



## Canadian project boosts climate change resiliency for 750,000 farmers in northern Ghana

**TORONTO, July 18, 2013**—Canadian Feed The Children (CFTC) has launched a \$2.4-million project to provide tools and training to northern Ghana's farmers, primarily women, to help them adapt to the increasingly severe effects of climate change in the region.

The **Climate Change Adaptation in Northern Ghana Enhanced (CHANGE)** project is bringing climate-smart agricultural training and non-agricultural livelihoods to 750,000 small-scale farmers, farm-based organizations and agricultural extension workers in 17 communities in Ghana's vulnerable Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. Made possible through the generous support of the **Government of Canada**, CHANGE was launched in January in partnership with Ottawa, Canada-based **Farm Radio International (FRI)** and three local community partners in northern Ghana: Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems (RAINS); Trade Aid Integrated (TAI); and Tumu Deanery Rural Integrated Development Program (TUDRIDEP).

The CHANGE community-based approach is expected to increase farm yields and income, and lessen the negative impact of erratic rainfall, rising temperatures and declining crop yields which are driving farmers deeper into poverty in the region.

CHANGE extends CFTC's existing food security and livelihoods work in northern Ghana. Returning from a recent visit to the project communities, **CFTC's Executive Director Debra Kerby** was struck by the commitment, enthusiasm and innovation she saw as the first quarter's activities wrapped up. *"It is one thing to hear about climate change in the media; it is entirely another to look into the eyes of an elder and see his fear and frustration about the changing rains and weather patterns, and to hear the negative impact climate change is having on his community's ability to feed their children and their children's children. I was moved by the commitment of farmers, especially the women, to meld their indigenous knowledge with new training to better address their current reality."*

## MEDIA RELEASE



Jonathan Lanidune, Program Manager with CHANGE partner TUDRIDEP, compares mangoes. The innovative process yields larger fruit with higher market value.



Indigenous seeds are naturally drought-resistant and are bringing traditional knowledge held by women to the forefront, empowering them to contribute to community development in northern Ghana.



Inspecting vetiver grass, an experiment to bring the raw material used by basket weavers closer to the production site. L to R: Simon Amoah, CHANGE Project Coordinator, TradeAID; James Ayando, CHANGE Project Manager, CFTC Ghana; Derek Briffett, CFTC Board Chair; Nicholas Apokerah, Executive Director, TradeAID; Debra Kerby, Executive Director, CFTC.

The project uses a train-the-trainer model to cascade sustainable farming techniques, agricultural data and seasonal weather forecasts out to farmers. Technical experts from Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI), based near Tamale in Ghana's Northern Region, are training Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) agricultural extension workers as well as community extension workers, who will then deliver and support climate-smart agricultural practices and technologies to farm-based organizations and groups of farmers.



Women at the Veia Craft Centre in the Upper East Region of Ghana chant *"always sitting down!"* as they weave baskets. The chant refers to the fact that they now have a supplementary income source close to home, eliminating the need to travel long distances on dangerous roads – often with their children – to seek the means to support their families.

Radio programming will broadcast "just-in-time" weather forecasts and recommendations for crop planting throughout the region – a technique that has been used on previous projects to achieve broad-based behaviour change. **Kevin Perkins, Farm Radio International's Executive Director**, explains why radio programming is so effective: "Farmers need practical information to improve crop yields and better their lives. However, many African farmers do not have easy access to telephones or computers, and are unable to read and write. Exceptionally inexpensive and accessible, radio remains the best way to reach small-scale farmers around the world."

CHANGE will also stimulate alternative, sustainable income generation with the added bonus of environmental benefits. Project initiatives include growing grasses that reduce soil erosion and provide the raw materials for baskets woven by local women's groups, as well as a fruit tree nursery initiative that is expected to supplement farming family income while contributing to the greening of local spaces.

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#### **About Canadian Feed The Children:**

Canadian Feed The Children (CFTC) is an independent international development agency that envisions a world where children thrive free from poverty. CFTC works through local partners in five countries and in Canada to reduce the impact of poverty on children by supporting sustainable education, food security and capacity-building that have a long-term impact on poverty alleviation and create self-sufficiency for children, families and communities. ***Climate Change Adaptation in Northern Ghana Enhanced (CHANGE)*** is made possible through a generous grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (formerly, the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA) to Canadian Feed The Children and its coalition partner, Farm Radio International.



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