IMAGES INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

January - March 2025

imagesinitiative.org

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Welcome to the IMAGES Initiative Quaterly Newsletter!

IMAGES Initiative aims to catalyze and foster transformative partnerships, encouraging actions that integrate the three pillars of sustainable development–social, economic, and environmental.

This edition highlights our latest activities, engagements, research contributions, and achievements across various IMAGES Initiative programmes.

Editorial Board

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

Cross section of Participants at the CAADP Kampala Summit 2025.

CAADP KAMPALA SUMMIT 2025

The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), is an Agenda 2063 continental initiative that aims to help African countries eliminate hunger and reduce poverty by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development. The CAADP Kampala Summit was attended by representatives from different African Union member states including South Africa, Angola, Nigeria, Tanzania, Mauritius, Algeria, Tunisia, Ghana, Zimbabwe, among others.

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Kampala Summit convened representatives from multiple African countries, policymakers, and agricultural stakeholders to discuss Africa's 2025-2035 agricultural transformation strategy.

- **Key Outcomes from the Summit:**

✓ Adoption of the 2025-2035 CAADP Action Plan
✓ Focus on investment, inclusivity, and sustainability in agri-food systems
✓ Commitment to youth & women empowerment in agriculture

AGMCP mentees, Laura Aladriru and Rebecca Nassuna at AGMCP Corner during the Youth and Women in Agrifood Systems Pavilion in Kampala, Uganda on 9 January 2025

Cross section of Heads of States and Governments in Africa at the summit.

President IMAGES Initiative, Dr. Olawale Olayide, at the CAADP Kampala Summit 2025.

Cross section of Participants at the IICMS 2025

IBADAN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (IICMS)

- IMAGES Initiative partnered with the Faculty of Multidisciplinary Studies, University of Ibadan, to co-host the First Ibadan International Conference in Multidisciplinary Studies (IICMS) 2025, held from February 11-12, 2025. The conference brought together scholars, industry leaders, and policymakers to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and tackle global challenges through research and innovation.

- With over 210 participants and 110 research presentations, the conference reinforced the need for cross-disciplinary solutions in areas such as sustainability, security studies, data science, and energy economics. The event also marked the formation of the Society for Multidisciplinary Studies (SMS) to sustain post-conference engagement.

Highlights :

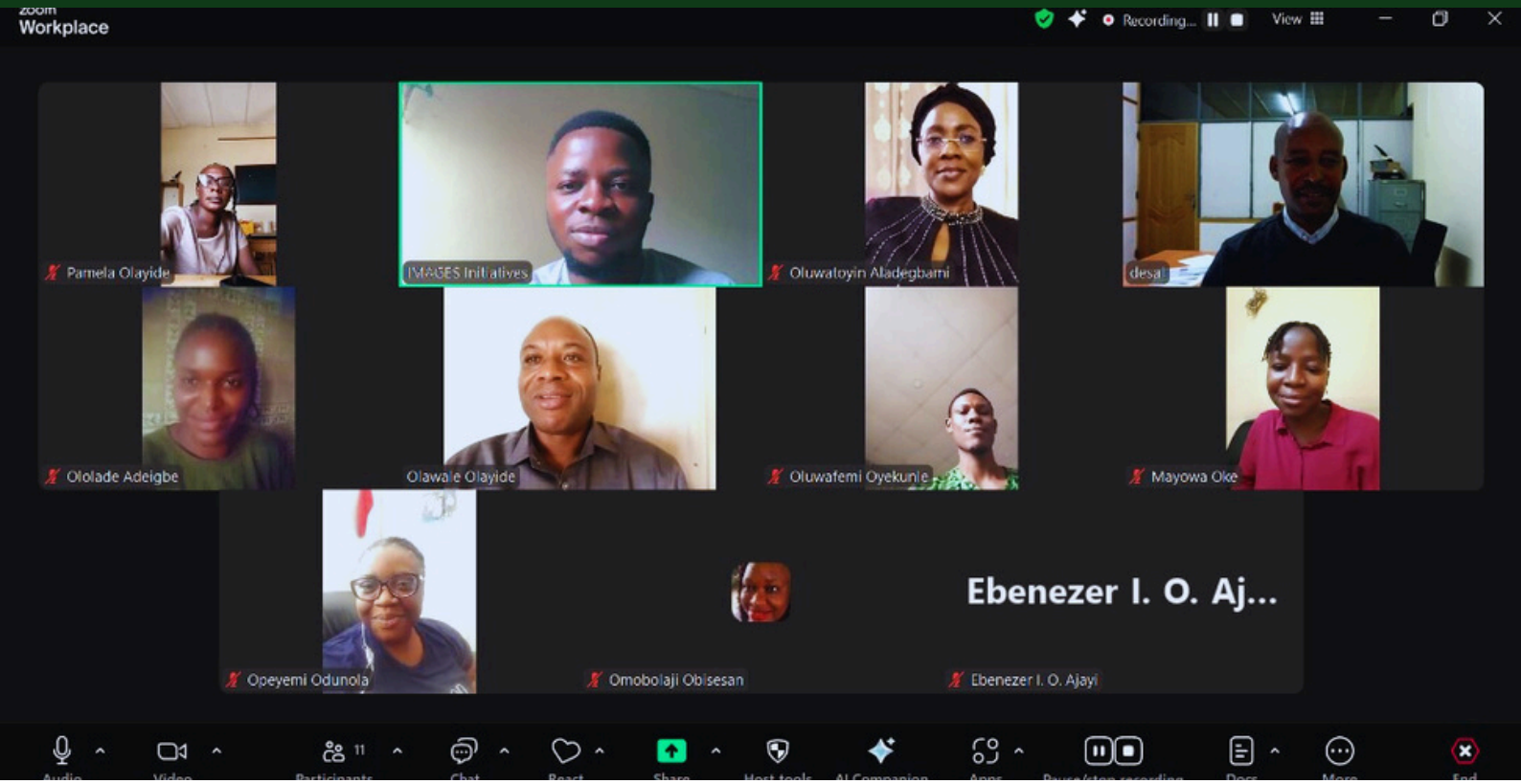
- Interdisciplinary collaboration for problem-solving
- Strengthening links between academia, industry, and policy
- Keynote speakers: Prof. Pauline Deutz & Prof. Idowu Olayinka


One of the technical sessions during the Conference

IMAGES INITIATIVE BOARD MEETING

The IMAGES Initiative Board convened her biannual meeting on Wednesday, 26th March, 2025 via Zoom to review ongoing programmes, regional updates, and strategic plans for 2025. The meeting opened with remarks from the Chairman, followed by a review of previous meeting matters by the President.

Programme leads presented updates on key initiatives, including AGMCP, COP-Africa, HELPS, AGISP/Africa-RAIN, and ACERPiN. Each provided progress reports, challenges, and projections. Regional representatives from East, Southern, and North Africa shared updates, while the West and Central Africa positions remain vacant.



Preparations for the upcoming 6th Circularity Africa Conference scheduled during 13th - 16th May, 2025 were discussed in detail, including the pre-visit, abstract submissions, invitation letters, and the 2024 Sustainability Report. A preview of the AGMCP documentary was shared, highlighting its development progress.

The President outlined the plan for Q2 and Q3 of 2025, with focus on the upcoming conference, monthly webinars, and report publications. Financial updates were presented, and the board discussed a new project proposal on agroecology under AOB.

The meeting concluded with a vote of adjournment, closing remarks from the Chairman, and a group screenshot to commemorate the session.

Standing(L-R): Benjamin Chukwu and Peter Kipkorir
Sitting (L-R): Dr. Mary Mbole-Kariuki, Dr. Olawale Olayide and Mrs Agnes Obua-Ogwal

AGMCP NAIROBI MEET & GREET

The Africa Graduate Mentorship and Coaching Programme (AGMCP) held a meet-and-greet session on the 7th of March, 2025. The Founder and Chief Coach of AGMCP, Dr. Olawale Olayide, hosted the session at the Novotel Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya.

- The session brought together two mentees: Peter Kipkorir from Kenya, an alumnus of the programme, and Benjamin Chukwu from Nigeria, a mentee in the 2025 cohort. The mentors were from different parts of the continent, working in academia, research institutes, policy institutes and organizations.

Event Highlights:

- Networking between mentors & mentees from across Africa
- Insights into research & professional development
- Autographed book gifts on mentorship by Dr. Olawale Olayide.

> Thank you very much for the rare opportunity to meet, relate, and exchange hand shakes with the experts today. It's definitely going to leave a lasting memory. I am also happy to meet Dr Peter, a son of the soil, looing forward to further engagement. Finally prof Olayide, not forgetting the authographed book, it is cherished. Asante sana!

> Indeed, it was a great blessing and unforgettable moments to see you Prof, for the first time, something I think expect to happen soon. I must say, it was timely and the brief moments we had with the other mentors was nothing short of learning, and motivating.
> It was a blessing to meet you too Benjamin. I learned quite a lot about Nigeria and take this opportunity to welcome you to Kenya and all the best in your PhD studies.

(L-R) Peter Kipkorir, Dr. Olawale Olayide and Benjamin Chukwu.

On Tuesday, 25th March, 2025, Dr. Janet Edeme was the guest speaker for the AGMCP March webinar titled "The CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026 - 2035): What are the role of young researchers in Africa?" which focuses on the implementation of the African Union's new agricultural development strategy, as outlined in the Kampala Declaration. This strategy aims to transform Africa's agri-food systems and ensure food security across the continent.

Key Highlights from the Webinar:

- The Kampala Declaration sets ambitious targets, including increasing agricultural productivity by 50%, reducing undernourishment rates from 20% to less than 5%, and reducing the negative environmental impact of agriculture by 40%.
- Challenges such as frequent policy disruptions due to leadership changes, resource mobilization issues, and a silo mentality among various stakeholders. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the successful implementation of the strategy.
- The importance of aligning efforts with international partners was emphasized. Organizations like the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and the World Bank expressed their commitment to support the CAADP framework and collaborate on achieving its objectives.
- The need for four revolutions: political, institutional, financial, and regional economic integration. These revolutions aim to address power distribution within food systems, promote cooperation over competition, leverage climate finance, and focus on regional objectives.

Screenshot showing participants at the AGMCP March 2025 WEBINAR.

(L-R)Dr. Olawale Olayide, President IMAGES Initiative conversing with Peter Keulers, Deputy Consul-General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Nigeria and Benjamin Chukwu.

DINNER WITH THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

On March 13, 2025, IMAGES Initiative was invited to a dinner meeting at Golden Tulip, GRA, Jericho, Ibadan, hosted in honor of the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Nigeria during their mission visit to Oyo State. The event provided a platform to engage with key stakeholders in the circular economy space and discuss potential collaborations.

- During the meeting, IMAGES Initiative presented its ongoing projects, possible plans for collaboration and invitation for the Circularity Africa Conference in Cotonou, Benin (13th - 16th May 2025).

- The Oyo State Commissioner for Environment and Natural Resources, Architect Abdulmojeed Mogbonjubola, was also in attendance and engaged with IMAGES Initiative on the formation of a Circular Economy Committee, in which IMAGES Initiative will play an active role.

Cross section of Stakeholders during the Dinner.

(L-R): Oluwafemi Aderemi, Ololade Adeigbe, Dr. Olawale Olayide, Ruth Babayanju, Oluwafemi Oyekunle.

SCIENCE ADVANCES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Cropland expansion links climate extremes and diets in Nigeria

Bhoktear Khan[1]*, Piyush Mehta[1], Dongyang Wei[1], Hanan Abou Ali[1], Oluseun Adeluyi[2], Tunrayo Alabi[3], Olawale Olayide[4], John Uponi[3], Kyle Frankel Davis[1,5]

Climate change threatens smallholder agriculture and food security in the Global South. While cropland expansion is often used to counter adverse climate effects despite ecological trade-offs, the benefits for diets and nutrition remain unclear. This study quantitatively examines relationships between climate anomalies, forest loss from cropland expansion, and dietary outcomes in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country. Combining high-resolution data on forest cover and climate variables within random forest and panel regression models, we find that 25 to 31% of annual forest loss is linked to climate variability. Using georeferenced household survey data, we then find that changes in forest cover have a significant positive association with changes in child diet diversity—a key proxy of nutritional adequacy—while cropland expansion does not, suggesting that such forest conversions may be an ineffective climate adaptation strategy for improving nutrition. Our findings highlight the potential of nutrition-sensitive climate adaptation to enhance yields, promote nutritious cropping choices, and protect remaining forests.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change poses a rising challenge to agricultural systems across the planet (*1*, *2*). The growing frequency and intensity of climate anomalies is leading to reduced yields (*1*, *3*), greater production instability (*3*), and cropping pattern migrations in response to shifting agro-climatic envelopes (*4*, *5*)—with critical implications for farmers and rural livelihoods. Potentially most vulnerable to these climatic effects are smallholders who—despite limited access to inputs and improved technologies (*6*, *7*)—are using a diverse toolkit of strategies to adapt to changing climate conditions. In addition to using strategies such as crop diversification (*8*), soil and water management (*9*), and improved crop varieties, among others (*8*, *10*), smallholders may also use cropland expansion as an adaptive strategy to offset crop yield losses from adverse climate conditions (and to thereby maintain levels of production) (*11*–*15*). Recent work has identified an association between adverse rainfall anomalies and cropland expansion in developing countries, particularly in regions with limited access to buffering infrastructure (*16*).

This cropland expansion can often occur at the expense of forests, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is the primary and dominant driver of forest loss (*17*–*19*). While the decision to expand croplands in response to increasing climate variability and extremes may be primarily an economic one for smallholders, little is known about whether cropland expansion is associated with benefits for the food security and nutrition of local communities. On one hand, increased cropland area allows for increased food production, particularly staple and cash crops, across many countries (*20*), and this expansion can be related to improved food security outcomes through increasing production, enhancing incomes, and lowering prices (*21*). On the other hand, forests provide a diversity of food resources such as fruits, nuts, roots, and game, and there is a well-established correlation indicating that access to forests is positively associated with favorable nutritional outcomes (*22*–*25*). For instance, recent studies in Malawi (*26*) and Tanzania (*27*) found that higher forest cover and lower levels of forest loss were associated with higher fruit and vegetable intake and vitamin A adequacy. Other recent work found a positive association between forest regrowth and fruit and vegetable intake in Nigeria (*28*). More than three-quarters of existing studies on the topic have found that forests have a positive impact on food and nutrition security—due to both the direct collection of forest foods and the beneficial indirect effects of forest-based ecosystem services on agriculture (e.g., water provision, soil fertility, income opportunities, and fuelwood access for cooking) (*29*). Thus, while the replacement of forests with croplands clearly produces short-term economic benefits at the cost of biodiversity and carbon sequestration, there is limited understanding of how these land-use changes are associated with nutritional effects for local communities—who rely on a balance of both staple foods from croplands as well as many other nutritionally important products from forests—and the extent to which climate change may be altering this balance.

To address this knowledge gap, here we examine the extent to which deforestation due to cropland expansion is associated with climate anomalies, and how nutritional outcomes in terms of child dietary diversity are correlated with forest loss and cropland expansion. With rapid deforestation occurring as a result of cropland expansion, as well as being Africa's most populous country and largest food producer (*30*), Nigeria presents the ideal focus country for investigating such dynamics between climate change, forests, and diets. To do so, we focus on its 20 southern states, which account for nearly all the country's remaining forests. First, we use high-resolution gridded data on annual forest cover (1998 to 2021) (*31*) to quantify rates of deforestation and to characterize spatially detailed patterns of forest loss. Combining this information with a suite of climatic variables, we use random forest and panel fixed-effects regression models to evaluate the extent to which annual forest loss due to cropland expansion is explained by climate variability and extremes. Last, we

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SCIENCE ADVANCES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

[Cropland expansion links climate extremes and diets in Nigeria]

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ACADEMIC JOURNALS

Journal of Horticulture and Forestry

Full Length Research Paper

Assessing post-harvest loss of tomato and its implications for food systems transformation in Nigeria

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This study assessed post-harvest losses incurred by tomato farmers in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Cross-sectional data were collected to obtain information on the socio-economic characteristics of tomato farmers and the factors influencing post-harvest losses. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, multinomial regression, and Tobit regression models. The mean age of farmers was 45.25 years, with a mean monthly income of ₦141,382.99 (USD 294.55), an average household size of five persons, and a mean post-harvest loss of 179.42 kg per hectare, representing 15.5% of the total quantity harvested. The major cause of post-harvest loss was limited technical know-how (55.56%) in handling tomatoes, particularly at the mature ripe stage. Losses were most prevalent at the harvesting stage (48.37%). Significant socio-economic factors influencing the quantity of post-harvest loss included household size, farm size, marital status, farmland ownership (rented/leased), seed variety, and access to storage facilities. Improved technical know-how, proper timing, and harvesting at the mature green stage were associated with reduced post-harvest losses. Notably, rented or leased farmlands positively influenced post-harvest loss reduction, suggesting that such farmlands are better managed, more efficient, and more sustainable for tomato agrifood systems management. It is recommended that tomato farming be embraced as an essential agribusiness component of food systems transformation, rewarding investment in farmlands, promoting efficiency, maximizing profits, and encouraging technological innovations to reduce post-harvest losses. Appropriate technologies for handling tomatoes along the value chain would reduce post-harvest losses and promote food systems transformation in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Key words: Tomato, tomato farmers, post-harvest loss, technological know-how, food systems transformation.

INTRODUCTION

The challenge of post-harvest loss poses a significant obstacle to food systems transformation in Nigeria (FAO, 2019). Food systems transformation in Nigeria aims to enhance food security, improve nutrition, and boost

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[Assessing post-harvest loss of tomato and its implications for food systems transformation in Nigeria.]

SOCIALS

HONOURS AND DISTINCTIONS

Celebrating Dr. Clare Kyomuhendo, Pioneer President, AGMCP Alumni Association (2021-2022)

IMAGES Initiative congratulates Dr. Clare Kyomuhendo (AGMCP 2020) on her successful PhD graduation from the University of Ghana!

Mr. Oluwafemi Seyi Oyekunle - Deputy Coordinator COP-AFRICA

January 7

Ms. Souhir Belaid – Vice President, IMAGES (North Africa)

January 18

Mrs. Kíkélomo Adégòkè – Pioneer Director of AGISP

January 28

Ms Ololade Adeigbe - Deputy Coordinator, HELPS

January 31

UPCOMING EVENTS