



Second Announcement

Fourth African Agricultural Science Week and FARA General Assembly

Promoting the productivity and competitiveness of
African agriculture in a global economy

June 10 – 16, 2007
Sandton Convention Centre
Sandton city, Johannesburg, South Africa

Overview

The Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs of South Africa will co-host the fourth (4th) General Assembly of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and FARA. The General Assembly will draw together representatives of FARA's constituents from all African and non-African institutions involved in African agricultural research and development such as the Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs) (ASARECA, CORAF/WE CARD, SADC/FANR and Northern Africa - AARINENA), the agricultural research institutions, universities, NGOs and private enterprises that comprise the national agricultural research systems (NARS), non-African partner research institutions (PRIs), the international agricultural research centers (IARCs), international NGOs, policy makers, private sector, farmers' organizations and Africa's development partners.

Objectives

- To hold the 4th African Agricultural Science Week and the 4th biennial FARA General Assembly.
- To provide a forum where FARA's constituents can meet to review progress since the 3rd biennial General Assembly in June 2005 and, based on lessons learnt since then, determine the African regional agenda for agricultural research for development for the next biennium.
- Within the African Agricultural Scientific Week, to hold a South Africa Agricultural Science day at which agricultural innovations will be exhibited to raise awareness amongst participants and the public about the relevance and impact of agricultural research in alleviating poverty, promoting food security and protecting the environment.

Expected Outputs

- Increased knowledge of the problems, opportunities and successes in African agricultural research and development
- Greater awareness of the roles and contributions of different stakeholders and enhanced networking and interaction between them
- Greater appreciation amongst the participants and the public of the important contributions of agricultural research for development in Africa, especially in South Africa
- Endorsement of FARA's program for the next two years
- Election of new FARA Executive Committee members including Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

The Program

There is an inexhaustible list of potential topics for discussions on African agricultural research for development. However, reflections on past FARA General Assemblies, trends in African agriculture, and continuing consultations with stakeholders indicate that the following main theme and sub-themes warrant particular attention by FARA's stakeholders at the 4th General Assembly.

1. Theme

Promoting the productivity and competitiveness of African agriculture in a global economy

2. Sub-themes

- a. **Identifying and exploiting Africa's competitive advantages** in agricultural production, agri-business and related industries; nationally, regionally and globally
 - Identifying the conditions required for producing products for which Africa has local, regional or global comparative advantages and making them more available and more affordable by the rural and urban poor.
 - Determining the policy and infrastructural requirements for pro-poor agri-business in value-adding processing and marketing
 - Identifying the constraints to reducing post-harvest losses, efficient marketing and processing that reduce farm-gate and raise consumer prices.
 - Considering the requirements for appropriate risk analysis, SPS equivalence, quality standards together with pragmatic means of verification, traceability and imposing them in the context of smallholders and pastoralists for enabling intra-regional trade within Africa. These will be complementary to efforts to increase Africa's penetration of international markets where the stringent quality and safety conditions can be met.
 - Identifying the requirements for, strengthening Africa's own international negotiating capacity and the advantages and *modus operandi* of developing joint negotiating positions with other developing producer nations such as Brazil, China and India.
- b. **Developing Africa's capacity** for agricultural commerce and innovation
 - Exploring the potential for modern information and communications technologies to inform and empower smallholder and pastoral producers and the processors and traders of their products. This will include consideration of what information they need, when they need it, and in what form they need it,
 - Making best use of recent advances in technology modulated distance learning methods and participatory approaches to enable producers, especially smallholders in remote areas, to demand the information they need and acquire the learning skills and tools they need to build the knowledge they require for successful and sustained innovation.
 - Exploring the business skills that producers and their input and output marketers require and how they can gain them to improve their livelihoods and cope with the risks and uncertainties that accompany innovation.
- c. **Learning from past success of research in influencing agricultural policies**, identifying best-practices and proposing new approaches with the potential to be more effective.
 - Identifying successes in influencing policies and understanding why they succeeded
 - Learning the lessons from successes and failures to improve the role of agricultural research in informing policy debates
 - Identifying the interests and needs of policy makers and translating them into guidelines for policy researchers?

- Identifying the data requirements and the topics and formats that will facilitate their use in policy formulation
 - Considering the requirements of ensuring that research products, identifying their outcomes and impacts with a view to constantly improving the productivity of research investments.
 - What have been the successes and challenges in harmonization of policies at regional level
- d. The status of the 5 requirements for turning Africa's agriculture around** in a way and on the scale that will make a real difference, *i.e.*: i) a unifying framework; ii) an innovation systems approach to agricultural research for development; iii) strengthening Africa's capacity to build capacity; iv) getting research products on to the farms; and; v) making farmers and other stakeholders knowledgeable and able to access and contribute to knowledge on African agricultural development adequate, ?
- A review of lessons learnt in developing and implementing the;
 - i.* Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP)
 - ii.* The SSA Challenge Programme and other interventions (SSA CP)
 - iii.* Building Africa's Scientific and Institutional Capacity (BASIC)
 - iv.* Disseminating New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA)
 - v.* Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS)
 - Government commitments to funding agricultural research
- e. Positioning agricultural research institutions** to be fully effective
- A review of the status of national agricultural research systems (NARS) and in what way they are or could be more than collections of national agricultural research institute (NARIs)
 - Determining the merits of alternative institutional arrangements for effective communication, exchange of information and value-adding coordination and collaboration
 - Discussing the roles of different components of NARS and in particular how to fully involve the universities, as collectively the largest employers of agricultural scientists, and private enterprise as the largest investors in agriculture and related industries in agricultural research in partnership with NARIs.
 - Explore alternative institutional arrangements for enabling all actors to contribute from their collaborative advantages in order to maximize the returns to the total investment in agricultural research?
 - To describe successes in agricultural research derived from working with other sectors and industries to utilize the advances of science and technology and explore novel approaches.
 - Experiences from coordinating research at sub- regional level
- f. Learning lessons from responding to risks and disasters**
- Review the predictions and consequences of climate warming and the ability of African agricultural production systems to cope with increasing frequency and amplitude of climatic shocks and other stresses such as droughts, floods, fires, pest and diseases, locusts, and conflicts
 - Discuss the level of preparedness of the agricultural industry to cope with the effects of HIV/AIDS Especially, but not limited to, the impact on labour availability and the production and marketing scenarios for women- and child-headed households
 - Review the ways in which agriculture could be structured and assisted to the causes of risks and disasters rather than the symptoms?
 - Discuss the role of agriculture information and learning systems in raising the level of information and the capacity to cope with and recover from calamities.
- g. Africa's capacity to build human and institutional capacity** for the agricultural industry as a whole to be able to meet its potential to contribute to achieving the MDGs

- Review the ongoing programmes for strengthening Africa's capacity to build capacity and the coordination and value adding between the different programmes and activities, including both African-funded and donor-funded programmes.
 - Discuss the adequacy of the use to which existing and new physical and financial resources are put.
 - Review the demand for strengthened institutional capacity from NARS institutions and their interdependencies such as of the NARIs, private enterprise and NGOs on graduates from universities.
 - Review programmes addressing future farmers and in particular the need to redress the loss of traditional sources of instruction for the growing number of orphans.
 - Review programmes addressing future researchers.
- h. Mobilizing civil society for agricultural development**
- Review the synergies and conflicts between NGOs and public institutions, especially in regard to the utilisation of scarce human resources in extension services
 - Discuss the means for ensuring that civil society organization such as NGOs are accountability to their stakeholders
 - Review constraints and best-practices in the relationships between civil society organizations and African governments
- i. Peri-urban agriculture**
- Review research findings on how current social and legal institutions assist the poor in accessing land-based resources
 - Review the implications for customary and formal land use policies and the security of the poor stemming from emigration out of agriculture, ageing farming populations, female-headed households, and increasing non-food producing urban conurbations
 - **Population movement and impact on urban and peri-urban agriculture**
- j. Capturing indigenous knowledge for development** while respecting intellectual property rights, ethical and moral integrity and biosafety

The above sub-themes are intended to address issues which are of the utmost importance at this time in ways which will produce concrete suggestions for actions by FARA's constituents. The pre-plenary meetings and poster sessions will be organized to make optimal use of the participants' limited time during the Africa Agricultural Science Week and at the FARA General Assembly.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The program will be divided into three parts: a pre-plenary meeting for each sub-theme, an African agricultural scientific week and the FARA General Assembly meeting.

1. Pre-plenary meetings

This provides opportunities for in-depth discussions on the sub-themes. An open call for papers/presenters will be issued by FARA. Due to the limited time available, requests for pre-plenary meetings will be considered and selected by a technical committee composed of distinguished experts in African ARD. Each session will be convened by an agricultural research institution specializing in or has particular responsibility for the selected topic. Interested institutions are encouraged to invite other institutions or organizations to join them in their requests for holding pre-plenary meetings. This will enable the FARA Secretariat to identify the most suitable facilitator(s) for each session.

Each session is expected to summarize their recommendations and present them to plenary at times that will be allocated by the organizers. Presenters are encouraged to direct and focus their recommendations to add value to FARA and SRO priorities and initiatives.

2. African agricultural science week

All stakeholders and actors in African agriculture such as NARS, farmers' organizations, development agencies, small and medium enterprises etc., from the host country and the region are invited to participate as exhibitors in the African Agricultural Science Week. This will provide them with an opportunity to raise awareness of their roles and products at designated booths. There will also be posters sessions at which participants will be able to set out their contributions to the theme of the week.

There will be a special **South Africa Agricultural Science Day** for raising awareness of agricultural research outputs from the South Africa, through exhibits or field visits. This will be held in the middle of the week between the pre-plenary and plenary meetings.

3. General Assembly Meeting

The General Assembly will be opened by a keynote presentation on the theme **Promoting the productivity and competitiveness of African agriculture in a global economy** and a report by the Executive Secretary of FARA on the progress on the recommendations and outcomes of the 3rd General Assembly.

Two days will be allocated for the presentation of the outcomes of the pre-plenary meetings to plenary sessions of the General Assembly. The General Assembly will review the recommendations and determine how they will be taken up by FARA and its appropriate constituent institutions.

The FARA business session will be allotted for one day where FARA programs for the next two years are endorsed by the General Assembly as well as election of new members of the Executive Committee i.e. Chairperson and vice Chairperson.

The FARA Secretariat will publish all information regarding the plenary meeting on its website (www.fara-africa.org) and if requested FARA may arrange for electronic fora or working groups to be hosted on its website.

LOGISTICS**Date and Venue**

The General Assembly will be held from the 10th – 16th June, 2007 at the Sandton Convention Centre in Sandton city, Johannesburg, South Africa

Invitations

Invitations to the General Assembly will be issued by the FARA Secretariat and the South African Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs. Interested Parties should contact FARA at ;

FARA Secretariat
 PMB CT 173,
 Accra, Ghana
 Tel: 233-21-772823
 Fax: 233-21-773676
 Email: mjones@fara-africa.org

Hotel Accommodation

The hotels closest to the conference center and the rates are shown below. The rates are still being negotiated and any new rates and new hotels will be conveyed as soon as possible.

Accommodation for 2007	Rate in South African rands (Bed & Breakfast)	No of rooms Available
Intercontinental Sandton Sun & Towers		
Single Superior Room per night per person	1284.00	71
Double Superior Room	1410.00	
Single African Premium Room	1530.00	76
Double African Premium Room	1660.00	
Sandton Towers		103
Single Deluxe room	1821.00	
Double Duluxe room	1971.00	
Southern Sun (Crown Plaza)		
Single Rooms	995.00	100
Hilton Hotel		
Single Rooms	1280.00	150
Courtyard All Suite		
Single Rooms	825.00	35
Protea Balalaika Hotel		40
Single Rooms	875.00	
<i>Micheangelo Hotel</i>		
Single Rooms	1850.00	30
<i>Garden Court Sandton City (cnr West & Maude street)</i>		
Single rooms	870.00	200
Twin Rooms	1135.00	50
Please note all prices quoted are subject to change		

Transportation

Transportation between the hotels and the airport will be provided. Shuttle services are also being arranged and details will be conveyed as soon as possible.

Visa

South African visas are issued at South African High Commissions and Embassies. Entry permits can only be issued on arrival to visitors from certain specified countries, which can be found at http://www.safrika.info/public_services/foreigners/travel_requirements/921809.htm

However, it is advised to cross check with the South African High Commission or Embassy in your country before making the trip.

Information about South Africa

South Africa is an exhilarating and spectacular country. It is one of the best places to see Africa's wildlife. Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Swaziland run from west to east along South Africa's northern border and Lesotho soars above the grassland towards the southeast. The population is about 44 million and the official languages are English, Zulu, Xhosa, Afrikaans, Tswana and Sotho. The currency is Rand.