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Strengthening cooperation between CORAF/WECARD and CIRAD

Mr. Georges Subreville, Regional Director for coastal West Africa, and Rolland Guis, project manager at the Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) were the hosts of Dr. Paco Sérémé and of his close colleagues at the CORAF/WECARD headquarters on 13th February, 2009.

Strengthening cooperation between the two organisations was the main theme of the working session held. In fact, CIRAD supports various National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in the CORAF/WECARD sub-region, in various fields, and some results of this action are visible in the field.

Thus, the two parties, in the beginning of this year 2009, wished to strengthen their cooperation so as to address the various agricultural challenges in West and Central Africa. □

Monitoring and evaluation starts with the DONATA Programme.

After more than one year of implementation of the Programme for the Dissemination of Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA), CORAF/WECARD conducted monitoring and evaluation missions in the field. On 24th February, 2009, one of these missions was made at Tivaouane, in the Thiès region, where activities connected with cassava cuttings multiplication are being carried out by scientists with the participation of producers.

The discussions with the focal point managers and with the producers

AIRP: Which activities have been achieved or not?

At the invitation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)'s agriculture, environment and water resources unit, the 15 countries and the 6 lead Institutions of the Agricultural Investment Regional Programme (AIRP)'s thematic groups met in Dakar from 16th to 17th February, 2009 with the aim to share information on activities already implemented and to plan the activities for 2009.

The AIRP, which is in line with the joint implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy of the Economic Community and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), is implemented in the field through six themes.

These themes are as follows : (1) water management improvement, (2) sustainable agricultural development, (3) improved management of other natural resources, (4) promotion of trade, (5) prevention and the management of food crises and other natural disasters, and finally (6) institutional strengthening.

The participants were informed during two days of each theme's activities that have been or are being implemented. CORAF/WECARD, the leader of theme 2 on the sustainable agricultural development, presented its achievements and its 2009 programme of activities.

This regional Programme's implementation plans the organisation of the following important regional meetings: (1) the meeting of the economic trade, agriculture and regional integration ministers in July 2009 and (2) the international conference of financial Partners in October 2009. □



(From right to left) Mr. Paco Sérémé (on the left), Mr Vincent Joseph Mama, Mr Marcel Nwalozie and Mrs Remi Cole largely contributed to the enrichment of this workshop.

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showed that the planned activities were on course. The field demonstrations and the platform implemented in Senegal are the main activities that were carried out in 2008.

The M&E mission teams were to continue to Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Liberia and Sierra-Leone. □

Biosafety: WAEMU drafts its plan of activities

The second meeting for the Orientation and Monitoring Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) was held in Bissau on 2nd and the 3rd February, 2009. The aim of this meeting was to take stock of the activities conducted in 2008 and to propose the 2009 plan of activities.

CORAF/WECARD was represented there by the Manager of the Biotechnology and Biosafety Programme in West and Central Africa. □

Oversight mission of the SCARDA Programme activities

Mrs Irene Annor-Frempong, the Regional Coordinator of FARA's Programme, Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa (SCARDA), conducted an oversight mission on the activities implemented in the CORAF/WECARD sub-region.

The various training activities, targeted at the managers of research organisations and at beneficiary students, which had been achieved, were reviewed with the CORAF/WECARD's Coordinator of this Programme, Dr Samba Ly.

It must be noted that in the CORAF/WECARD sub-region, this programme is being implemented in Ghana, Mali, The Gambia and Congo in this initial phase. □

DFID in the field of SCARDA activities

The stakeholders and partners of the Programme, Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa (SCARDA) met from 16th to 20th February 2009 in Kumasi, in Ghana. The aim was to conduct a midterm review of the activities implemented in the CORAF/WECARD sub-region.

In addition, after one year of implementation, the main financial partner, the Department for International Development (DFID), appointed Mr Ken Robson to review the already implemented activities. He therefore conducted fieldstudy, particularly in Kumasi, in order to hold discussions with the Programme's stakeholders and beneficiaries. □

The PPZS plans master's programmes

The partnering research unit's scientific and administrative council, called « dry land pasture pole » (PPZS) held its third meeting at the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar from 10th to 11th February, 2009.

The Pole's annual activity programme and report, ongoing research activities and its involvement in the doctoral schools were presented.

CORAF/WECARD, through its livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and capacity strengthening programmes find an advantage for collaboration on these initiatives with the universities and other training organisations in the field of livestock development.

This is related to research on land, ecology, functional diversity and the creation of master's programmes in agroforestry and ecology, tree sciences and agriculture systems, in treeherb sciences (pasture) and tree-animal sciences (pastoralism).

A meeting on pastoralism, global exchanges, challenges, issues and

perspectives is planned for November 2009. □

Livestock: CIRDES to be assessed

The members of the Assessment Committee of the Centre international de recherche-développement sur l'élevage en zone sub-humide (CIRDES) met in Paris from 16th to 20th February in order to prepare for CIRDES's assessment.

They discussed the assessment's terms of reference and other issues, re-defined again the assessors' functions and specified steps for monitoring and evaluation.

It was decided that it would take place between 20th and 27th of April, 2009, in Bobo Dioulasso, in Burkina Faso.

As a member of the assessment team, CORAF/WECARD Director of administration and finance, Mr Jean-Rostang Kamga Jiadias is responsible for the financial management and financial system analysis of CIRDES which is a base-centre of CORAF/WECARD. □

ECOWAS and its partners lean towards the implementation of the CAP

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) convened its financial partners and its scientific and technical partners in an information and resource mobilization meeting on 26th 2009 in Abuja.

The establishment of its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) required the participation of various partners.

During a full day's session, the various programmes and projects developed and executed in the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) were presented in their current state of implementation in the field. The cur-

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rent situation of their budgetary execution was also introduced.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the French Agency for Development (AFD), the World Food Programme (WFP) were, among others, the main financial partners that participated in this sub-regional meeting which was also attended by CORAF/WECARD. □

ECHO FROM NARS

West Africa: Livestock revival on the agenda

How can livestock breeding contribute to poverty reduction in West Africa? In order to answer this question, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) convened stakeholders and partners' workshop in Niamey from 29th January to 4th February, 2009.

In considering stakeholders' needs in the livestock value chain, three parallel sessions were organised with the participation of professionals, research and development experts and ministers in charge of agriculture and livestock.

Real propositions were made for the revival of the sector which is still dominated by informal practices despite the fact that it contributes 44% of the countries' Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This could be understood since these countries currently rear more than 60 millions bovines, 160 millions small ruminants and 400 millions fowls.

From this meeting, CORAF/WECARD, gained a lot of information for its Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme which will soon take off. □

ECHO FROM HEADQUARTERS

West Africa: from ideas to achievable projects

As a framework for communication and exchange between scientific and technical partners in West Africa, the biotechnology technical platform (PTB) held its first workshop, from 26th to 27th February, 2009, in Saly Portudal, in Senegal.

The workshop focused attention on flagship projects of the biotechnology and biosafety programme in West Africa and facilitation of cooperation

At the end of these fruitful debates, four thematic groups were formed on biosafety, plant biotechnology, animal biotechnology and communication. Each group would have to select among the fifteen proposed project areas put forward by the workshop, the ones that can be achieved in maximum impact with the timeframe given.

The responsibility of coordination has already been given to the Manager of the Biotechnology and Biosafety Programme in West and Central Africa, Dr Sangaré Abdourahamane. □



the members of the biology technical platform at work in developing ideas on possible projects for West Africa

among the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), the Advanced Research Institutes (ARI), the International Agricultural Research Centres (IARC) and CORAF/WECARD's research Poles and Base centres.

Each of these organisations appointed a focal point responsible for ensuring effective participation in the Programme, projects' design and implementation.

In practical terms, the Platform has been assigned the task of identifying project opportunities and ideas that will be used for the elaboration of this Programme's portfolio of projects; of drafting the terms of reference that would help for the choice of excellence centres on a competitive basis, identifying priority themes for these centres and, finally, establishing synergy between the programme and other initiatives.

The regional and international initiatives were reviewed and the development of a regional communication strategy debated.

CORAF/WECARD- AUS/AID: A forthcoming partnership

Mr. John Sutherland, a consultant of the Australia's International Development Agency (AUS/AID) and Dr. Paco Sérémé, the Executive Director of CORAF/WECARD, and the latter's close colleagues held a working session in Dakar on 24th February, 2009, that dealt with the future partnership between the two organisations.

Mr. J. Sutherland first introduced AusAID and its potentialities in terms of agricultural research and development and the existing supports for many countries in various sectors.

As far as agricultural research and development are concerned, the international Agency has been supporting Southern African countries for the

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development of the livestock sector since many years. Through this discussion, it has decided to turn to West African States and to support in the following domains: biotechnology, climate change, livestock, soil management, etc., through CORAF/WECARD, with the concern to ensure a better coordination of its support.

Conversely, Paco Sérémé asserted his openness to this cooperation and

welcomed the Agency's gesture that will facilitate its contribution to agricultural development in the sub-region.

The two parties agreed on the following axes of collaboration: biotechnology, natural resources and capacity strengthening. But before any legalization of the partnership, an Australian delegation will come to Senegal in March 2009 and will take advantage of the trip to CERRAS. □

RAILS: our computing system diagnosed

The institutional diagnosis of three sub regional Organizations — CORAF/WECARD, ASARECA and SADC — out of the four is being conducted by the ICT international Consultant, Mr Robert Daniels, appointed by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). This task that specifically deals with the rehabi-

litation of facilities is in line with the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Information and Learning System (RAILS). Discussions on the task were held during a working session held on 18th February 2009 at CORAF/WECARD information and communication unit.

The following issues were discussed during the working session: the introduction of the organisation's computing system, of its network and security aspects' diagnosis, of its website and database management.

Various constraints related to the facilities and operation were identified and in order to address these, CORAF/WECARD ordered the auditing of its computing system, which is captured in this study report.

A new computing system was then established which has been in use a few months ago with the effective installation of the telephony on Internet Protocol in the new office building.

A new website has also been published online since 16th February, 2009 and we guarantee that your comments and suggestions will be considered.

In order to facilitate communication and information exchanges between FARA and CORAF/WECARD, the Consultant recommended the use of a Virtual Private Network (VPN) based on the VSAT satellite system. He also recommended a survey of the Executive Secretariat's staff on the use of the new information and communication technologies that has already started. □

ECHO TO COME

3rd March, 2009, Dakar. A Delegation of the European Commission to Senegal's agriculture sector will pay a courtesy call on the CORAF/WECARD Executive Director and held a discussion on reviving partnership between the two Institutions.

5th March 2009, Douala, Cameroon. CORAF/WECARD is invited to participate in a Session of the Governing Board of the *Centre africain de recherches sur bananiers et plantain* (CARBAP) which is among the CORAF/WECARD base-centres.

From 5th to 6th March, 2009, Accra. CORAF/WECARD was represented at a workshop on resource mobilization convened by the Forum of Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

9th March 2009, Brussels. In the framework of advocacy activities on resource mobilization, the management of CORAF/WECARD's Secretariat and of some of its technical components – the CARBAP and the Regional Pole of Applied Research for the Development of Central Africa Savannas – are going on a mission to the European Union.

From 9th to 10th March 2009, Dakar. An Australian delegation from the AUS/AID paid a call on CORAF/WECARD with the aim of initiating partnership arrangements on agriculture in West Africa, as a follow-up to an earlier consultation.

From 2nd to 11th March, 2009, Ouagadougou, Bamako and Abidjan. CORAF/WECARD will conduct monitoring and evaluation activities on Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA) programmes.

From 3rd to 10th March 2009, Dakar. CORAF/WECARD is invited to participate in a workshop on the Scientific and Technical Information System (SIST)'s management.

From 11th to 15th March 2009, Cotonou. CORAF/WECARD will send a mission to Benin in preparation for the 9th General Assembly planned in 2010 in Cotonou, Benin. □



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