

Executive Secretariat

Extension of Headquarters Office Block Inaugurated

In the presence of CORAF/WECARD Administrators, the representatives of technical and development partners based in Senegal, the representatives of Senegal Government Authorities and the Executive Secretariat Staff, the extension of CORAF/WECARD headquarters premises, funded by the Department For International Development (DFID), was inaugurated on Monday 7th December, 2009.

It is worth to note that, CORAF/WECARD received funding from the Department For International Development (DFID) in 2006 for the Development of a Plan for Strengthening Agricultural Research in West and Central Africa (DPSAR). The DPSAR was aimed at strengthening the capacity of CORAF/WECARD to support agricultural research in the sub-region in line with the CAADP/NEPAD objectives.

This financial support enabled CORAF/WECARD, undergo the institutional and programmatic reform initiated, to develop a new strategy (Strategic Plan 2007-2016) and a medium-term plan (Operational Plan 2008-2013) and entrusted the institution with the mission to contribute to a sustainable improvement of productivity, competitiveness and agricultural markets in West and Central Africa by meeting major needs addressed to research system in the sub-region by target groups.

The support equally enabled the extension of the Executive Secretariat headquarters to meet its reforms.

As part of the inauguration, four addresses were delivered by the following personalities.

The Director General of the Senegalese Institute of Agricultural Research (ISRA), Dr. Taïb DIOUF, the Chairman of the Governing Board, Dr. Simon ZOK and Dr. Paco SEREME, Executive Director of CORAF/WECARD were given the floor in turn to express their gratitude to Development partners, notably DFID for enabling CORAF/WECARD to extend its headquarters.

The extension is a three-storey building with 16 offices, toilet rooms, halls, a big conference hall and store houses over a total surface area of 700 m² with 655 m² already constructed.

On behalf of DFID, Mrs. Rachel LAMBERT thanked all personalities attending the event before making a brief presentation on DFID,



Mrs. Rachel LAMBERT and Dr. Simon ZOK cutting ribbon during the official inauguration of CORAF/WECARD new building

an international cooperation agency of the United Kingdom Government, with a mission to contribute to development and poverty reduction in developing countries.

The DFID Representative equally expressed her satisfaction in seeing an improvement in CORAF/WECARD functions and organization.

Following the addresses, Mrs. Rachel LAMBERT

and Dr. Simon ZOK jointly cut the ribbon and unveiled the plaque with inscriptions «This is a DFID-funded building inaugurated on December 7th, 2009» in English and in French, the two official languages of CORAF/WECARD.

The ceremony ended with a visit to the premises of the new building.

CORAF/WECARD-AUSAID :

Agreement to be Finalized and Signed in May 2010

A mission of the Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) comprising Dr. Bruce Pengelly and Mrs. Sara Webb had working sessions with Dr. Paco sérémé and his technical staff including Program Managers, from 1st to 4th December, 2009 at CORAF/WECARD Headquarters.

At the end of these sessions, the two parties were expected to agree on the terms, main lines and operationalization of the Partnership.

The Partnership is aimed at improving food security in sub-humid and semi-arid zones of the agricultural and livestock systems. At the end four years, marking the duration of Phase 1 of the Partnership, producers' systems are expected to be strengthened.

To achieve this, the main areas of activity shall include Biotechnology, livestock, natural resources and capacity building.

Both parties defined activities to be carried out during the year 2010-2011.

The agreement is to be finalized and signed in May 2010 during the General Assembly scheduled for Cotonou.



WAAPP-2 :

Mano River Union stakeholders in consultation

From 17 to 18 December, 2009, Stakeholders and partners of the Mano River Union participated in a workshop in Free-town - Sierra Leone, to consider developing a program on rice under the second phase of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP).

During the first regional preparatory meeting on WAAPP-2 held from 24 to 25 June, 2009 in Abuja, stakeholders and partners made the request to develop a program on rice for the four countries of the Mano River Union, i.e. Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

For this reason, two consultants were selected to conduct a scoping study to identify constraints, needs and essential elements for the development of the program.

At the Freetown meeting organized by CORAF/WECARD, participants agreed on the objectives of the program and the findings of the scoping study before determining the roles of each stakeholder in the implementation of the programme and the roadmap for developing the programme.

West Africa :

Project for Building livelihoods resilience among small-holder producers launched

CORAF/WECARD held, a regional workshop for the launch of the project entitled "Building livelihoods resilience to alleviate poverty in semi-arid zones of West Africa" in Dakar, Senegal from 9 to 11 November 2009.

This is a research-for-development project funded by the International Development Research Center over a 4-year period (IDRC/CRDI). The project will be implemented in Mali, Niger and Togo under the coordination of CORAF/WECARD, with scientific support of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI). It aims at promoting the mixed, sustainable and profitable dairy and horticulture production systems to build livelihoods resilience among small-holder producers.

The rationale behind this regional workshop was to harmonize views and facilitate the implementation of the project.

More specifically, the intention was to share information on the project; develop the logical framework and regional and national work plans of the project and define the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders; present the M&E strategy of the project and agree on the administrative and financial management procedures of the project.

WAAPP :

Information systems analyzed in Mali and Ghana

From 9 to 20 November, 2009, a delegation of CORAF/WECARD went to Mali and Ghana to carry out the diagnosis of information and communication systems under the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program.

For an effective coordination of activities in the region by CORAF/WECARD, and within beneficiary countries by coordinating structures, information and communication are very important tools for informing stakeholders and partners of WAAPP.

This year, besides the creation of a WAAPP window on the CORAF/WECARD website, and the diagnosis of the communication systems of beneficiary countries, the creation of a directory

of research specialties was deemed necessary.

The mission team comprising of Dr. Anatole KONE – Information & Communication Manager and Mr Gorgui Alioune Mbow – ICT specialist aimed at analyzing the communication systems to gather information for the creation of a directory of research specialties.

Within 10 days of work, the information and communication needs of the beneficiary countries were collected; ongoing communication activities were noted; communication systems were audited; target groups of WAAPP activities were identified and the officers in charge aspects were met.

Cooperation :

CIRAD and CORAF/WECARD Team up For Agricultural Development in WCA

CORAF/WECARD and the Center for International Cooperation in Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD), longtime partners, formalized their partnership through the signing of a cooperative framework, on December 12th, 2009 in Dakar, at the headquarters of CORAF/WECARD.



(Left to right) Paco Sérémé, Simon ZOK and Gérard Mathéron join hands together for a fruitful cooperation for the benefit of WCA populations, and CIRAD and CORAF/WECARD researchers.

In the presence of the Chairman of CORAF/WECARD Governing Board, Dr. Simon ZOK, some partners of both institutions and the members of CORAF/WECARD Executive Secretariat, Dr. Gérard METHÉRON, Director General of CIRAD and Dr. Paco Sérémé, Executive Director of CORAF/WECARD initialed and signed the cooperative framework, formalizing therefore the partnership between the two institutions.

The agreement was more specifically aimed at facilitating cooperation between CORAF/WECARD and CIRAD in the area of scientific research, adaptation and dissemination of products and scientific research innovations with a view to creating positive impacts on agricultural development in West and Central Africa (WCA).

The cooperation will be organized based on research, training and development stakes, which were substantiated in CORAF/WECARD strategic Plan (2007-2016) and in the CIRAD strategic vision document (2008-2012).

Taking the floor in turn, Dr. Simon ZOK and Dr. Gérard Mathéron recognized the opportunity and relevance of such cooperation that will benefit the populations of the 22 countries of West and Central Africa and researchers of both institutions.

Banana sector in WCA :

A forum to strengthen regional partnership

Organized jointly by CARBAP, the Banana Program of Biodiversity International (former INIBAP) and CORAF/WECARD, the forum was held in Douala, Cameroon from 19 to 21 November 2009.

Participants were mainly representatives of the banana programs of five major plantain producing countries of the sub-region: Cameroon (IRAD/CARBAP); Côte d'Ivoire (CNRA); Ghana (ICC); Nigeria (NIHORT) and DRC (INERA). The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the Center for International Cooperation in Agronomic Research for Development (CIRAD) were also represented.

For three days, participants reviewed the activities of MUSACO – the banana and plantain research network created under the auspices of CORAF/WECARD in 1997 by identifying

its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Reviewing the sector made it possible to assess the major achievements in the banana and plantain sector in WCA. The support that various partners are likely to bring in the operation of the new system to put in place; the new guidelines for stimulating the banana and plantain sectors in the sub-region; projects to finalize and issues to be addressed by new projects; and the main orientations of the logical framework were also on the agenda. The strategic role of communication as a vital tool for the functioning of the network or platform was also discussed.

One of the major resolutions of the meeting was the change in the mode of operation of the MUSACO network and its replacement by a new system in line with the new guidelines of the strategic plan of CORAF/WECARD.

Implementation of CAADP

Pillar 4 :

ECCAS member countries sensitized

The ten countries of the Economic Community of Central African States, i.e. Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, DRC, Sao Tome and Principe, and Chad were invited to a regional awareness raising workshop on the implementation of Pillar 4 of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) from 24 to 25 November, 2009, in Yaoundé.

The objective of by FARA, CORAF/ WECARD and ECCAS in organizing this sub-regional meeting was to raise awareness among key stakeholders on CAADP Pillar 4 and boost its implementation to improve agricultural growth. Stakeholders were informed about all CAADP round table processes, including issues relating to Pillar 4.

Discussions helped participants to build on the implementation of CAADP Pillar 4 in West Africa led by ECOWAS. ECCAS will seek the support of the Group of Experts.

GA 2010 :

CORAF/WECARD Mission in Cotonou

As part of the preparation of the second agricultural science week and the ninth General Assembly scheduled for 2010 in Cotonou, a mission of CORAF/WECARD comprising Dr. Harold Roy-Macauley, Dr. Anatole Koné and Mr. Jean Rostand Kamga were in Cotonou from 14 to 19 December 2009 as a follow-up to the organization of the two events.

After the visit of the Official and Technical Missions of CORAF/WECARD to the Beninois Authorities of Agriculture and Agricultural Research in March and August 2009, the preparations of the Second Agricultural Scientific Week of West and Central Africa as well as the ninth General Assembly were officially launched.

Since August 2009, a Local Organizing Committee has been set up in Benin, which is coordinated by the National Institute for Agricultural Research of Benin (INRAB). Its role is to organize the Second Agricultural Scientific Week of West and Central Africa as well as the ninth General Assembly under the overall coordination of CORAF/WECARD Executive Secretariat (ES).

During its last technical mission in Benin, the Executive Secretariat (ES) worked with the Local Organizing Committee on the following:

In view at the fact that the 2nd Scientific Week and 9th General Assembly will be held in six

months, a second mission was necessary not only to take stock of the preparations on ground, but also to support the Local Committee in such preparations.

After three-day work sessions, partners like Centre du Riz pour l'Afrique, Bioversity International, IITA, Centre Songhaï, the Private Sector, Universities and Producers' Organizations will be involved in the organization of both events.

On the ground, search for partners continued and fruitful exchanges were initiated with the members of the Local Organizing Committee in Benin.

WAAPP :

Stakeholders and Partners Reflect on Second Phase

From 04 to 06 November, 2009, the ECOWAS Commission for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources chaired the second regional consultation on the preparation of the second series of the Adaptive Programmatic Loan (APL) in the framework of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP) in Abuja, at the headquarters of the Commission.

The meeting was attended by representatives of ECOWAS Members States applying for the second series of APL, the World Bank and CORAF/WECARD

The participants were to review the state of implementation of the first meeting recommendations, June 2009; review the various components of the project and the Result Framework in order to update the roadmap for the start of the second phase of the WAAPP.

After three days of fruitful exchanges, the recommendations were made based on experiences from the implementation of the ongoing phase 1 in Senegal, Ghana and Mali.

Countries were basically requested to produce

project documents that are less descriptive and more analytical, more specifically in the presentation of components, the institutional mechanism, Program implementing agencies capacities, etc. The regional dimension must be mentioned in the project document when priorities are set, and should be translated into the monitoring and evaluation mechanism, and the formulation of result framework indicators.

The various actors' responsibilities for each component should be clearly outlined.

2nd Session of GB 2009 : CORAF/WECARD Budget 2010 Approved

After its first session in May 2009 in Abuja, Nigeria, the members of the Governing Board convened a second meeting for 2009 from 7th to 9th December, in Novotel Hotel, Dakar. Development partners attended this meeting as observers.

The agenda for the Board Meeting included the following:

Presentation and review of Program activities and Technical Cooperation; presentation of financial status report as on November, 30th 2009; presentation and review of the Annual Work Plan and Budget 2010; Presentation and review of the progress report on Institutional Change activities; presentation of Executive Secretariat progress report from June 2009 to November 2009 and the implementation of the Recommendation of the first session of GB 2009.

During the three-day meeting, the members of the Board deliberated more specifically on the functioning of the programs, CORAF/WECARD cooperation, advocacy and governance activities. After reviewing the work plan and budget for 2010, the Board approved the budget worth more than seven billions CFA.



Board members confident about the future of their institution.



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Institutional change :

NARS stakeholders trained

As part of the implementation of the CORAF/WECARD institutional change process, a sub-regional workshop brought together more than twenty participants from eight countries of WCA from 14 to 16 December, 2009, in Dakar.

Through group and plenary sessions, participants gained better understanding of institutional change and institutional change management in the context of the CORAF/WECARD Strategic Plan.

They analyzed in the form of a table, their roles and responsibilities as national and sub-regional stakeholders in the context of the implementation of the CORAF/WECARD Operational Plan. They also scrutinized the new research paradigm through a change and change management process.

National and sub-regional plans and a timeframe for the way forward for future steps of the institutional change were developed.

AGENDA

January 11 to 16, 2010 – Dakar.

Extraordinary Session of the CORAF/WECARD Scientific and Technical Committee (STC)

January 19 to 21, 2010 – Ouagadougou. CORAF/WECARD mission for the monitoring of the DONATA project activities.

January 12 to 13, 2010 – Dakar. FARA Mission CORAF/WECARD Headquarters to discuss the implementation of the RAILS and DONATA projects

January 5 to 19, 2010 – Cotonou, Lomé and Abuja. Joint Mission WB-CORAF/WECARD for the pre-evaluation of activities carried out under WAAPP-2

January 20 to 21, 2010 –Thies, Senegal. Review of the information systems of the National Center of Specialization, and CERAAS under WAAPP

January 25 to 27, 2010 – Dakar. Workshop on the CORAF/WECARD institutional change process intended for NARS stakeholders.