

THE DURBAN STATEMENT

The Way Forward for Agricultural Research and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

1. Agriculture is the engine for improved rural livelihood and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Recognizing this, the African political leaders have positioned agriculture at the center of their new vision for the future of the continent. In full support of this vision, the SSA agricultural research and development community has called for regional agricultural production to grow at an annual rate of 6% through 2020.
2. The African vision for agricultural research and development envisages that by 2020, the region should:
 - have dynamic agricultural markets among nations and between regions;
 - be a net exporter of agricultural products;
 - have food availability and affordability, equitable distribution of wealth;
 - be a strategic player in agricultural science and technology development, and
 - have a culture of sustainable use of the natural resource base.

The target level of agricultural growth can not be achieved without a focused and market-driven technology development and transfer system, an enabling policy environment, and effective institutions.

3. The considerable efforts and financial investments that have been made by national and international institutions over the past 30 years have had limited pay-offs. At the present time, SSA is still dealing with first order challenges of increasing agricultural productivity, lagging behind most of the rest of the world. Additionally, new challenges that threaten the potential of agriculture to contribute to sustainable economic development in SSA have emerged. These include increasing urbanization, globalization and market competitiveness, environmental and natural resource issues (land degradation and desertification, water scarcity and competing

demands for water, deforestation, loss of biological diversity, climate change, etc), and the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS.

4. To address these challenges, we, the members of the SSA agricultural research and development community, recognize that effective and broadened partnerships are essential. The national agricultural research systems (NARS) must play a central role in these partnerships. The African countries have made considerable efforts, over the past decades, to develop a solid base-line research infrastructure. In order to harness these resources, the NARS have taken the initiative towards reforming themselves for greater accountability, fiscal stability and impact. They have also strengthened regional collaboration through the formation and development of sub-regional organizations (SROs), and more recently through the creation of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). The light structures coordinate many decentralized networks, based on subsidiarity principles and increasingly on competition. Other partners, including the CGIAR Centers, have similarly responded to the challenge through more intensive consultation with NARS and greater collaboration among themselves.
5. The way forward is to build on the gains already made. We, the members of the SSA agricultural research and development community hereby agree to commit ourselves to pursue the stated Vision
 - through the following lines of action
 - develop and disseminate technologies for increased agricultural productivity and sound natural resource management
 - utilize the benefits offered by the emerging technologies including information and communication technology, and safe use of biotechnology,
 - guided by the principles of
 - inclusive partnerships which reach out to producers, agribusiness, and consumers organizations, as well as other development-oriented non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
 - substantive agenda based on programmatic priorities
 - operational efficiency based on competition and decentralization

- mutual respect and shared credit,
 - and using the following instruments
 - high quality human capital
 - increased and sustained financing, and
 - effective institutions.
6. On the occasion of the CGIAR Mid-term Meeting held in Durban, South Africa, we call upon:
- the SSA governments to translate their political commitment to agricultural development into concrete actions by providing the necessary resources and creating an enabling policy and institutional environment;
 - the SSA governments to ensure that issues of sustainable agriculture receive their due place on the agenda of the Johannesburg Earth Summit
 - FARA, with the support of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), to play an advocacy role to place agricultural research at the center of the SSA agricultural development agenda;
 - the international investor community to coordinate its efforts, and significantly increase and sustain financial support for African agricultural research;
 - the international agricultural research system, including the CGIAR Centers and advanced research institutions, to forge more effective and efficient partnerships with African NARS and achieve greater programmatic integration; and
 - the CGIAR System to ensure that the proposed changes in program, governance structure, and funding mechanisms are consistent and reinforce our efforts to achieve the African Vision.
- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
 - Special Program for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR)
 - Association for Agricultural Research in East and Central Africa (ASARECA)
 - Conférence des Responsables de la Recherche Agronomique en Afrique de l' Ouest et du Centre (CORAF/WECARD)
 - Southern African Center for Agricultural Research (SACCAR)
 - CGIAR – Supported Future Harvest Centers

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