

# Will a radical farming shift save drought-stricken Zimbabwe? A call for climate-smart action

ICRISAT - Mon, 14 Dec 2015 14:41 GMT



Author: **Jerome Bossuet**



AgMIP scientists share climate scenarios and impact on farms with farmer organisations, government and other stakeholders. Credit: ICRISAT

Zimbabwe's slow recovery from years of economic depression has suffered a terrible blow from recurrent droughts halving the expected production of 742,000 tons of the main staple, maize, this year. It leaves 1.5 million Zimbabweans (16% of the population) without enough food to stay healthy, according to the UN World Food Programme. To make matters worse, because of the ongoing El Niño, meteorologists are predicting the upcoming cropping season to be further marred by below normal seasonal rains in the semi-arid southern region of Zimbabwe (**FEWS**). The Southern Africa Development Community has announced that over 27 million people across the Southern African region will face hunger over the next six months.

Over the last two weeks, political leaders debated how to address global warming during the COP21 talks in Paris. Yet for years many scientists have been warning us about the increase in drought risks around the world. This could lead to more frequent food crises and social unrest if no appropriate adaptation policies are in place. Agrarian countries like Zimbabwe, where over three quarters of the population depend on farming, many of which are poor rain fed smallholdings, will suffer the most.

Though clear that we are facing this enormous and complex threat, policy-makers



S  
D  
(  
O  
R  
|  
20  
P

D  
C  
C  
O  
R  
|  
20