



FARA Secretariat updates

The Secretariat

- **1-10 February 2007, FARA donor consultation and annual program planning, FARA Secretariat, Accra, Ghana**

FARA welcomed its Executive committee Chair (Njalubo Nduli) and members representing the SROs (ASARECA-Dennis Kyetere and Seyfu Ketema; CORAF/WECARD – Emmanuel Ewuso-Bennoah and Paco Sereme; SADC – Margaret Nyirenda; North Africa – Hamid Narjisse), farmer's organization (Desire Poquet), private sector (Lucy Muchoki), NGOs (Sylvie Mbog), international scientific partners (Dennis Garrity) and donors (Frank Kufakwandi) representatives for an intensive annual program planning process. The annual program planning was divided into several sessions. The first session was dedicated to SRO-FARA retreat where the subregional initiatives or activities were presented and analyzed on how FARA could add value at the continental level. The second session was meeting of subcommittees on program, finance and audit and nominations. The program subcommittee reviewed and endorsed activities and progress made by each of the FARA regional initiatives. The finance and audit committee reviewed FARA's financial management. Nominations reviewed and endorsed the new members of FARA representing the farmer's organization, the private sector and the NGO.

The Executive committee endorsed the three year rolling workprogram and the recommendations of the joint external evaluation of FARA to review and revise its strategy based on the current changes in the African agricultural research for development environment such as the endorsement of FAAP and CAADP by the African Heads of States and the SRO revised strategies. The new FARA Strategy will be presented at the FARA General Assembly in 10-16 June 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Donors also met during the week to review and determine future actions based on the recommendations of the joint external evaluations of FARA. The donor group issued an aide memoire formalizing the donor group of FARA but emphasized that their group should not be an exclusive club but rather working in equal partnership with FARA. It is Chaired by CIDA and co-Chaired by DFID until 2008. Harmonized support framework and joint funding arrangement were endorsed. A Memorandum of Agreement between donors and FARA will be negotiated and signed during the FARA General Assembly in June 2007.

- **NEPAD and FARA renews its partnership on boosting development of agriculture in Africa**

A Memorandum of Understanding between NEPAD and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) was signed in 2003 which ended in 2006. This year FARA and NEPAD renewed this partnership at NEPAD headquarters in Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, on 20 February 2007.

FARA and NEPAD has been working together to enhance the capacity of African scientists, development agencies and farmers to take advantage of new technologies and methodologies to improve African agricultural productivity.

Aware of the need to streamline or scale up various activities within the region, sub-regions and country levels, FARA have identified priority projects and activities for collaboration and integration of African agricultural research for development and will continue to involve all its stakeholders, including NARS and SROs, to achieve this objective.

NEPAD, in turn, will continue to engage the international community, development partners and multilateral institutions in support of FARA.

In welcoming the agreement Prof. Firmino Mucavele, NEPAD Chief Executive, praised FARA for its leadership in support of the NEPAD's CAADP process in its regional initiatives, especially its leadership in developing the Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP) which was recently endorsed by the Heads of States in June 2006.

■ **International Conference on 'Agricultural Innovation in Dryland Africa: What Are the Key Drivers for Success?', 22-24 January, 2007, Accra, Ghana**

The strategic objective of the AIDA ('Agricultural Innovation in Dryland Africa') project is to generate knowledge about long-term trends and innovations in agriculture and environment in drylands.

The launching event of the AIDA project, an international conference on 'Agricultural Innovation in Dryland Africa', was held from 22 to 24 January 2007 in Accra, Ghana. The conference was attended by more than 40 participants from farmer organizations, NGOs, the donor community (European Union), national research institutions (10 countries from sub-Saharan Africa), international research (CIAT, Wageningen, Cirad), communication, information and training institutions (CTA) and FARA as the umbrella organization for agricultural research in Africa.

During the conference, participants debated 6 keynote presentations and 11 case studies (selected from 55 cases submitted previously to the conference organizers) related to agricultural innovation in dryland Africa. Group discussions were structured around two sessions: one on 'Integrated approaches for agricultural development in dryland Africa' and one on 'Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of interventions aimed at improving rural livelihoods'.

The case studies presented during the conference provided evidence that there is great potential for dryland agriculture in Africa. The AIDA project will be instrumental in achieving improved understanding of such innovation processes and guiding the scaling up/out processes to achieve greater impact and reduce poverty in Africa.

The debates during the conference converge around three major recommendations and four keywords (Availability, Adoption, Participation, Partnership, AAPP) that will guide the implementation of the AIDA Project :

1. **Availability** (of the innovation)

Develop comprehensive innovation systems, look beyond one single technology and linear technology transfer approaches: establish flexibility, feedback and feed forward loops. This may be facilitated by full integration of lean, efficient and effective M & E procedures within the projects.

2. **Adoption** (of the innovation) and **Participation** (to its development)

Ensure that all stakeholders are on board (including in the M & E procedure): enhanced information and communication is key and so is greater involvement of NGOs, policy makers and 'people behind markets'.

3. **Partnership**

The AIDA group needs to fit within the EU-AU **Platform for African and European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development** (PAEPARD) for developing joint projects for African ARD to be financed through the FP7 and EDF10.

This linkage will facilitate relationships with other recent major initiatives as CAADP (UE-AU-Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program), FAAP (Framework to the Agricultural African Productivity), SSA-CP (Sub Saharan Africa Challenge Program), and the European funded FSTP (UE, Food Security Thematic Program).

Regional Initiative Updates

■ **RAILS Implementation Workshop, 17-19 January 2007, FARA Secretariat, Accra, Ghana**

With funding from AfDB to support its major activities, the Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS) came to a full start. On 17 – 19 January 2007, various RAILS key stakeholders, including international service providers, taskforce members, and representatives from SROs, NARS, farmers' organizations and private sector, convened at FARA Secretariat to have a RAILS implementation workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to consolidate initiatives and find synergies towards regional agricultural information and learning systems for Africa.

Through case studies from within and outside the sub-regions, exposure to various initiatives and available tools from partner organizations and international service providers, and creative group discussions, the workshop was aimed to develop an implementation framework and workprogram for RAILS which will be coordinated by FARA and implementation by the SROs and NARS together with international service providers.



Major meetings attended by FARA

- **Ceremony in honor of World Food Prize Laureate Dr. Monty Jones, 15-16 January 2007, WARDA, Cotonou, Benin**

Dr. Monty Jones received an award at the Africa Rice Center in recognition of his achievements in the success of NERICA rice varieties. At the ceremony, Dr. Jones gave a brief presentation on the history of FARA with its 3 thrusts and the FARA-led regional initiatives meant to address the thrusts as well as respond to the challenges and objectives of NEPAD's CAADP Pillar IV. He outlined the linkages between the CAADP and FAAP and further explained that the FAAP calls for development of productivity programs at national, sub-regional and regional levels.

Dr Jones highlighted the convergence of DONATA and the WARDA-led African Rice Initiative (ARI) as one of the opportunities of collaboration between FARA and WARDA.



Furthermore, he announced that following the recommendations of the recently concluded Joint External evaluation (JEE) of FARA, there are possibilities of expanding the SSA CP to 9 pilot learning sites, which will open opportunities for WARDA to be a PLS lead institution. He also mentioned the opportunities offered by SCARDA in terms of training targeted at the WARDA stakeholders.

During the event, WARDA announced the formal launching of the annual "**Dr Monty Jones Lecture**", which will invite prominent scientists, academics and development personalities to speak on agriculture related topics for the promotion of science and technology in Africa.

Upcoming FARA Secretariat events

- **20-22 March 2007. Stakeholder consultation to implement the regional initiative on Disseminating new and proven technologies in Africa (DONATA),** to be held at FARA Secretariat, Accra, Ghana
- **11-16 June 2007. The 4th FARA's General Assembly and African Agricultural Science Week** will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The detailed programmes and registration information are now posted on www.faraweek.org. Those interested in participating are encouraged to register online as soon as possible.

For more information on the above events, please contact Dr. Monty Jones by email: mjones@fara-africa.org.

Other Events

[Second ASARECA Board of Directors Meeting, 26 February – 1 March 2007, Bujumbura, Burundi](#)
Final draft of the ASARECA Operational Plan 2007-2011 will be officially presented and endorsed

[CORAF/WECARD Operational Plan Development, 14-17 March, Dakar, Senegal](#)

[CORAF/WECARD Final Consultation on Operational Plan and Change Programme for Consensus Building, 19-20 April](#)

[Twentieth CORAF Anniversary and Launching of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme \(WAAPP\) and of the Central Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme \(CAAPP\), 3rd week of May \(to be confirmed\), in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire](#)

[Improving Sustainability in Organic and Low Input Food Production Systems, 20-23 March, 2007, Stuttgart, Germany](#)

3rd International Congress of the European Integrated Project Quality Low Input Food (QLIF)

[The 2nd International Conference on Plant Molecular Breeding, 23-27 March 2007, Sanya, China](#)
This event will focus on applied plant genomics and molecular plant breeding in view of the increasing need to use new molecular approaches and mine novel gene resources.

[West and Central Africa Hub & Regulatory Harmonisation Workshops, 27-29 March, 2007, Lomé, Togo](#)

[RUFORUM Biennial Meeting on "Building Scientific and Technical Capacity through Graduate Training and Agricultural Research in African Universities", 22-27 April 2007, Lilongwe, Malawi](#)

[Fourth World Congress of Rural Women, 23-26 April 2007, Durban, South Africa](#)

Theme: United in our diversity: working together towards the total emancipation of rural women from poverty and hunger

[The First FANUS meeting: Nutrition, Health and Human Development in Africa: Breaking the Downward Trend, 7-9 May, 2007, Ouarzazate, Morocco](#)

[International Workshop on 'Improving the Quality of Forestry Education in Africa and Developing Nations throughout the World', 9-11 May, 2007, Nairobi, Kenya](#)

[International Workshop on Potential of Cassava \(Manihot esculenta Crantz\) Processing in West Africa, 4-7 June, 2007, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire](#)

Organised by the University of Abobo-Adjamé and the Centre Suisse de Recherches Scientifiques, this event will take stock of existing technologies and recent developments, and make way for innovative development of the cassava processing sector.

[The Second International Symposium on Knowledge Communication and Peer Reviewing \(KCPR 2007\), 12-15 July, 2007, Orlando, Florida](#)

March 8th, 2007 is the deadline for paper/abstract submissions and invited session proposals.

[The Second ANAFE International Symposium: Building Africa's Capacity for Tertiary Agricultural Education, 30 July - 2 August, 2007, Zomba, Malawi](#)

Aimed at establishing mechanisms for building long-term scientific and institutional capacity in SSA tertiary agriculture and NRM institutions

New Face at FARA

Anne Starks Acosta will be joining FARA as Communications and Public Awareness Specialist as of March 1. She got a head start on her new position by attending the FARA donor consultation, SRO retreat and ExCo meetings at the beginning of February, and she has also worked as a consultant to FARA and the SSA CP on several occasions over the last three years. Other professional activities have included consulting work in management and organizational change in Mexico and internationally since 2000, teaching in an MBA program in Mexico City, and working at headquarters

of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in Mexico since 1990 (as assistant to the director general and donor relations officer from 1990-99, and as coordinator of CIMMYT's strategic planning process in 2002-03). Anne is a firm believer in interdisciplinarity, with a B.A. in Economics and Political Science, an M.Sc. in Extension Education and International Agriculture, and a Ph.D. in progress in organizational development (focusing on building collaboration). She is American by birth and Mexican by adoption, since she has lived in her husband's village of Teotihuacan, Mexico for 19 of the last 25 years (ask her about her experience as a smallholder farmer in Mexico). She will be joined later this year by her husband Ricardo and youngest son Eric, and her two older sons are looking forward to visiting Ghana and Africa as well. In sending greetings to the FARA family, she commented: "It will be an honor and a pleasure for me to support FARA's mission and work shoulder-to-shoulder with FARA Secretariat staff and stakeholders. FARA has a unique role to play in African agricultural development, and as a firm believer in working through partnerships I am especially happy to be here. I look forward to working with all of you!"

Sub-regional news

[Launch of the ISAAA Report on Global Status of Biotech – West Africa](#)

FARA/PBS assisted the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) in launching the 2006 report on the Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops

[ASARECA Vacancy Announcement](#)

ASARECA is seeking programme managers for its various programmes

[Development of Postgraduate Programme for Enhancement of Skills in Agricultural Information and Communication Management in ASARECA Region](#)

Stakeholder Workshop Documentation is now online

[CORAF/WECARD 2006-2015 Strategic Plan Review Is Online](#)

[CORAF Agricultural Productivity in West Africa Programme](#)

The World Bank supports CEDEAO member countries through a sub-regional Agricultural Productivity in West Africa Programme.

[CORAF Recruits an Information and Communication Manager](#)

National news

[UK Will Provide £105 Million of Direct Budget Support to Tanzania in 2007/8](#)

'Tanzania's progress in tackling poverty provides an "excellent example" for other African countries to follow'

[Zambia's Plans for Science Get Recognition](#)

African Development Bank has approved a loan of 123 billion kwachas (US\$30 million) towards the country's fifth national development plan

[China Sends Agricultural Experts to Gabon to Help Small-scale Farmers in Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries](#)

Chinese specialists will assist the Government of Gabon in implementing the country's Special Programme for Food Security under the FAO's South-South Cooperation initiative.

[Mozambique Receives US\\$70 million for the Third Poverty Reduction Support Credit \(PRSC3\)](#)

The World Bank approved an International Development Association (IDA) credit of US\$70 million to support the implementation of the Third Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC 3).

[World Bank Provides US\\$175 Million Grant To Combat Food Insecurity in Ethiopia](#)

To help vulnerable populations in Ethiopia lower their risks of serious food shortage and famine.

[Three Farming Communities in Ghana to Benefit from CIDA](#)

Three farming communities within the Sunyani municipality in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana are to benefit from a Canadian International Agency (CIDA) sponsored project aimed at improving the livelihoods of the people in the beneficiary communities. -Daily Graphic, 6th February 2007

African news

[2007 to Be Africa's 'Scientific Innovations Year'](#)

The designation is hoped to raise the profile of Africa's innovative capacity

[Africa 'Spearheading' Solutions to Climate Change](#)

The report by AU, AfDB, UN ECA and the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) shows how countries in Africa are integrating climate information into development and planning.

[Project to Intensify Agricultural Production in Great Lakes-- Africa's Most Impoverished Region](#)

IFDC and Netherlands launch project for soil health in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, DR Congo

[AfDB Group Operations Hit Record Levels](#)

The African Development Bank (AfDB) Group registered record levels of operations in terms of loans, grants, and debt relief in 2006, with lending activities reaching US\$3.4 billion

[AU Endorses Biotechnology Plan, but not Science Fund](#)

Heads of state at the African Union (AU) summit have endorsed a 20-year biotechnology action plan, but failed to reach agreement on an African science and innovation fund.

[African Leaders Set Guidelines for Scientific Growth](#)

AU declarations will boost African science

[Annan Settles for Agriculture in Retirement](#)

Kofi Annan, UN immediate past Secretary General declared that he would go into agriculture and collaborate with African leaders and governments to find a solution to the problems of agriculture on the continent, and consequently ensure food security in the region. -Daily Graphic, 31st January 2007

[Africa Creates Awards to Encourage Scientists](#)

The prizes will encourage more young Africans to study science

World news

[EU-Africa Relations: Towards a Joint EU-Africa Strategy](#)

EU and AU have decided to further strengthen the ties linking both continents by developing a co-owned 'joint strategy' which reflects the needs and aspirations of the peoples of Africa and Europe.

[Germany Commits €2.8 Million for Projects in Afghanistan, Kenya and Tanzania](#)

Funds to promote biodiversity preservation, sustainable agricultural practices and natural resource management

[Genetically Modified \(GM\) Farming on the Rise in Developing Nations](#)

GM's acceptance is still to be argued despite the rise.

[Deadly Wheat Disease 'a Threat to World Food Security'](#)

The spread of stem rust from Africa to the Arabian Peninsula could devastate world wheat crops and threaten food security

[Statement by the World Bank Chief Economist Regarding Draft Paper on Agricultural Special Products](#)

A response to the contentious issue of whether tariffs or similar instruments to restrict imports of staple foods can benefit poor people in developing countries

[IDRC to Conduct Study on GM Crops](#)

The Canada-based International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in collaboration with the Gene Campaign has launched a research study on the attitudes and perceptions towards genetically modified (GM) crops and foods in India.

[Wheat Acreage Up but Output Forecast Lowered to 72.50 mt](#)

Despite an increase in wheat acreage by over 1.5 million hectare, the government of India has lowered the projection for wheat output at 72.50 million tonne.

[No Levy Obligation for Sugar Exports in India](#)

The government of India exempted the sugar meant for exports from being accounted under the levy sale obligations.

[US Wants India to Help Break WTO Deadlock](#)

The US defended its new Farm Bill 2007 for providing more direct support to its farmers and asked India to work towards breaking the deadlock in WTO negotiations.

FARA's bulletin is published monthly by the FARA Secretariat. It is aimed at improving exchange of information and promoting partnership. 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 could be submitted by email to: info@fara-africa.org.

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