

CTA - NEPAD : innover pour un avenir durable de l'agriculture



CTA ANNUAL SEMINAR

Closing the Knowledge Gap:
**Integrated Water Management
for Sustainable Agriculture**



Johannesburg, South Africa • 22-26 November 2010

Getting to the point:

Plenary sessions focus attention on water management, policy and investment

Capitalising on the excellent presentations from the previous day, the second day was divided into plenary sessions and working groups. The first plenary session began with presentations from ACP experts on techniques, experiences and research into management of water, soil and environment and the second plenary delved deeply into the area of public policy and investment.

Presenting a paper called “Strategies for increasing agricultural water productivity in physically and economically water-scarce regions”, Maimbo Mabanga Malesu of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) in Kenya used some of the key concepts of green and blue water to explain the challenges and the main issues involved with increasing agricultural water productivity. He maintained that to exploit agricultural potential in curbing hunger and undernourishment; technical, economic and human resources must be mobilized to facilitate water management through Rainwater harvesting (RWH) and irrigation. He identified several Promising Water Harvesting



Lively debates during the plenary sessions

Technological Options such as *Zai* pits and Runoff catchment systems to address these challenges.

Prof. Elijah K. Biamah, based at the University of Nairobi, Kenya looked at Current and Future Responses to Drivers of Change for Water Availability and Use for Agriculture. Starting with a sobering look at the effects of climate change on agriculture, and looking at the overall situation within ACP, he identified key drivers of change: demographic, technological, social, environmental and governance to sustain water availability.

Integrated rainwater harvesting and management

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Group sessions : Breaking it down



Fred Kalibwani, consultant



André Vugayabagabo, CTA

their roles and consultant Fred Kalibwani further clarified what was expected from the four groups looking at: Water scarcity adaptation strategies for vulnerable rural communities; water storage for climate change adaptation (recovering rain-water); water governance and water sector reform and the equitable distribution of water rights and access (water, poverty and gender).

Following the excellent plenary presentations in the morning, seminar participants went

into four work groups. Senior programme coordinator, Andre Vugayabagabo briefed participants on

continuation Day 1

(RHM) systems and complementary technologies could help smallholder farmers increase and diversify crop production, and hence shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture. Dr Stephen Ngigi, Projects Coordinator for the Greater Horn of Africa Rainwater Partnership and the Kenya rainwater association (KRA) said RHM leads to improved utilization of available rainwater to reduce water stress especially through supplementary irrigation during intra-seasonal dry spells and use of water efficient drip irrigation for vegetable production. He noted the need for an integrated RHM system in schools, at community level, for livestock and crop production and advised that these would use complementary technologies that include roof catchment, farm ponds, sand surface dams, shallow wells, spring protection; earth dams water pans and *in situ* soil storage.

After hearing of all the possibilities, Stefanos Xenarios and Matthew McCartney of IWMI highlighted the economic and environment-re-

lated aspects of water storage in sub-Saharan Africa. Touching on some of the challenges related to decision-making in water storage methods,

they presented two methodologies that could be used to assist in this regard.

ARDYIS Essay Contest

The presentations have been made and now it is up to the judges to decide on the winners. While we are sure that many a sigh of relief is being breathed, we also know that many nails may be eaten before the night is over! Good luck to the participants and may the best essay be announced at the Prize giving and Gala Dinner to take place on Wednesday night.

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Policy and Investment

Anyone coming to the afternoon session on public policy and investment expecting rich and thought-provoking presentations would not have been disappointed. The session was chaired by Dr Merrey of AgWA with opening remarks by CTA director, Michael Hailu.

Dr Woldeab Teshome of Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia set the scene with a comprehensive overview of the ACP context, the players and the issues before defining the way forward: the key drivers to impact future water availability and adaptive measures and strategies.

In a presentation which re-inforced the points made by Dr Teshome, Clément Ouedraogo, CILSS, presented a case study on the Regional Programme to Support the Development of Small Irrigation in the Sahel (PRADPIS), set up to attract funding for small-scale irrigation, to increase production and fight against food insecurity. At the end of a dynamic presentation, Ouedraogo issued a double challenge, to continue talking to exchange information, but at the same time, to move from talk alone and into action.

Andy Bullock, Interim Facilitator of the recently-launched Agricultural Water for Africa Partnership (AgWA) concluded, at the end of his presentation on improving setting for public investments in AWM, that there is now an improved setting for public investment in agriculture and greater support was necessary to support institutions.

Once again reminding everyone of the need to remember the rural, smallholder men and women who

are the ultimate beneficiaries of the policies, Rudolph Cleveringa, IFAD, using the concept of Russian dolls, painted a vivid picture of the complexity of water governance in fragile states. His was also a voice for

change, contending that many policies existed and the time had arrived to translate those into action and impact, rather than adding new ones.

Making Science more inclusive

On Tuesday, the Advisory Committee (AC) deliberated on the history of knowledge; reflected on the South African experience in integrating indigenous and scientific knowledge for developing a bio-based economy and learned lessons from the ongoing research work on documenting, evaluating, and validating traditional medicines being undertaken by scientists from Ethiopia, Kenya and Madagascar.

The ethical issues concerning the use of indigenous knowledge for commercial gains were considered; but the AC agreed that it is important for the ACP region to ensure that any future commercial benefits are also shared with the holders of the indigenous knowledge.

The AC acknowledged that advanced science integrated with indigenous knowledge system was also important for addressing the mega challenges of food insecurity, high poverty, unemployment and climate and for transforming the agricultural and rural sectors. However,

scientists should challenge new paradigms to determine their relevance but recognize that a new period of enlightenment is emerging which requires a more inclusive approach to science which benefits society. Western science and traditional knowledge must converge.

The major role that the South African government is playing as a prominent driver in the creation of an enabling policy and legislative environment for innovation and providing necessary support for adding value to indigenous knowledge through science, was considered a model for other ACP countries.

The Daily Update is an information tool giving on the ongoing discussions.