

CORAF General Assembly

Central theme: "Managing post-harvest systems and to enhance agricultural productivity, competitiveness and Markets in West and Central Africa"

Topic of talk: GCARD a message to the CORAF constituents

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I am honored to be given the opportunity to bring to my own regions outputs of the global conference on agricultural research for development (GCARD). This is a unique opportunity as for the first time, a global forum had a very intensive process of consultation that, even though it was a global initiative, the voices of the national and regional institutions were adequately heard. Our own African recommendations were brought to the global level. And now, as I stand here in front of you, I'm bringing back the results of the global consultations, which completes the loop of intensive consultative process.

The GCARD process entailed consecutive consultations feeding into each other.

- It was kick-started by regional reviews carried out to provide an up-to-date status of the development context and ARD priorities in each region.
- The e-consultations reached out to greater number of stakeholders, were informed about the regional review.
- The regional review and e-consultation in turn informed the face-to-face consultations that identified gaps in current ARD priorities and areas where knowledge and partnerships are most required.
- The F2F consultations also captured stakeholder feedback about the CGIAR Alliance's version of its strategic research framework at the time.
- The outputs of the regional F2F consultations were fed to the global authors' team report which synthesized global issues and elements of an action plan which we shall collectively concretise tomorrow and the day after.

Parallel to these consultations, the CGIAR had their own internal process to formulate the desired changes to make CGIAR more open and responsive to development challenges. We all hoped that GCARD will unite these two processes towards a common action plan.

The conference participants endorsed the following characteristics for a more effective AR4D system, and as the baseline upon which to build and assess progress at the next GCARD in 2012.

1. Adopts a problem-solving approach to priorities with a focus on selectivity, with regional and regional organizations as the foci;
2. Focuses on *researchable or proven* technologies and/or their delivery to meet farmer constraints on technology adoption;
3. Addresses constraints identified through regional consultations e.g., human resource development, incentives for scientists, accountability and effectiveness of *multiple* partnerships.
4. Facilitates the rapid generation of innovations in support of the spread of knowledge and technologies to small holders and delivery of services to reach the poor;
5. Promotes effective use of collective capacities, particularly networks, by strengthening key relationships among research, development (extension, seed suppliers, the banking sector) and farmer actors;
6. Actively achieves increased investments in human, institutional and financial resources;
7. Promotes coordinated operational linkages among donors and development partners, aimed at monitorable development impacts;
8. Increases mutual and equal accountability among all stakeholders;
9. Commit to action;
10. Achieves credible monitoring, evaluation and reporting on what has changed.

The stakeholders who should commit to this AR4D system were outlined as the following:

- National policy makers of developing and developed countries;
- All stakeholders at the local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels engaged in and/or supporting agricultural research knowledge and information systems including the CGIAR, and advanced research, educational, and extension institutions;
- Donors, foundations, intergovernmental agencies, including bilateral and multilateral institutions and development banks;
- Private sector, including small, medium and large agricultural input companies, food companies, agricultural banks, insurers and the agribusiness sector;
- Farmers organizations and CSOs/NGOs at all levels;
- Representatives of the poor and women;
- Stewards of the environment.

I'm sharing this with you, so that as CORAF plans its future actions, these are taken into consideration. That through CORAF, West and Central Africa is support in any new initiatives, investments that come out of these consultations.

Already we see the megaprogram of the CGIAR materializing, but we should not here, rather we should build a strong regional organization, that can also lead the region.

Most of the issues described or mentioned are all familiar to us. We can see the increasing importance of knowledge networks to be competitive within an increasing innovation-intensive system. Human and institutional capacities become critical, more so in being able to have foresight. A critical element if we want to be ahead and be competitive in a increasing networked world.

The theme of the week, is very much in place, as it focuses on post harvest and market access, two elements that Africa is lagging behind. As we end the meeting, we have to reflect more on action-oriented recommendations that we can monitor and evaluate progress and impact.

I would also encourage, that whatever this meeting recommends should be appropriately delivered at the FARA General Assembly in July. I would like to take this opportunity to invite each one of you to participate in the 5th African Agriculture Science Week and FARA GA.