

FARA Secretariat updates

FARA successfully concludes its Fourth General Assembly

"The fourth FARA general assembly, with its large, diverse and vigorous participation, provided a fertile source of information and knowledge on the opportunities and problems currently facing African agriculture,"

Hon. Lulama Xingwana, Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs, Republic of South Africa

FARA held the Africa Agricultural Science Week (AASW) and Fourth General Assembly (GA) at the Sandton Convention Center in Johannesburg, South Africa, from June 10-16, 2007. This event was the result of more than a year of planning and close collaboration between the FARA Executive Committee, the FARA Secretariat, the South African Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs and the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), and a South African Local Organizing Committee. The theme selected for the week's event was **"Promoting the productivity and competitiveness of African agriculture in a global economy."** The General Assembly was organized around the following ten sub-themes:

- Identifying and exploiting Africa's competitive advantages in agricultural production, agri-business and related industries;
- Developing Africa's capacity for agricultural commerce and innovation
- Learning from past success of research in influencing agricultural policies
- The status of the five requirements for turning Africa's agriculture around
- Positioning agricultural research institutions to be fully effective
- Learning lessons from responding to risks and disasters
- Africa's capacity to build human and institutional capacity for the agricultural industry
- Mobilizing civil society for agricultural development
- Peri-urban agriculture
- Capturing indigenous knowledge for development while respecting intellectual property rights, ethical and moral integrity and biosafety

The General Assembly was attended by approximately 670 delegates from African Ministries of Agriculture, agricultural research and development organizations, universities, advanced research institutions and CGIAR Centers, NGOs, farmers' organizations, the private sector/agric-business, development partners, and the media. The South African Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, the Hon. Lulu Xingwana, was an active participant in the event, accompanied by ten African Ministers of Agriculture or their representatives.

The African Agricultural Science Week featured:

- a South Africa day featuring advances made by the host country in agricultural research for development, showcased at the South African ARC research station at Irene Campus, Gauteng;
- a Ministerial roundtable chaired by the Hon. Lulu Xingwana, with the participation of eight of the above ten Ministers of Agriculture or their representatives;
- exhibits by organizations representing a cross-section of the ARD stakeholder groups;



Ministerial delegation led by Hon. Lulu Xingwana, during the field visit at Irene Campus

- a poster competition with entries representing national programs and international centers; and
- the launch of the UK-supported “Research Into Use” programme.

The opening session of the General Assembly featured updates on the progress achieved by all stakeholder groups since the Third GA in Entebbe (2005). Each of the plenary subtheme discussions also included a keynote speech by a recognized expert on the topic, one or more respondents, reports from the side events related to the subtheme, and discussion from the floor. Twenty-four side event meetings took place prior to the General Assembly per se. The opening session of the General Assembly featured updates on the progress achieved by all stakeholder groups since the Third GA in Entebbe (2005). Over the next two days, the ten subthemes were discussed in plenary session, with each subtheme addressed through a keynote speech by a recognized expert on the topic, presentations by one or more respondents, reports from the side events related to the subtheme topic, and discussion from the floor. Side event reports to plenary contained recommendations regarding priority actions for FARA, which were submitted to the General Assembly for endorsement. Ample time was set aside throughout the week for networking among conference delegates. The side-events responded to one of the 10 subthemes where recommendations were submitted to the FARA General Assembly for endorsement as priority action for FARA. Ample time was set aside throughout the week for networking among conference delegates.

Dr. Monty Jones (FARA Executive Secretary) stated that, “This year’s general assembly was undoubtedly our most successful to date. With ten sub-themes and only a week to work through all of them, we are thrilled with the resolutions that have been brought to the table.” The resolutions include:

- the promotion of intra-African trade in food staples and international trade in high-value products;
- the development of endogenous innovation capacity, including the ability to identify and adapt potential foreign innovations;
- maximising the impact of agricultural research and development by providing policy makers with evidence-based pragmatic options, preferably developed jointly by researchers and policy makers;
- endorsing FARA’s integrated set of networking support functions as a sound basis for continent-wide contributions to the work of the SROs;



Participants at the Fourth FARA General Assembly, June 2007, South Africa

- advocating and facilitating the strengthening of research management and agricultural sciences;
- developing adequate veterinary capacity, livestock disease surveillance, and epidemiological and response systems;
- addressing the broad and systemic issues in capacity strengthening to focus on causes rather than symptoms and to assure that the capacity strengthening initiatives reflect established demands;
- redressing gender and age imbalances and inequities;

- recognizing sub-Saharan and North African civil society organizations;
- regarding research on peri-urban agriculture as a mainstream activity, but one that requires new approaches to research;
- mainstreaming indigenous science into agricultural research and development; and

- making the necessary personal and institutional adjustments that are required to enable communication and joint learning between practitioners of the different sciences.

During the Business Meeting that took place on June 16th, the FARA Strategic Plan was endorsed, along with various changes to the FARA Constitution and Governance Manual and the FARA Secretariat's response to the two external reviews conducted in 2006 and 2007. The General Assembly congratulated the FARA Executive Committee (ExCo), Dr. Monty Jones, and the FARA Secretariat staff for the many accomplishments that have occurred since the Third GA in Entebbe in 2005. Particular thanks were extended to the departing Chair of the FARA ExCo, Mme. Njabulo Nduli (Deputy Director General for Agricultural Production, Ministry for Agriculture and Land Affairs, Republic of South Africa) for her significant contribution to FARA during her tenure as Chair, and especially for her leadership role in organizing South Africa's sponsorship of the General Assembly. Dr. Denis Kyetere (Director General, NARO-Uganda) was elected as the new Chair of the FARA Executive Committee, and Dr. Tiemoko Yo (Director General, Centre National de Recherche Agronomique, Côte d'Ivoire) was elected Vice Chair. It was agreed that the next FARA General Assembly will be held in 2010 in Burkina Faso.

All presentations and documents from the side events and plenary discussions are being posted on the FARA website (<http://www.fara-africa.org/general-assembly-2007/documentation/>). Proceedings of the AASW-4th GA will be published later this year to document all the discussions and recommendations.

FARA Strategic Plan developed and endorsed

At their February 2007 meeting, the FARA Executive Committee recommended that the FARA Secretariat develop a new strategic plan in light of the many changes in FARA's external environment since the first strategy was adopted in 2002. Between March and June, Secretariat staff drafted the new strategy, drawing upon expert input to ensure congruence between the new strategies of CORAF/WECARD and ASARECA, and to

identify key background issues that should be included in the plan. The planning process also drew upon the considerable knowledge about stakeholder needs that FARA has accrued during numerous recent consultations with partners and constituents. The first draft of the strategic plan was discussed and validated in a workshop in May 2007, involving 45 people representing a cross-section of FARA stakeholders from all over Africa. The draft strategic plan was revised to reflect stakeholder input, and was submitted to and endorsed in the Business Meeting at the Fourth FARA General Assembly.

The new strategy is designed to guide the work of both the FARA Secretariat and FARA as a Forum over the next ten years. It identifies five **"networking support functions"** ("NSFs") that, taken together, should enable the FARA community to achieve the goal of establishing high, broad-based agricultural growth in Africa to reduce food insecurity and poverty and to enhance environmental conditions. **The five NSFs are:**

- 1. Advocacy and resource mobilization** – to support the SROs and their NARSs in establishing appropriate institutional and organizational arrangements (including a conducive policy, research infrastructure and financial environment) for regional agricultural research and development.
- 2. Access to knowledge and technologies** – to empower researchers and end users through access to information, learning opportunities, and new technologies.
- 3. Regional policies and markets** – to promote and facilitate policy analyses and market research.
- 4. Capacity strengthening** – to ensure that Africa has the human and institutional capacity, public and private, to achieve improved broad-based agricultural productivity.
- 5. Partnerships and strategic alliances** – to catalyse and facilitate the establishment of partnerships with the range of expertise and sufficient capacities necessary to drive agricultural innovation for African agricultural research and development.

The FARA Strategic Plan is currently being revised to incorporate comments received during and since the General Assembly. When finalized, it will be available on the FARA website, along the the Five-Year Medium-Term Operational Plan.

New faces at the FARA Secretariat

Dr. Adolphus Adewale Adekunle takes up position as new coordinator of FARA's Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme



The FARA Secretariat welcomes Dr. Wale Adekunle, who took office on July 1 as the new coordinator of the Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme (SSA CP). Dr. Adekunle, a Nigerian national, brings to the SSA CP 22 years of experience in agricultural research and development. He has worked for the last 16 years at IITA, most recently as an Associations and Rural Development Specialist in Abuja, Nigeria, developing and implementing strategies to strengthen groups and rural institutions that link producers and agricultural markets. Prior to that, he served in 2004 as the outreach coordinator for the Nigerian Agricultural Biotechnology Project, where he successfully designed and implemented communication and public awareness strategies to promote awareness and public acceptance of biotechnology and its products in Nigeria. His recent work has drawn extensively on the innovation systems

approach – the framework that underpins the integrated agricultural research for development (IAR4D) approach that the SSA CP is testing.

Dr. Adekunle holds a Bachelor of Agriculture degree from the University of Ife (now known as Obafemi-Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria); an M.Sc. in Plant Science from the same university; and a Ph.D. in agronomy from the University of Ibadan. In addition, he holds postgraduate qualifications in science communication from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland and the Walt Disney University, Florida, USA, and in the establishment and management of small and medium scale agro-enterprises from Galilee College, Israel.

Upcoming FARA Secretariat events

- **5-7 July 2007, Meeting of SSA CP “Lake Kivu” Pilot Learning Site taskforce partners** to review and align their work-plans and budgets to the Programme's 2008-2010 medium term plan, to be held at hotel Africana, Kampala, Uganda.
 - **11-12 July 2007. SCARDA Stakeholders workshop in CORAF/WECARD sub-region**, to be held at hotel Faidherbe, Dakar, Senegal.
 - **8-9 August 2007. SCARDA Stakeholders workshop in SADC sub-region**, to be held at The Grand Palm Hotel, Gaborone, Botswana.
 - **27-29 August. SCARDA regional Workshop**, to be held at FARA Secretariat, Accra, Ghana
- The objective of these workshops is to validate the outcomes from the Capacity strengthening in-country needs assessments

Other Events

[Crawford Fund Conference - Biofuels, Energy and Agriculture. 15 August, 2007, Canberra, Australia](#)

Titled “Biofuels, Energy and Agriculture – Powering Towards or Away From Food Security?” the Australian Crawford Fund's 2007 annual conference will be held on 15 August, and will examine whether biofuels enhance or undermine food security.

[International Symposium and Workshop on Tropical Peatlands “Carbon-Climate-Human Interactions: Carbon Pools, Mitigation, Restoration and Wise Use” and Indonesian National Seminar on “Pressing Peatland Issues”, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 27-31 August 2007](#)

This International Symposium will present the most up to date scientific information on tropical peatlands, especially their role in the global carbon cycle and levels of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of deforestation, drainage, land use change and fire.

[International Conference to Promote the Development of Tropical Non-Timber Forest Products and Services. 19–21 September 2007, Beijing, China.](#)

This conference, designed primarily to showcase practical rather than theoretical/academic experiences with NTFPs and forest services in the tropics

Sub-regional news

ASARECA. 3rd ASARECA Board of Directors Meeting, 23-25 July 2007, Entebbe, Uganda
Aligning and Making ASARECAS Strategic Plan Compliant to the Agenda of CAADP Pillar IV and the FAAP Guiding Principles is the main subject of the meeting

CORAF/WECARD. Signature of the Protocol of Agreement with the CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa), 18-20 July 2007, Bangui, Central Africa Republic. The objective is to make CORAF/WECARD the technical arm of CEMAC on issues related to agricultural research and development of CEMAC member countries.

National news

[Burkina Faso delays production of genetically modified cotton](#)

"We cannot produce the cotton this year on a large-scale, but certainly by 2009, after we have increased the number of transgenic seeds sufficient in quality and quantity in 2007 and 2008," said Georges Yameogo, an official with Sofitex, Burkina's textile and fibre company.

[Kenya: Potato farmers in Kenya increased their potato production by 30 percent](#)

Potato farmers in Kenya increased their potato production by 30 percent simply by using tubers from selected healthy-looking plants as seed. The beauty of the technology, known as positive selection, is that it is easy to adopt by small scale farmers because it does not require any cash investment, just some sticks and labour.

[Ghana cocoa production target One million tonnes by the year 2010](#)

Dr. Yaw Ampomah, Executive Director of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, has said that the country is on course to meet its production target of one million tonnes by the year 2010. He said good agronomy practices and enhanced research have put the country in a good position to attain the production target.

[Nigeria: Country to Adopt Lowland Varieties of Nerica](#)

"Nigeria is set to adopt two new lowland varieties of NERICA rice", the Project Co-ordinator of SASAKAWA Global 2000, Dr Ahmed Falaki, has said.

[Nigeria: Countries Making Progress in Response to Avian Influenza](#)

"The response to the deadly H5N1 virus in poultry has significantly improved over the past three years, but the virus remains entrenched in several countries and will continue to spread", FAO's Chief Veterinary Officer Joseph Domenech said.

[Gambia: Startling News](#)

The revelation in the National Assembly by the Secretary of State for Agriculture that government will be providing fertilizers to the farming community in the up-coming trade season is indeed a good news. This is because, the boost in agricultural productivity cannot be achieved in the absence of soil fertilizer.

[Cameroon: ADF Approves U.S. \\$165 Million for Transport Facilitation On the Douala-Bangui And Douala-N'djamena Corridors](#)

The African Development Fund (ADF) the concessional window of the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group has approved a loan and a grant amounting to US\$ 164.89 million to finance a Transport Facilitation Programme on the Douala-Bangui and Douala-N'djamena corridors.

[Côte d'Ivoire: A Shot in the Arm for the Northern Livestock Sector](#)

As Côte d'Ivoire tries to pick up the pieces after five years of civil war, efforts are getting underway to deal with a notable casualty of the conflict: the health of livestock in the north, formerly under rebel control. Starting next month and ending January 2009, about three million stock animals will be vaccinated by authorities, with financial assistance from the European Union.

African news

[Book on Africa's under-utilized fertilizer raw materials published](#)

The book is a collection of information that IFDC has gathered on Africa's mineral resources that could be used to manufacture fertilizer. Much of the data is from Van Kauwenbergh's research during his 22-year IFDC

career. "The book is the first to cover all fertilizer raw material resources in Africa," he says. "Writing the book was a wonderful opportunity

[Africa: Taking On Biotechnology the African Way](#)

African Union leaders took an important step in acknowledging the potential of biotechnology to help agricultural development earlier this year when they endorsed the Freedom to Innovate plan. The plan emphasises the need for Africa to find a unified approach to agricultural biotechnology research and biosafety regulation.

[Africa cotton growers fret over trade talks setback](#)

African cotton producers said on Friday the collapse of talks critical to salvaging global trade negotiations was a blow to their hopes of obtaining an end to US cotton subsidies.

[Africa: Second International Halaal Conference for Africa](#)

The success of the first international Halaal conference held in Durban has led to Halaal authority SANHA once more planning to converge Halaal role players in the industry at one venue. Issues under discussion shall include Halaal certification programmes, import regulations, benefits of Halaal certification and challenges facing the Halaal world. The core focus of the conference is 'Halaal - Opportunities Beyond Boundaries'. The conference is tailored for the industry, professionals, academicians, students, government agencies, importers and exporters.

[Africa: EU Pesticide Rules May Force Out Small African Farmers](#)

African farmers could soon find themselves forced out of the lucrative European market for agricultural products as retailers and government move towards a zero tolerance policy on chemical residues in food.

[Africa and Asia's Population to Double in Size By 2030](#)

The population of African and Asian cities is set to double by 2030 according to a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report.

[Africa: Chances of Achieving MDGs 'Slim' Without Civil Society](#)

Global civil society leaders called on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) Thursday to use both international channels and their muscle on the ground for applying pressure on governments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Civil Society Development Forum also heard that the global picture for progress towards the MDGs is uneven, with sub-Saharan Africa and western Asia set to miss most of the targets -- despite there being enough money to achieve the goals.

World news

[International Conference. Community forest management and enterprises: global issues and opportunities](#)

The Conference will bring together about 250 leaders of forest communities, public forest agencies, forest industry and conservation groups to share experiences in community forest management and enterprises from around the world. It will explore case-studies from Mamirauá, Madang, El Balcón and more than a dozen other community forests and debate the best ways of assisting the sustainable development of community-based operations.

[ITTO workshops to promote the exchange of experience at the regional level on the implementation of sustainable forest management through ITTO supported projects](#)

ITTO will organize three regional workshops in each ITTO tropical timber producing region (Togo, Indonesia, Colombia) to exchange experiences on the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) through ITTO supported projects, and activities such as the application of criteria and indicators (C&I) at the national and forest management unit (FMU) levels.

FARA's bulletin is published monthly by the FARA Secretariat. It is aimed at improving exchange of information and promoting partnerships. Information in this bulletin is received from FARA's diverse stakeholders. FARA welcomes such contributions from all stakeholders in African agricultural research and development, which should be submitted by email to: info@fara-africa.org. For more information on any of the news items reported here, please contact Dr. Monty Jones (FARA Executive Secretary) by email at: mjones@fara-africa.org.

Please check your contact information and update your profile on www.fara-africa.org