions can contribute towards favourable national nutrition outcomes.*

## 8. DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

### 8.1. Strategic Enablers

To ensure that this strategic plan is implemented effectively, CISANET will put in place the following strategic enablers:

#### 8.1.1. Fit for a Purpose Team

CISANET will revise its current structure at the Secretariat in line with the new strategic priorities and will realign positions accordingly as well as bring on board new members that are well qualified to ensure that the Secretariat has adequate capacity to implement the strategy. CISANET will have a core team of a mix of agricultural policy specialists and those from other fields such as governance to lead in implementing the strategy as well as a pool of consultants as a resource for short term assignments.

#### 8.1.2. A Sustainable Business Plan

CISANET will have a business plan with multiple funding pillars to support the implementation of this strategic plan. CISANET has widely consulted with a number of stakeholders who have shown interest in the work of CISANET. Thus, funding pillars will include direct contributions from development partners particularly those that are members of the Donor Committee on Agriculture and Food Security (DCAFS); CISANET members through project implementation; consultancy services; and member contributions.

#### 8.1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

CISANET will have a monitoring and evaluation plan that will clearly outline the strategic goals and objectives; planned activities and indicators for tracking progress but also generating lessons learned. The Secretariat will assign one team member as a monitoring and evaluation focal person who will coordinate all monitoring and evaluation activities including: tracking project implementation, ensure data and information quality, ensure timeliness and adequacy of reporting system to measure impact of interventions.

#### 8.1.4. Communication and Visibility Plan

CISANET will implement a robust communication plan to enhance its visibility among stakeholders. This will target Network members, Government, development partners, the private sector, the media

and other non-state actors. The communication plan will include a range of communication materials including monthly updates, quarterly newsletters, the CISANET annual review, and media outreach.

#### 8.1.5. Member Engagement

A key aspect of this strategic plan will be strengthening the link between the secretariat and the Network members. CISANET will have a member engagement strategy that will ensure active involvement of members in the Network activities. This will include updating the database of members; revamping thematic groups; coordinating with the Network through thematic groups and district Networks in implementing the CISANET advocacy strategy; linking the CISANET website to that of the members; and periodically soliciting feedback from members on CISANET.

#### 8.1.6. Risk Mitigation

The successful implementation of this strategic plan will depend on four key identified assumptions which include (1) Conducive policy environment that is responsive to advocacy interventions; (2) active membership of CISANET members; (3) Positive relationships with key stakeholders including Government officials, the private sector, development partners, research institutions, the media and (4) adequate funding. Thus, the absence of these factors will entail risks for effective implementation of the strategy. In order to avoid or mitigate the risks, CISANET will have a well thought out risk mitigation plan that will thoroughly assess, analyze, evaluate the risks and outline a plan for mitigating the risks.

### 8.2. Implementation Plan

This strategy will be implemented through a four-year investment plan that will run between 2019 and 2023. CISANET will view advocacy as a process and will link a series of events to send out key messages to relevant target groups. Key activities are outlined below:

#### 8.2.1. Revamping the CISANET thematic groups

CISANET will work with its members to revamp thematic groups in line with the three thematic areas. The thematic groups will collaborate with the Secretariat to implement the CISANET Advocacy Strategy. Each thematic group will have a leader who

will liaise directly with the Secretariat on advocacy activities. Thematic groups will provide a platform for strengthening participation of CISANET members in the Network activities.

### **8.2.2. Policy engagement and technical support to Government**

As a FANPARN node host, CISANET will build on past research activities and continuously engage with Government particularly the MoAIWD and ministries that support it to provide policy technical support to Malawi Government to improve the performance of the Agriculture sector in Malawi. Areas of focus will include monitoring and evaluation of the NAIP as part of the CAADP Biennial Review process; development of action plans for Government's prioritization; and raising awareness of the NAIP and ensuring alignment with plans of key players in the sector.

### **8.2.3. Issue scoping**

Through the thematic groups and district Networks, CISANET will identify key issues that are affecting the agriculture sector and will develop issues paper for the attention of Government and other stakeholders. CISANET will also use this process to generate topics for research and policy analysis as well as policy dialogues.

### **8.2.4. Thematic policy dialogues and policy advisory note**

CISANET will periodically conduct policy dialogues to provide space for its members and other stakeholders to discuss matters that affect the agriculture sector. The basis for these policy dialogues will be identified issues through thematic groups and district Networks. At the end of each policy dialogue CISANET will generate a policy advisory note or policy brief that will feed into policy engagement meetings with Government and the parliamentary committees. The policy dialogues will mostly centre on CISANET thematic areas.

### **8.2.5. Interface meetings with parliamentarians**

CISANET will continue to hold periodical interface meetings with the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture to discuss issues that relate to the Agriculture budget and legislation that affects the agriculture sector for example the food and nutrition

bill; the seed bill and others.

### **8.2.6. Sessions with the private sector**

In recognition of the important role that the Private Sector has, CISANET will organize sessions with the private sector to discuss matters of mutual interest within the agriculture sector. CISANET will propose to the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) to join forces at times for policy engagement meetings with Government to amplify voice.

### **8.2.7. Budget analysis and budget tracking**

CISANET will lead in budget analysis and tracking in the Agriculture Sector both at the local and national level. CISANET will use the findings from these exercises to engage public officials and highlight areas that must be addressed. A key drive for CISANET will be to ensure that the national budget allocation and expenditures aligns with policy provisions in both the MGDS and the NAIP. CISANET will continue to press for prioritization of areas that will promote growth and resilience of the sector.

### **8.2.8. Policy repository and other policy and regulatory framework updates**

As a member of various policy technical committees, CISANET will develop a policy repository on its website to provide information on the current agricultural policies and will make this information readily available to its members. This will include completed policies, regulatory frameworks and policies that are under review. CISANET will also provide updates on policy related events such as review meetings and submissions and will seek input from its members on ongoing policy work to feed into policy engagement with public officials.

### **8.2.9. Capacity building trainings on policy advocacy with CISANET members (District Networks)**

CISANET will conduct a series of training sessions on agricultural policy for its Network members particularly those at the district level with the aim of empowering them to effectively advocate for agriculture transformation within their respective districts. The sessions will include awareness sessions on agriculture policy including the NAP and the NAIP and policies that support it; advocacy

skills; gender mainstreaming; budget analysis and public expenditure tracking and general topics on accountability and transparency.

#### **8.2.10. Media outreach (op-eds, press release, newspaper articles, and radio programs)**

CISANET will continue to use the media as a key tool for its advocacy. CISANET will ensure broad media coverage for all events that warrant such; but will also send out information products including opinion editorials, newspaper articles and feature articles to highlight the work of CISANET and those of its members.

### **8.3. Cross Cutting Issues**

For all its activities CISANET will ensure that issues concerning women, the youth and persons with disabilities are effectively main streamed into all policy advocacy programmes and activities; with the objective of ensuring that the needs of these vulnerable groups are taken into account and brought to the attention of policy officials for their action.

### **8.4. Partnerships**

To implement its strategic plan, CISANET will build on existing partnerships or develop new partnerships as follows:

#### **8.4.1. Government Ministries and Departments**

CISANET will continue to build on its relationship with the MoAIWD and the Ministries that directly support it through policy engagement, monitoring and evaluation, and participation in policy technical committees.

#### **8.4.2. Member Organizations and other NSO**

CISANET will continue to partner with member organizations in policy advocacy and projects depending on theme.

#### **8.4.3. Development Partners**

CISANET will seek to partner with development partners particularly DCAFS members in all its policy advocacy work. Both CISANET and DCAFS seek to support the implementation of the NAIP. CISANET will therefore seek collaboration with DCAFS members on similar areas of interest.

#### **8.4.4. Farmer Organizations**

CISANET will continue to work with farmer organizations such as the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) and join forces with them from time to time on a number of advocacy interventions particularly those related to demanding for accountability and transparency in the agriculture sector.

#### **8.4.5. The Private Sector**

The NAP and NAIP emphasizes on achieving farmer led agricultural transformation and commercialization that entails treating farming as a business. The private sector has therefore an important role to play to achieve this vision. Thus, CISANET will seek to partner with the MCCCCI and other private sector players in carrying out its mandate.

#### **8.4.6. The Media**

CISANET will continue to strengthen its partnerships with media houses including print and electronic to ensure a wider reach of its policy advocacy's key messages.

#### **8.4.7. Academia and Research Institutions**

CISANET will establish formal links with academic and research institutions to ensure that research findings on agriculture are linked into policy advocacy.

#### **8.4.8. Regional and International Affiliations**

Currently, CISANET is the Malawi node host for FANPARN and CAADP Coalition for Non-State Actors. Participation in these regional Networks provides an opportunity for CISANET to learn from other countries while sharing Malawi's experiences. During the implementation of this strategy CISANET will endeavor to affiliate with additional regional and global institutions for more information sharing and participation in international platforms.

# Appendix I: BRIEFS ON AGRICULTURE AND RELATED POLICIES

## I. National Policy (NAP)

The Government of Malawi, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) developed and launched the National Agriculture Policy (NAP) in 2016. The NAP aims at addressing the challenges that have previously made meaningful agricultural development untenable. The development ambition of the policy is to guide and champion collective efforts by all the sector players in transforming the agriculture sector in Malawi. It is envisaged that such a transformation would expand incomes for farm households, improve food and nutrition security and increase agricultural exports. The NAP is premised on a spirit of inclusiveness and coordinated partnerships.

In order to achieve its goals, the NAP has identified and will be implemented within the continuum of eight Priority Areas (PAs) that include:

- Sustainable Agricultural Production and Productivity
- Sustainable Irrigation Development.
- Mechanization of Agriculture.
- Agricultural Market Development, Agro-processing and Value Addition
- Food and Nutrition Security
- Agricultural Risk Management
- Empowerment of Youth, Women and Vulnerable Groups in Agriculture.
- Institutional Development, Coordination and Capacity Strengthening

## II. National Livestock Development Policy

At the time this strategic plan was being developed, the Government through the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development (DAHLD) had just validated the draft National Livestock Development Policy 2017 – 2022. Once finalized and launched, the policy will articulate in detail the mandate of the MoAIWD in developing the livestock sector in Malawi. Serving as an operational tool for the implementation of the National Livestock Development Strategies, the Policy has eight Priority Areas as follows:

- Sustainable Commercially led Livestock Production and Productivity

- Animal Welfare, Health and Disease Control
- Livestock research for Innovations and Technology Development
- Livestock Market Development, Agro-processing and Value Addition.
- Livestock for Resilience, Security and Risk Management.
- Empowerment of all gender groups including youth, women and vulnerable groups through livestock sector.
- Livestock sector Development, Coordination and Capacity Strengthening
- Natural Resource Management and Climate Change

## III. National Irrigation Policy

The MoAIWD developed the National Irrigation Policy (NIP) in 2016 to guide all stakeholders in Malawi in the implementation and provision of irrigation related goods, works and services. The NIP aims at contributing to food security, nutrition and economic growth in line with the national, regional and global aspirations. The overall goal of the NIP is to contribute to sustainable national economic growth and development through enhanced irrigated agriculture production and productivity. In order to achieve the overall goal, the NIP focuses on three priority areas that include:

- Sustainable Irrigation Development,
- Sustainable Irrigation Management and;
- Capacity Development

The NIP provides for the establishment of the National Irrigation Board (NIB) which will be responsible for mobilizing resources through the National Irrigation Fund. The Fund is intended to serve as a mechanism for funding and supporting public and private sector irrigation development in Malawi.

## IV. National Seed Policy

The National Seed Policy (NSP) was developed and launched in 2018 to guide and support the seed industry in Malawi. The overall goal of the National Seed Policy is to provide clear guidelines for the development and promotion of the seed industry in order to raise agricultural productivity through the

provision of sustainable, adequate and high-quality seeds. In order to achieve this goal, the NSP has identified four policy outcomes:

- Enhanced appropriate and effective seed regulatory framework
- Enhanced seed quality assurance for better performance of Agriculture
- An established reliable and internationally acceptable seed certification system
- Enhanced growth of the local seed industry to ensure farmers' access to improved varieties and seeds

To successfully attain the desired policy outcomes, the NSP has eight policy priority areas, including:

- Institutional, regulatory and legal framework;
- Seed certification and quality control;
- Information system for the seed industry
- Production of different classes of seed;
- Biotechnology and biosafety research;
- Seed marketing and distribution;
- Seeds orchards and vegetative propagated materials and
- Integration of seed topics in education curriculum

## V. Fertilizer Policy

The Government has drafted a National Fertilizer Policy that seeks to improve the sustainable use of fertilizer and overall enhancement and performance of the fertilizer industry. The policy aims at sustainably increasing effective use and access to use of soil and crop-appropriate fertilizers by all farmers in Malawi. Appropriate Fertilizer use is considered the cornerstone for transforming the agriculture sector from predominantly subsistence to market-oriented agriculture sector. While the policy will encourage the increased access to quality fertilizers through commercial channels, the Government at the same time will continue to support smallholder farmers through the fertilizer subsidy program and other innovative loan-based initiatives.

## VI. National Export Strategy (NES)

The National Export Strategy (NES) was developed in 2013 to provide a clear and prioritized roadmap for developing Malawi's productive base and allow for exports competitiveness and spur economic empowerment. The goal of the NES is to enhance the long-term export trend to match long term imports trend. Once implemented, the NES is expected to raise exports as a share of imports from 51.5 percent in 2010 to 93.4 per cent in 2023

The NES has four key priority areas:

- Export clusters – to enhance diversification of three prioritized export-oriented clusters and supporting exports of existing clusters
- Conducive environment – create an environment that is conducive for economic competitiveness and economic empowerment.
- Support economic institutions – investing in supportive economic institutions and organizations
- Competencies, skills and knowledge – make significant investments in competencies, skills and knowledge

## VII. National Multi-sector Nutrition policy

The National Multi-Sector Nutrition policy spans 2018 to 2022. The purpose of the policy is to provide the framework and context within which sectoral and other strategic plans and budgets should be formulated, monitored, and coordinated. In order to achieve this goal, the policy has identified four policy outcomes:

- Improved adolescent, maternal, and child nutrition, and health.
- Reduced prevalence of overweight and nutrition - related Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).
- Reduced nutrition- related mortality.
- Improved enabling environment for effective coordination and implementation of nutrition interventions.

The successful implementation of the policy borders on eight priority areas as follows:

- Prevention of Under-nutrition,
- Gender Equality, Equity, Protection, participation and Empowerment,
- Treatment and Control of Acute Malnutrition,
- Prevention and Management of Overweight and Nutrition-related NCDs,
- Nutrition Education, Social Mobilization and positive Behavior Change,
- Nutrition during Emergency Situations,
- Creating an Enabling Environment,
- Nutrition Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Surveillance.

## VIII. International Instruments

### i. CAADP

Malawi is a signatory to the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), a pan-African framework that provides a set of principles and broadly defined strategies to help countries critically review their own situations and identify investment opportunities with optimal impact and returns. The CAADP came out of the Maputo Declaration and it returned agriculture to the center of the agenda of African countries including Malawi. Malawi domesticated the CAADP and is one of the countries that have performed well regarding increasing budgetary resources for agriculture sector. The CAADP was considered to be a mechanism for stimulating production and bringing about food security among the populations of the continent. It is remembered mostly for its commitment to allocating at least 10 percent of national budgetary resources to agriculture, in order to achieve 6 percent growth of the economy.

### ii. Malabo Declaration

To sustain momentum for CAADP in 2013 African countries convened in Malabo Equatorial Guinea and looked back at ten years of CAADP implementation. The Malabo Declaration on accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods reaffirmed the central commitment of the CAADP, namely, to allocate 10 percent of public resources to agriculture. It also specified more clearly a range of commitments in agriculture, such as increased irrigation and

mechanization or curtailing post-harvest losses among others. So, in contrast to the Maputo Declaration, it contains many more commitments in areas like infrastructure, natural resources, land tenure, trade and nutrition. The Malabo declaration ensures that countries deliver on CAADP targets as well as against the other national development targets. Following on the Malabo Declaration, Malawi developed the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP).

### iii. Agenda 2063

The agenda 2063 is the endogenous plan for transformation in Africa. Developed in 2015, the Agenda 2063 harnesses the continent's comparative advantages to effect equitable and people-centered social, economic and technological transformation and the eradication of poverty. The agenda has seven aspirations that will be achieved in by 2063:

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance
- An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law,
- A peaceful and secure Africa
- An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics,
- An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of
- African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
- Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

## Appendix II: THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT PLAN (NAIP)

The National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) is the implementation vehicle for the NAP and it is intended at guiding investment focus in the sector. Launched in 2018, the NAIP is aimed at accelerating agriculture transformation, economic growth and poverty reduction. While the NAIP focuses on public investments, it recognizes the need for agricultural growth that is stimulated by private sector investments. Thus, the NAIP provides the necessary framework for coordinating both public and private sector investments.

The NAIP has four programs and sixteen Intervention Areas (IAs). Each of the four programs and their corresponding objectives are presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Programs for the NAIP**

	PROGRAM	OBJECTIVE
A	Policies, institutions and coordination	To improve policy and regulatory environment stakeholder coordination and accountability
B	Resilient livelihoods and agricultural systems	To strengthen resilience of livelihoods and natural resource base for agriculture
C	Production and productivity	To increase production and productivity of a more diversified agricultural sector
D	Markets, value addition, trade and finance	To enhance market access, value addition, trade, and access to finance

The program's objectives will be achieved through 16 Intervention Areas (IAs) with each IA contributing to more than one program. Intervention areas and expected outcomes for NAIP are highlighted in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Intervention areas and expected outcomes for NAIP**

	INTERVENTION AREA	EXPECTED OUTCOME
1	Policy, Program and Stakeholder Coordination	Effective mechanisms for multisectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination to support Program implementation and M&E introduced
2	Farmer Organizations	Strengthened performance and outreach of farmer organizations
3	Public agricultural services delivery	Strengthened Maid's capacity to provide Relevant, market-oriented agricultural extension services
4	Food and Nutrition Security	Available diversified and nutritious foods consumed
5	Food safety and quality	Food safety and quality standards established and mainstreamed
6	Empowerment and tenure security	Empowered Women and youth and enhanced land tenure security
7	Disaster risk management	Strengthened Capacity to manage disasters and reduce their impact
8	Pest and disease management	Major pests and diseases controlled, and major outbreaks managed effectively
9	Agricultural innovation systems	Demand-driven, pluralistic innovation systems for relevant technologies generated and disseminated
10	Access to inputs	broader range of quality inputs at reasonable costs timely accessed by farmers
11	Natural resource management and Climate Change	Sustainably managed natural resources and enhanced climate resilience of production systems
12	Irrigation development	Sustainably increased use of irrigation
13	Mechanization	Improved access to and use of mechanization services
14	Agricultural markets and trade	Enhanced efficiency and inclusiveness of agricultural markets and trade
15	Investments in agribusiness	Increased agro-processing, value addition and investments into the domestic markets
16	Access to financial services	Improved access to agricultural finance by all target groups

## Appendix III: Strategy (Thematic Areas) Alignment with National Policies and International Instruments

**Table 3: CISANET Strategic Plan alignment key National and International policies and instruments**

THEME	CISANET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	NAP	MGDSIII OUTCOMES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
Access to Profitable Markets	<b>Strategic Goal 1 Strategic Objective 1 (SGISO1):</b> Promote value addition and agribusiness mentality among the farmers along the value chains	<b>Policy Statement (PS) 3.4.4:</b> Promote agricultural value addition and agro-processing	<b>Outcome 6.2.5:</b> Increased agriculture market development, agro-processing and value addition	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere  <b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture  <b>SDG8:</b> Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
	<b>SGISO2:</b> Advocate for an enabling environment for promotion of agriculture markets and trade for farmers at local and international levels	<b>PS3.4.7:</b> Ensure that agricultural market and trade policies and regulations are transparent, evidence-based and enforced.	<b>Outcome 6.2.5:</b> Increased agriculture market development, agro-processing and value addition	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere
	<b>SGISO3:</b> Strengthen agriculture marketing information system that reaches all farmers in Malawi	<b>PS3.4.6:</b> Strengthen and harmonize agricultural market information systems.	<b>Outcome 6.2.5:</b> Increased agriculture market development, agro-processing and value addition	<b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
	<b>SGISO4:</b> Increase and strengthen farmer cooperatives and associations	<b>PS3.8.2:</b> Promote development of professionally-operated and efficient farmer organizations, particularly cooperatives	<b>Outcome 6.2.7:</b> Increased empowerment of the youth, women, persons with disability and vulnerable groups in agriculture	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere
	<b>SG2SO1:</b> Increase farmer knowledge on the quality of agricultural produce and grading standards	<b>PS3.4.9:</b> Support improvements in quality standards and grading systems for all agricultural commodities	<b>Outcome 6.2.5:</b> Increased agriculture market development, agro-processing and value addition	<b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture  <b>SDG3:</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
	<b>SG2SO3:</b> Strengthen the national quality and standards systems for agricultural produce	<b>PS3.4.9:</b> Support improvements in quality standards and grading systems for all agricultural commodities	<b>Outcome 6.2.5:</b> Increased agriculture market development, agro-processing and value addition	<b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture  <b>SDG3:</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

THEME	CISANET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	NAP	MGDSIII OUTCOMES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
Resilient and Nutrition Friendly Agriculture	<b>SG1SO1:</b> Reduce the effects of climate change and environmental degradation on agriculture production and productivity	<b>PS3.6.1:</b> Establish a diversified portfolio of agricultural production risk management instruments and technologies	<b>Outcome 6.2.6:</b> Enhanced agricultural risk management	<b>SDG13:</b> Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
	<b>SG1SO2:</b> Increase land under irrigation and the rate of production of crops using irrigation farming	<b>Policy Priority Area (PPA) 2:</b> Sustainable irrigation development	<b>Outcome 6.2.2:</b> Increased land under irrigation	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere <b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
	<b>SG1SO3:</b> Improve smallholder farmers' access to improved agricultural technologies and access to farm inputs for crop production	<b>PPA2:</b> Sustainable irrigation development	<b>Outcome 6.2.2:</b> Increased land under irrigation	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere <b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
	<b>SG2SO1:</b> Promote nutrition sensitive agriculture, crop diversification and utilization of nutritious foods	<b>PPA1:</b> Sustainable Agricultural Production and Productivity	<b>Outcome 6.2.1:</b> Increased agricultural production and productivity	<b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
	<b>SG2SO2:</b> Promote effective prioritization, coordination and implementation of nutrition interventions	<b>PS3.5.5:</b> Coordinate investments and sub-sectoral policies and strategies that help improve the nation's nutritional status and promote healthy diets	<b>Outcome 6.2.1:</b> Increased agricultural production and productivity	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere <b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

THEME	CISANET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	NAP	MGDSIII OUTCOMES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
Livestock, Aquaculture and Dairy Development	<b>SG1S01:</b> Promote investment into livestock production and welfare.	<b>Policy Objective 4:</b> Increase sustainably the production and consumption of livestock, aquaculture and capture fisheries by 50 percent	<b>Outcome 6.2.3:</b> Increased agricultural diversification	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere  <b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
	<b>SG1S02:</b> Promote fish farming among smallholder farmers where relevant	<b>Policy Objective 4:</b> Increase sustainably the production and consumption of livestock, aquaculture and capture fisheries by 50 percent	<b>Outcome 6.2.3:</b> Increased agricultural diversification	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere  <b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
	<b>SG1S03:</b> Promote investments in the development of the dairy industry	<b>Policy Objective 4:</b> Increase sustainably the production and consumption of livestock, aquaculture and capture fisheries by 50 percent	<b>Outcome 6.2.3:</b> Increased agricultural diversification	<b>SDG1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere  <b>SDG2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

---

## Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.





**Civil Society Agriculture Network**

Plot Number 12/236, Area 12  
P. O. Box 203, Lilongwe, Malawi

**Phone:** +265 (0) 1 775 540 / 1 770 479

**Email:** [cisanet@cisanetmw.org](mailto:cisanet@cisanetmw.org)

**Website:** [www.cisanetmw.org](http://www.cisanetmw.org)