

# THE GCARD PROCESS IN AFRICA

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## 1 Africa's Engagement with the GCARD Process

### 1.1 Introduction

In 2008 the population of Africa reached 987 million, inching closer to the one billion mark (FAOSTAT, 2009). Approximately 61% of these people live in rural areas and 51% depend on agriculture as their main source of livelihood. Dependence on agriculture is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) where this important sector employs 62% of the population (excluding South Africa) and generates 27% of the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Agriculture's dominance in Africa's economies makes its performance a major determinant of the continent's economic and development indicators. The poor performance of agriculture is underscored by the facts that: (a) despite the vast arable land in SSA with potential to feed the citizens and produce surpluses for export, the number of undernourished people in the sub-continent swelled from 170 million in 1990-1992 to 236 million in 2007; and (b) Africa is a net importer of food and its food trade deficit has been widening. According to data generated by FAOSTAT (2009), this deficit reached US\$ 16.5 billion in 2007, denoting the amount of scarce foreign exchange diverted away from other investments to the importation of food.

### 1.2 The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

Africa's response to this untenable situation was the development and adoption of CAADP by African Heads of State and Governments in 2003. Through CAADP, African countries seek to achieve and maintain a minimum of 6% annual growth in agricultural production. To this end, in 2003, African Heads of State and Governments committed to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to the agriculture sector by 2008. The driving motive for CAADP was twofold, namely: (a) the elimination of hunger and pervasive malnutrition in Africa; and (b) improvement in Africa's food independence by substantially reducing the amounts spent by each country on food imports.

CAADP lays out the priority areas for action and investment to stimulate and sustain improvement of Africa's agriculture, food security and trade balances. These priority areas, also known as "pillars", are:

- i. Extending the land under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems;
- ii. Improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacity for market access
- iii. Increasing food supply and reducing hunger
- iv. Agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption.

The first three pillars are designed to produce gains in the short term while the fourth pillar bears a longer term horizon. A key feature of CAADP is the establishment of a strong African leadership and ownership of the agricultural development agenda. It has also created a shared

framework for policy planning and implementation to which investments in the agricultural sector, including investments from the CGIAR and south-south cooperation, should be aligned.

### **CAADP Pillar IV**

The agricultural research and development (ARD) agenda for Africa is encapsulated in CAADP's fourth pillar. Agricultural research is critical to improving productivity, which is recognised as the foundation for growth and poverty reduction in agriculture-based economies such as the ones in Africa. Additionally, investments ARD have been shown to have a high economic return and long-term impact on rural farm earnings.

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) has been designated to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the Pillar IV agenda. In consultation with stakeholders FARA has developed the Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP) to provide guidelines and criteria to encourage CAADP implementers and investors in African agricultural research and development to work in harmony at the scale sustained over time to achieve the African vision.

### **1.3 The added value of GCARD to Africa**

GCARD aims to help ensure that:

- Agricultural research is focusing on the right approaches and questions in order to meet the needs of resource-poor farmers and poor consumers
- Agricultural research is embedded into the development process
- Funding systems are aligned between research and development funding to ensure effective investment in the new forms of institutions and partnerships required for delivery of development impacts, and,
- The international research system is effectively integrated with national partners and responds to national, sub-regional demands to ensure development impact.

To Africa's understanding, the GCARD process provides a mechanism for putting into practice the key principles espoused in the FAAP. In particular, the inclusiveness of the process ensures that views of all stakeholder groups engaged in agriculture are captured to feed into the setting and refinement of priorities. The GCARD process also offers Africa a platform to articulate the specific priority areas in which it requires support and cooperation from international partners including the CGIAR system. It supports the accomplishment of CAADP goals by strengthening Pillar IV and enhancing its effectiveness in responding to R&D needs of other CAADP Pillars. Africa, has therefore, embraced the GCARD process.

## **2 The GCARD Consultation Process in Africa**

The GCARD consultation process in Africa is facilitated by the FARA Secretariat. It entails three cascading stages, starting with a regional desk review followed by an electronic consultation and concluding with a face-to-face consultation.

## **2.1 GCARD Regional Review of Africa**

This review was undertaken by Prof. Uzo Mokwunye in July and August 2009. By examining the continent's stated development priorities and the existing agricultural research priorities along with their implementation mechanisms at all levels, the review identified the key gaps to be focussed on, in order to move Africa's ARD agenda forward. The identified gaps include: (a) poor capacity for innovation; (b) lack of coordination between research and extension; (c) too much emphasis on challenges and little on opportunities; (d) perceived gaps in implementation of the four CAADP pillars; (e) insufficient attention on food quality; and (f) insufficient attention to research on value chain stages after production, in particular processing and utilization.

The outcome of the regional review served as a key reference for the electronic consultation.

## **2.2 GCARD electronic consultation in Africa**

The electronic consultation held from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September was hosted by FARA. Its objective was to gather views from all stakeholders and build consensus on how research can increase its development impact in Africa. The consultation involved 500 participants from 65 countries who engaged in a very lively debate. Participants included researchers, scientists and lecturers, farmers, farmer's organization and civil society organizations. The consultation highlighted the complexity and diversity of Africa's agricultural setting as a major challenge for ARD. The recommendations emerging from the consultation are outlined below.

- Clear understanding of the key continental frameworks notably CAADP and FAAP, in particular their operationalization and monitoring should be increased.;
- African governments should be encouraged to align their commitments and policies to CAADP and FAAP especially on human resources and infrastructural development through increased investments in these areas.
- ARD should focus on farmer empowerment and the involvement of youth and women in all its stages. Further, ARD should combine indigenous knowledge with modern technology. Inter-sectoral linkages between ARD and health and nutrition should be strengthened.
- ARD actors should increasingly embrace interests of the wider community in addition to addressing their individual and institutional interests. Greater emphasis should be devoted to increasing productivity of staples. There is need for a better blending of international partnerships with local actions.

The e-consultation observed that African ARD is not sufficiently development-oriented. It proposed the following as the specific areas that require strengthening to enhance the development orientation of ARD: information and knowledge management; innovation systems using successful tools such as farmer field schools; natural resource management, mechanization; post-harvest technologies; policy and market access and increasing the productivity of commodities and livestock.

### **2.3 The GCARD face to face consultation in Africa**

The GCARD regional face-to-face (F2F) consultation for Africa was held from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at the FARA Secretariat in Accra, Ghana. It brought together 56 representatives of virtually all the major stakeholders engaged in African agriculture, namely: farmer organizations, researchers (NARS, CGIAR centres and advanced research institutes), extension service providers, knowledge management providers, non-governmental organizations, Universities, the private sector, donors, SROs, FARA and GFAR. The farmer organizations had the highest representation at this meeting, a noteworthy departure from the norm for such meetings. The private sector registered the lowest representation.

The objectives of the F2F consultation were to: (a) consider and validate the findings of the regional review and the electronic consultation and to provide feedback on the CGIAR's strategic results framework (SRF); (b) identify the key areas in which Africa requires support from international partners; and (c) explore strategies for effectively delivering Africa's messages to the March 2010 GCARD event in Montpellier, France.

Participants reaffirmed:

- CAADP's essence as the accepted framework for advancing Africa's agriculture, leading to achievement of the sector's potential in driving development on the continent.
- the need for involvement of relevant stakeholders, especially end users (farmers), in ARD priority setting, implementation and evaluation; i.e. adoption of the innovation systems approach;

The consultation's proceedings featured a brief discussion on the proposed Strategic Results Framework of the CGIAR. While taking note that the SRF did not accord sufficient recognition to R&D for Africa's major staples notably rice, and R&D for livestock and fisheries, participants supported the notion that formulation of any programs by the CGIAR should be scheduled to draw on feedback from the GCARD consultation process.

#### **Priority ARD areas for Africa's engagement with international partners**

The consultation identified seven broad priority themes on which attention should be focused to ensure that ARD delivers greater developmental impact, especially for the poor in Africa. For each of these themes, the priority areas for engagement with international partners were identified (Table 1). It should be noted that there is an overwhelming need for strengthening the capacity for innovation in Africa.

Table 1 ARD priority themes for Africa and the priority areas for engagement with international partners

ARD Priority theme	Priority areas for Africa's engagement with international partners including the CGIAR
<p><b>1. Risk and vulnerability</b></p> <p>African ARD should enable smallholder producers to become better prepared to respond to effects of climate change and other global crises (e.g. financial, trade, food, diseases and energy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening of African human and institutional capacities to assess risks and to develop mitigation and adaptation measures (early warning, response and recovery)</li> <li>• Sharing relevant information, technology, lessons and experiences</li> <li>• Realignment of investments to increase funding for interventions aimed at mitigating risk and vulnerability</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Institutional and Policy dialogue</b></p> <p>Testing and up scaling institutional and policy arrangements that promote agricultural innovation across entire value chains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening of human and institutional capacities for policy analysis, evidence based advocacy and innovation systems approaches</li> <li>• Fair trade policies, e.g. removal of barriers to Africa's agricultural products</li> <li>• Alignment of investments in rural development to agricultural priorities, e.g. transportation and water infrastructure</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Information, knowledge and innovation</b></p> <p>Support to generation of knowledge through science and technology; building on indigenous knowledge and use of success stories for scaling up good practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening Africa's capacity for generation, dissemination and use of agricultural knowledge and knowledge management tools e.g. ICT and knowledge banks</li> <li>• Supporting the exchange of innovations between Africa and the rest of the world</li> <li>• Strengthening intellectual property rights regimes for ARD</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Coordination, partnership and networking</b></p> <p>Strengthening institutional frameworks for harmonizing ARD priorities and their implementation at national, sub regional, continental and global levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligning interventions and support to existing frameworks notably CAADP, FAAP and national compacts</li> <li>• Supporting platforms for inter-regional cooperation (south-south and north-south)</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Land and water management</b></p> <p>Priority issues concerning management of common property resources, policies to support investment in sustainable land and water use. Policies to protect tenure rights of smallholders in the face of "land grabs"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening the human and institutional capacities to address land and water management issues (soil fertility management, land degradation, forest management, land tenure and water rights). This includes sharing relevant technologies.</li> <li>• Formulation and enforcement of international conventions and protocols on land and water management</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Monitoring and Impact Assessment</b></p> <p>There is need for easy-to-understand methodologies for measuring success and funding arrangements that allow impact assessment and lesson learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening capacity for monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment for using the resulting information to enhance impact</li> <li>• Developing and applying appropriate methodologies for assessing impact</li> </ul>

ARD Priority theme	Priority areas for Africa's engagement with international partners including the CGIAR
<p><b>7. Food security</b></p> <p>Access to technologies that increase productivity, increase in market access and making it possible for producers to cope with uncertain weather conditions given the increasing rural and urban populations in Africa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening capacity for development and up-scaling of technologies, policies, markets for increasing food productivity, reducing post harvest losses and increasing food quality (nutrition).</li> <li>• Increasing investment in infrastructure and support for policy regimes that promote domestic and regional trade in food</li> </ul>

### **Declaration by representatives of farmer organizations**

The F2F consultation concluded with a declaration by farmer representatives which reinforced broadly the priority areas and recommendations of the review and emphasized the inclusion of farmer organizations in the structures of agricultural research at national, sub regional and continental levels. It underscored the need for strengthening of partnership between African farmer organizations and other constituents of FARA. While calling on FARA and the SROs to ensure that farmers participated effectively in the implementation of CAADP the declaration highlighted that livestock, fisheries and the needs of women and young farmers are areas that require greater ARD attention. It registered the commitment of farmer organisations to lobby governments and development partners to increase investment in research and extension.

### **Reference**

FAOSTAT, 2009, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations online database  
<http://faostat.fao.org>