Policies, Institutions and Markets for enabling Agricultural Incomes for the Poor

The session discussed the policy and institutional constraints and opportunities to support farm incomes for the poor, Agri. Growth has bigger impact on poverty reduction than other sectors. Evidence base and new ideas to support the creation of vibrant and sustainable markets for the poor, small holder farmers and identifying pathways to get farmers more embedded in local and international markets, need to be developed.

The group discussed and listed specific research areas (agri. Value chains, PHM and processing) which can minimize the bias that negatively affect the poor and women. Pro-poor growth and women asset development was emphasized. The comparative advantage of CGIAR in policy research and advocacy was also discussed. The multidisciplinary approach followed and partnership built with national system will be very useful. The group suggested to investing in rural public investments like roads, markets etc which are important to address the challenge to develop a platform that links the various actors along the research development policy continuum, from bottom to top.

The group also suggested to address the issue of the definition of target groups at the micro level and their constraints to attain higher income such as post-harvest losses, proper training to develop skills to maximize their productive capacity etc.

The role of the private sector in policy development and formulation need to be factored in such research areas.

The theme needs to be comprehensive w.r.t. scale, coverage of income sources (high value crops, farm & non-farm enterprises), and range of beneficiaries (landless farmers, small & marginal farmers, women), institutional and individual capacity building. Some of the areas suggested to be include under the theme included product development, new extension approaches, new approaches in marketing, how to minimize sufferings of farmers from market power, incentives for women’s participation, involvement of farmers in the collection of data, research on PPP, business models, extension efforts to address climate change, quality assurance and certification etc.
Knowledge, information and advice in agri.-food systems

Stakeholders should actively get involved in agricultural and innovation systems from research to action. Through, the design of different stakeholders is different, but they should align to the common goal of reaching small holder farmers. Public research systems are based on the open and free exchange of ideas and public access provides greater returns and increases the potential for skill over benefits to support AR4D.

Enhanced access is absolutely necessary for effective decision making & for empowering various stakeholders. High quality research if not properly and timely communicated and put to use by the end users, it will not be a good investment.

Lack of skills, access to finance and technology were highlighted as constraints to access the research outputs. Local and global efforts to increase access of farm information are hindered by under investment and innovative approaches in information and knowledge sharing systems.

There is a need for a global movement to provide access to public research outputs across the AR4D and advisory services. The successes of national advisory services in India, Brazil, Denmark, and USA were highlighted. But up-scaling the success was noted as a challenge which requires large investments and use of modern ICT.

Tailored, multidisciplinary and social media based approaches to extension that support communities of practice were highlighted for their potential benefits. The case of USA where young farmers are using YouTube videos for farm advice was discussed.

There should be incentives and adequate investments to the scientists to encourage them to contribute information. However Accountability was highlights of Extn. & Advisory. Multi partner initiatives such as CIRAD, GFRA, to facilitate advisory services in innovative ways was also recommended.