



# Global Water Initiative - East Africa

## Secure Water for Smallholder Agriculture

# Regional Charter on Investing in Water for Smallholder Agriculture

Morogoro, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2013

**Introduction:** Water is a precondition for successful smallholder agriculture in Eastern Africa. Without this key resource crops fail or perform badly and livestock suffer, directly affecting household food security and reducing available income. This key link between water, crop production, livestock and livelihoods means investing in agricultural water management is central to attaining local, national and regional development objectives. Yet, in spite of this fact, investment levels remain low, revealing lack of prioritization within sector budgets and investment plans at all levels.

In signing this charter we seek to address this situation and urge government, civil society, research institutions, international development agencies, the private sector and farmers themselves to ensure that investment levels change for the better. Not only will this help to achieve the outcomes of enhanced food security and reduced poverty across the region, it will also underpin the position of women within rural production systems and support farmer resilience against climate variability and other shocks. Most critically this will enable farmers themselves to become more successful in investing in and determining their own futures.

**Undertakings:** As key stakeholders in supporting smallholder farmers across the Eastern Africa region, we call upon government and all other institutions and networks that have the responsibility and/or means and capabilities to invest in water for smallholder agriculture, to work towards the following:

1. **Increase public sector investment** in water for smallholder agriculture in real terms by 2017;
2. **Provide tangible support** to the capacity building of all institutions within the region that address water management for smallholder farmers;
3. **Enhance the exchange of knowledge and evidence** on best practices in agricultural water management across the region, including a specific focus on the role of women farmers;
4. **Establish stronger coordination, communication and joint development** and planning between water, agriculture and all other relevant sector institutions at all levels;
5. **Assess, monitor and record more effectively** evidence on the linkages between improvements in water for smallholder agriculture and economic growth;
6. **Empower farmers** as the ultimate decision makers through improving their knowledge, practices, skills and potential to invest in their own futures.

We the signatories of this charter believe that achieving these six undertakings will require concerted effort and continued support. We therefore propose taking forward this charter for further consultation and endorsement at key country- and regional-level events in East Africa and, where appropriate, at a global level including the World Water Forum in 2015.