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Communiqué

The 1st Pan-Africa Non-State Actors Policy Dialogue Meeting on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP):

Working Together to Tackle the Challenges of African Agriculture – Role of NSAs

Rockview Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria • 17-19 October 2011

We, the participants – comprising of smallholder farmers and pastoralists across the continent, land rights alliances, women’s rights organizations, relevant government officials from Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union Commission (AUC), donor community including the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and research institutions including the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC) – met for a three day workshop organized by ACORD (Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development), ActionAid and Oxfam, to tackle the challenges facing African agriculture and to discuss the role of non-state actors (NSAs) in the CAADP implementation process.

Specific objectives of the meeting were: 1) To have an effective dialogue among various stakeholders to deepen the commitment and alignment of national agricultural policies and investment plans to key CAADP targets and principles; 2) to strengthen the capacity of small-scale farmers, pastoralists, land rights alliances, women’s rights organizations and other civil society groups to engage effectively with the CAADP processes at the national and regional levels; 3) to update participants on the CAADP Mutual Accountability Framework and how country-level implementations are addressing the needs of women, land grabbing and climate change response mechanisms; 4) to facilitate a constructive exchange of ideas among government representatives, development agencies, smallholder farmers, pastoralists and other civil society groups not only on the CAADP implementation process, but also on the broader issues facing African agriculture; 5) share lessons and good practices regarding the identification, design and implementation of national and regional policies, strategies and programmes that contribute to enhanced agricultural growth, food security and rural development in Africa; and 6) identify gaps and present clear recommendations for effective CAADP implementation at the national and regional level.

Overall, the meeting served as a platform for constructive dialogue among NSAs, governments, RECs and the AU on important issues related to CAADP and African agriculture at large. Not only was the meeting effective in teasing out the pivotal role of NSAs in various aspects of CAADP implementation, but it also highlighted the gaps and room for improvement for the current status of NSA participation. Furthermore, representatives from national governments, RECs and the AUC confirmed their commitments to work with NSAs on an equal footing to advance the CAADP agenda at the national and the regional level.



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The dialogue meeting:

Acknowledged ACORD, ActionAid and Oxfam for organizing the dialogue on addressing the challenges facing African agriculture and discussing the role of the NSAs in the CAADP implementation process, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for providing financial assistance for this meeting.

Further acknowledged the AUC/NPCA's support in encouraging the involvement and participation of NSAs in the implementation of CAADP across all levels.

Recognized the added value of NSAs' engagement in the CAADP process, which include:

1. raising awareness and engaging the coordination of NSAs;
2. raising awareness and mobilizing the public from the national and community level;
3. generating knowledge and sharing best practices; advocating to governments, donors and other stakeholders to support the CAADP process;
4. developing capacity of national and regional stakeholders;
5. increasing the engagement of women and youth in the CAADP process.

Furthermore the workshop:

Argued that large-scale land acquisitions, or land grabs, that do not comply with the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in Africa have resulted in the dispossession, eviction, deception, violation of human rights, and destruction of livelihoods of the poorest communities. Communities regularly lose out to local elites and domestic or foreign investors because they lack the power to claim their rights effectively and to defend and advance their rights.

Emphasized the fact that women farmers bear disproportionate impacts from climate change, including added burden of ensuring household food security, limited adaptive capacity arising from structural social inequalities and unequal gender norms, increased vulnerability in women-dominant sectors such as paddy cultivation, cotton and tea plantation and fishing.

Acknowledged that the principles of gender-sensitive agricultural development including essential services packages for women farmers should ensure: equal rights of men and women; participatory and non-discriminatory approaches, accountable and transparent, availability and accessibility of extension services to the most marginalized groups.

Stressed that the rising global food prices has a direct impact on regional and local prices and on consumers, particularly poor communities who are at the bottom of the economic ladder, and there is a need for adequate price stabilization mechanisms such as food reserves.

Highlighted the need to ensure the popularization and domestication of AU policy frameworks and guidelines on land, pastoralism and climate change



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Called upon state actors to

1. Commit to the Maputo Declaration and give legal mandates to the implementation of CAADP by aligning national agricultural investment policies to the CAADP framework
2. Promote sustainable agricultural development models, such as agro-ecological approach, through supporting community seed banks, use of indigenous knowledge, small-scale irrigation systems, affordable credit and/or direct support to farmers and their organizations to develop and disseminate suitable technology (that reduces drudgery, especially for women)
3. Build buffers against food price shocks, such as social protection programmes and national and regional food reserves
4. Address landlessness and implement redistributive land reforms in favor of women and other marginalized sectors (smallholder farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, agricultural workers, landless and off farm rural communities) as a part of agrarian reform
5. Address the growing burden of women's unpaid care work, by improving investments in infrastructure along with greater investments in labor-saving technologies, especially as environmental degradation intensifies
6. Target extension services specifically at women and involve their participation; this should include training more female extension officers but also training male officers to meet the needs of women farmers and equip them with communication skills and transport to reach remote women farmers
7. Provide secure land tenure for women and eliminate all policies and practices that discriminate against them in matters of land rights. Where land reforms have been passed, these need to be effectively implemented
8. Draw up regulations for land investment and negotiate with local farmers on land use plans to prevent violent eviction of farmers from biofuel development
9. Consciously and gradually engage with the NSAs including women and youth in the CAADP implementation process.
10. Improve donor coordination for aid effectiveness through alignment and harmonization as agreed in the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness in Rome, Paris and Accra, and learn from other country experiences where this process has been successful

Called upon NSAs to

1. Hold land investors and traders accountable through the ballot box, consumer choices, and their pension fund and other investments. Civil society organizations along with the media and research institutes can use accountability mechanisms, expose bad practices, acknowledge good practices and help build transparency.
2. Analyze the cost and benefits of various types of land-based agricultural investments, taking into account the various country contexts, and develop alternative models of investments that are beneficial for smallholder farmers.
3. Organize an agricultural policy dialogue group which will meet biannually/annually to review and talk about the status of agricultural sector and livelihood based on the Annual Trends and Outlook Report (ATOR) and program implementation reports.
4. Be more proactive and keep abreast of continental policies and guidelines so as to better influence national governments and mobilize other members of the civil society.



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5. Play a greater role in sensitizing rural farmers on the national, regional and continental processes so they can claim their rights, make informed decisions and build solidarity to influence governments.
6. Work with governments, not against. Rather than outright criticisms, NSAs need to provide constructive feedback with suggestion of alternatives to inadequate policy and programmatic measures.
7. Continue to engage in the review and analysis of national agricultural investment plans so that the interests of women smallholder farmers and pastoralists and the response mechanisms to climate change are adequately addressed.
8. Improve coordination, accountability and transparency in engaging with the CAADP process