



**Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Farmers Organizations
(FOs) Roundtable on Promoting Access to Regional and
International Markets for Africa's Agricultural Commodities
July 20, 2010
Ouaga 2000 International Convention Center
Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**



Recommendations

CSOs and FOs should establish private funds and micro finance institutions that will cater to the need of smallholder farmers. In addition, building institutional capacity and the voices of the ultimate beneficiaries (CSOs and FOs) for advocacy is essential and understanding of the political context to ride on is important. Enhanced agricultural value addition and market access depend on willingness of government to partner with the private sector and civil society organizations in agricultural production and trade promotion initiatives. Government, private sector, FOs and CSOs should work towards this. Governments should put in place favorable ICT policies that will bring down ICT tariffs to make market information services available to smallholder farmers at affordable prices.

Key issues

The objective of the workshop is to increase awareness about policy issues affecting regional and international agricultural trade, promote dialogue on these issues and build consensus on key trade enhancing policies in Africa. The specific objectives are:

- Stimulate dialogue among stakeholders on key trade policy issues in order to build broad-based support for alternative regional agricultural trade policies and to bridge agriculture and trade policies and processes;
- Advocate for pragmatic agricultural trade policies that promote and facilitate access to regional and international markets, taking into account the needs of smallholder agricultural producers ;
- Clarify the added value of regional approaches and how these link up with national initiatives and policies ;
- Identify and agree on policy options to respond to critical issues ;
- Disseminate outcomes to wide range of stakeholders in order to support national and regional, policy-making processes, including CSO involvement in policy-making processes.

Introduction

FARA and collaborators (CTA, ECDPM, FDA, SROs, RECs) are organizing a series of policy dialogue workshops to enhance understanding of critical agricultural policy and trade issues in Africa so that they can be addressed. There are 3 workshops to address this issue, namely:

- First Policy Dialogue Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in March 2010,
- Second Workshop in Accra, Ghana in June 2010,
- Third Workshop in September 2010.

Summary of Plenary Discussions

Session I

After the opening remarks by Fred Oladeinde, President, The Foundation for Democracy in Africa, and Chairman of the roundtable, welcome statements were given by Dr. Monty Jones, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); Mr. Raphael Vogelsperger, Deputy Chief of Party & Coordinator of Value Chains/Director of the Agribusiness and Trade Program (ATP) Office in Burkina Faso; Ms. Julie Howard, Executive Director of Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa; and Hon. Kwesi Ahwoi, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Ghana. During this session the speakers addressed several important issues regarding agriculture production and promoting access to regional and international markets for Africa's agricultural commodities, namely:

- FARA's interest on working with civil society organizations and farmers organizations,

- Improving access to the international market for the CSOs and FOs.

During the question and answer session after the welcome remarks, participants raised several issues regarding West Africa agricultural commodities trade, stating firstly, that there is a need to comply with sanitary and phyto sanitary standards to enhance the promotion of their products. Secondly, the discussion stressed access to domestic and sub regional markets (infrastructures, telecommunications, and legislation). Also, participants talked about the unfair competition from imported agricultural commodities and products from developed countries on the domestic markets of Africa due to subsidies. The need to add value to primary agricultural products and to reduce post harvest losses was discussed, as well as learning from the success of the other countries on this issue. Participants requested that development partners provide a portion of their donor funds directly to CSOs and FOs to assist them in their capacity building efforts. In spite of the ECOWAS declaration of 1980, regarding the free movement of people, goods and services and removal of tariffs on agricultural commodities and products - according to participants in this session, road harassment, and border protection still exist, to the detriment of farmers and other important stakeholders in the supply chain of agricultural trade in the sub - region.

Session 2

During session 2, Dr. Emmanuel Tambi, Director NSF 3, FARA, presented the “Key Messages and Recommendations from the East and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa Regional Policy Dialogue Workshops on Promoting Access to Regional and International Markets for Agricultural Commodities in Africa.” Following, Dr. Frank Ofei, Policy Advisor, ATP/USAID, presented the Agribusiness and Trade Promotion/USAID (ATP/E-ATP) Program. The primary objective of the program is to increase the value and volume of intra-regional agricultural trade in West Africa in order to contribute to achieving the 6% agricultural growth target set under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) of the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AU-NEPAD). Finally, Fred Oladeinde made a presentation on US- Africa trade since the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was signed into law in 2000. Mr. Oladeinde highlighted the significant increases in trade on both sides. He also reviewed the AGOA survey created by the AGOA Civil Society Network Secretariat and asked that participants complete the survey to assist the Secretariat in its work on shaping the necessary reforms to align AGOA with CAADP goals and objectives.

Session 3

Dr. Jean Martin Kambire, Advisor to the Minister of Agriculture, Government of Burkina Faso provided the luncheon keynote speech and provided the Government of Burkina Faso’s perspective on promoting access to regional and international markets for Burkina Faso’s agricultural commodities and products, and responded to several questions from the participants.

Session 4

Participants separated into two groups. The two groups answered the following questions: What are the most appropriate strategies for engaging CSOs and the private sector in evidence-based policy-making processes, and How can the capacities of CSOs and the private sector be strengthened to promote access to markets?

Session 5

The two groups came together to present their respective key messages and recommendations for the group sessions (attached as one – slide)

Session 6

During the closing session, Mr. Oladeinde summarized the day’s activities and thanked the CSOs FOs, NGOs and, sponsors for their contribution to the success of the roundtable.