The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) held the 5th African Agriculture Science Week and its General Assembly in Ouagadougou from 19th to 24th July, 2010. During a whole week, more than 800 participants, comprising managers of agricultural research, agricultural development experts, producers, researchers, scientific and development partners, agricultural NGOs, the private sector and statesmen, reflected on the central theme of African Agricultural Innovation in a Changing Global Environment.

Investment in agricultural innovation after the financial crisis, the knowledge centres and networks in order to meet the challenges of globalization and climate change and the African agricultural trade capacity for adaptation to internal and external shocks were the subthemes that guided the reflections which had been conducted in 14 parallel sessions during which, thanks to the very varied range of themes, people managed to discuss the main challenges and, above all, the emerging questions so that to make concrete proposals in order to contribute to the development of African agriculture. Plenary meetings, exhibitions and poster sessions have also been held during this international meeting.

A day has been dedicated to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) on the following theme: Implementing the CAADP Compact Agreement: the African private sector and investments in agriculture. Thanks to this day, the political decision-makers have been more sensitized on their support to the implementation of the CAADP; the African private sector too has been sensitized to invest in agriculture through an explanation of the importance of its role. Four ministers facilitated a roundtable on the CAADP: Burkina Faso, Rwanda and Sierra Leone Ministries of Agriculture and Mozambique Ministry of Research.

The President of the Republic of Burkina Faso, Mr Blaise Compaoré himself, opened the work of this international meeting, a way of supporting the men and women of science for agricultural development. The Foundation for Democracy in Africa awarded him the 2010 medal of glory for the personality that strives for a good democracy in Africa.

After a week of exchange, the stakeholders and partners now know more about the problems, the opportunities and the progresses in African agricultural research; the stakeholders have been sensitized on their roles in

FARA Vice Chairman since 2007, has been elected as FARA Chairman for the next 3 years. His Vice-Chairman is the Egyptian Ayman Abou Hadid from the North Africa Subregional Organisation (NASRO).

The 6th Science Week is going to be held in 2013 in a Maghreb country.
As the host of the 5th Science Week, the West and Central Africa region strove for not only the success of this African meeting, but also for the diversification of its partnerships. CORAF/WECARD’s Executive Secretariat was strongly represented at this meeting by the Chairman of its Governing Board, its Executive Secretariat, the Director of Programmes, the Director of Finance and Administration, the Information and Communication Manager, the Capacity Strengthening and Knowledge Management Programme Manager, the SCARDA project Coordinator, one Programme assistant and the ICTs assistant. 12 managers of West and Central African National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARI) have been invited to the work.

The Executive Director, Dr Paco Sérémé, presented the activities of CORAF/WECARD since the General Assembly in Johannesburg. He showed that CORAF/WECARD undertook numerous reforms in order to achieve the implementation of the CAADP’s agricultural research programme. He facilitated the plenary session of the subtheme 2 on knowledge centres and networks to meet the challenges of globalization and climate change. Meetings with partners have been organised in order to strengthen existing partnerships and to build new ones. A stand showing the role and activities of CORAF/WECARD has also been held. It recorded more than 500 visits including that of the Burkina Faso and Rwanda Ministers of Agriculture.

Elected as the Vice Chairman of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Dr YO Tiémoko, the Director of the National Centre for Agricultural Research (CNRA) in Côte d’Ivoire has been a member of CORAF/WECARD Governing Board since 2008. He replaced Dr Denis Kyetere, the former Chairman. Dr YO Tiémoko has got more than 20 years of experience in the field of Research and Development in his country, Côte d’Ivoire. He has greatly evolved in his organisation of which he became, in 2005, the Director General. At the international level, he has managed to build strong relationships with some scientific and development partners for the benefit of his organisation, his country, his subregion and Africa as a whole. In his message to his peers of the African and International Scientific Community, FARA’s new Chairman declared that he relied upon everybody’s support in order to enable the African Agricultural Research to present in the forthcoming years a shining aspect so that to contribute to the improvement of food safety.
Development of livestock, fisheries and aquaculture in WCA:
the research priorities validated

The subregional workshop for the validation of the research priorities in livestock, fisheries and aquaculture development in West and Central Africa was held at Palm Beach hotel in Ouagadougou from 7th to 9th July 2010.

This workshop gathered about sixty participants representing corporate organisations of breeders, fishermen, aquaculturists and processors, training institutions, CORAF/WECARD’s centres of excellence, national research institutions, intergovernmental organisations, technical and financial partners and the Australian Agency of Cooperation (AusAID).

At the end of the debates on research constraints and opportunities in the field of livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, the participants reached a consensus on the main themes and subthemes and on strategic activities.

Four themes were retained as being the most important: production and productivity improvement; improvement in performance and access to market; improvement of competitiveness and added value and improvement of the interactions in livestock-agriculture-aquaculture-environment.

A varied range of activities connected with livestock, fisheries and aquaculture and professional stakeholders’ capacity strengthening and autonomization were identified as being likely to guide the formulation of competitive or commissioned projects.

Fish-breeding:
a farmer day organised in Mali

The work of the preparatory meeting for the 8th edition of the farmer’s day on the promotion of fish breeding for the sustainable management of halieutic resources was done from 22nd to 23rd June, 2010.

This meeting gathered 250 participants coming from the technical Ministries of livestock and fisheries, agriculture, environment and sanitation, the Commission of Food Safety, projects and programmes, the Chambers of Agriculture, agricultural corporate organisations and technical and financial partners.

The participants in this day diagnosed the concerns of the producers, in general, and that connected with fish production, in particular; they made proposals for the development of fish breeding in Mali before launching the 2010-2011 agricultural campaign.

Various recommendations were made for the organisation of the fish breeding sector, for the strengthening of stakeholders’ capacity, for the promotion of research on food formula and on species adapted to fish breeding and, finally, for the establishment of the fish day.
The West African Agricultural Productivity Programme (PAAO/WAAPP) has been prepared by CORAF/WECARD in relationship with the agricultural experts from the participant countries’ Ministries in charge of agriculture (Ghana, Mali, Senegal). It rests, on the one hand, on the integration and harmonization of national agricultural policies, and, on the other hand, on the building of strong links between research, extension services, producers and private operators.

The WAAPP has been developed with the main objective to improve agricultural productivity while favouring regional integration as tools for the promotion of a shared growth and of poverty reduction in West Africa.

Held in the framework of the promotion of the WAAPP activities, the 2nd biannual meeting of exchange with the national and international press has been dedicated to this programme.

Thanks to the presentations followed by debates on the birth of the WAAPP, on its activities at level of the region and that of Senegal, the journalists were informed on the activities and on the results that have been achieved since 3 years of implementation of the WAAPP; they thus understood the role of the regional coordination ensured by CORAF/WECARD; they were also informed on the WAAPP mechanism of expansion in other ECOWAS countries.

This classroom session has been facilitated by the Executive director of CORAF/WECARD, the Director of Programmes, the national coordinator of the WAAPP, the Executive Director of FNRAA, the Director General of ISRA, the Director General of the Food Technology Institute, the Director of the Regional Centre for Studies on the Improvement of Plant Adaptation to Drought (CERAAS) and numerous researchers coming from Ghana in the framework of this Programme’s scientific exchanges.

In the afternoon, the journalists visited the Food Technology Institute and a bakery in order to see the technologies developed in the framework of the WAAPP in Senegal for the maize or millet flour used in bread making.

More than 20 participants met in Accra in the framework of this work that facilitated the improvement of the project’s indicators, the review and the update of the results framework considering the new activities namely on technology transfer and dissemination.

This workshop has been coordinated by CORAF/WECARD’s Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.
The PLM project: field activities are well conducted

From 22th to 30th July, 2010, Dr Hamadé Kagoné, the Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture programme Manager and the coordinator of the Livelihood resilience strengthening project for poverty reduction in West Africa’s semi-arid zones, conducted a monitoring tour for the implementation of the project in Mali, Togo and Niger.

Through individual interviews, working sessions and visits to potential sites, the coordinator could assess the implementation of the project with regard to the 2010 programme of activities and realised that the recommendations of the launch workshop held in 2009 have been implemented. He also exchanged with the countries’ coordinators in order to prepare for the next visit of the food safety director of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Capacity strengthening: regional training to Biotechnology and Biosafety for ECOWAS countries researchers and technicians

20 researchers and technicians from 10 ECOWAS countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Mali, Senegal and Togo) were trained to the use of modern agricultural Biotechnology and Biosafety tools from 15th to 13th August, 2010. This was in Abidjan.

The main objective of this training was to contribute to the strengthening of researchers and technicians’ technical and operational capacity in the field of Biotechnology in West Africa.

The participants were informed on the challenges of Biotechnology with a view to support the selection and conservation of genetic resources; they succeeded in gaining skills in Biotechnology and Biosafety. They studied the legal tools that would facilitate GMOs’ development and use and, finally, they were updated on the economic and ethical issues of the development of transgenesis techniques.

As a whole, 6 modules that facilitated the various participants’ capacity strengthening have been given. It must be recalled that this training is in line with the implementation framework of the action plan for Biotechnology and Biosafety development in West Africa initiated by ECOWAS and given to CORAF/WECARD which acts as the technical partner.

PPAAO: the Environmental and Social Management Framework Plan (ESMFP) and the Pesticide Management Plan (PPMF) validated

From 4th to 5th August 2010, the stakeholders and partners of the section 1C of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP) met in Dakar to validate the Environmental and Social Management Framework Plan (ESFMP) and the Pesticide Management Plan (PPMF).

In fact, in accordance with the requirements of the safeguard policy for community development projects funded by the World Bank, CORAF/WECARD commissioned the study for the drafting of an environmental assessment and pesticide management plan in the Mano River Union countries (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Benin, Togo). Afterwards, the consultants prepared an Environmental and Social Management Framework Plan (ESMFP) which includes an analysis of the environmental, institutional and legal frameworks through which the WAAPP has been implemented in their respective countries.

During these two days, the participants appropriated the two plans and made suggestions for their improvement.

The stakeholders and partners of the WAAPP 1C exchanged in a warm atmosphere

CORAF/WECARD’s competitive projects: the CARBAP finalizes a regional project

The preparation workshop for the regional project on the improvement of plantain productivity in West and Central Africa was held from 16th to 18th April, 2010 at the headquarters of the Centre Africain de Recherches en Bananiers et Plantains (CARBAP).

The aim of this meeting was to merge the six national projects on the banana sector that have been retained in the framework of the competitive funds of CORAF/WECARD in order to meet the standards for subregional projects. The project covers six CORAF/WECARD member countries: Cameroon, The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Togo, Benin, Ghana and Congo.

The subregional project to be implemented will deal with the dissemination of innovative technologies. The CARBAP has been appointed by CORAF/WECARD to ensure this project’s regional coordination. In each country, there will be a national coordinator who will work with associated researchers according to the various themes.
Innovation platforms on banana and plantain:

The activities are well conducted.

Innovation platforms on banana and plantain sectors have been created in Central Africa since 2009. Their implementation is ensured by the CARBAP in collaboration with the NARS of beneficiary countries. In fact, there is a range of pilot, structured and operational platforms that are developed on the geographical area that covers the agricultural production basins of the subregion. These platforms aim at contributing to the sustainable improvement of food safety and of the populations’ standards of living through the development of the banana and plantain sectors. The innovations developed by the stakeholders of research are tested and disseminated among producers through the appropriate learning mechanisms.

It must be recalled that these partnership platforms are in line with the project entitled « Partnership platforms for the development and dissemination of innovations in order to sustainably improve the banana and plantain sectors in Central Africa ».

SCARDA:
The programme extended until December 2010

A mission of the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) stayed on 5th and 6th August’ 2010 at CORAF/WECARD’s headquarters mainly in order to assess the implementation of the Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa (SCARDA).

This mission, comprising Luke MUKUBVU from DFID, John LINTON and Tim CHANCEL-LOR from the NRI, met with the main managers of the Executive Secretariat and with the SCARDA coordinator at CORAF/WECARD.

After two days of exchange and in view of the progress achieved in SCARDA implementation, the DFID agreed to extend it from July to December, 2010.

The project’s accounts have been closed and the workplan of the 2010 second semester has been reviewed and adapted again to the main axes of intervention retained by the DFID so as to take into account the given time.

The DFID mission members and CORAF/WECARD managers promised to work for the success of SCARDA activities in the CORAF/WECARD region.

WAAPP:
Benin and Togo visited in the framework of the finalization of the ESMFP

A joint mission of the World Bank and CORAF/WECARD visited Benin and Togo from 18th to 25th July, 2010 in the framework of the finalization of the Environmental and Social Management Framework Plan (ESMFP).

In order to extend the process of the programme in Benin, Togo, and the Mano River Union countries, CORAF/WECARD commissioned a study for the development of this framework which will serve as the basis for the definition of National Environmental and Social Management Framework and Pesticide Management Plans. In order to better understand the countries’ environmental and social management and pesticides’ management mechanisms, a CORAF/WECARD – World Bank joint mission visited Benin and Togo.

The purpose of this mission was to analyze, based on the context of each of these two countries, the importance of the environmental and social problems to be considered in the framework of the WAAPP B and 1C. The mission also reviewed the national rules that should be applied during the development of activities and during their implementation as well. The strengths and weaknesses of the organisations, which are going to ensure the implementation of the WAAPP, have been assessed and the stakeholders have been informed on the World Bank’s safeguard measures.

Dr Mbène Dièye Faye, the Policy, Markets and Trade programme Manager, represented CORAF/WECARD in this joint mission.
During a cocktail party organised for this purpose and to which all CIRAD partners in Senegal were invited, Dr Paco Sérémé reviewed the excellent career of this great stakeholder of French and African agricultural research. He stressed his reliability and, above all, his strictness and his love for the well-done work, all qualities that make of him an exemplary man that has worked for the development of French and African agricultural research with 40 years spent in Africa.

The Executive Director of CORAF/WECARD acknowledged all SUBREVILLE’s efforts to support CORAF/WECARD which led to the signing of a framework convention with CIRAD in December 2009.

Dr Georges SUBREVILLE expressed all his gratitude for the support he’s received during his life in Africa. He said to be in fact retiring but to remain at the disposal of his African brothers and sisters for the development of agricultural research in Africa and in France.

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CORAF/WECARD - CIRAD :

CORAF/WECARD pays tribute to Dr Georges SUBREVILLE

On 15th July, 2010, CORAF/WECARD honoured Dr Georges SUBREVILLE, the Regional Director of the Centre of Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD) in Senegal who was retiring after more than 40 years of service.

CORAF/WECARD-CSIRO partnership :

the subregional research themes identified

CORAF/WECARD’s stakeholders and partners identified the integrated Livestock/Crops research projects for the West and Central Africa semi-arid and subhumid zones during a workshop held in the framework of the partnership between CORAF/WECARD and Australia’s CSIRO. This was on 15th and 16th July, 2010 in Dakar.

In order to have a sustainable basis for partnership and research intervention, the specialists and experts representing many NARS and subregional and international organisations shared information and knowledge on the integrated Livestock/Crops system of production during a participatory workshop organised by CORAF/WECARD in the framework of this partnership.

The aim of the workshop was to define the subregional research themes that should guide the research interventions supported by a partnership between CORAF/WECARD and the AusAID/CSIRO aimed at improving the productivity of livestock/crops production systems in West and Central Africa’s semi-arid and subhumid regions. The main themes that have been identified are the following: sustainable seed systems/seed stocks; water and nutrients efficiency; sustainable Livestock/Crops intensification systems; socio-economy in Livestock/Crops systems; the marketing of research [Crops and Livestock] and post-harvest losses and conservation.

At the end of the workshop, concept notes for projects dealing with the priority themes were drafted.

a family photo in order to immortalize this tribute ceremony held for Georges SUBREVILLE

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