

Minutes of CARD Sixteenth Steering Committee Meeting (SC16) Met virtually, 30-September-2020 (0900-1230 GMT)

Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) organized its 16th meeting of Steering Committee (SC) members on 30th September of 2020. The meeting was held virtually, due to the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19. The meeting was attended by representatives of East African Community (EAC), Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community for Western African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), African Development Bank (AfDB), Africa Rice Center (AfricaRice), African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for African Development (AUDA-NEPAD), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan International Research Center for Agriculture Sciences (JIRCAS), World Bank and World Food Programme (WFP). Apology from Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ibrahim Gourouza of AUDA-NEPAD.

Objectives

The Chairperson, Mr. Gourouza, welcomed all participants in his introductory remarks and read out the agenda for the meeting. The agenda was seconded by the representative of World Bank and then adopted. The chair also explained the objectives of the SC16, which are to: (i) share the progress of CARD Phase 2 so far; (ii) discuss CARD M&E framework; (iii) share information on rice-related activities by the SC members; (iv) discuss the organization of 8th General Meeting in 2021 and CARD Webinar in 2020; and (v) discuss AATF's interest in SC membership.

Opening Remarks

In her opening remarks, the President of AGRA, Dr. Kalibata, welcomed all participants to the meeting and pointed out that the second phase of CARD presents new challenges because of the expansion of the number of participating countries and the inclusion of the regional trade issues through the regional blocks. She continued to mention the following: more work is needed to double rice production in Africa because about 50% of the rice requirement in the continent is still imported. In spite of the abundant resources (land, human etc.) available, productivity is low, and the local rice cannot compete with the imported brands because of poor quality and low standard. The opportunities in the rice value chain are huge and we need to take advantage of them to create jobs and make rice production competitive for the farmers. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown up new challenges which require concerted efforts to produce more food for the continent. She pointed out that CARD as a coalition has helped to bring partners together to address challenges along the rice value chain and therefore attract the right investments. We need to rethink the way we produce rice and that more funding could be pulled to rice sector development when we work as a team. She concluded by emphasizing that AGRA would continue to play its part to ensure the development of rice in the continent and will be looking forward to recommendations from the meeting for the Food Systems Summit coming up shortly.

Progress of CARD Phase 2

The General Coordinator (GC) of CARD Secretariat presented the progress report of CARD Phase 2. He explained that most of the plans as agreed during SC15 were duly covered, including the successful launching of CARD Phase 2 in August 2019 in Yokohama, Japan, with about 130 participants at a side event of the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7). The NRDS formulation and validation is on course in all the countries with support from CARD with a few exceptions. In order to establish better information flow both at the national and regional levels, the CARD newsletter has been renewed, and a web-based M&E system is being prepared and introduced soon. At the regional level, CARD has supported ECOWAS to reform its Rice Offensive, while also supporting EAC to formulate the East Africa Rice Development Strategy. The regional trainings were conducted in Uganda and Cameroon with about 30 participants, respectively. Finally, he mentioned that the timing for the 8th GM should be decided during this meeting.

CARD M&E framework

The GC presented the proposed CARD M&E framework; this framework became necessary to close the gap of lack of data-based monitoring as observed in CARD 1. He explained the tools for the M&E. Since the second phase of CARD adopted the R.I.C.E. approach (Resilience, Industrialization, Competitiveness and Empowerment), an idea on the set of indicators to monitor the progress along with this new approach was presented to SC members for further discussion and decision. Once the indicators are finalized, necessary information will be collected regularly for monitoring the progress, basically through a NRDS Focal Point person and Taskforce members of each member country.

Response to COVID-19

In response to COVID-19, the Secretariat prepared and sent a policy note to the member countries and SC members. The objective was to draw their attention to the possible negative impacts of the pandemic and then take appropriate measures to mitigate such impacts on the rice sector. The GC informed that among the member countries the Secretariat had successfully contacted for information, the only country that clearly mentioned the serious direct negative impact of COVID-19 on the rice production and rice value chain was Malawi, while the others showed either slight or moderate negative impacts.

After the presentation, comments and clarifications were made (See details in Annex 4), one of such was the concern raised by Dr. Roy-Macauley of AfricaRice that we need to clearly define “resilient varieties” as proposed by the Secretariat as one of the indicator for monitoring. It was also pointed out by Dr. Zhao of World Food Program that it was necessary to capture indicators to measure the level of mechanization of the small-scale farmers as well as on post-harvest losses. The observation by Dr. Kalibata on the fact that increase in production in CARD Phase 1 was attributed more to area expansion than yield improvement actually sparked a discussion among the SC members about technology development and its adoption by farmers. In their various contributions, the SC members emphasized that we would need to integrate rice into the food system conversation that is currently gaining attention globally. Dr. Ismail of IRRI pointed out that there is the need for a policy framework to shorten the time of the release of varieties and getting it to the hands of the farmers.

Rice-related activities by SC members

A summary of rice related activities of each Steering Committee members is presented below.

i) EAC

EAC joined the CARD in 2019. CARD Secretariat is currently supporting the formulation of the East Africa Rice Development Strategy.

ii) ECCAS

ECCAS joined CARD in 2019. Discussions on support for the formulation of the regional strategy for Central Africa is on-going.

iii) ECOWAS

ECOWAS and CARD have a very productive relationship, which resulted in the formulation of draft ECOWAS Rice Action Plan. CARD has supported ECOWAS in carrying out evaluation of the rice sector and provided financial support during the consultative meeting held in Abuja, in February 2020.

iv) SADC

Rice is the most imported commodity in SADC; about 93% of rice is being imported into the member countries with a trade deficit of 1 billion USD. SADC joined CARD in 2019 and is looking forward to collaborating with CARD to help it formulate its rice regional value chains and regional strategy for rice.

v) AfDB

AfDB shared interventions in the rice value chain across African countries, which include Gambia, Sierra Leone, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar and Zambia. AfDB recently restructured about 360 million USD to support countries in mitigating the impact of COVID-19.

vi) AfricaRice

A new initiative known as Excellence in Agronomy was recently launched and high yielding varieties are constantly being developed and released.

vii) AGRA

AGRA has a number of projects taking place across member countries in support of rice development. In Ghana and Burkina Faso, AGRA is organizing a consortium of public and private stakeholders of rice sector. In East Africa, AGRA is supporting rice sector development in the region through CARI-EA project.

viii) FAO

Two projects were recently completed in 2019 and were implemented in 10 countries. Presently, four rice-related projects are on-going, and COVID-19 recovering program was recently launched.

ix) FARA

FARA Recently completed capacity building in collaboration with AfDB under the TAAT project, and modular materials for training on effective use of rice technologies were produced. Also developed was an innovation platform for agribusiness development.

x) IFAD

IFAD is engaged in capacity building for a number of NARIs. The organization shifted resources to support emergency response to COVID-19. The proposed funding for CARD which is to the tune of 2.5-3 million USD for 4 years will be delayed to early part of 2021. IFAD is proposing three areas of partnership: i) policy engagement, ii) capacity building of public sector institutions, and iii) rice food system development.

xi) IRRI

Development of varieties and technologies that are suitable for the current environment are on-going. Focus is on yield and quality, resilience to climate change and resistance to pathogens. About 26 varieties have been developed recently, however the major challenge is how to take these varieties to the farmers.

xii) IsDB

IsDB is supporting the promotion of the rice value chain in several ECOWAS member countries. For these countries, the projects are ongoing, except in Guinea where the project coordinator has not been appointed yet. In addition to this support, the IsDB made available to Senegal, Niger, Guinea and Sierra Leone additional funding for the promotion of women in the rice value chain. This new project is under development and the average amount per country for this project is US \$ 2.5 to 3 million. The objective of the project is to: i) alleviate the financial constraint faced by women along the RVC; and ii) support matching grant schemes and inputs to farmers.

xiii) AUDA-NEPAD

AUDA-NEPAD through Grow Africa is helping to structure private sector investments in key agricultural commodities. In order to make maximum impacts, rice multi-stakeholder platforms need to be established by bringing all the actors of the value chain together, as currently being done in Côte d'Ivoire.

xiv) JICA

JICA is providing 29 technical cooperation projects in 15 countries and also carrying out human resource development in all 32 CARD member countries. On top of the on-going training courses provided, JICA is planning to offer additional training courses in Senegal and Thailand this year. Support will be provided for grant projects in 5 priority countries, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia. New projects include promotion of mechanization hub in East and West Africa and production of technical manuals in English, French and Portuguese. JICA will continue to support the Secretariat with human and financial resources.

xv) JIRCAS

JIRCAS continues to carry out research in developing new varieties and technologies. Rice research in Africa will be one of the main target areas in the next five years. JIRCAS will strengthen cooperation with CARD especially in scaling up technologies and will continue to share results of research.

xvi) World Bank

World Bank continues to support member countries in rice development across the whole value chain. Support increased productivity, linking farmers to market and improving access to finance. WB is currently formulating a regional program to support food system resilience in ECOWAS. Project preparation has already started at country level. WB is also working with ECOWAS to develop regional scorecard on agriculture trade.

xvii) WFP

WFP has a comparative advantage in procurement, purchasing around four hundred thousand tons of rice in 2019 and trying to increase local procurement of fortified rice from African countries. In late 2019, WFP approved a new Local and Regional Procurement Policy, which aims to explicitly link its procurement system with development goals, such as increase in income, improvement in resilience of smallholder farmers, and strengthening their capacity to fight against vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses.

8th General Meeting in 2021 and CARD Webinar in 2020

Mr. Tadashi Sato, Vice President of JICA, proposed that the 8th General Meeting, originally planned to be held in June 2020, be held in the first half of year 2021. Instead, an organization of webinar was proposed to be held in December 2020, with potential themes of: (1) rice sector with and post COVID-19; and (2) competitiveness of local rice. The SC members agreed to the two proposals.

AATF's interest in SC membership

The Secretariat explained that African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) has recently indicated its interest to the Secretariat to become a SC member of CARD. Several SC members supported the idea while noting the strong background and current involvement of AATF in the rice value chain, especially seed development. The SC members confirmed that AATF meets the criteria set by the CARD operation guideline; therefore, it should be welcomed as a member. (This decision by the SC meeting will be reported to the next General Meeting for the final consent by all the member countries.)

Closing Remarks

In his closing remarks, Mr. Tadashi Sato, Vice President of JICA, thanked all participants for fruitful deliberations and looking forward to seeing all during the planned webinar.

ANNEXES TO MINUTES OF 16 SC MEETING OF CARD

1. AGENDA

- i) Address by Chairperson Mr. Ibrahim Gourouza, AUDA-NEPAD
- ii) Opening Remarks by Dr. Agnes Kalibata, AGRA/Director Card Secretariat
- iii) Progress of CARD Phase 2 and CARD M&E Framework
- iv) Update from SC Members
- v) Timing and Mode of 8th GM (By JICA)
- vi) Annual Plan for 2020-21
- vii) SC Membership (AATF's interest in joining the SC)
- viii) Closing Remarks by Mr. Tadashi Sato, JICA

2. CARD Secretariat Annual Plan 2020/2021

- i) Continuing Support to NRDS Formulation/Implementation
- ii) Continuing Support to Regional Strategy Formulation/Implementation
- iii) Strengthening Coordination among Projects/Programmes/Trainings by SC Members
- iv) Finalizing the M&E and Starting Data Collection
- v) Strengthening communication Tools: CARD2 website Launching
- vi) CARD Webinar towards the end of 2020
- vii) Organizing the 8th General Meeting/17th SC Meeting in 2021

3. Way Forward

- i) M&E Framework and its indicators
- ii) GM 8 and Webinar
- iii) AATF's interest in SC Membership
- iv) Annual Plan 2020/2021
- v) Any Coordinated Effort against COVID-19 negative Impact on Rice

4. Comments

❖ **Dr. Harold Roy–Macauley (Director General, AfricaRice)**

We need to clearly define “resilient varieties” proposed by the Secretariat as one of the indicators for monitoring. Furthermore, how do we align the R.I.C.E. approach with the ongoing Food Systems discussions? A lot of knowledge, innovations, and outputs are being generated but what are the impacts of NRDS implementation? Why are new varieties not being adopted by the farmers? We need to build right policy framework, model to create sustainable impacts, and new partnership from the community to the global level as rice is cultivated at the community level. We need to invest in NRDS, in structured and organized ways. Let’s select one or two countries and invest together in these countries, to create a model and scale out to the rest of the member countries.

❖ **Dr. Agnes Kalibata (President, AGRA/Director, CARD Secretariat)**

It is puzzling that yield has not increased much during Phase 1, despite significant innovations in technologies. How should CARD improve access to better varieties and improve productivity? What is the greatest challenge that need to be tackled in moving forward?

❖ **Dr. Bing Zhao (Director, WFP)**

In the proposed M&E framework, is there any indicator capturing the level of mechanization of the small-scale farmers? There should also be an indicator for post-harvest loss, as it plays an important role in improving resilience and competitiveness.

❖ **Dr. Abdelbagi Ismail (Regional Representative for Africa, IRRI)**

Varieties developed by IRRI and AfricaRice have basically the same background as the ones developed in Asia. A major problem in Africa is that it takes a longer time until new varieties reach farmers, due to lack of strong systems. Policies that are not supportive for the involvement of private sectors sometimes hinder the rapid release of new varieties. On-farm management in general is weak, which is represented by low levels of fertilizer use and mechanization in land preparation, leading to a high yield gap. Dominance of rain fed cultivation, without control of water, is also an issue. In Phase 2, CARD needs to work not only with varieties but also policies and management issues.

❖ **Mr. Ibrahim Gourouza (COO, Grow Africa)**

NRDS needs operational and execution plans, which is the responsibility of the public sector and actors in the rice value chain at the country level. This is why AUDA-NEPAD and Grow Africa have been promoting the set-up of multi-stakeholder platform in the priority value chains. The platform can also affect policies. This is already yielding good results in country like Côte d’Ivoire.

❖ **Dr. Abebe Haile–Gabriel (Assistant Director General and Regional Representative, FAO)**

We need to look at the rice system as part of the entire food system. The impacts of COVID-19 need to be analysed with not only production but also market and trade perspectives.

❖ **Dr. Ernest Ruzindaza (Senior Agriculture Economist, World Bank)**

We need to assess all parameters that contribute to rice productivity, such as water management, good agricultural practices, use of improved seeds, fertility management and

disease control. NRDS remains a good framework. There is a need to catalyse private sector investment in the rice value chain. It is important to promote PPPs and bring onboard the Private Sector through NRDS.

❖ **Dr. Bashir Jama Adan (Lead, Global Practice, Food Security Specialist, IsDB)**

Considering area increase vs productivity, the way we access data is crucial because we tend to miss out counting the second harvests where double-cropping is practiced. If not counted in, yields must be under-reported. Secondly, farmers produce rice and other crops, such as vegetables, on the same piece of land. Therefore, we need to look beyond rice and look at the food system in general.

5. Response to Comments– Dr. Yusuke Haneishi (General Coordinator, CARD Secretariat)

The detailed proposal for M&E indicators will be shared with SC members later for further discussion. Inputs from AfricaRice and IRRI regarding the definition of “resilient” and “high-yielding” varieties would be welcomed. The followings issues raised cannot be addressed by the Secretariat alone but need to be discussed among and tackled by all the SC members: (1) alignment of CARD activities with the ongoing food systems dialogue; (2) involvement of private sectors in NRDS implementation; (3) policy advocacy and creation of framework to accelerate NRDS implementation, including rapid adoption of new varieties; and (4) actions required to encourage farmers to adopt better technologies to improve their yield, rather than increase their area.

6. List of Participants

	Organization	Title	First Name	Last name	Position
1	EAC	Mr.	Fahari	Marwa	Principal Agricultural Economist, EAC Secretariat
2	ECCAS	Dr.	Honoré	Tabuna	Commissioner in charge of Environment, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development
3	ECCAS	Mr.	Jean	Ndjoya	Special Assistant to the Commissioner in charge of Environment, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Rural Development
4	ECCAS	Mr.	Semingar	Ngaryamngaye	Expert
5	ECOWAS	Mr.	Ernest	Aubee	Head of Agriculture Division
6	ECOWAS	Dr.	Boladale	Adebowale	Rice Policy Advisor for ECOWAS
7	SADC	Mr.	Duncan	Samikwa	Senior Programme Officer, Food Security and Agriculture, Directorate of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
8	AfDB	Dr.	Martin	Fregene	Director, Agriculture and Agro-Industry Department
9	AfricaRice	Dr.	Harold	Roy-Macauley	Director General
10	AfricaRice	Dr.	Etienne	Duveiller	Director, Research for Development
11	AfricaRice	Dr.	Koichi	Futakuchi	Program Leader, Sustainable Productivity Enhancement
12	AGRA	Dr.	Agnes	Kalibata	President (Director, CARD Secretariat)
13	AGRA	Dr.	George	Bigirwa	Deputy Vice President for Program Innovation & Delivery
14	AGRA	Dr.	Julius	Kagamba	Special Assistant to the President
15	AUDA-NEPAD	Mr.	Ibrahim	Gourouza	Head of Private Sector - COO, Grow Africa
16	AUDA-NEPAD	Mr.	Eyram	Amovin-Assagba	Country Coordinator, Grow Africa
17	FAO	Dr.	Abebe	Haile-Gabriel	Assistant Director General and Regional Representative, Regional Office for Africa
18	FAO	Mr.	Peter	Anaadumba	South-South Cooperation Officer, Regional Office for Africa
19	FAO	Mr.	Kazuyuki	Fujiwara	Partnerships Officer, Regional Office for Africa
20	FAO	Ms.	Makiko	Taguchi	Agriculture Officer, Plant Production and Protection Division
21	FARA	Dr.	Oluwole	Fatunbi	Senior Research Cluster Leader
22	IFAD	Dr.	Malu	Ndavi	Lead Global Technical Specialist
23	IRRI	Dr.	Abdelbagi	Ismail	Regional Representative for Africa
24	IsDB	Mr.	Nur	Abdi	Manager, Agriculture Global Practice
25	IsDB	Dr.	Bashir	Jama Adan	Lead, Global Practice, Food Security Specialist
26	JICA	Mr.	Tadashi	Sato	Vice President
27	JICA	Mr.	Koji	Makino	Director General, Economic Development Department
28	JICA	Mr.	Shinjiro	Amameishi	Deputy Director General, Economic Development Department
29	JICA	Mr.	Shinichi	Noguchi	Director, Economic Development Department
30	JICA	Mr.	Yuichi	Matsushita	Deputy Director, Economic Development Department
31	JICA	Mr.	Hiroshi	Hiraoka	Senior Advisor, Agriculture and Rural Development
32	JICA	Mr.	Shota	Kakinuma	Program Officer, Economic Development Department
33	JIRCAS	Mr.	Osamu	Koyama	Vice President
34	JIRCAS	Dr.	Seiji	Yanagihara	Project Leader
35	JIRCAS	Dr.	Miyuki	Iiyama	Director, Research Strategy Office
36	JIRCAS	Dr.	Keiichi	Hayashi	Project leader
37	World Bank	Dr.	Ernest	Ruzindaza	Senior Agriculture Economist
38	WFP	Dr.	Bing	Zhao	Director, Smallholder and Food Systems Support Programme
39	CARD Secretariat	Dr.	Yusuke	Haneishi	General Coordinator
40	CARD Secretariat	Mr.	Tomokazu	Nagai	Technical Coordinator
41	CARD Secretariat	Ms.	Noriko	Chege	Operational Coordinator
42	CARD Secretariat	Dr.	Kathiresan	Arumugam	Regional Consultant
43	CARD Secretariat	Mr.	Ibrahima	Sall	Regional Consultant
44	CARD Secretariat	Mr.	Harifidy	Ramilison	Regional Consultant
45	CARD Secretariat	Dr.	Michael	Nasamu	Regional Consultant