

**SECTION SEVEN:
Conclusions and recommendations
of the workshop**

Workshop conclusions and recommendations

The development partners have been very alert in canvassing actionable proposals and suggestions in achieving the development of rice in Africa and using it as a springboard to alleviate poverty and promotion of food security in Africa. The workshop has also enabled the formation or strengthening of a common platform for rice policy research and advocacy and facilitated the discussions for prioritized research and action plans.

Following the discussion, debates and consensus building on the central theme of this workshop – rice policy and food security in sub-Saharan Africa – tangible conclusions and recommendations were reached. The discussion was participatory and inclusive. The workshop permitted a broad consensus on the following findings and recommendations.

Achieving competitiveness in domestic rice production

a) Exogenous factors affecting competitiveness in rice production

- The rice farmers in the countries of origin of imported rice are subsidized by their governments (affects most countries of WA);
- Lower tariffs in neighboring countries encourage smuggling and depress prices (Sierra Leone, Nigeria);
- Food aid by donors distorts markets (Niger, Benin);
- High interest rates on credit;
- Off-farm employment wages;
- Scarcity of labor due to migration from rural areas to the city (Benin)
- Institutional arrangements;
- Overcentralization of administration of agriculture (Sierra Leone);
- Multiple taxation (checkpoints, etc.).

b) Endogenous factors affecting competitiveness in rice production

- Cost of transportation of inputs (Niger);
- Access to input;
- Seed variety;
- Poor agronomic practices;
- Low purchasing power (i.e. lack of funds Benin);
- Water management strategy (Mali).

How researchers can work with the civil society and farmers' organizations to promote rice policy advocacy

- Need to establish a link/partnership between NGOs, farmers' organizations, NRIs and IRIs;
- Public-private partnership stressing ownership among stakeholders;
- Sensitization on issues affecting farming systems;
- Involvement of stakeholders in consultation and policy dialogue.

Priority needs for capacity building to enhance agricultural policy research and advocacy

- Stronger research-extension-farmer linkage;
- Participatory needs assessment for NRIs, farmers' organizations and CSOs;
- Training of researchers and advocacy groups on policy analysis and simulation through research network;
- Critical engagement of policymakers.

Food security and poverty reduction issues

- Rice is a very important tool for food security and poverty reduction efforts;
- Rice alone cannot ensure food security: other food crops within the farming systems should also be considered;
- ECOWAS to move faster on its agreements on free trade and movements.

Priority areas for public support

- The harmonization of tariffs across the sub-region to protect local production and reduce smuggling;
- Increased public support for irrigation development;
- Make 10% budgetary allocation to agriculture work;
- Be wary of effects of trade agreements/treaties on domestic agriculture;
- Increasing need for credit support to rice farmers;
- Involve farmers in decision-making process;
- Make appropriate policy and a conducive environment for private sector participation.

Common agricultural policy and market integration

Impact of rice trade liberalization

Different impacts depending on comparative advantage in rice production:

- for those with comparative advantage: increased outputs, increased income, increased foreign exchange and employment
- for those with no comparative advantage: low production, reduction of other activities in rice production such as extension services, lack of competitiveness in trade, example of Nigeria's import bill which was high, and which depressed domestic production.

Before liberalization the State controlled the prices with protection measures: high taxes, reduction of incentives to production; deregulation of the market; Production increases when protection is large; example of Nigeria, consumers' prices increased, and in Ghana where there was a change in consumers' choices;

Oversupply of the markets by imported rice (result of unfair competition); Disorganization of inputs market which is no longer supported by the private sector;

Disorganization of the rice commercialization and processing systems (Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Ghana, Niger, Mali);

Inadequacy of the structures of the local rice production processing units (example of rice dehullers operating under capacity in Senegal and Niger); Reduction in investment for rice research; Weak organization of producers and emergence of new organizations more informed on the market.

Policy intervention for self-sufficiency and food security in SSA countries

Policy targeted towards urban and rural poor;
Removal of 'roadblocks' to allow free movement across borders and within countries;

Policy on post-harvest to be taken into consideration;
Economic integration: economies of scale, common markets, price stability.

Research priority areas for advocacy work at various levels

Effect of the international trade agreements in relation to the Millennium objectives;

Technologies relating to production;

Impact of agriculture protection on urban and rural rice consumption;

Impact of monetary and fiscal policies on rice production;

Develop a document that provides data and analysis of rice subsidies to be used as the basis of discussion with WTO;

Develop a policy on subsidy levels and type of beneficiaries with indication on the optimum scenarios;

Development of a solid database on price, infrastructure, production, and trade regulations to be made available to the private sector, farmers and other partners;

Need to have policies on authenticity of data and statistics for planning.

Priority capacity building needs for NARES and CSO

Training of decision-makers in impact analysis;

Training in the development of market profiles, lobbying and understanding of the market environment;

Capacity building targeted to CSO on quality control;

Market information: human capacity and training in information gathering and dissemination, and material (internet, GSM, GIS);

Training in understanding contractual arrangements, negotiations and agreements and their legal implications;

Capacity building for increased public awareness on partnerships for efficiency and high productivity.

Food security and poverty reduction

Rice is not included as a buffer stock in food security strategies in some countries;

Some research institutions such as WARDA have had breakthroughs, but these are not well disseminated to farmers. Use ROPPA and PROPAC for direct links with farmers to enhance farmer-to-farmer interactions;

In countries where rice is factored as a food security crop, tariff regimes affect the level of production and competitiveness of the local rice sector;

Rice fills the gap in terms of providing food of nutritious value in countries where drought may be a problem such as those in the Sahel;

Need to factor quality issues into food security;

For food security, we must have the right quality, quantity and income at individual, household, community and national levels;

Target production surplus in order to achieve food security;

Rice ought not to be considered the only crop for food security. Other cash crops – rice is a cash crop as well as a food crop – should also be taken into consideration.

About the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), established in 1971, is a strategic partnership of countries, international and regional organizations and private foundations supporting the work of 15 international Centers. In collaboration with national agricultural research systems, civil society and the private sector, the CGIAR fosters sustainable agricultural growth through high-quality science aimed at benefiting the poor through stronger food security, better human nutrition and health, higher incomes and improved management of natural resources.

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CGIAR Centers

CIAT	<i>Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical</i> (Cali, Colombia)
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IWMI	International Water Management Institute (Colombo, Sri Lanka)
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