



West Africa Regional Seminar on Rice Development

Summary of the Seminar

Dakar, Senegal, 18–19 September 2012

1. Background and objectives

CARD initiative, which was launched in 2008 at TICAD IV to respond to the mounting concern caused by global food price hike, has accumulated in participating countries and partners of lessons and observations in various dimensions of rice development. Western Africa region, where rice is one of the most important staples, covers more than half of CARD countries out of total 23, and they share some common agenda in the rice development both in agro-ecological dimensions and in socio-economic structures.

In order to stock-take those progress and challenges in the sub-region, the West Africa Regional Seminar on Rice Development was convened in Dakar, Senegal on 18–19 September 2012, by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), one of the founders of the initiative, in partnership with CARD and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment in Senegal. Participants attended from 13 CARD member countries in West Africa, 2 Asian countries as South-South Cooperation partners, and 38 Senegalese, regional and international organizations of producers, agribusiness and development partners. The seminar was inaugurated by Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Equipment and H.E. Ambassador of Japan to Senegal.

2. Discussion

This sub-regional seminar first of all shared progress to date in the CARD initiative both in country-base activities and as a whole, and status of its collaboration with the related initiatives such as CAADP and other policy drives for agricultural sector development including G8 New Alliance.

The meeting noted, through presentations such as Senegal's zoning experience and the mechanization practices, the value chain analyses in the region and the rice research in West Africa, the significant roles of the government public sector to support the effort of individual producers and other value chain actors to improve productivity and efficiency. Participants also discussed the importance of enabling environment to commercial activities of the stakeholders, as well as the new dimension of fast-growing private sector investment on rice industry. Cases of Indonesia and Thailand gave the participants insights of further potential partnerships.

The participants exchanged experiences of various cases of rice-based development in the region, such as participatory approach in rehabilitation of irrigation schemes, value chain development and PPP approach in Senegal, development and extension in lowland rainfed area in Ghana, the post-harvest processing and marketing in Nigeria and the training and extension service in Tanzania.

Representatives of the West African countries discussed in the later of the seminar the way forward to accelerate their effort to implement their own National Rice Development Strategies (NRDS), in line with the agricultural development strategies in each country.

3. Outcome

The participants of the Seminar shared, among others, the following points;

- (1) Participants from 13 western African countries and partners recognized importance of networking among themselves through the exercises today to improve the quality of works ;
- (2) Progress of CARD initiative and its collaboration with CAADP and the other initiatives including G8 New Alliance was noted ;
- (3) Significance, strong interests and potential benefits of the expanding and strengthening partnership between West African and some Southeast Asian countries under the South-south Cooperation were reconfirmed ;
- (4) Participants recognized the analytical work useful, such as zoning classification of productivity and marketability elements, to promote NRDS implementation;
- (5) Participants welcomed recent drive of private sector investment in rice-related sectors and recognized the significance of government's roles to establish and maintain win-win relationship among all stakeholders for keeping momentum of rice sector growth.

It is expected that these points would be fed into discussions in each country as well as at the series of forthcoming events such as the Fifth General Meeting (GM5) of CARD to be organized in Senegal in February 2013, and TICAD V to be held in Japan in June 2013 for further elaboration.