REPORT OF THE PRE-PLENARY FORESIGHT EVENT
“THE FUTURES OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL AREAS IN AFRICA”

15-16 JULY, 2013

ACCRA GHANA

Prepared by
Ann Kingiri (ACTS), Katindi Njonjo (SID) and Robin Bourgeois (GFAR)

For
Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) together with other stakeholders organised the 6th Africa Agriculture Science Week (AASW) under the theme ‘Africa Feeding Africa’ in Accra, Ghana from 15-20 July 2013. The purpose of this event was to create an open space for networking and exchanging information and knowledge on agricultural innovations and on topical issues with a bearing on agricultural research and development. It is noted that FARA is committed to promote foresight in Africa in order to enable the voices of farmers to be heard and taken into consideration in shaping the future of agricultural research and innovation systems for development.

In this context, FARA with the support of the Secretariat of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) facilitated the organisation of a foresight reflective exercise on the futures of sustainable rural areas in Africa in the framework of Sub-Theme 2 “Innovations to improve productivity and resilience”. This foresight side event was also tailored as a training process to enable African participants to take a different look at the perspectives for agriculture and rural development in Africa and open a space for new thinking on “Africa feeding Africa”. The outcomes of the workshop were also aimed at contributing to the reflection of the highest governance organ of FARA, the General Assembly (GA), on the future role of FARA.

The Africa Science Week was also considered as an opportunity to launch the African Chapter of the Foresight Academy as presented during the second Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD2) in Punta del Este.

The foresight side event attracted 26 participants from diverse backgrounds all involved in activities related to rural areas across Africa. The workshop was coordinated by Robin Bourgeois from GFAR Secretariat, and facilitated by Sivi Katindi Njonjo (Society for International Development - SID) and Ann Kingiri (African Centre for Technology Studies - ACTS), African members of the Forward Thinking Platform facilitated by GFAR.

INTRODUCTION

The foresight workshop attracted a wide range of participants with diverse backgrounds from across the region and some observers from outside Africa (see Annex 1). The participants, while introducing themselves reiterated the importance of the foresight workshop in relation to their work which involves in one way or another, the rural areas and the communities.

Dr. Robin, introducing the workshop’s objectives indicated that the aim of the workshop was to brainstorm and learn together on forces shaping sustainability of rural areas in the view of the past, present and the future; and consequently ask what the future could be like in 2030. He noted that sustainability had to be looked at from a broad perspective based on three dimensions namely economic development, social justice and environmental integrity. He then explained how the workshop would unfold during the two days. Consequently, the following agenda was adopted to guide in the next two-days (see Annex 2).

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES- DAY 1: 15 JULY 2013

The main agenda for the day was to identify drivers/forces that will shape the sustainability of rural areas in Africa. The participants were randomly divided into two groups where they were facilitated to use systems thinking in this identification process. To sensitize the participants and prepare them
for the related group exercises, two presentations were made, an Introduction to foresight by Robin and a presentation on some trends in Africa by Katindi.

**Discussions emanating from the presentations**
- In addition to questions that must be asked around the foresight approach, the question “for whom” should be considered to encourage the ownership of the process.
- There was a discussion on how to engage/integrate different stakeholders like civil societies, rural people and leaders in policy making in foresight/futures.
- There is need to build capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to envision alternative scenarios when it comes to agriculture-related decision making.
- It was also noted that there are difficulties in consolidation of different futures/scenarios into policy. This requires skills hence the importance of capacity building.
- The issue of the importance of gender especially the integration of women in achieving success in rural agriculture was emphasized.
- The need to link research and policy to “real” farmer issues was also noted.
- Decisions made at micro levels (global, national, community) determine the importance of a particular variable in influencing the futures of rural areas.

**Methodology adopted for the entire foresight exercise**

The training adopted a participatory prospective analysis (PPA) that comprises of several steps namely:
- Defining the limits of the system: 2030, Africa, and the sustainability of rural areas
- Identifying the variables
- Defining the variables
- Analyzing their mutual influences
- Identification and selection of the key variables
- Defining the states of the variables
- Building up scenarios
- Implications of the scenarios and related actions

The outcomes of the mapping exercise as well as the structural analysis are presented in various parts of this document both in tabulated and graphic forms.

**Identification and definition of variables**

The participants were asked to list on cards the variables that had, have, or will have an influence on the sustainability of rural areas in Africa according to their understanding. Many variables were listed down and a plenary discussion led to a final list of 18 variables in total (Table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geopolitics of Africa</td>
<td>This was discussed in view of regional conflicts around natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural values related to agriculture and development</td>
<td>The perceptions and behaviour towards certain agricultural practices and rural development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequalities in rural areas</td>
<td>The gender roles and distribution of resources across different social groups particularly women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of research institutions to influence government policies</td>
<td>Includes the role of knowledge/expertise in decision making circles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education on rural livelihoods</td>
<td>Education relating to knowledge, knowhow and skills for developing business activities in rural areas (including but not limited to farming).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of infrastructure in rural areas</td>
<td>Includes roads, energy, water, sanitation, ICT etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of investment in rural areas</td>
<td>The flow of investment from all sectors (including private, individual, foreign) in rural areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to financial services in rural areas</td>
<td>Includes loans for agri-businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political will to invest in agriculture</td>
<td>The willingness of national governments to commit resources and ensure actions in agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulation of access to productive natural resources</td>
<td>These include water, land and forests. Regulation refers to who has what rights on these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional arrangements for rural development</td>
<td>This relates to how stakeholders collaborate. It includes arrangements that bring different actors together like business oriented public private partnerships (PPPs) or farmers associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics of land appropriation</td>
<td>How rural land and in particular agricultural land is used by various social groups. This sometimes reflect the dynamics of the land tenure system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability &amp; resilience of vulnerable rural communities to changing climatic conditions</td>
<td>The capacity of the rural poor to sustainably deal with climate related challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The types of production systems</td>
<td>Relates to the nature of and intensity of use of inputs and the functions they perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitability of agriculture</td>
<td>The monetary return from engaging in farming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm work</td>
<td>How difficult it is to farm, refers to drudgery of agricultural work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth migration to cities</td>
<td>The number of young people who prefer to move to cities rather than stay in rural areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics of population growth in Africa</td>
<td>How the growth of population is evolving and distributed across different regions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES DAY 2 – 16 JULY 2013**

The day started by reflecting on the results of the previous day’s group exercise that focussed on identification and definition of variables. The participants were introduced to the methodology that was used to understand the multiple and complex links between all the 18 variables.

**Structural analysis**

Understanding of the links between the 18 variables was achieved through structural analysis. This analysis entails evaluation of the existence of a direct and strong influence of each variable on all the other variables. Data is entered in an influence/dependence matrix and is computed in order to calculate the strength of each variable. Variables are also displayed on an influence/dependence
This process provides a quantitative basis for the identification of the key drivers from which scenarios are then built. For this analysis, participants were asked to attach zero (0) to variables that have no direct or weak/indirect influence and one (1) to direct and strong influence. This culminated to Figure 1. The results of the structural analysis of the 18 variables are displayed in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Influence/dependence matrix with the 18 variables identified

Figure 2 below presents the graph displaying the position of each variable on double axis space with the influence level of each variable on the vertical axis and the dependence on the horizontal one. The graph presents four quadrant representing (clockwise and starting from the upper left quadrant) respectively the key drivers, the leverage variables (or stakes), outputs variables and outsiders.

Figure 2: Results of computation of the variables based on influence/dependence links
Key drivers
From the above structural analysis, four drivers of the future sustainability of rural areas in Africa were identified as follows. It is important to note that these drivers are socio-political and cultural in nature.

- Political will to invest in agriculture,
- Level of investment and resulting state of infrastructure in rural areas (including access to financial services),
- Cultural values regarding agriculture and development,
- Gender inequalities.

Other variables such as education for rural livelihoods could also have been added for scenario building. However, the time constraint did not allow for a fully comprehensive inclusion of more than four drivers.

The analysis that ensued pointed to the fact that, in addition to the importance of the above mentioned drivers, the analysis of indirect influence helps identifying other drivers that, though they are currently less remarkable, are becoming gradually important in the future (Table 3). This table highlights the following less usual variables:

- Adaptability and resilience of vulnerable communities to climatic conditions,
- Youth migration to cities,
- Institutional arrangements for rural development (how stakeholders collaborate),
- Dynamics of land appropriation (how rural land is used by various social groups),

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Evolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geopolitics of Africa</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural values</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research to policies</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequalities</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education rural livelihoods</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of infrastructure</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>-43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of investment in RA</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>-32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to financial services RA</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>-39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political will invest in agriculture</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to natural prod resources</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional arrangement for rural dev</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>273%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics of land appropriation</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>183%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities Adaptation &amp; resilience</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>1510%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food production systems</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitability of agriculture</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth migration</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>1392%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics of Population growth</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>376%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm work</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Direct and indirect strength of the variables and change in their strength from direct to indirect.
Part of the day was then dedicated to scenarios building using the key drivers formerly identified through structural analysis. The exercise was intended to give the participants an understanding of how to build contrasting scenarios building in relation to the different drivers. The participants were divided into two groups. During the group exercise, participants were challenged and prompted to ask questions that were aimed at triggering thinking towards identification of contrasting and mutually exclusive scenarios.

For each key driver participants had to propose hypotheses about how the future state of these drivers could be in 2030. Plausibility of these hypotheses, not probability of occurrence was the criteria used to identify mutually incompatible and contrasted hypotheses. The results of this group exercise are presented in Table (3). Each line of the table displays the hypotheses the participants made. The table defines in columns the backbone of four contrasted scenarios. However, due to time constraint these scenarios were not further explored and developed. Other scenarios could have been anticipated with more key drivers and more time to reflect on alternative combinations of variables and hypotheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Drivers</th>
<th>Sc1 (likely)</th>
<th>Sc 2. (undesirable)</th>
<th>Sc3. (desirable)</th>
<th>Sc4. (unexpected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural values related to agriculture &amp; development</td>
<td>Continuation of the negative perceptions of agriculture development</td>
<td>Continuation of the negative perceptions of agriculture development</td>
<td>Pro-farming cultural values drive agricultural growth &amp;development</td>
<td>Opposing cultural values on how to conduct agriculture &amp; develop rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of investment and resulting state of infrastructure</td>
<td>Due to low levels of investment, African spaces continue to develop at the current slow space without new ideas</td>
<td>Complete disregard of the rural economy hence zero investment &amp; complete breakdown of existing services</td>
<td>All public &amp; private investment is in the rural economy leading to urban- rural migration &amp; re-&quot;ruralisation&quot; of Africa</td>
<td>Investment in the rural area giving up agriculture to business &amp; services thus enhancing food insecurity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political will to invest in agriculture</td>
<td>Commitment to invest in agriculture but insufficient actions</td>
<td>Lack of political will to mobilise investment in agriculture; Politicians invest in agriculture for their own political gain/interests</td>
<td>Global opportunities and local context create incentives for policy makers to invest in agriculture</td>
<td>Politicians in the poorest and marginalised rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequalities in rural areas</td>
<td>Existing gender inequalities continue to undermine gender gains achieved, re-enforced by culture and value systems</td>
<td>Patriarchal and matriarchal systems and power relations are entrenched and re-enforced</td>
<td>All people have equitable opportunity to realise their full potential, have access to resources, services and social rights</td>
<td>Power to women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Insights from participants for reporting to FARA General Assembly

Using a guided reporting format, each side event was requested to come up with a brief synthesis report reflecting on the various deliberations. This report was to be presented to the wider conference participants during the subsequent plenary sessions. This initial brainstorming discussion involved all the participants. This section covers the discussion that ensued.

What participants hoped to achieve from the foresight workshop

- Understand the emerging issues in rural areas and how they will affect sustainable future and how to navigate around them.
- Explore how sustainable rural areas will emerge in the future?
- Learn how to use foresight in designing programmes on sustainable development, to provide an outlook of the whole system, not disjointed parts.
- Understand how scenarios emerge and how they can be used to shape thinking and influence change. It was noted that scenarios tend to trigger wide range of ideas, emotions and rethinking towards asking what can be done for sustainable future.
- Learning about foresights as a new tool.
- Understand how the theme of the conference “Africa feeding Africa” could be achieved.
- Foresight training was seen as a tool to unlock the potential towards achieving this theme, making one to ask questions like, are rural systems sustainable and how sustainability can be enhanced?

Content of the report

As mentioned above, this is presented in line with the reporting format provided by FARA.

a) Objective of the foresight workshop

Engagement of participants in systems thinking to build scenarios in future sustainability of rural areas in Africa

b) Messages from the participants to the organisers/stakeholders

The following are some messages that came out of what the participants felt was a system thinking and highly interactive process.

- Engage in further reflections on foresight in similar or related forums. More time should be allocated to the training.
- Need to build capacity in foresight to enable use of this approach in rural areas and sustainable agriculture. The foresight academy was cited as a good platform to initiate this endeavor.
- Big messages that came up from the collaborative group work relates to paying attention to forgotten, yet important drivers that are specific to Africa like the role of drudgery/hard work in future of sustainable rural areas.
- Foresight helps in building the future with the future in mind; triggering important questions around how to guide policy makers, the youth, children etc?
- Foresight is as a tool not only for raising awareness about contrasting plausible states, but also for public action.
- Foresight thinking encourages system’s thinking around the future sustainability of rural areas.
c) **Actions emanating from this workshop in the next three years**

The following are some immediate actions that participants suggested they will undertake personally or corporately.

- They will act as champions to engage people in their respective organizations in foresights thinking/exercises.
- They will also endeavor to foster foresight thinking at different implementation levels – global, community, national and make comparisons across levels.
- A training workshop for farmers consortium in NENA (Near East & North Africa) region Jordan organized by AARINENA
- A training workshop for farmers in Kenya coordinated by the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Kenya in collaboration with the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kenya.

**FORESIGHT WORKSHOP EVALUATION**

Participants were asked to voluntarily evaluate the two days workshop using different methods. Three charts were pinned to the wall. The first one captured written sentences about the overall qualitative evaluation of the participants. The two other quantitative forms were intended to elicit their views about the process (methodology) of the training and the relevance of the content. The results of the evaluation are presented below.

**Free sentences capturing the participants’ perception of the workshop**

“An exciting and fun, yet useful way of visioning; and planning for the future”

1. “Innovative approach of the workshop. Excellent!!”
2. “The process and methodology is interactive, innovative, challenging and creative”
3. “Very interesting and exciting methodology. I shall learn more about it.”
4. “Very exciting, relevant and thought stimulating.”
5. “Exciting yet complicated.”
6. “Highly participatory, inclusive and exciting; very relevant and stimulating with great vision.”
7. “Fun, fun, fun. Eye opening, educational, innovative, thought provoking.” (two comments)

The pictures of the rating of the workshop by the participants displayed below indicate a high rate of satisfaction both in terms of process and in terms of content.
Overall, all participants found the training very useful and productive, resonating well with their expectations captured at the beginning of the workshop.

**CLOSING REMARKS**

- Participants were grateful to FARA and GFAR for organizing the workshop.
- Robin was also appreciative of the participants’ enthusiasm and active participation.

**ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES DAY THREE, 17 JULY 2013**

**Preparation of synthesis report to FARA**

Following the intense interactive discussion in the first two days, the facilitators were charged with the task of preparing a synthesis report to FARA, according to a reporting format provided by FARA. This report was presented to the conference participants during the plenary sub theme 2 “Innovations to improve productivity and resilience” on the third day of the conference, the 19th July 2013. The summary of this synthesis report is annexed to this workshop report (Annex 3).
ANNEX 1: AGENDA

Day 1: July 15 2013

Morning 09:00 to 13:00
- Plenary (45 minutes)
  o Introductions of participants
  o Introduction to foresight (25 minutes): R. Bourgeois
  o The multiple dimensions of sustainability of rural areas - K.S. Njonjo
- Facilitated group work: the drivers of the sustainability of rural areas in Africa (2 working groups; 2 and ½ hours)
  o Identification of drivers
  o Trends and discontinuities
- Plenary: reports from the groups and consolidation (Group exercise)

Afternoon 14:00 to 18:00
- Facilitated group work: mapping the sustainability of rural areas in Africa as a system and identification of driving forces (2 working groups; 2 and ½ hours)
- Plenary: reports from the group work and consolidation - A. Kingiri
- Introduction to scenarios - R. Bourgeois
- Group exercise (2 working groups; 2 and ½ hours)
  o Systemic linkages between drivers
  o Identification of key drivers

Day 2: July 16 2013

Morning 09:00 to 13:00
- Facilitated group work: Building scenarios of the futures of sustainability of rural areas (2 working groups; 3 hours)
  o Identification of plausible futures for the key drivers
  o Discontinuities with current situation
- Plenary: Sharing scenarios (Group exercise)

Afternoon 14:00 to 18:00
- Facilitated group work: Scenarios’ implications for “Africa feeding Africa” (3 working groups; 2 hours)
- Plenary:
  o Reports from the Group work and consolidation - A. Kingiri
- Wrap up and next steps - R. Bourgeois
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution/country</th>
<th>Activity/Role</th>
<th>Contact/email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mbosonge Mwenechanya</td>
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<td>World Fish, AAS Zambia</td>
<td>Aquatic Agriculture systems</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immaculate Njuthe Maina</td>
<td>Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Ngenge Ngeh</td>
<td>Young Farmers Development Group, Cameroon</td>
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<td>Felista Makini</td>
<td>Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon. Sephiri Motanyane</td>
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<td>Makopoi Molapo</td>
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<td>Prof. Clements Adebooye</td>
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<td>Sonali Bisht</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cephas Mounga</td>
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<td>Obafemi Awolowo, University Ile -Life Nigeria</td>
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<td>Andrew Ward</td>
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ANNEX 3: SYNTHESIS REPORT TO FARA

Objective of the foresight workshop
Engage participants in systems thinking to build scenarios on the future sustainability of rural areas in Africa and produce insights on future sustainability of rural areas in Africa

Participant’s expectation about the workshop

Learning about foresight, system thinking and what they can achieve for sustainable rural areas
- Learn how to use foresight in designing programmes on sustainable development, to provide an outlook of the whole system, not disjointed parts.
- Understand how scenarios emerge and how they can be used to shape thinking and influence change
- Identify ignored drivers and explore emerging issues that might affect agriculture, the future sustainability of rural areas, and how to address them.

Insights on future sustainability of rural areas
The foresight workshop using system’s thinking engaged the participants to think about the future sustainability of rural areas in Africa as a case relevant for this conference. Through this process, they identified 18 drivers/forces leading to 4 scenarios. Considering their importance, the group find it useful to share some insights with the conference participants as follows.

1. The key drivers of the future sustainability of rural areas in Africa are socio-political and cultural in nature. They include;
   - Cultural values regarding agriculture and development,
   - political will to invest in agriculture,
   - level of investment in infrastructure in rural areas,
   - gender inequalities
2. Pay attention to forgotten, yet important drivers that are specific to Africa like the importance of the drudgery (tedious hard work) for the future of sustainable rural areas.
3. Pay attention to ignored drivers with a delayed impact on the sustainability of rural areas. These include:
   - Vulnerable communities adaptation and resilience to climatic conditions,
   - Youth migration to cities,
   - Institutional arrangements for rural development (how stakeholders collaborate),
   - Dynamics of land appropriation (how rural land is used by various social groups,)
   - Geopolitics of Africa (tension and conflicts between countries),
   - Types of food production systems.

Food for the future
- Foresight training unlocks the potential for system thinking about the future with the future in mind.
- Foresights as a tool not only for raising awareness about contrasting plausible states but also for public action.
- Need to build capacity in foresight to enable the use of this approach in rural areas for sustainable agriculture. (The African foresight academy was cited as a good platform to initiate this endeavor. A training workshop for farmers consortium in NENA (Near East & North Africa) region Jordan will be organized by AARINENA)
Pre-plenary foresight event on

*The future sustainability of rural areas and implication for Africa Feeding Africa*

Summary report to
FARA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Sub-Theme 2 - Innovations to Improve Productivity and Resilience

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**Objectives of the foresight two-day workshop**

- Engage participants in system thinking through foresight
- Reflect on the future sustainability of rural areas in Africa

**Participant’s expectation**

*Learning about foresight, system thinking and what they can achieve for sustainable rural areas*

- Learn how to use foresight in designing programmes on sustainable development, to provide an outlook of the whole system, not disjointed parts.
- Identify ignored drivers and explore emerging issues that might affect agriculture, the future sustainability of rural areas.
- Understand how scenarios emerge and how they can be used to shape thinking and influence change.
Two insights on the future sustainability of rural areas

The key drivers of the future sustainability of rural areas in Africa are socio-political and cultural in nature. They include:

- Political will to invest in agriculture
- Level of investment and infrastructure in rural areas
- Gender inequalities
- Cultural values regarding agriculture and development,

Pay attention to forgotten, yet important drivers that are specific to Africa or with a delayed impact on the sustainability of rural areas. These include:

- Farm work conditions (tedious hard work)
- Adaptation and resilience of vulnerable communities to climatic conditions
- Youth migration to cities
- Institutional arrangements for rural development (how stakeholders collaborate)
- Dynamics of land appropriation (how rural land is used by various social groups)
- Geopolitics of Africa (tension and conflicts between countries)

Food for the future

✓ Foresight unlocks the potential for system thinking about the future “with the future in mind”.

✓ Foresights as a tool not only for raising awareness about contrasting plausible futures but also for public action.

✓ Build capacity in foresight to enable the use of this approach in rural areas for sustainable agriculture and development.