

**Regional Office for Africa (RAF)**



# **Programme Review**



**May 2011**

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# Foreword

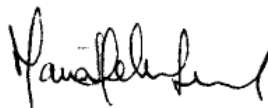
Recent hikes in international food markets have placed the spotlight back on Africa and its ability to avoid a repeat of the 2008 food crisis where millions faced hunger. In response FAO is working in partnership with governments to ensure that strategic investments are placed in the area of food production, strengthening rural livelihoods and sustainable natural resource management.



Our ambition to achieve regional food security was reinforced at our annual Regional Management Team Meeting in Accra last December which outlined our vision for Africa in 2012/13. FAO committed to building strong partnerships with key regional stakeholders including African Union, NPCA, FARA and AfDB in helping to transform Africa's agriculture sector.

This edition of the RAF Programme Review features FAO's work in addressing the effects of the 2007/8 food crisis and details how FAO assistance led to support being provided to over 200,000 people across the region.

Projects also featured in this edition on Disaster Risk and Natural Resource Management also demonstrate the importance of ensuring that rural development interventions benefit the environment and build the resilience of beneficiary communities against the threat of climate change.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Helena Semedo'.

**Maria Helena Semedo**  
FAO Assistant Director-General  
Regional Representative for Africa

# Acknowledgements

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# Acronyms

<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>AFF</b>	African Forest Forum
<b>ASARECA</b>	Association for Strengthening Research in Agriculture in East and Central Africa
<b>CA</b>	Conservation Agriculture
<b>CAADP</b>	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
<b>CEMAC</b>	Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale
<b>CIFOR</b>	Center for International Forestry Research
<b>CILSS</b>	Comité Permanent Inter-Etat de Lutté Contre la Sécheresse
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DRM</b>	Disaster Risk Management
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FARA</b>	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
<b>FISRI</b>	Farmer Input Support Response Initiatives
<b>GAFSF</b>	Global Agriculture and Food Security Program
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>ISFP</b>	Initiative on Soaring Food Prices
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature
<b>KAINet</b>	Kenya Agricultural Information Network
<b>KARI</b>	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
<b>MACO</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>NPCA</b>	NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency
<b>RAF</b>	Regional Office for Africa
<b>SRA</b>	Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture
<b>SSE</b>	Smallholder Seed Enterprises
<b>SARD</b>	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>TIVO</b>	Tilapia Volta Project
<b>UEMOA</b>	Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar

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## Over 200,000 people in Africa reached by FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices



A beneficiary of the FAO assistance Botha Bothe, Lesotho

The 2007/8 food crisis caused sharp price increases in basic food commodities across Africa. Low income import dependent countries in the region were particularly badly affected, leading to a reduction in food consumption and a rise in hunger rates, placing severe pressure on national food production. In response, FAO's Initiative on Soaring Food Prices reached nearly a quarter of a million people in Africa at a cost of USD 15M.

FAO assistance supported African countries in strengthening their agriculture sectors through the delivery of productive safety nets for vulnerable farmers. Assistance was provided for beneficiary households to receive agriculture input packages comprising of tools seed and fertilizer with the aim of enhancing local food security.

Input delivery represented a critical part of FAO's programme response. The ISFP in Africa distributed nearly 200,000 items of agriculture tools and inputs to targeted beneficiaries.

Project impact assessments showed that farming inputs distributed by FAO contributed to increased food production, improved food access and poverty reduction in targeted areas. The majority of beneficiaries interviewed reported a high level of satisfaction with project outcomes following improvements in food production.

In Kenya and Sierra Leone the ISFP was shown to have had a positive impact on the income generation of smallholder farmers with clear benefits to the local economy.

### Perceived impact of ISFP TCP projects on crop production and food accessibility

Crop Production	Sub region	Improved %	Unchanged %	Deteriorated %
	Central Africa	57	12	31
	East Africa	63	14	23
	Southern Africa	50	17	33
	West Africa	83	15	2



Beneficiary of FAO assistance in Zimbabwe receiving crop inputs

The ISFP had a significant impact on improved crop production in targeted areas. Following FAO assistance the majority of farmers in the region stated that crop production had improved as a result of the support provided under the ISFP (see above).

In the East Africa region, about 63 percent of all beneficiaries reported that their crop production had improved during 2008/2009 agricultural season as compared to the previous season. The project also scored well on improving beneficiary access to food with almost 67 percent of beneficiaries regionally reporting increased access to food in 2008/2009.

The results of the on the ground survey show that national ISFP projects in West Africa enhanced production for about 80% of beneficiaries and contributed to improved food access to households by the same proportion.

Quality and quantity of inputs were scored by beneficiaries as part of the assessment. Results showed positive feedback on inputs supplied from across the region. Due to enhanced access to crop inputs, farmers in Africa were able to produce more food and achieve a surplus to sell on local markets.

Despite the lack of training, many beneficiaries showed willingness to acquire the inputs distributed by ISFP projects. Furthermore, the project showed significant demand for new seeds as about 30 to 40 percent of voucher receiving beneficiaries in Lesotho and Swaziland chose seed varieties they had never planted before.

## Africa Crop tool launched



A farmer weighing leaves of the Kidugutusungu plant in Nyandira District, Tanzania

FAO has launched a quick reference calendar covering 43 major African countries that advises which crops to plant when, according to the type of agricultural zone from drylands to highlands.

The web-based tool, developed by FAO experts, covers more than 130 crops from beans to beetroot to wheat to watermelon. It is aimed at all donors, agencies, government extension workers and non-governmental organizations working with farmers on the continent.

The FAO crop calendar is especially useful in case of an emergency such as drought or floods or for rehabilitation efforts following a natural or manmade disaster.

"Seeds are critical for addressing the dual challenges of food insecurity and climate change," said Shivaji Pandey, Director of FAO's Plant Production and Protection Division.

"The right choice of crops and seeds is crucial both for improving the livelihoods of the rural poor and hungry and for dealing with climate change. To be able to make that choice, you have to make sure seeds and planting materials are available and accessible at the right place and at the right time."

There are 283 agro-ecological zones covered in the calendar, representing the vast richness and variety of the African ecology as well as challenges of land degradation, sand encroachment and floods.

An estimated 50 percent of the global increase in yields over the past ten years has come from improving the quality of seeds. The other fifty percent has come from better water management and irrigation practices.



# Telefood makes a difference in South Africa

In South Africa, FAO's telefood campaign has been designed to make an impact on low income urban populations and support rural areas and communities where there are limited opportunities for income generation. This is in line with the South African government agenda which focuses on 'sustainable rural communities with food security for all'.

By widening access to essential production items such as basic agriculture tools materials and inputs. Telefood project are able to support low income farmers to increase their productivity, enhance food consumption for their families and sell crop surpluses at affordable prices to local communities.

Key projects supported so far include the Qualakabusha Poultry Project, the Shannon Mutton Project and an urban agriculture project implemented in Gauteng.

Telefood project funding acts as a catalyst in attracting additional financing from various stakeholders especially the National and Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries who also take up a leading partnership role in terms of joint implementation of projects and country resource mobilization.

Additionally, telefood receives support from National and Provincial Departments of Agriculture through agriculture extension services that provide ongoing onsite technical assistance. Agreements have recently been signed with two NGOs; Adventist Development Relief Agency and Operational Lionheart Trust.



Feeding hens at the Agricultural Research Council, Pretoria

## Qualakabusha Poultry Community Project

Qualakabusha Poultry Community Project is a rehabilitation initiative supporting women who have been released from correctional centers to rebuild their lives and successfully integrate back into their communities.

The project is founded on the principle of group self help and solidarity reflecting the traditional spirit of Ubuntu. Assistance is provided in the area of poultry production and market access covering the purchase of chicken feed and the donation of a wendy hut for poultry storage. Beneficiaries have also received broiler equipment including veterinary medication.

## FAO to supply emergency seed kits for thousands of farming families in Cote D'Ivoire



Ivorian refugees at the Liberian border

© ACT Alliance

FAO is working hard to avoid a mounting food crisis in Côte d'Ivoire by procuring seeds, tools and fertilizer kits for around 12,000 farming households in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

Following months of political violence, a race is on to salvage the upcoming rice and maize planting season beginning with the first rains in the west and north of the country starting in April. Violence, fuel shortages and road blocks have restricted inputs from circulating in country, causing seed and fertilizer shortages.

"Food to cover the lean season until the next harvest has not been stockpiled as it usually is and there will not be enough," said Luc Genot, FAO Emergency Coordinator in the Côte d'Ivoire.

"In addition, pressure is being put on household food supplies by increasing numbers of displaced people

from the conflict in rural areas. Unless these people are helped to plant now, they are going to need food assistance for many months to come," Genot added.

An estimated one million people have been displaced inside the Côte d'Ivoire and up to 150,000 people have fled into Liberia, putting a huge strain on the already meager resources of host villages.

FAO interventions to shore up this planting season have so far been funded by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund and its own resources.

FAO has asked for an initial \$4.25 million from the international community as part of the United Nations appeal for agriculture in the Côte d'Ivoire, and six million dollars for Liberia.

# Reducing vulnerability through livestock ownership



Farmer receiving livestock herd in Eritrea.

Livestock plays a significant role in the livelihoods of many Eritreans in different ways. They range from pastoralists, for whom livestock form the mainstay of their livelihood, to agro-pastoralists who depend on a mixture of herds and crops, to small-holder farmers who depend largely on their crops but whose livestock provide an important supplementary source of protein and income.

FAO in Eritrea is supporting the establishment of a vibrant small-scale animal rearing sector focusing on small ruminants, to strengthen the purchasing power of vulnerable populations and to increase the quantity of livestock products on Eritrean markets.

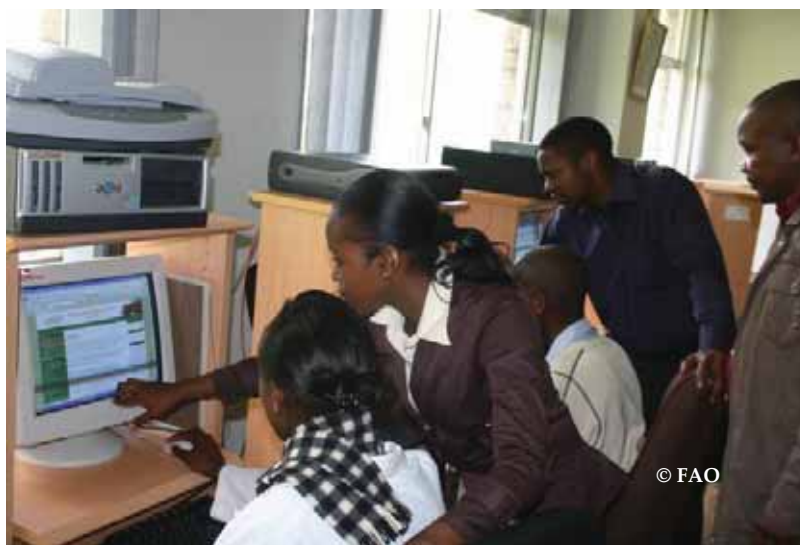
In total, approximately 8014 heads of livestock (mainly goats) of which 50% were in their late pregnancy, were procured on 36 livestock markets or fairs, the latter organized by the FAO project.

About 1 186 farmers (686 males and 500 females) have been trained on livestock management, health and production of forage crops.

Training also focused on the principles of market-oriented production and techniques such as fattening of male sheep and goats as well as unproductive females and home milk processing, with a view to adding value to livestock and products as a means of generating larger amounts of cash incomes from livestock enterprises.

Local knowledge was used to plan the provision of livestock to coincide with optimal availability of feed (pasture, fodder, crop residues) and water. As a result maximizing productivity and growth and minimizing the negative impact on the environment.

## Widening access to African agriculture research



University students go through the paces of retrieving information from KAINet at KEFRI library

Limited access to agricultural information is a major constraint and an impediment towards achieving food security. There is a wealth of information that exists in public institutions such as the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) but linking farmers with new agriculture research and technology has remained a challenge.

The Kenya Agricultural Information Network (KAINet) is a major output of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UK Department for International Development (DFID) implemented through collaboration between the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), the Association for Strengthening Research in Agriculture in East and Central Africa (ASARECA) and CAB International.

The project's overall objective was to establish a pilot implementation of an electronic repository as part of the Kenyan national agricultural sciences and technology information system in relation to the Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture (SRA).

KAINet was set up to foster improved archiving, dissemination and sharing of agricultural sciences and technology content between researchers and other stakeholder groups. KAINet's vision is to make public domain agricultural information and knowledge accessible to all. Its mission is to build a common and freely accessible information system through partnership in the generation, collection, processing archival, and dissemination of agricultural information.

Under KAINet, a member of institutions have setup institutional e-repositories and a national e-repository (KAINet e-Repository) to provide access to digital agricultural sciences and technology content in the country. Member institutions have benefited from various training programmes including attachments within the Knowledge and Capacity Development unit at FAO in Rome, training on management of electronic documents, website development and management, open access, and investing in information for development. The KAINet e-Repository can be accessed at <http://www.kainet.or.ke/>.

## Beyond subsistence farming in Sierra Leone



Women farmers winnowing rice in Kenema, Sierra Leone

The Government of Sierra Leone is helping its country's smallholder farmers make the transition from subsistence to commercial farming. The five-year smallholder commercialization programme budgeted at USD 403 M seeks to help farmers grow more and varied crops, process more of what they produce, and market their goods more effectively.

Fatmata Sesay a 45-year-old farmer from Kailahun in eastern Sierra Leone is the head of an organization of farmers, many of them women widowed during the country's brutal civil war. Before, Sesay just grew enough to feed her family. If she sold, it was only in small quantities and usually at a low price. But recently she has seen her profits from rice and cassava double - an increase made possible, she argues, by using high-yielding seeds and by marketing collectively. Farmers, buoyed by better earnings, are growing more crops and "beginning to see that farming can be a profitable business," she says.

The Government is working with FAO and other partners to make sure farmers have better access to quality seeds, fertilizers and machinery as well as training ranging from improved cropping techniques and group governance to financial management and marketing skills.

It is also making a big push to develop irrigation systems, improve feeder roads so that farmers can get their goods to the market and make it easier for them to access financial services.

The agricultural business centre is the centerpiece of the programme — a place in the community where farmers can buy seeds and fertilizers, rent equipment to cut down on labour costs and process, store and market what they harvest.

Efforts are under way to empower existing farmer-based organizations, many of which started out as farmer field schools, to operate these centers on a cost-recovery basis.

"The plan is for the centers eventually to be independent of Government support and external support," says Kevin Gallagher, former FAO Representative for Sierra Leone. "It is important to get them linked to markets so there are opportunities and new kinds of jobs — not just in farming but in mechanization and shop keeping."

With funds from the European Union, Ireland, the Islamic Development Bank and Italy, 192 centers are being built and equipped with rice mills, cassava graters and drying floors, while board members and equipment operators are receiving training.

Michael Dick, a 35-year-old farmer from Moyamba, thinks the centre will make a huge difference in his community. "If we had graters and compressors and training we could process and sell these things ourselves," he added. "It would be much more profitable."

FAO is working closely with the Government to make sure the existing centers are on a sound footing with strong management systems in place.

The Government's goal is then to strengthen and expand upon these activities — a goal that got a boost from a recent USD 50 M grant from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a multi-donor funding mechanism.

The programme is still in its infancy, but it has much on its side for it to succeed — abundant fertile land, decent rainfall, widespread support from the Government and the international community and, perhaps most importantly, growing enthusiasm from the country's farmers.



**Fatama Sesay, Chairperson of Tungi  
United Agricultural Association, Kenema,  
Sierra Leone**



**Members of the Bombali District Farmers  
Cooperative Association in Gbanka Potho,  
Sierra Leone**

## FAO supports Zambia's farmers to boost production and tackle high food prices



Staff of the Golden Valley Research Centre plant cowpea seed from sacks, north of Lusaka

The United Nations identified Zambia as one of the countries at risk of being negatively affected by soaring agricultural input and commodity prices. Between January and May 2008, fertilizer prices increased by 40 to 50 percent while at the same time the price for maize, the main staple, rose by over 25 percent. The rising cost of maize and other staples in 2007 and 2008 posed significant problems for already food insecure Zambians, both in urban and remote food-deficit rural areas.

As a result FAO established the Farmer Input Support Response Initiatives (FISRI), with funding from the EU Food Facility, which aims to increase food production in order to ease the impact of high food prices.

This is being achieved through improved access to agricultural inputs and the promotion of conservation agriculture principles among small scale farmers throughout selected districts in the Central, Lusaka, Western, Southern and Eastern Provinces.

The project aims to increase agricultural productivity through the provision of yield enhancing inputs such as fertilizers and improved seed varieties of legumes and cereals. While boosting household income through increased food production, FAO is also increasing household competitiveness by training farmers in good agricultural practices and the basic principles of conservation agriculture.

Nearly 4,000 farmers and 400 camp extension workers are being supported through the distribution of inputs including seeds, fertilizer and agricultural tools. Training is also being provided to lead farmers and agriculture extension workers on conservation agriculture techniques, led by respected national institutions such as the Golden Valley Research Centre.

Each lead farmer trains 15 others bringing the total number of beneficiary farmers to 58,800. FISRI has extended its activities to 16 additional districts for the 2010/2011 agricultural season.

The use of the voucher system for input distribution has demonstrated how the private sector can be encouraged to form partnerships at local level, thus contributing to enhanced local economic development. By using an electronic voucher system, the project has benefited from reduced bureaucracy. This system has also facilitated the creation of client supplier relationships among smallholder farmers and local agro dealers whose businesses have been significantly enhanced by the FISRI project.

The Post Harvest Survey of Conservation Agriculture Farmers reported that maize yields on farms practicing rain type conservation agriculture were 2.6 tonnes per hectare compared to 2.0 tonnes per hectare for farms practicing traditional techniques. Several farmers reported that they had sold maize for the first time as a result of adopting conservation agriculture.

Based on the experiences during the first year, the project is expected to contribute to strengthening the productive capacities and governance of the agriculture sector with a view to improving sustainability.

Feedback received during the monitoring missions from officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MACO), extension workers, farmers and agro dealers has been highly positive.

The continued provision of enhanced support to MACO, particularly in the fields of policy formulation and the creation of mechanisms for seasonal credit instruments, will be essential for the achievement of better project results and viable exit strategies.



Zambian business women participating in FAO food legume project



Farm labourer applying urea fertilizer to maize in Kaoma



## Strengthening the seeds sector in Central Africa



FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf during his visit to Congo, Brazzaville.

Security of the seed sector is an essential requisite for boosting agricultural production and productivity and ensuring food security. In a bid to develop this sector, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community ('Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale - CEMAC') requested assistance from FAO to develop harmonized seed regulations for its member countries, namely Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of Congo.

This assistance started with seed sector country assessments, followed by the validation of the sub-regional synthesis report and its approval by the CEMAC governing bodies. Protocols were prepared on the production, certification and quality control of seeds. In all, thirteen crops were chosen on the basis of their importance for food security in Central Africa: maize, rice, millet, sorghum, groundnuts, cowpeas, bananas (plantain), cassava, yams, Irish potatoes, tomato, onion and sweet potatoes.

Regulation governing the seed sector was drafted on the harmonization of procedures for the production, quality control, certification and commercialization of seeds in the CEMAC zone and the organization of a seeds catalogue for Central Africa.

Both protocols and the draft regulations were validated by technical and legal experts of CEMAC member countries in two separate workshops held back-to-back in Douala in April last year. The creation of a seeds committee for Central Africa was also proposed at these workshops. The first draft of the regional seeds catalogue has since been compiled and is awaiting validation by technical experts of CEMAC member countries.

Future activities will include capacity strengthening of national and sub-regional institutions to ensure the effective implementation of these instruments for the benefit of the farming communities in Central Africa.

Projects implemented by FAO in partnership with the Cameroonian Government have contributed towards building smallholder seed enterprises which produce and distribute quality seeds of rice, sorghum, millet and maize, in food insecure and drought prone regions of Cameroon..

FAO activities have focused on strengthening the multiplication and dissemination of improved and healthy rice seeds, and on building the capacity of farmer organizations in the multiplication and dissemination of early maturing varieties of maize, sorghum and millet.

In support of the rice sector, 25 smallholder seed enterprises (SSE) were set up or revitalized with a total of 360 members in the rice growing areas of Maga and Yagoua and 60 SSE in Lagdo. In the maize, sorghum and millet project 114 SSEs totalizing 1,648 members were set up. Today a good number of these enterprises are still active and successfully producing quality seeds in Northern Cameroon.

Rice seed production rose from 267 tons at the beginning of the project in 2005 to approximately 2,000 tons in 2009. For maize, sorghum and millet, approximately 497 tons of certified seeds were produced by the end of 2009, an increase of about 30 per cent compared to the situation in 2008.

Project success and sustainability are attributed to investment in the technical and managerial capacities of enterprises created, improved access to financial services as a result of project activities and the establishment of partnerships with the public sector on seed quality control.



A researcher from INERA , Mvuazi, DR Congo



A researcher from INERA carrying out field research Mvuazi, DR Congo

## Supporting pastoral communities in the horn of Africa



A group of shepherds sit on the banks of the Gumara river, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

In the horn of Africa, pastoralist production has faced complex problems, with increasingly frequent and severe shocks occurring in recent years. Drought is forecast to double by the end of the century from 25 percent to 50 percent and last for much longer with severe consequences for the replenishment of water resources and livestock security.

FAO has launched a USD 6 250 000 regional project in support of vulnerable pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in the Horn of Africa.

The project is jointly funded by the European Commission, FAO and the Swiss Development Corporation. The areas of intervention under this project are the drought affected areas of north-eastern Uganda, the arid lands of Kenya, and southern and eastern Ethiopia.

These regions can all be classified as arid or semi arid with pastoralism and agro-pastoralism as the primary source of livelihood.

The overall objective of the project is to mitigate against the adverse impacts of hazards, reduce vulnerability and strengthen community resilience in order to improve food security enabling countries in the region to build on the development of sustainable food and agriculture systems.

While enhancing and promoting programme risk identification and reduction the project also aims to strengthen the coordination of both development and humanitarian initiatives in the (agro) pastoral area ranging from community to national and regional level. In addition the initiative will assist in the development of regional policies and institutions in support of pastoralist livelihoods.

# The fight against livestock disease



A child herding cattle for grazing in Burundi

Livestock disease is a major constraint for increased, sustained animal productivity of small-farmers in vast areas of sub-Saharan Africa. Consequences of these diseases range from USD 3 BN losses for gastrointestinal parasitism to around USD 4.5 BN for trypanosomiasis in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Programme Against African Trypanosomiasis (PAAT), a statutory body of FAO, provides technical and scientific support to assist and promote regional and national programmes, with funding from IFAD and operated by the FAO Regional office for Africa (RAF).

The goal of this technical FAO assistance is to develop, in partnership with the beneficiaries and National Agriculture Research and Extension Systems, holistic animal health packages for the management and control of animal disease constraints and risks for improved livestock

production and increase opportunities for rural development.

PAAT is now building up on acquired experience to embrace more comprehensively the African livestock disease burden in order to assist African Member States.

In addition, the involvement of the Private Sector, through the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU between FAO and IFAH (International Federation for Animal Health – Private Sector) on Quality Control/Quality Assurance of veterinary drugs, provides support to African Governments to ensure the quality of veterinary service delivery capacity. The project aims to improve the availability of quality chemicals on local markets for disease treatments.

## Sustainable Management and Use of Forest Ecosystems in West Africa



A delivery of wood for the fish smoking ovens in Moree, Ghana

In West Africa, forests contribute significantly to food security and domestic energy supply. Today, the major pressures on forests are found outside the forest sector, including changes in the global climate, economic demand for wood reserves, and population growth. In response, FAO has promoted the integrated ecosystem management approach which requires working with several partners from other sectors outside of forestry to develop multi-sectoral approaches and solutions.

In order to support this approach in cross-cooperation on forest management, a process of dialogue on forestry in West Africa has been undertaken including CILSS, UEMOA and ECOWAS at sub regional level and FAO, IUCN, CIFOR from the international stage.

From July to October 2008, a study that reviewed sub-regional cooperation on forest matters was conducted by FAO in partnership with ECOWAS and UEMOA covering all the 15 member states of ECOWAS.

Following a meeting in June 2010 of Ministers responsible for forests and wildlife of ECOWAS member states, FAO formulated and financed a project under its Technical Cooperation Programme to support the formulation of a Convergence Plan for the sustainable management and use of forest ecosystems in West Africa.

The project was launched at a workshop in Abuja from 15 -16 March 2011 inviting all Directors of Forestry of ECOWAS states, as well as representatives from the African Forest Forum (AFF), CIFOR, CILSS, FAO, IUCN and UEMOA.

## From disaster prevention to building resilience



Flooding in Senegal, 2009

Each year in West Africa, millions of people are affected by disasters in the form of climatic hazards. Crises affecting agriculture are becoming more frequent, with a devastating impact on farmers, fishermen and pastoralists.

To better protect, reinforce and restore the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable populations affected by these crises, FAO launched in March 2010 its Operational Strategy for Emergency and Rehabilitation Operations. This roadmap is mainly based on the three pillars of Disaster Risk Management (DRM): pre-disaster (mitigation/prevention, early warning, preparedness); emergency response, and post-disaster (recovery, rehabilitation and transition to development).

To rehabilitate the production capacity of more than 2500 households affected by the 2009 floods and

increase their resilience to climatic hazards, a Technical Cooperation Project was funded and implemented during May 2010 – February 2011 in Senegal.

The objective was to restore the livelihoods of vulnerable households affected by the floods, to improve their capacity to prevent risks and to cope with the consequences of climatic hazards.

More than sixty community leaders participated in the various modules organized, to strengthen the communities' capacity to adapt to climate change. Participants' awareness was raised about the links between climate change and food security in the Sahel.

Training addressed the identification and assessment of risks at community level in addition to contingency planning. Practical examples of community resilience in the medium and long term were also presented. Emphasis was placed on the promotion of resilience and behavior change of local actors and beneficiaries.

## East African conservation agriculture project empowers thousands



Maize intercropped with Dolichos lablab in Karatu Tanzania

The Conservation Agriculture for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (CA for SARD) project has positively impacted the livelihoods of some 20,000 women and men smallholder farmers in Kenya and Tanzania through the introduction and adoption of profitable conservation agriculture (CA) practices. The first phase of CA SARD was from June 2004 to August 2006 while the second phase covered July 2007 to March 2011.

The project was implemented in 5 districts of Kenya and 6 in Tanzania with Ministries of Agriculture taking the country implementation lead through their respective research institutions namely Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) for Kenya and Selian Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) based in Arusha for the United Republic of Tanzania. CA-SARD was funded by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany amounting to USD 3.5 M in total.

CA is a farming approach that promotes the application of three principles namely: minimum soil disturbance; permanent soil cover and crop rotations/associations, CA holds the promise of improved food production, increased land and labour productivity, reversal of land degradation and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

The results generated through the project have shown that CA is a technology which can address several key constraints challenging agriculture in Africa which includes a need to reduce labour requirements; curbing soil erosion; conserving soil moisture for use by plants during dry spells through build-up of soil organic matter; minimum soil disturbance and; permanent soil cover. CA is, though slowly, becoming the agricultural mainstream in a variety of farming systems found in East Africa.



Maize intercropped with Crotalaria in Babati Tanzania



Project beneficiaries in Hanang district Tanzania

CA holds the promise to not only increase farm productivity, but also offer contributions to the adaptation to, and mitigation of the effects of climate change (including lower or sporadic rainfall, floods and higher temperatures) and stabilize yields in years of extreme weather.

The project encouraged and facilitated field days and farmer to farmer exchange visits (within villages, districts and across Kenya and Tanzania) with the intention of having farmers share and exchange CA information and knowledge amongst themselves. During its life time, the project established 282 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) that trained 8,460 households (49% of FFS members were women). 47% of the FFS members have adopted and are benefiting from the CA technologies while reversing degradation of the environment.

The capacity of the African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT) for up-scaling CA in Africa has been substantially improved through the support received from the CA SARD project. ACT's staff numbers have increased to 14; the network has expanded from the Harare office and Nairobi headquarters to West and Central Africa (Burkina Faso) and the East Africa hub (Dar es Salaam); and from coordinating 1 project in 2007 (CA SARD); to 4 in 2010; and 6 in 2011. The ACT website ([www.act-africa.org](http://www.act-africa.org)) provides CA information which is accessed by many organizations across Africa; while targeted hard copy publications (posters, leaflets, manuals, information sheets) are constantly produced to satisfy growing demand.

The CA-SARD II project has developed the technical approaches that can be used to promote CA in certain locations, and has also been able to create awareness among farmers as well as professionals. The mainstreaming of CA on a wider scale requires a larger, and better funded initiative that – based on the experience of the CA-SARDII project – can tackle the questions of input supply, CA equipment manufacturing, maintenance, and marketing.



## RAF set vision for 2012/13 at annual meeting



All RMTM participants gather for a group photo

The 3rd Regional Management Team Meeting (RMTM) was held between the 6 and 9th December 2010 at the La Palm Royal Beach hotel in Accra. The meeting included participation from sub-regional Coordinators from Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Africa including FAO Representatives from Uganda, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Congo and Lesotho.

The meeting was opened by Mr Changchui He, FAO Deputy Director-General/Operations alongside Mrs Maria Helena Semedo, FAO Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative for Africa.

Invited guests from AfDB, African Union, AGRA and FARA also attended the meeting alongside FAO staff from across the region and headquarters.

A central theme for this year's meeting was agriculture investment. During the meeting participants recognized that high international food

prices are an investment opportunity and that member states must overcome policy bias against agricultural investment.

During the session on partnerships, the meeting identified actions for development partners, regional, sub-regional and country offices as well as HQ to take on in 2012-2013. These included strengthening synergy by sharing information with key partners in the region and facilitating private public partnership on rural extension at country level.

CAADP featured as a crucial component of RAF's work programme. Participants were reminded of FAO's support to member states in CAADP implementation focusing on the production of CAADP compacts and the formulation of priority agriculture investment plans.

## A new chapter for producer organisations in Africa?



Craftsmen of the Association Artisan et Artistes de Mbiza weaving baskets in Kinshasa, DRC

Following the withdrawal of state support as part of measures for liberalization, producer organizations in Africa have been in a process of transition, attempting to define appropriate strategies in a competitive open market and deliver much needed local agriculture services to their membership.

Growing marginalization of smallholder farmers within increasingly liberalized agriculture markets, has attributed to the mounting assertion of producer organisations to defend local interests and ensure that farmers participate in policy dialogues particularly within national and regional fora.

Producer organisations are cited as making a crucial contribution to the provision and enhancement of extension services. Their ability to develop linkages between extension providers and small holders farmers have been underlined as essential to the

formulation of appropriate and effective extension approaches that can also enhance interventions on food security.

Producer organisations can be divided into groups that place emphasis on market related concerns such as price controls and institutional issues that relate to the coordination of agriculture activities. Other farmers associations have focused more on agriculture policy constraints at national level in their attempts to lobby government and make linkages with regional networks.

Linked to national development goals for expanded agriculture markets and enhance productivity, the development of producer organisations is often tied to the boundaries provided by their domestic political environment.

Macroeconomic environment, political leadership and private sector growth are all factors which contribute to the constitution and direction of producer organisations.

Governments play a critical role not only in creating the policy framework that producer organisations operate within, but have substantial influence in determining the performance of local commodity markets that members of associations depend on for their livelihoods. In this respect, building effective working partnerships between government and producer groups is essential to their success.

Transferring agriculture knowledge from the urban centers to isolated rural districts remains a challenge in Africa where information flows are obstructed by poor access. Widening knowledge channels for smallholder farmers remains a key objective for producer organisations in recognition of the role that improve farming techniques and approaches can play in delivering improvements in food productivity.

Action is required by governments in creating the right macroeconomic enabling environment for producer organisations to contribute to agriculture sector growth. In addition, development agencies and governments should work to promote the engagement of producer organisations in policy consultations relating to agriculture development.



**A farmer pushing a wheel barrow full of rice seedlings Ahero, Kenya.**



**Women shelling peanuts for sale at the Metundu Market in Lilongwe, Malawi**

## Better Tilapia Seed for Farmers in the Volta Region of West Africa



Hatchery owner,  
Ms. Begnina Azasoo  
at FAO project site

In West Africa, Tilapia Fish farming is rapidly emerging as a new field for farmers with good profit making potential. In Ghana, fish farms of all sizes have achieved success, such as Tropo Farms one of the largest in Africa. The economic impact of fish farms is growing as they improve national food supply and reduce reliance on fish import products.

Challenges for the development of the fish sector include limited access to necessary inputs such as land, water, fish feed and seed.

In response, FAO launched the regional Tilapia Volta Project or TIVO in 2009, which aims to improve access of farmers of the Volta Basin to good quality fish seed. TIVO works with the six countries of the Volta Basin – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Togo.

TIVO supports a scientific selective breeding programme run by the Water Research Institute of Ghana at Akosombo where an improved strain of Nile Tilapia is being developed.

These improved fish are released to approved hatcheries in the region which in turn supply farmers with guaranteed fish seed quality. One hatchery owner, Ms. Begnina Azasoo, is enthusiastic about the improved tilapia strain as she 'wants to supply the best product to my customers, so that they can produce fish at a lower cost.'

In order to ensure that the increasing aquaculture activities in the region remain sustainable TIVO is also fostering a collaborative approach among the countries of the Volta Basin on environmental issues affecting aquaculture and the regulations needed to manage them.

# Natural Resources Management in Fouta Djallon



The Fouta Djallon stepped Highlands between Dalaba and Pita, Guinea

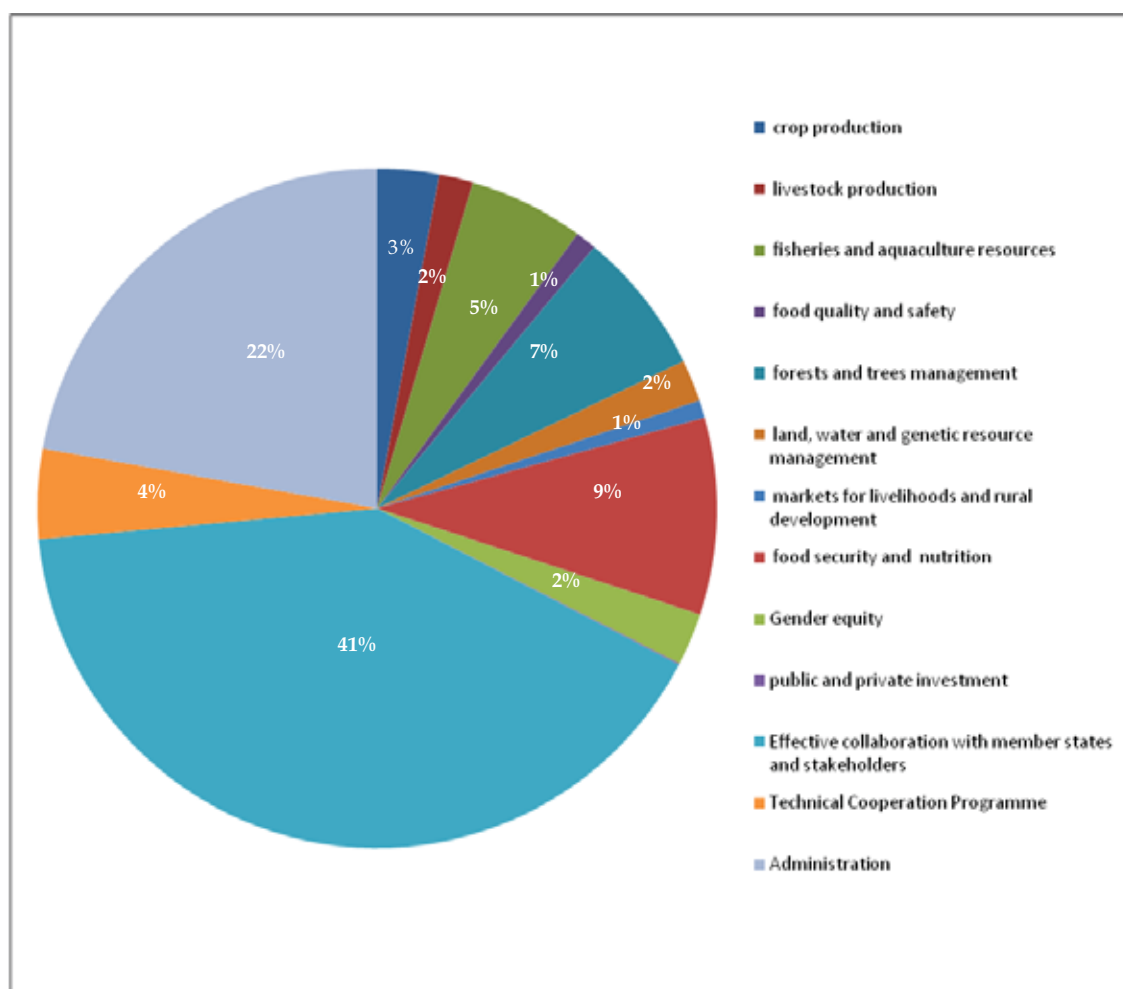
The Fouta Djallon is the spring area of great West-African rivers, flowing through the Gambia, Senegal, and Niger and is the only highland in Western Africa, composed of a central plateau. Conservation of its natural resources is a matter of regional importance, as water flow disturbances upstream automatically affect the lives of those living downstream, all the way to Nigeria.

The Integrated Natural Resources Management Fouta Djallon Project is a 10 year programme started in July 2009 focusing on biodiversity conservation and the improvement of livelihoods. The first phase or pilot phase of the project covers 4 years, followed by a second 6 year phase. Funding come from different sources with GEF covering 25% of the 44 million USD.

Field activities in each site will start in the remaining part of 2011. As deforestation and bush fires are two of the main causes of land degradation, intervention on these subjects is urgently needed, using farmers' organizations as the main entry point for activities.

Based at Conakry, Guinea, at the office of the African Union, activities cover 8 countries of West Africa: the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. During the first year, 29 pilot sites were selected in the 5 countries (18 in Guinea, 5 in Mali, 2 in Guinea Bissau, 2 in Senegal and 2 in Sierra Leone).

# Finance – RAF expenditure 2010



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