

Knowledge for Development

Observatory on Science, Technology and Innovation for ACP Agricultural and Rural Development

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October 2011 newsletter

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Dossier "S&T policy dialogue": New lead article

Are investments in agricultural research making a difference in the ACP region, and why the need to monitor investments?

Monty Jones, Executive Director, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Ghana



Since the post-colonial period, investments in agriculture have been declining, as it was not a priority. But for the past decade, this decline in interest in agriculture has started to reverse. This was catalysed by the African Heads of State (2002) declaration and endorsement of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (CAADP, <http://www.nepad-caadp.net/>). This was intended as a tool to harmonize and coordinate investments in agriculture after the sector had been recognized as the engine of economic growth across the continent.

As the CAADP Pillar 4 lead institution, FARA mobilizes and advocates all concerned actors: from the African farmer to the European investor. Its most recent achievement is a Ministerial Dialogue on Agriculture, Science and Technology in April 2011 (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, 2011). The dialogue confirmed commitments from African Ministers to sustain their investments and priorities in agricultural development. It also reiterated that such investments require development-oriented service provision by research, education/training and advisory services.

Given such progress and continuing challenges, it is important to have a better monitoring system for research investments from different sources, such as government, donor agencies, private sector or stakeholder groups. Having the right monitoring system can be an important tool to ensure balance between divergent interests of investors and Pillar 4 institutions. Most investors would like to see an immediate impact from their money (value for money). Strategic research can lead to breakthroughs, but it is often difficult to show impact, at least in the short run. At the same time, researchers cannot be responsible for impact, as it depends on too many factors outside their control.

Read the whole article: knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14506

CTA S&T programme

Key messages from the 10th Advisory Committee on S&T for ACP Agricultural & Rural Development

The theme for the 10th AC meeting in the Commonwealth of Dominica was "Safeguarding the ACP Food System through Science, Technology and Innovation". It took place on 9–13 October 2011.

From Sunday October 09, when Professor Bongani Ndimba, a young scientist from the Agricultural Research Council, South Africa, presented the future of science for food and nutrition security and wealth creation at the Joint Opening Ceremony of the climate change and 10th AC meetings and continuing; AC members reflected on the following:

- (i) what has been achieved through the enhanced ACP/EU scientific cooperation and;
- (ii) what impact has this cooperation had on improving agricultural performance and reducing poverty in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific?

The AC agreed that inter and intraregional and international cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation has been strengthened. However, while there have been advances in agricultural productivity, the enhanced cooperation has not made a significant dent on mobilizing more national resources for research (1% GDP), or on increased agricultural performance and wealth creation in the ACP region. ACP scientists are still not sufficiently engaged in national, regional and international policy processes. The AC also concurred that the ACP scientific community needs to provide more evidence to support policy and decision-making to convince governments to make

adequate resources available for agricultural research, teaching and training.

Read the key messages: knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14639

The Wageningen Statement: Climate-Smart Agriculture – Science for Action

Over 160 participants from 38 countries from scientific institutions, universities, multilateral scientific organizations, governments, international organizations, farmers' organizations, private sector and civil society organizations convened at the Global Science Conference on Climate-Smart Agriculture in Wageningen, Netherlands, 24–26 October 2011, to identify scientific priorities that will lead to climate-smart agriculture.

The GSCSA participants took stock of the current state of global knowledge of the science and best practices concerning climate smart agriculture worldwide; identified key priorities for further knowledge development as well as efficient and effective ways to implement possible interventions. The conference focused on the following themes:

- Sustainable intensification and climate-smart solutions – enhancing food production while reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Overcoming the barriers to climate-smart agriculture;
- Managing volatility and risks – technical and social-economic options for climate-smart risk management.

The global science conference in Wageningen is a follow-up to the Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, hosted by the Netherlands in 2010, that concluded that agriculture (including forestry and fisheries) must be part of the solution to climate change.

Download the statement and the press release: knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14503

International Conference on Innovations in Extension and Advisory Services

Continuing our K4D focus on extension leading up to the international conference on Innovations in Extension and Advisory Services: Linking Knowledge to Policy and Action, 15-18 November 2011, Nairobi, Kenya

Over 400 academics, researchers, extension agents, farmers' representatives, media experts, policy makers and representatives from international organizations and donors will meet in Nairobi to discuss innovations in extension and advisory services for food and livelihoods.

Download the programme and read the book of abstracts (PDF, 1.6MB)

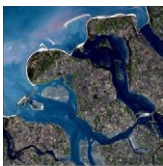
Visit the conference website: <http://extensionconference2011.cta.int/>

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Developments | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

Mapping cropland for sub-Saharan Africa using five land cover data sets

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14507



A novel methodology has been developed for the creation of a cropland map for Africa through the combination of five existing land cover products: GLC-2000, MODIS Land Cover, GlobCover, MODIS Crop Likelihood, and AfriCover. A synergy map is created which reflects the probability that a given map pixel is cropland. The cropland map is then calibrated with national and sub-national crop statistics using a novel approach. Preliminary validation of the map was undertaken and the results are presented. The resulting cropland map has an accuracy of 83%, which is higher than the accuracy of any of the individual maps.

(Servir via GSDI Newsletter, 10/2011)

Policy coherence in agriculture and rural development

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14515



The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development has released a study on policy coherence within the field of Agriculture and Rural Development entitled 'Platform Knowledge Piece 1: Policy Coherence for Agriculture and Rural Development'. The report explores the need for policy coherence to make sure that policies for development do not contradict one another but rather complement each other. The authors underline the expectation that ARD policy will serve multiple sector objectives. They argue that considering the limited administrative capacity in many developing countries, these countries are left with inconsistent and contradictory policy, which will need sustained interest and effort in order to be aligned and coherent.

(Global Donor Platform for Rural Development via Farming First, 20/9/2011)

Kenya farmers adopt new method to grow more rice with less water

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14520

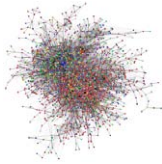
Kenyan rice farmers are switching to the System for Rice Intensification (SRI) developed by the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya.



SRI is expected to improve production by more than 50 % while reducing water use by about 25 % to 50 % (allowing for the saved water to be used to expand the production area). Farmers will use only 25 % of seeds used in the conventional paddy system and save on input costs. One of the disadvantages of the new system, however, is that it requires more weeding since weeds tend to grow more rapidly under un-flooded conditions. The extra effort is compensated by increased yields of one to two tonnes per hectare.
([African Agriculture](#), 26/9/2011)

Researchers failing to make raw data public

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14527



A study, led by Heather Piwowar at the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center in Durham, North Carolina, USA, reveals scientists are failing to make raw data publicly available, even when prompted to do so by journals, and a wide variation exists in data-sharing policies and in researchers' adherence to them. The findings come amid a growing push for sharing raw research data – both to facilitate further research and to better prevent fraud or error.
([Nature](#), 14/9/2011)

Important changes to the Botanical Code

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14529



The XVIII International Botanical Congress held in Melbourne, Australia in July 2011 approved sweeping changes to the way scientists name new plants, algae, and fungi. The changes will allow online-only publication of names of new taxa from 1 January 2012. Electronic material published online in Portable Document Format (PDF) with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) or an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) will constitute effective publication. The requirement for a Latin description or diagnosis for names of new taxa of algae, fungi, and plants will be changed to a requirement for a description or diagnosis in either Latin or English. In addition, effective from 1 January 2013, new names of organisms treated as fungi must, in order to be validly published, include in the protologue (everything associated with a name at its valid publication) the citation of an identifier issued by a recognized repository.
([Eurekalert](#), 14/9/2011)

GIS mapping of rice field to begin in Ghana

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14525



The Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Programme is to carry out a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping exercise of rice, soya and maize fields in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. The programme is to help farmers to calculate their plot sizes for production, planning and resource allocation. It will also involve 53 students who will be trained as Geographic Information System surveyors, from the University of Ghana, Cape Coast University, University of Development Studies and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.
([Ghana Broadcasting Corporation](#), 7/2011)

Researchers crack genetic codes for medicinal plant species

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14533



Researchers from across Canada, led by the University of Calgary's Dr. Peter Facchini and Dr. Vincent Martin of Concordia University in Montréal, have identified the genetic makeup for 75 medicinal plant species and are making the codes available to scientists and the public on-line. The genetic blueprints have potential applications in the pharmaceutical, natural health product, food and chemical industries. Plants contain specialized enzymes encoded by their unique genes that make them effective producers of medicines, flavours, fragrances, pigment, insecticides and other chemicals. The [PhytoMetaSyn Project](#) (Synthetic Biosystems for the Production of High Value Plant Metabolites) which started in 2009 is expected to have the entire set of genetic codes available by February 2012 (half the set is already available, and codes are added as they become available).
([Eurekalert](#), 14/9/2011)

River basins could double food production – study

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14540



The world's major river systems have enough water to double food production by 2050 if the resource – a potential source of conflict – is used efficiently and distributed fairly through the breadbaskets of ten river basins, says a worldwide study released in Brazil at the XIV World Water Congress. The study, from the Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF) of the CGIAR, finds that inefficient use and inequitable distribution of water are the problem, not water scarcity. The study, a result of five years of research by scientists in 30 countries, is the most comprehensive effort to date to assess how, over vast regions, people are coping with the growing need for water. The ten river basins that were studied are: the Andes and São Francisco

in South America; the Limpopo, Niger, Nile and Volta basins in Africa; and the Indus-Ganges, Karkheh, Mekong, and Yellow in Asia. ([AlertNet](#), 26/9/2011)

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Selected publications | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

What is the irrigation potential for Africa? A combined biophysical and socioeconomic approach

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14509

This [paper](#) analyzes the large, dam-based and small-scale irrigation investment potential in Africa based on agronomic, hydrologic, and economic factors. Area potential for irrigation was assessed with a combined bio-physical and socio-economic analysis and it has been found that significant profitable irrigation potential exists for both small-scale and large-scale systems. This type of regional analysis can guide distribution of investment funds across countries and should be a first step prior to in-depth country- and local-level assessment of irrigation potential, which will be important to agricultural and economic development in Africa. (via [Farming First](#), 19/10/2011).

Ecosystems for water and food security

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14517

Boelee, E. (Ed). 2011. *Ecosystems for water and food security*. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme; Colombo: International Water Management Institute

This [publication](#), compiled and edited by UNEP and IWMI, illustrates the importance of healthy ecosystems for the provisioning of key services that contribute to food security. This background paper (179p.) provides an overview of the linkages between ecosystems, water, and food security. It explores how to manage water in agro-ecosystem for food security by examining food security and agricultural water use issues from an ecosystem perspective. Recommendations for sound water management in agro-ecosystem include the valuation of ecosystem services, a multifunctional approach to agro-ecosystem management, the adoption of adaptive Integrated Water Resources Management and a stronger policy-based collaboration between sectors. The synthesis report to this background report is also produced.

Biodiversity and socioeconomic factors supporting farmers' choice of wild edible trees in the agroforestry systems of Benin

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14567

This [study](#) was conducted by researchers from the University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin, is an assessment of the diversity of wild food species and socio-economical factors that support farmers' choice for the species used in agro-forestry systems. A total of 43 wild edible trees were found in the traditional agro-forestry systems of Benin during the survey. The researchers found that the number, diversity and perceived importance of species used in these systems varied according to the socio-cultural zones of the country. They identified three main reasons that support peasants' ambition to conserve or to grow wild edible trees in their field: their contribution to food, their use in traditional medicine and ceremonies and the farmers' perception of their availability in natural vegetation. (ScienceDirect, 24/8/2011)

Plant domestication and genetic resources in Benin

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14576

Vodouhè R., Dansi, A., Avohou, H. T., Kpèki, B. and Azihou, F. (2011) *Plant domestication and its contributions to in situ conservation of genetic resources in Benin*. *International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation* Vol. 3(2), pp. 40-56.

This [study](#) shows that domestication is actively being carried out in the rural areas of Benin and appears as a one of the most appropriate practices for developing the diversity, increasing its use and conserving agricultural biodiversity in situ. The results highlighted the role that gender play in plant domestication and revealed that food security and health are the main motives behind adoption and cultivation of wild species. Thanks to local communities' efforts, experiences and innovations, plant genetic diversity is being developed, preserved and sustainable use. Several factors limit full success of farmers' initiatives: limited knowledge of plant reproductive biology, plant diseases and pests' complex, climate variability and its impact on biodiversity. The authors suggest that scientific investigations on major constraints to plant domestication are needed. They recommend that multidisciplinary research focusing on individual plant species (leafy vegetables, herbs, fruits etc.) be conducted to better understand the influence of the domestication on the evolution of the species and that further baseline studies are needed on the uses and values of the species under domestication by the local communities throughout West Africa. ([Bioversity Library Blog](#), 5/2011)

Integrating climate change into agricultural research for development in Africa

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14578

This [IIED briefing paper](#), commissioned by the European Initiative for Agricultural Research for Development (EIARD), discusses the need to integrate climate change into agricultural research for development, taking into account the synergies and trade-offs of adapting to and mitigating climate change while also boosting food security. This will demand a more strategic and coordinated approach that reflects African realities, responds to African priorities for adaptation

and development, and makes the best use of limited resources.

Technologies for climate change adaptation – Agricultural sector

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14583

Clements, R., Hagggar, J., Quezada, A., Torres, J. (Authors). Zhu, X. (Ed.). 2011. Technologies for Climate Change Adaptation – Agriculture Sector. UNEP Risø Centre, Roskilde, Denmark

This Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded TNA project, implemented by UNEP, has produced a guidebook to assist developing country governments, agriculture practitioners, and stakeholders in conducting Technology needs Assessment (TNA) and prepare technology action plans for adaptation to climate change in the agriculture sector. The technologies cover, among others: planning for climate change and variability, sustainable water use and management and soil management. The guidebook provides a systematic analysis of the most relevant information available on climate change adaptation technologies in the agriculture sector. It has been compiled based on a literature review of key publications, journal articles, and e-platforms, and by drawing on documented experiences sourced from a range of organisations working on projects and programmes concerned with this particular issue. Its geographic scope focuses on developing countries.

Climate risk management through sustainable land management in Sub-Saharan Africa

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14586

Nkonya, E., et al. 2011. IFPRI

Empirical evidence has shown that farmers can adapt to climate change by using sustainable land and water management (SLWM) practices that provide local mitigation benefits, reducing or offsetting the negative effects of climate change at the level of the plot, farm, or even landscape. Adaptation to climate change using SLWM practices in sub-Saharan Africa, however, remains low. This study was conducted to examine the impact of government policies on adaptation to climate change.

Ethnobiology – New textbook

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14468

Featuring contributions from experienced scholars and sanctioned by the Society of Ethnobiology, this concise, readable volume provides extensive coverage of ethical issues and practices as well as archaeological, ethnological, and linguistic approaches. Emphasizing basic principles and methodology, this unique textbook offers a balanced treatment of all the major subfields within ethno-biology, allowing students to begin guided research in any related area – from archaeo-ethno-zoology to ethno-mycology to agro-ecology. All chapters cover recent research, and many are new in approach; most chapters present unpublished or very recently published new research. Featured are clear, distinctive treatments of areas such as ethno-zoology, linguistic ethno-biology, traditional education, ethno-ecology, and indigenous perspectives. Methodology and ethical action are also covered up to current practice.

Crop adaptation to climate change

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14477

This book covers a spectrum of issues related to both crops and climatic conditions. The first two sections provide a foundation on the factors involved in climate stress, assessing current climate change by region and covering crop physiological responses to these changes. The third and final section contains chapters focused on specific crops and the current research to improve their genetic adaptation to climate change. Written by an international team of authors, this book is a timely look at the potentially serious consequences of climate change for our global food supply, and is an essential resource for academics, researchers and professionals in the fields of crop science, agronomy, plant physiology and molecular biology; crop consultants and breeders; as well as climate and food scientists.

ASARECA newsletter May–October 2011

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14615

The 3rd issue of the AgriForum, ASARECA's newsletter, reports on the East African Agricultural Productivity Programme (EAAPP), provides tips on year-round fruit and vegetable preservation, details ASARECA's own crop-livestock successful innovations (inter-cropping practices, multi-purpose fodder trees, small-scale hay and silage making techniques, organising farms) and covers Burundi's efforts to tackle xanthomonas wilt in banana plantations.

RUFORUM newsletter, August 2011

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14616

The latest RUFORUM newsletter features discussions on data management and scientific writing courses, on the successful completion of the RUFORUM PhD programme on dryland resource management by six graduates, on the state of PhD programme in Africa and the ranking of African universities (8 universities in South Africa make it to the Top 10, and Makerere University in Uganda maintaining its 10th position).

ScienceAfrica, Volume 17, August–September 2011

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14617

This is the [first part](#) of a special report on biotechnology in Kenya. Volume 17 of ScienceAfrica reports on Kenya's parliamentary debate over GMO's and the country capacity to deal with modern agricultural biotechnology, high-level support for biotech by politicians in the region, and the link between medical clinics and biotech research centres.

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Events | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

International Conference on Post-Harvest Management and Technology for Food Security

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14478

Dates: 21-25 May 2012

Venue: Jimma University College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, Jimma, Ethiopia

A 4-day International Conference on Post-Harvest Management and Technology for Food Security will be held at Jimma University College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine (JUCAVM) in the beautiful town of Jimma, Ethiopia. The conference will address questions related to developments in all areas of post-harvest management dealing with the food chain. It is expected to attract many international experts in the field to discuss the related issues with particular reference to topics of significance to the developing world in general and the African sub-continent in particular. It will provide a platform for professionals from academia, government agencies and industry to network and strategize in post-harvest initiatives.

World Climate Summit 2011

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14511

Dates: 3-4 December 2011

Venue: Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel, Durban, South Africa

The World Climate Summit 2011 will be held in Durban, South Africa during the UNFCCC COP17. The World Climate Summit complements the UNFCCC process by exploring, refining, and supporting the development and expansion of bottom-up approaches from business and finance in collaboration with governments. The most important and affected sectors of the economy will be addressed, with sessions structured to formulate new strategies for each sector. Each session will bring the most respected speakers and experts in business, finance and government to optimize crosspollination of ideas and resources. WCS 2011 provides an innovative platform to generate business opportunities and catalyze new commitments and action by industry, financiers and governments. Sessions are mostly interactive so as to encourage blue-sky thinking and joint strategy development among a diverse yet deeply experienced community of key actors.

Grants and competitions | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

Call for Papers - Climate Change and Agriculture in Africa

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14623

Deadline for application: 31 December 2011.

The African Crop Science Journal (ACSJ) [invites submission](#) of papers with a focus on climate change work and effects on Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa. Papers, in English or French, should be submitted to the Journal's Secretariat by 31 December 2011. More info [here](#).

Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's Climate Change Fellowship

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14474

Deadline: 15 December 2011

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's fellowship programme promotes prospective leaders from threshold and developing countries who are engaged in climate protection and resource conservation in academia or business, government or non-governmental organisations. Up to twenty fellows are funded annually. They will come to Germany for a year to work alongside a host of their own choosing on a joint project dedicated to the exchange of knowledge, methods and techniques. The aim is to create a network in which German and foreign experts will work together on a sustainable, international basis to combat climate change and its global consequences. The fellowships are funded under the Federal Environment Ministry's (BMU) International Climate Protection Initiative.

The closing date for applications is 15 December 2011. The fellowship commences 1 September 2012. Download the flyer and visit the [website](#) for application package and further information.

New Swedish fellowship programme for young researchers

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14624

Deadline for nomination: April 2012

This new funding program in Sweden aims to help young scientists from around the world bridge the gap between their postdoctoral years and their first academic position. The [Wallenberg Academy Fellows programme](#) will give generous start-up funds and access to positions in Swedish universities to 125 grantees over the next 5 years. The program will offer 25 awardees a year up to about €820,000 over 5 years, with no strings attached. Researchers from any nation or discipline are eligible, as long as they received their Ph.D. between 4 and 7 years before applying. Candidates must be nominated by a Swedish university, and the foundation has asked university

officials to make sure that 40% of the nominees are not currently based in Sweden. [More information](#).

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Jobs | Follow the latest RSS feeds for this section

Soil scientist

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14626

Deadline: 21 November 2011

The International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC, at the Wageningen University in the Netherlands) is seeking a dedicated soil scientist to support the further development of area-class maps (through SOTER) in support of the further development of the Harmonised World Soil Database (HWSD). More information [here](#).

Organisations | Find more organisations on our website

Promoting African – European Research Infrastructure Partnerships (PAERIP)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14512



PAERIP is a dedicated initiative to promote research infrastructure partnerships between Europe and Africa. There is currently significant political attention on promoting science and technology partnerships between the European Union and Africa. The Joint Africa-European Union (EU) Strategy, adopted by Heads of Government at the December 2007 Lisbon Summit, notably includes a dedicated Science, Information Society and Space initiative. Several collaborative efforts are currently being implemented under this Partnership, with the support of the African Union Commission, the European Commission and African and European Union Member States. None of these initiatives are, however, specifically addressing research infrastructures. The 'Promoting African European Research Infrastructure Partnerships' (PAERIP) project is specifically focused on addressing this void notably by undertaking a series of relevant studies, which will inform the organisation of policy dialogue and cooperation promotion events.

Sub-Saharan Africa Feed Composition Database

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14566



Sub-Saharan Africa Feed Composition Database ([SSA Feeds](#)) provides information on the nutritive value of 20,913 samples of 566 livestock feeds from 15 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The samples were analysed at the Animal Nutrition Laboratory of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS)

knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/14572



The Program for Biosafety Systems (PBS), which is facilitated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), launched a [new website](#). The website is a one-stop-shop for information on the responsible development and use of biotechnology in the developing world. It provides information on PBS' two regions of focus – Africa and Asia – and provides tools and resources – including easy-to-download copies of its publications – for policymakers throughout the world.

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