



Former Deputy Regional Representative for Africa advocates for more resources in agriculture

☉ *Dr. Lamourdia Thiombiano, new FAO Sub-regional Coordinator for North Africa calls on the agricultural sector to play its role as true engine of economic growth on the continent*

Outgoing Country Representative in Ghana and Deputy-Regional Representative, Lamourdia Thiombiano, has urged the Governments of African countries to continue committing more resources to agriculture to truly play its role as the engine of sustainable growth.

He said the sector still is known as a huge potential source of employment and generates more income in terms of both trade and at the household levels, but the portion of resources being allocated is not up to the expectations.

In an interview with FAO Communication in Accra, before leaving for his new duty station – Tunis – Dr. Thiombiano said the Organization is doing well but faced with the challenge of continued advocating, mobilizing resources and convincing policy makers and partners to allocate the needed resources for an effective boost of the sector. “We need to come up together with key areas of effective collaboration in terms of pulling our

resources; our financial, human and knowledge resources together to support for instance the community development centres for value chains development in Ghana which are concrete illustrations of the implementation of the priorities within the country programming framework signed with the Government.”

The scope of challenges

According Dr Thiombiano, the Organization with the interesting challenge of remaining relevant to the needs of countries, communities and the overall continent in the

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Dr. Lamourdia Thiombiano, new FAO Sub-regional Coordinator for North Africa

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SOFI 2015 report: key messages

IGAD and FAO step up their collaboration for Food Security in the Region



IGAD and FAO Participants at the lunch of the project to support the Co,prehensive Africa Agriculture Programme

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have launched a project to support the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) process in the sub-region.

Technical experts have exchanged on a work plan to ensure the IGAD CAADP Regional Investment Plan be comprehensive and address emerging regional agricultural development, food security and nutrition challenges; in addition.

Stakeholders discussed particular priority areas on investment which will seek to align with current national, regional and continental developments, such as the Malabo Declaration and IGAD's own initiatives.

The IGAD Secretariat has requested FAO's assistance in formulating a Regional Investment Plan within the African Agriculture Development Program initiated by the African Union, and on the basis of which a CAADP Compact will be prepared, aiming at supporting and completing the efforts undertaken for food security and agriculture development at a national level.

Urtcantcaterpillars threatening rice fields in Guinea



To improve the crucial deficit, FAO made available to the Ministry of Agriculture a considerable number of durable equipment on 11 June 2015.

Controlling the invasion of rice fields in Guinea, by urtcantcaterpillars and reinforcing the operational and material capacities of the workers in the sector,

appear to be the key factors for improving agricultural productivity. The direct damages caused by various pests on crops and foodstuff, is estimated at more than 30% at

the national level, hence controlling their population will incur significant additional economic costs for the government and its partners.

A statement issued by FAO in Conakry, Guinea, says the material, financial and technical capacity limitation of the National Plant Protection and Stored Commodities Service (SNPV/DS) and the farmers to control the attacks of the predators and crop pests, especially with regards to rice in the region of Boké, remains a major constraint. To improve the crucial deficit, FAO made available to the Ministry of Agriculture a considerable number of durable equipment on 11 June 2015.

This includes laboratory equipment such us scales, refrigerators, binocular magnifying glasses, a microscope, incubators, entomolog-

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rapidly changing world, has proven its effective response capacities in support to member countries.

“We are in the process of resource decentralization which is also truly welcomed and well appreciated within the region and at country level and will help timely response to emerging needs of countries.”

He however pointed out that the challenge of mobilizing additional resources is particularly high in the context of middle income countries for which donors are not always ready to support in terms of financial aid. “In the case of Ghana for instance, a middle income country, there still is a high level of stunting in the Northern part of the country around 20-25%. So donors and partners should continue to give support in addressing such major challenges and FAO has played a big role in building a partnership”, he emphasized.

Lamourdia Thombiano said: “The point is how we can remain focused on results and less on processes; there is a human face behind all activities that we undertake when we are talking about alleviating hunger, it should be translated in partnerships, to make sure that the programmes and projects we implement contribute to drive people out of poverty, out of hunger and malnutrition. So, this is very important particularly within the region.”

The Ghana experience

“I had the opportunity to meet the President twice and he expressed the commitment of the country to meet the Maputo Declaration of 10% budget allocation to agriculture and to even go beyond”.

“We have and increasing strong political commitment and FAO has worked closely with the Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Land for results”.



Dr. Thombiano and FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, Mr. Bukar Tijani observing farming technique demonstration at Ghana's Farmers Day event

“Ghana has met the target of the World Food Summit and MDG We need to continue supporting the country for example in the area of Agriculture Statistics and Data as a tool for planning sustainable economic development”. He highlighted the important contribution of the UN system and gave the assurance that FAO will remain very active within the UN Country Team in support to the country. During his 2 year-tenure in Ghana, Dr. Thiombiano, expressed appreciation and gratitude to the Team within the Africa Region.’

We were able to formulate, exchange and implement together as a team at regional level; linking country offices and sub-regional offices to the regional office and HQ in Rome using for instance modern and efficient means of communication for results, impact and more resources mobilization for the agricultural sector”

Across the continent and in close collaboration with Head Quarters, I could witness the commitment of our staff including administration, technical and operations colleagues and their capacity to pull synergies together towards the implementation of the Strategic Objectives and Regional

Initiatives and to make an impact on the continent agricultural agenda, in strong partnership with the African Union, NEPAD and the Regional Economical Organizations”.



Dr. Thombiano and 'gift from staff', a traditional wooden stool

Continuation of Urtcaterpillars threatening rice fields in Guinea

ical nets, a generator, a light trap, insect breeding cages, GPS, high-speed treatment devices and vaporizers. The rest are backpack sprayers, protection kits as well as computer equipment such as desktop and laptop, laser printers, inverters, a photocopier, a multimedia projector and a scanner.

FAO's support to the SNPV/DS would allow an efficient control of the attacks by urticantcaterpillars, which cause very heavy

losses to rice production, especially in the mangrove plains and lowlands of the region of Boké.

Overall, the caterpillars attack large hectares of rice farmland. “The equipment FAO is donating to the Ministry of Agriculture through the National Plant Protection and Stored Commodities Service reflects once again a clear willingness on the part of our key partner to accompany us in achieving food self-sufficiency. “This is because by controlling the attacks of caterpillars, we will improve

productivity of both rice and vegetable crops,” said N’famara Conté, the General Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture. The urticantcaterpillars are not a threat to rice production in the region of Boké, alone but also a serious public health and environmental problem.

After reaching certain stage, their tiny hairs break while in contact with the farmer's skin and release a stinging and allergenic substance causing very severe itching, serious disturbances, oedema, eye injury, dizziness and even the paralysis of both lower and upper limbs.

FAO supports women with soft loans, Liberia

A number of women belonging to associations, whose lives were affected by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Lofa County in early 2015, have received soft loans from FAO-supported savings schemes to engage in food crop production.

They are growing rice cassava and vegetables, and their activities are meant to develop enterprises after EVD broke out. The Food and Agriculture Organisation jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture and APEX Liberia, assisted 25 women's groups (about 750 direct beneficiaries) to engage in enterprises of their choice as part of efforts to revive the Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and build affected rural livelihoods.

Beneficiaries in four districts of Lofa County got financial (cash transfer), training and field-level technical support.

Some beneficiaries in Kolahun and Quardu Gbono districts opted for agriculture as a sustainable way of regaining their lost livelihoods. Esther Ndebeh is a member of the Women Organization for Peace and Development (WOPD) in Kolahun City. "People say agriculture is business, yes, but I also say agriculture is life."

"I received L\$30,000 (US\$350) from the VSLA club to increase my pig farm and grow peanuts. I will support my children and enlarge this farm when I do my first harvest. We are now aiming higher after Ebola," she said.

WOPD Chairlady, Anna Solibah, lauded FAO and partners and urged other organizations to come in with more assistance. Samodu Rural Women Association (SRWA) in Quardu Gboni District comprises 23 members engaged in petty businesses and

the production of rice, cassava and vegetables. SRWA member, Fatu Kanneh, invested her loan in agriculture, which she said was for the future of her children. "Whatever I am doing here is for the future of my children, I want them educated and farming is the only way I can send them to school. When they are educated then we will be self-reliant once and for all."

The Ebola that hit Liberia in 2014 killed over 4,000 people and affected livelihoods of rural people to the extent that schools were closed and markets were suspended. Women and children were among the most affected. FAO's rapid assessment mission in September 2014 found out that there was a possible reduction in food production by 10 to 25 percent in worst affected communities in Lofa County.

A rapid food security and livelihoods assessment conducted by the Government and its food security cluster partners in November 2014 confirmed FAO's report.

FAO boosts support to the Holima agribusiness centre, Sierra Leone

The Holima Agriculture Business Centre in Fengehun Village, Bo District, received from FAO building materials for the construction of a poultry breeding farm.

The construction of this farm is part of FAO's continued support to the Ebola recovery process. Following the impact of the outbreak on rural livelihoods, the aim is to support agricultural production and promote added value to enhance income generation and a better access to food.

The Chairlady of the farmers, Mariama Koroma of Holima Agribusiness Centre, expressed gratitude to FAO for its support. She intimated that the community had long

been yearning to breed poultry because of its essence for both income generation and as a source of protein in their food intake.

Mariama maintained that the poultry farming will greatly help them to recover from the economic losses caused by the Ebola outbreak. "We are very hopeful that the Ebola disease will be eradicated and the ban on periodic markets will be lifted so that we can sell the layers to increase our income", she stated. She promised that her membership will work hard to ensure that all conditions are met to ensure productivity. She explained, for instance, that the Centre will always have rice-brand to feed the chickens as it runs a milling site. Mem-

bers will also plant corn to feed the layers. The Holima Agribusiness Centre comprises eight Farmer Based Organizations whose members live in several villages of the Kakua Chiefdom, all depending on agriculture for their livelihood and the sustenance of their families.

FAO will procure five hundred layers as a starter for the Holima Poultry farm. With FAO's support, two members of the Centre have already been trained in good poultry management and acquired specific skills in food mixture, right feeding measurement, disease prevention and sanitary measures, vaccination, egg collection and handling.



Beneficiary Makon Bayo in Barkedu: "I was sitting doing nothing until FAO and ADC came with this help"

Ebola was a strange war

strange war. She recalls: "For me, Ebola was a strange war on us. It killed many people, broke down our businesses, stopped our movements and made people from the same family afraid to touch one another"

My brothers who used to assist me were killed by the disease". She remembers how FAO restored hope to her after the

trying times: "I sat all day doing nothing until FAO came and put money in our 'susu' (Village Savings and Loans schemes) where I took money."

Thank God I am now selling my vegetables and no longer idle." Makon is member of one of the 25 women farmers associations who is actively engaged in Ebola

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awareness-campaign and reviving their saving and loans schemes thanks to joint efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO. Matengbeh Jabateh, Co-Chairlady of the Samodu Rural Women Association in Samodu Town, explains: “The first thing we did as women was to unite and join hands against Ebola”.

“Apart from observing the rules ourselves, we were trained by FAO and ADC and we went door-to-door in our communities to spread the prevention messages to women, children and elderly. It was a clever method against Ebola”, she further explained.

Koboi Larmine, the Programme Advisor of the Africa Development Corps (ADC), FAO’s implementing partner, expresses satisfaction as he sees the women bounce back to restart their businesses: “We worked with 25 women’s associations, trained them and sent them to do the Ebola awareness in communities. They also received cash injections into their savings and started their businesses and farming activities.” Commenting on the



successes of these activities so far, FAO Representative in Liberia, Mr. Marc Abdala praised FAO’s interventions: “From all indications, FAO is pleased to see rural women gradually regain their livelihoods and resume normal agricultural, market and

other livelihoods activities. FAO will now continue to support them in improved lowland rice and vegetable production as well as maintaining the awareness campaign to ensure Ebola does not return.”

FAO honours Mr Issah Michael Aselekum for his long dedicated service

Praising his exceptional qualities and commitment towards work, the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, Mr Bukar Tijani awarded, on behalf of the Director-General, a silver medal to Mr Issah Michael Aselekum who has served FAO without interruption for 25 years.

Speaking at the brief ceremony attended by staff from the Regional Office for Africa and FAO Ghana Country Office, Mr Tijani accounted the humble beginning of Mr. Issah in the Organization and how he demonstrate sincerity and honesty towards work.

He also stated that, FAO recognizes the contribution of all staff irrespective of their ranks or positions.

As he reiterated, “I challenge all of you seated here today to aim at getting such an award through your commitment, dedication and hard work aimed at achieving tangible results for the Organization”.

In a brief interview, Mr Issah, who is popularly called “Papa Issah” by staff, recounted how he started working with



FAO Assistant Director-General and Representative for Africa Bukar Tijani presenting 25 year-medal to Issah Michael Aselekum

FAO in Ghana since May 1986, with the intention of working as a driver. However, he was designated to be a Caretaker at the Regional Office for Africa. He also avers how through his hard work at FAO he has managed to take good care of his eight children.

He expressed his gratitude to management for their good human relations and support towards his work

and thanked the Organization for recognizing his contribution in achieving the vision and mission of FAO.

Testimonial

Most staff who attended the ceremony attested to the high level of commitment, honesty and exemplary life style Mr Issah has exhibited over the years working with the Organization and vouched for his sincerity and loyalty and integrity.



Family farming is the predominant form of agriculture both in developed and developing countries. There are over 500 million family farms in the world and family farming is responsible for 80% of world's food supply.

In recognition of the contributions of family farmers to food security and poverty eradication worldwide, FAO recently launched the Family Farming Knowledge Platform which gathers digitized quality information on family farming and smallholder farming from all over the world, including national laws and regulations, public policies, best practices, statistics, researches, articles and publications.

The Family Farming Knowledge Platform was also established in response to the concerns expressed during the 2014 International Year of Family Farming (IYFF), whereby, various partners and stakeholders expressed the need to go beyond the 2014 celebrations and to put in place a set of concrete actions aimed at addressing the family farming issues raised throughout the year. There was consensus on the crucial necessity of providing information sharing and knowledge-based assistance for policy making.

Closing the knowledge gap

International entities, from governments and multilateral organizations to research consortiums and NGOs, have identified open data for agriculture as a vital component for addressing the myriad of challenges facing food and agriculture. Since information on family farming is scattered and incoherent, there is a need to integrate and systematize existing information on family farming to better inform and provide knowledge-based assistance not only to policy-makers and development experts, but also to stakeholders in the field, at the grassroots level.

The Family Farming Knowledge Platform provides a single access point for international, regional and national information related to family farming issues. It aims to facilitate an open and immediate access to relevant data on family farming, improving information sharing pathways among policy makers, farmers' organizations and researchers. The platform also aims to facilitate the interchange and sharing of documentation regarding juridical frame-

Closing the knowledge gap in family farming: Family Farming Knowledge Platform



Photo Credit: FAO

Knowledge sharing platform remains a critical factor in bridging the information gap on family farming

works, policies, programmes, international cooperation and investments in support of family farms.

Bridging the information gap in family farming and smallholder farming in Africa

In Africa, most of the over 70% people living in rural areas practice family farming and 60 percent of the "farms" are smaller than one hectare. Family farming, despite present low productivity levels, is responsible for 70% of Africa's food supply.

The Africa Regional Dialogue on Family Farming held in November 2013 underlined that the low levels of productivity characteristic of many family farmers across the continent was due to various factors which include limited access to capital inputs, high levels of risk from environmental factors such as drought, poor access to markets and limited access to reliable information for policy makers.


Closing the knowledge gap in family farming can produce significant gains as different countries and stakeholders will be able to learn from their different experiences and this will lead improved policy formulation based on reliable information. Using the Platform as a worldwide knowledge reference on family

farming can assist policy makers and other stakeholders by facilitating policy discussion, policy design and decision making on family farming.

Conclusion

Family farmers have an enormous potential to contribute to food security in the continent, but require support from all stakeholders in order for them to address the various challenges they face.

Therefore, for this initiative to succeed, collaboration between FAO and various stakeholders is of the highest importance. FAO welcomes contributions from all interested entities including Research Organizations, Universities, Non-Governmental Organizations, Development Agencies and Farmers' Organizations willing to participate in the project by sending factual, notable, verifiable and neutrally presented content. Interested parties can submit expressions of interest in collaborating to the Platform by writing to family-farming@fao.org

 ***In Africa, most of the over 70% people living in rural areas practice family farming and 60 percent of the "farms" are smaller than one hectare.***

Informing, communicating and raising awareness on Zero Hunger Initiative for West Africa

"Setting up networking mechanisms emerged as a major priority"

The achievement of the Hunger Free Initiative results requires a strong political commitment, capacity building of regional and national stakeholders for the implementation of the CAADP/ECOWAP; therefore, it needs an engaging communication, coordination and accountability building.

Out of the 5 Africa Regional Economic Commissions, ECOWAS is the most forward-looking region in advancing the agenda of the CAADP, through among others, the development and implementation of the ECOWAP, the Hunger Free Initiative, as well as embracing the Malabo 2014 declaration strategy, road map and result framework.

Two FAO-ECOWAS projects, "Establishing a West Africa Hunger Free Initiative" funded by the German cooperation and "Strengthening the capacity of ECOWAS for the implementation of the CAADP/ECOWAP" sponsored by the Spanish cooperation, are striving to contribute to the implementation of the ECOWAP in the framework of the African Union Commission/NEPAD's Roadmap on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods in Africa.

After ten years of implementation of its agricultural policy (ECOWAP) and Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in collaboration with its technical and financial partners, is planning to organize an international high-level conference to review, learn lessons and re-strategize its agriculture policy and plan towards 2025 by November this year.

Therefore, it is essential to inform, sensitize, advocate, raise the awareness and mobilize all actors and stakeholders around one goal, strengthen coordination and accountability and to build synergies between all policies, strategies and programs at both regional and national levels.

To that end, a strong and winning communication is essential in order to raise awareness of all, keep the momentum of the Hunger free initiative at the highest level, but also to disseminate success and challenges, to trigger the needed changes towards achieving CAADP's 2025 vision.



The main outcome of the meeting was the creation of an ECOWAS-led communication hub to support the West Africa Zero Hunger initiative.

Photo Credit: FAO

For the first time ever, a diversified range of communication specialists met to initiate a Communication Plan for a Regional Economic Community of Africa. Representatives shared sub-regional overviews on the state of progress of the above mentioned projects, of the engagement with CSOs and the scaling up of advocacy, and of communication efforts that can support projects for effective and maximum impact within ECOWAS and with partners.

The consultation, hosted by FAO in Lomé, Togo (25-26 June 2015), looked at mechanisms and approaches for mobilizing and creating synergies with existing sub-regional platforms and their communications assets to ensure outreach and visibility for the Hunger Free Initiative in West Africa by the year 2025 such as ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, CSAO and partners such as FAO.

Open discussions brought up suggestions to consolidate an initial one year-and a half (July 2015 – December 2016) communication plan that will be submitted for approval to the executive and technical managers of the programme, for immediate implementation. In the course of the action plan implementation, the overall communication would span from the period before, during and after the high level conference.

The main outcome of the meeting is the creation of an ECOWAS-led communication hub to support the West Africa Zero Hunger initiative. Additionally, the following results were obligated:

The meeting participants have a shared understanding of the Zero hunger initiative, its links with the ECOWAP/PRIA and what need to be achieved in terms of communication to make it happen;

Participants have been informed and are abreast of existing communication activities and tools used by involved institutions

The creation of an ECOWAS Zero Hunger website has been adopted.

A draft action plan and budget has been elaborated: Under the general leadership of ECOWAS, the ECOWAS Zero Hunger Initiative communication network is expected to play the following roles.

Serves as a platform for leveraging communication among key regional institutions and with key State and non-State recipients at both regional and country level

Facilitates information and knowledge flow at all levels and strengthen the ZHI communication network.

Supports communication and advocacy with appropriate tools.

The overall strategy would foresee that , by the end of 2016, , ECOWAS will have fully taken up the Zero Hunger Initiative communication activities and internalized them in its regular activities.

FAO supports the use of spent grains as organic fertilizer



The project is a response in line with the National Programme for Agricultural Investment and Food and Nutrition Security (PNIASAN). FAO's Resilience program aimed at implementing response and mitigation strategies towards the adverse effects of the crisis.

A project meant to address the disruption of the meat food and vegetable supply chain to populations in a highly vulnerable areas has been launched last June in Bangui, the Central African Republic called in French “Approvisionnement en drêche (déchets de la brasserie) des producteurs péri-urbains et insertion professionnelle des jeunes désœuvrés de Bangui et ses environs”, it would be implemented by the Committee for Integrated Development of GrassrootsCommunities (CODICOM) with technical and financial support from FAO.

The project is a in line with the National Programme for Agricultural Investment and Food and Nutrition Security (PNIASAN), and is part of FAO's Resilience program aimed at implementing response and mitigation strategies towards the adverse effects of the crisis.

It contributes to the recapitalization of vulnerable peri-urban producers and the recovery and increase in peri-urban production on the one hand, and to the reduction of the unemployment rate through socio-professional integration of unemployed youth of Bangui and its surroundings, on the other hand. The ceremony provided an opportunity for the 16 groups of the 7th arrondissement of Bangui to benefit from kits consisting of

wheelbarrows, pairs of boots and gloves, shovels, rakes, rickshaws and mufflers, following a technical capacity building provided to 120 trainers engaged to support the 430 producers—vegetable producers, fish farmers and pig farmers—identified in the four selected arrondissements for this three-month pilot project.

The Mayor of the 7th arrondissement of Bangui, Mr. Joseph Tagbalet, on behalf of his peers of the 4th, 6th and 8th arrondissements, said: “The selection of the 7th arrondissement to take the lead in the implementation of this project makes us proud, but we also know that it is a major challenge because the success of this project will depend on our level of involvement.”

The Project Manager, Raymond Mbadjiré, stressed: “We had to brave fear and psychosis and go to our compatriots in the so-called high-risk areas because for us, what really counts is to give everybody a chance to produce and have enough to eat, to give this chance to even those immersed in violence, to break out from it and participate in the national reconciliation and cohesion.” For the FAO Representative, Jean-Alexandre Scaglia, “this positive and optimistic view is an example to follow in

Central African Republic, and there is a need to recognize in the near future that initiatives like this are important solutions that can bring significant benefits to the country's economy. The specific target of these efforts is the youth. I would like to stress how important it is to the youth to regain hope for a better life. This hope in CAR remains largely in agricultural activities.”

The Minister for Livestock, Mohamed Yacoub Tahib, pointed out: “Taking into account the warning from the United Nations system in Central African Republic that the current year will still go through a rather troubling times with regards to food security, the Government will make every effort to ensure that some projects similar to that of CODICOM's receive funding and get implemented in order to further build the resilience of populations in vulnerable situations.”

As part of this institutional partnership, CODICOM received a financial support of USD 24,000 from FAO, over 200 tonnes of wet spent grains from the brewery MOCAF, and technical support from the Ministry to boost production and partly meet the high demand of urban consumers for animal proteins.



Forum on open data and open science in agriculture held in Kenya

A stakeholders' forum on open data and open science held in Kenya agreed that there is huge value and benefits to be unlocked through open data and science to advance agriculture.

Open data and open science have great potential for enhanced and effective decision making and transparency in agriculture, ultimately for sustainable management of natural resources, improved production, food and nutrition security in Africa.

With the support of the FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAF) and the Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development (OPC), the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) in June 2015 organized the forum for stakeholders to discuss and agree on strategies for open data and open science in agriculture in Kenya.

Increasingly, governments and international development organizations around the world are making their data sets available, on open platforms, for re-use by the development community to improve data's contribution to national, regional and global development initiatives.

While Africa has easy access to global agriculture data and science, data generated on the continent, especially by public institutions, is largely not very visible and easily available for re-use by other stake-



Photo Credit: FAO

While Africa has easy access to global agriculture data and science, data generated on the continent, especially by public institutions, is largely not very visible and easily available for re-use by other stakeholders due to several challenges.

holders due to several challenges. Open data and open science require an enabling environment that includes appropriate government policies, and data archiving policies and strategies of research organizations and research funders.

The existing reward systems for researchers/scientists that focus on publishing in high impact journals and job promotion is not supportive of open sharing of data and open science and this need to be revised. Efforts made in fostering collaborative multi-disciplinary research work, and communicating the relevance and usefulness of the research that address-

es local problems to the policy makers in governments and the beneficiaries should be rewarded to encourage open sharing of data generated through research.

The forum recommended focusing open data and open science initiatives in Africa on impacting positively on the livelihoods of farmers and rural communities; to sensitize various stakeholders in agriculture research on Creative Commons licensing as one of the approaches to achieve open data and open science; and to consolidate the Forum on Open Data and Open Science in Agriculture to continue the consultations and maintain the momentum that had been initiated at the Nairobi event.

Following the outcomes of the Nairobi event, OPC and RAF have set up a virtual forum on Dgroups to serve as a platform for sharing knowledge and discussing activities to improve the visibility and open access to agriculture data and science in Africa.

Forty-four participants partook in the forum and they represented various organizations in Kenya including universities, research institutes/organizations, Government ministries innovation hubs, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), journal publishers, science academies, and United Nations agencies.



Photo Credit: FAO

Panel members at the forum: Prof. Meoli Kashorda, Dr. Simon Hodson, Prof. Muliaro Wafula and Ms. Jackie Olang



SOFI 2015 REPORT

Regional Overview of Food Insecurity
in Africa 2015

KEY MESSAGES

■ The prevalence of undernourishment in Sub-Saharan Africa declined from 33 percent to 23 percent between 1990-92 and 2014-16. However, the total number of undernourished people continues to increase with an estimated 220 million in 2014-16 compared to 175.7 million in 1990-92.

■ Western Africa has made significant achievements. It has reduced the proportion of hungry people by 60 percent thus achieving the MDG target on halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger. With respect to the World Food Summit (WFS) goal on halving the absolute number of undernourished, the sub-region reduced the number of undernourished people by 11 million since 1990-92. The Eastern and Southern Africa sub-regions also made some progress towards the MDG target while Middle Africa¹ is lagging behind with respect to both targets.

■ Of the 40 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa considered in SOFI 2015, seven countries achieved both the MDG and WFS targets, 11 achieved the MDG target and made progress on WFS while 12 countries made some progress in reaching the MDG and/or WFS targets.

■ Food availability in Sub-Saharan Africa has increased by nearly 12 percent over the past two decades.

■ The poverty rate also declined by 23 percent between 1993 and 2011 and many countries are on course to meet the MDG 1.A target of halving the proportion of people living with less than \$ 1.25 a day by 2015. These trends are having a positive effect on food security and nutrition.

■ The number of underweight children in Sub-Saharan Africa has declined over the last two decades, while stunting has stagnated and overweight is on the rise among children below five years.

■ High level leadership and good governance are required, besides political commitment, to translate Government policies and strategies into concrete actions in all the relevant sub-sectors: agriculture, health, water and sanitation, social protection, and education.

■ Ensuring effective participation of all stakeholders and setting up effective accountability systems is necessary to provide oversight and track the performance of comprehensive food security and nutrition programmes, as well as respond to the needs of targeted communities.

■ Involvement of the private sector plays an important role in strengthening linkages within agricultural supply chains, while the public sector has oversight of social welfare, disaster risk management and equitable distribution of benefits. Well-designed Private Public Partnerships (PPPs) not only enhance investment, but also develop capabilities, introduce innovations, provide technical assistance and knowledge to small producers. Benefits include increased employment and agricultural productivity, infrastructure development and strengthened market access.

■ Beside the need to adopt an integrated approach, sustained implementation of a mix of complementary and comprehensive food security and nutrition policies and programs is required over time to effectively make an impact on hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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EVENTS:

Second Meeting of the Bureau of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission, Arusha, Tanzania, 1 - 3 July 2015; Global Strategy-Expert Meeting, MPlaza, 7 – 8 July 2015; Special Regional Nutrition Coordination and Programming Consultation 07 – 11 September, 2015, Alisa Hotel Accra, XIV World Forestry Congress, South Africa, 07 – 11 September, 2015; Technical Workshop on principles guiding new Investments in Agriculture, 23 – 24 September, 2015; Gender and Agricultural Policy Assessment Tool in Ghana, October, 2015

WELCOME: Mr Trenchard Richard appointed as FAOR, Somalia eff 1/8/15

FAREWELL: Dr Lamourdia Thiombiano appointed as SRC, SNE