



United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Aide-Memoire

Training Workshop on Sustainable Modernization of Agricultural and Rural Transformation
(SMART) in Africa

June 2009

Background and Justification

That agricultural development is key to achieving broad-based economic growth and the Millennium Development Goals of poverty and hunger reduction in Africa is overwhelmingly recognized. Notwithstanding, the performance of the continent's agriculture has been disappointing over many decades, resulting in increasing rural poverty, declining per capita food production, increasing food imports now estimated at US\$ about 30 billion per year and rising food prices. Africa's prospects for achieving internationally agreed development goals, such as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, remain rather bleak.

Inadequacy of past approaches and solutions has been a major cause of the above situation. It has led to failure to produce tangible and sustained results, caused the Green Revolution to bypass Africa, was a major reason for the persistent hunger and extreme human misery on the continent.

The failure to build on past successful experiences has been an important aspect of the underlying inadequacy. Evidence is available which suggests that not all African efforts to achieve green revolution or sustainable rural transformation have been in vain. There have been pockets of successes or good practices, which were characterized by significant productivity increases in various parts of the continent. Examples of these successes include production of tea in Kenya in the 1990s, cotton in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal in 1979-1981 and 1992-1993; maize, wheat, sorghum and teff in Ethiopia in the 1990s; New Rice for Africa (NERICA) in West Africa in recent years, maize in south Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in the 1930s and 1980s, and in Malawi in recent years. These examples suggest that many African countries may have good potential to achieve Sustainable Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Development (SMART) or Green Revolution that could help reduce significantly food insecurity and poverty. Further, recent encouraging shifts in attitude towards African agriculture and the movement that brought African agriculture back to prominence seem to underline African readiness to effect SMART.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) is organizing a training workshop on Sustainable Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Transformation (SMART)/ African Green Revolution in order to address the above issues.

Objectives

The main objective of the training workshop is to enhance the capacity of African countries to formulate and implement appropriate programmes, strategies and policies towards a Sustainable Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Transformation (SMART)/African Green Revolution. The workshop will address the following issues:

1. Agriculture and rural development: Overview
2. African Agriculture: Unique features and Paradigm shifts
3. Indicators and Index for assessing SMART/African Green revolution: concept and application

4. Achieving Green Revolution in Africa: Lessons learned from Africa (strategic commodities and related best practices).
 - Cassava in Nigeria
 - Rice in Senegal
 - Maize in Malawi
 - Banana/Plantain in Cameroon
 - Milk in South Africa
 - Water in DR Congo
5. Achieving sustainable Agriculture and rural development in Africa: Lessons from Asia (e.g. case of Saemaul Undong movement in the Republic of Korea)
6. Achieving sustainable Agriculture and rural transformation in Africa: Other local (country), sub-regional or regional experiences;
7. Formulation of appropriate programmes, strategies and policies for SMART/African Green Revolution
8. Field visit

Format

The training workshop will take place over the course of five days. Day 1 to Day 4 will focus on the presentations and discussions related to objectives 1 to 6 and sharing experiences and expectations between different stakeholders in agriculture (Farmers, NGOs and Research Centers). Day 4 will focus on how to formulate appropriate programmes, strategies and policies for sustainable agriculture and rural transformation/African Green Revolution. Day 5 will be devoted to field visit.

Participants

The training workshop will bring together at least 20 experts and practitioners in the fields of agricultural and rural development from Africa from National Agricultural Research and Extensions systems, farmers' Organizations, the Public and Private Sector Organs, academia and Civil Society Organizations. These participants are drawn from Southern Africa.

Date and venue

The meeting will be held in South Africa. The draft background papers, provisional agenda and programme of work will be sent to participants in advance of the meeting. These documents will also be posted at the website of the meeting.

Administrative Arrangements

UNECA will provide all invited participants with round-trip economy class air-tickets and Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) at South African rate. The Commission will also make all hotel reservations for participants.

An entry visa into South Africa is absolutely required for participants. The visa can be obtained from the South African embassy in the country where the participant resides if there is a South African embassy in the country. Participants are expected to pay for their visas.

Contacts

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