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“Reconcile land system changes
with planetary health”

Driving change: Inclusive strategies to realise Africa’s fertiliser and soil health agenda

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Abstract

Africa’s vast arable land holds immense agricultural potential, yet productivity remains constrained by climate change, soil degradation, limited technology adoption, and entrenched socio-economic barriers, including the persistent marginalisation of women and youth. These challenges underscore the urgent need for transformative change, with soil health at the heart of efforts to build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable agricultural systems. Soil health is essential not only for agricultural productivity, economic viability, and ecosystem resilience, but also for advancing equity and sustainability across Africa’s diverse landscapes. This talk reflects on the key conditions, strategies, and policy levers required to achieve this transformation, aligning with the objectives of the African 10-year Action Plan for Fertiliser and Soil Health endorsed at the 2024 Africa Fertiliser and Soil Health Summit in Nairobi. It draws on CGIAR’s experience across Africa and Latin America to identify five interconnected levers essential for successful implementation: (1) inclusive, evidence-based policy mandates that address land tenure, access rights, and structural inequalities; (2) trusted multi-sectoral partnerships involving governments, the private sector, NGOs, donors, and farmers to drive reform and scale solutions; (3) demand-driven, trans-disciplinary R&D that delivers measurable outcomes and integrates user-centred, gender-sensitive approaches; (4) targeted investments and innovative financing mechanisms to expand private sector engagement and tailor solutions to local needs; and (5) inclusive capacity building that empowers women, youth, and marginalised groups. Finally, the talk emphasises that advancing agricultural transformation will require sustained commitment, with soil health positioned at the core of agricultural policy and practice as the foundation for a more equitable, climate-resilient, and productive future for Africa.

Keywords: Africa, gender transformative approach, inclusivity, policy, soil health