



7TH AFRICAN AGRICULTURE SCIENCE WEEK AND FARA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

KIGALI, RWANDA

12 – 15 JUNE 2016

Pre-plenary Meetings On:

**“Developing Capacities for a More Effective Role of Science in Africa’s Agricultural
Development”**

Co-hosted with:



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

CONCEPT NOTE

TITLE

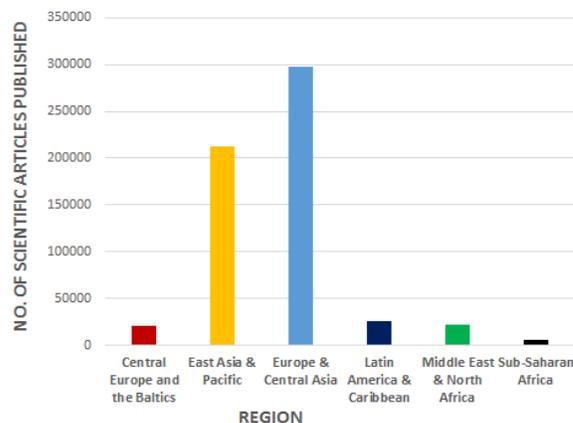
Developing Capacities for a more Effective Role of Science in Africa's Agricultural Development

BACKGROUND

ABOUT FARA AND THE SCIENCE AGENDA FOR AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

In its current strategic outlook detailed in the MTOP (2014 – 2018), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) purposes to re-assert its position as an *apex organization* bringing together and forming coalitions of major stakeholders in agricultural research for development (AR4D) in Africa as well as a *knowledge institution* that contributes to raising productivity, enhancing competitiveness and fostering integration of African agriculture. Principally, this entails facilitating country-level implementation of the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A).

Developing a S3A was borne chiefly of the urgent need for a greater role of science and technology in helping surmount the formidable challenges facing Africa's agriculture. That science is currently not playing its rightful role in Africa's agricultural and overall economic development is attested to by the grim statistics revealed by key STI indicators. Quite disappointingly, for instance, Sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) research intensity - proxied by the Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD) as a percentage of GDP - averaged a paltry 0.4% between 2007 and 2013. In comparison, the GERD increased from 1.8 to 2.1% of GDP in East Asia and Pacific countries over the same period (UNESCO, 2015¹). This dismal investment in R&D expectedly accounts for the relatively small share of scientific articles emanating from the SSA region that were published in recognized journals in 2011 as indicated in the figure below (World Bank, 2016²).



¹ UNESCO (2015). Global Investments in R&D, UNESCO Institute for Statistics Fact Sheet No. 36. UNESCO, Paris, France.

² Available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator> (Accessed 27 January 2016).

We cannot belabour these statistics that invariably depict Africa as a laggard.

Rather, it is incumbent upon Africa to ideologically commit to strengthening its role as a player in the global science space. More specifically, Africa needs to invest in the science to drive accelerated growth in the agricultural sector to ensure positive structural transformation of her economies. Besides, Africa has the highest youthful population in the world. Human capital development for gainful employment of the youth in agricultural sector would help African countries turn a potential time bomb into a demographic dividend.

At the behest of the AUC and NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), FARA has successfully led the development of the S3A document building on and harnessing its experiences over the last decade as the lead institution for implementing CAADP Pillar 4 that focused on agricultural research, technology generation and dissemination. The S3A document was ratified by African Heads of State and Governments during the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Summit of the African Union held in 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The S3A “articulates the science, technology, extension, innovations, policy and social learning that Africa needs to apply in order to meet its agricultural and overall development goals” (FARA, 2014³). It will ensure that science is strategically integrated into the continent’s current agricultural transformation agenda. Indeed, the S3A has since been adopted as the implementation framework for the science, technology and innovation dimension of the post-Malabo CAADP Roadmap and Strategy and the agriculture and food security dimension of the African Union Commission’s (AUC’s) Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024).

THE AASW AND ITS PURPOSE

The concept of an African Agriculture Science Week (AASW) was conceived by FARA and partners over a decade ago to triennially bring together key stakeholders to deliberate, recommend and endorse a portfolio of overarching collaborative measures aimed at improving Africa’s AR4D. The AASW serves as a forum for stakeholders and partners to refresh and re-affirm a shared vision for AR4D, take stock of their collective achievements on the commitments undertaken at the last AASW, and craft a new set of actions (complete with modalities for achieving specified targets) for joint implementation into the next AASW.

Thus, the AASW is an all-encompassing planning session providing a unique opportunity for collegial assemblage of all stakeholders with interests in Africa’s AR4D. Almost all major stakeholders in Africa and beyond have been represented in previous AASWs, making the event a formidable intellectual marketplace for transacting pertinent issues in African and global AR4D. The other major AR4D institutions with a regional mandate (e.g. ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF/WECARD and AFAAS) have since adopted the science week concept in dealings with their constituents and stakeholders.

³ FARA (2014). Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A): “Connecting Science” to Transform Agriculture in Africa. Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Accra, Ghana. Available at www.faraafrica.org

The 6th AASW was held 15 – 20 July 2013 in Accra, Ghana, under the theme: “Africa Feeding Africa through Agricultural Science and Innovation.” A pre-plenary event on Capacity Strengthening was held 15th - 16th July 2013 under the sub-theme: “*Strengthening Capacities for Agricultural Science and Innovation: From Frameworks to Networks and Impacts.*” Nineteen stakeholder organizations mounted various pre-plenary meetings that contributed to this broad sub-thematic area. These included FARA and sub-regional organizations (ASARECA, CCARDESA and CORAF/WECARD), NPCA, the CGIAR (IITA, ICRAF and World Fish Centre), tertiary agricultural education networks (ANAFE and RUFORUM), AWARD, AAAPD, AGRA, Agrinatura, CTA, FAO, GFAR, ICIPE, ICRA, IFS and Iowa State University. Broad recommendations from these meetings were made in the following areas:

- a) Harmonizing concepts and achieving clarity on capacity development, agricultural innovation and results;
- b) Strategies to produce entrepreneurial agricultural professionals;
- c) Pertinent areas for collaborative actions; and
- d) Avenues to facilitate improved flow of information amongst stakeholders.

The 7th AASW and FARA General Assembly will take place in Kigali, Rwanda, 13-16 June 2016. The event will focus on the operationalization of the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa at country level under the overall theme: “*Apply Science, Impact Livelihoods.*” Accordingly, the Capacity Development for Implementation Unit of FARA and participating partners will jointly host a series of pre-plenary meetings under the sub-theme: “*Developing Capacities to Ensure a more Effective Role of Science in Africa’s Agricultural Development.*” Specific topics or agenda for the pre-plenary meetings convened by various stakeholders will be decided upon based on the strategic areas of interest to the organizer with respect to developing capacities for agriculture; but are each expected to address contemporary issues on agricultural capacity development in Africa whilst uniquely contributing to the rallying sub-thematic area above. See the “Approach & Activities” section below.

SOME PERSPECTIVES ON POTENTIAL CO-THEMATIC AREAS FOR THE SIDE EVENT

The Implementation Strategy and Roadmap (ISR) to achieve the 2025 Vision on CAADP operationalizes the seven Malabo Declarations (AUC, 2014⁴) and integrates them with the CAADP Results Framework. A key objective of the ISR is “strengthened systemic capacity to implement and deliver results.” Indeed, based on experiences and lessons gathered over the first decade of CAADP, Level 3 of the CAADP Results Framework emphasizes the need to develop ‘systemic capacity’ for CAADP implementation.

⁴ AUC (2014). Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. Doc. Assembly/AU/2(XXIII).

Recognition of the need for a systems approach to capacity development in the CAADP “emphasizes the creation or strengthening of capacity for program execution independent of the permanence of an institution” (Pielemeier and Salinas-Goytia, 1999⁵). That is, developed systemic capacity should enable program execution independent of possible changes in organizational features such as personalities, technologies, social structures and resource crises (Potter and Brough, 2004⁶). A diagnostic scheme for systemic capacity development has been proposed by Potter and Brough (2004), with human capital being the central lynchpin. To sum up, within the bounds of structures, systems and roles defined by an organization, staff utilize existing facilities, inherent and acquired skills, and available tools in order to achieve set organizational goals.

Achieving the CAADP goals would require sustained agricultural productivity growth of at least 4.4% p.a. (FARA, 2006) against a myriad of uncertainties and challenges occasioned by conflicts, climate change, debilitating health epidemics, demographic transitions, and price volatilities. Developing an African foresight capacity will enable oversight agencies such as FARA to better advise agricultural sector stakeholders, particularly policy makers and development partners, on: 1) anticipated future changes and scenarios that would affect productivity growth (and food and nutrition security) in Africa; 2) associated response strategies, priorities and investments around the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa; 3) and predictive approaches for concerted action to ensure viable agricultural futures. Initial actions in this regard would entail establishment of an African Virtual Foresight Academy, identification of potential foresight topics, and constitution of foresight teams around the topics.

Further, to address the paucity of capacity to implement agricultural R&D in majority of African countries, structured collaborative service and research agreements (CSRAs) will be needed to facilitate (a) pooling of R&D infrastructure, (b) mobility of human capital, (c) harmonizing surveillance and testing (e.g. of aflatoxins) to promote cross-border certification, and (d) institutional innovations. The CSRAs will help create an enabling environment to strengthen the national and regional centres of excellence/specialization already evolving notably through the African Agricultural Productivity Programs (APPSA, EAAPP, & WAAPP) and the African Centres of Excellence (ACE) project managed by the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Inter University Council for Eastern Africa (IUCEA). Initial actions in this respect may entail compilation of a database of experts, development of mechanisms for tracking and trans-border capacity pooling and mobility, and elaboration of guidelines to be used by countries and RECs to craft specific CSRAs.

⁵ Pielemeier, J. and Salinas-Goytia, A. D. (1999). United Nations capacity building in Brazil. Chapter 3 in: Maconick R, Morgan P (eds). Capacity building supported by the United Nations: some evaluations and some lessons. New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

⁶ Potter, C. and Brough, R. (2004). Systemic capacity building: a hierarchy of needs. *Health Policy and Planning*, 19(5): 336-345.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The pre-plenary meeting will contribute specifically to two thematic areas of the 7th AASW as follows:

- i. Institutional systems and policies for making science work for African agriculture
- ii. Human capital development and the youth

Typical issues to be address will include:

- a) Action planning for demand-led capacity development for country implementation of the CAADP and Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa – 1 ½ Days; to start on Sunday, 12th June and end on 13th June 2016.
- b) Foresight in African Agriculture – 1 day on Tuesday, 14th June 2016
- c) Collaborative Service and Research Agreements to facilitate Science Agenda implementation – 1 day on Tuesday, 14th June 2016.

Thus, the side event will, among others, help identify and streamline key actions to aid stakeholder engagement in:

- Elaboration of country action plans to facilitate development of requisite capacities at country level to implement the S3A and the broader CAADP,
- The formation of an African foresight academy, and
- Crafting modalities for capacity pooling and scholar mobility.

In addition, an exhibition advocating for biofortified foods will also be mounted alongside the three parallel sessions.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1. Key recommendations adopted on nature of capacities critically needed by countries and supportive organizations to implement the S3A and the wider CAADP
2. Strategic orientation agreed upon for collaborative ventures on capacity development to support the S3A and the wider CAADP post-Malabo Roadmap and Strategy
3. Stakeholder working teams identified to deliver on specific strategic aspects

APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

There will be parallel events each facilitated independently and organized around pertinent topics that may include:

- a) Country action plans for developing capacities to implement the S3A and CAADP. This will mainly constitute the appraisal and validation of recommendations arising from the needs assessment studies conducted jointly by FARA and SROs in several African countries over the last two years.
- b) Establishing an African foresight academy to help refresh the future S3A priorities. This will build on previous efforts supported by GFAR in Africa under the GCARD process and the Global Foresight Hub initiative.
- c) Establishing collaborative service agreements and partnerships for pooling and sharing of AR4D capacity and infrastructure amongst African countries. These will address the issue of differential capacity endowment in various sub-Saharan African national agricultural research and innovation systems

and modalities for cross-border sharing of resources. Creation of innovation hubs (e.g. like BecA-ILRI Hub) and research centers of excellence (e.g. like the commodity-specific centers promoted under the AAPSA, EAAPP, WAAPP and the STI Centres of Excellence) are expected to enrich these discussions.

The discussion in the parallel sessions will be underpinned by keynote addresses by eminent experts in the respective thematic area. Key recommendations from each parallel session will be collated for presentation in the Plenary Session.

IMPACT AND BENEFITS

The recommendations will guide collaborative efforts amongst stakeholders on developing capacities to implement the S3A and the wider CAADP agenda over the next three years. This will lead to increased total factor productivity, with farmers and agribusinesses benefitting from innovative R&D outputs from revamped national agricultural research and innovation systems.

LOCATION

Camp Kigali Village, Kigali, Rwanda, on 12th – 14th June 2016.

COLLABORATORS

FARA, ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF/WECARD, BecA-ILRI, AAU, AUC/NPCA, ACBF, ANAFE, CGIAR, World Bank, FAO, Agrinatura, CTA, REESAO, RUFORUM and others.