

Minutes of the 10th CARD Steering Committee Meeting Bangkok, Thailand, 26 October 2014

The 10th Steering Committee meeting of the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) was held on 26th October, 2014 at Radisson Blue Plaza Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was attended by the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Africa Rice Center (AfricaRice), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS) and the World Bank, while the African Development Bank and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) were absent with their apologies. (Please see the attachment for the list of attendants).

1. Objectives and overview

To meet the two objectives, (i) to update the progress of CARD activities since the last SC meeting and (ii) to discuss and agree on the way forward for future CARD activities, a series of presentations were made in the meeting and attendants actively participated in discussions under the co-chairing by the World Bank and JIRCAS.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 9th CARD Steering Committee Meeting (SC9)

The meeting revisited and approved the minutes of SC9 that was held in Yokohama, Japan on June 3rd, 2014. The meeting also noted that the CARD general meeting shall in the future have two co-chairs representing the CARD member states (one each from Anglophone and Francophone countries), in addition to the two co-chairs from the CARD SC members.

3. Update of CARD Activities

To update the status and progress of activities conducted by the CARD secretariat, two presentations were made as summarized below.

(1) Implementation of National Rice Development Strategies

The data from FAOSTAT shows that rice production in Sub-Saharan Africa has increased by 59% during the first 6 years of the CARD initiative. However, CARD cannot attribute this production growth to solely CARD activities since the overall rice production is influenced by a number of factors beyond the control of CARD. Therefore, CARD should deliver outputs that can clearly demonstrate its contribution to the overall rice production increase. The number of 'CARD-labeled projects' (interventions which would not have realized in the absence of CARD's activities) and their contributions (total budget, covered areas, beneficiaries and other indicators) could be used as indicators for CARD contributions, and the CARD secretariat have made efforts to increase the number of 'CARD-labeled projects' through:

- Mainstreaming of NRDS by (i) increasing the awareness of high rank officials about NRDS and (ii) integrating NRDS into CAADP investment plans
- Improving NRDS concept notes through (i) update of gap analyses and (ii) technical revisions of concept notes

- Fund matching activities to connect NRDS concept notes with financial resources through (i) identification of potential donors, (ii) detailed research on them (area of interest, portfolio, budget cycle etc.), and (iii) joint planning to materialize the implementation of concept notes, including modification.

The CARD secretariat is currently taking stock of ‘CARD-labeled projects’, and this preliminarily resulted in 54 projects in 7 countries. The stocktaking exercise will be completed by the next CARD general meeting and the result will be presented as a part of interim progress of the CARD initiative.

Also the presentation referred to some cases where information sharing by some steering committee members helped fund matching activities and thus implementation of NRDS concept notes, and the CARD secretariat requested the steering committee members, especially the one with financing and programs, such as AfDB, FAO, IFAD, JICA, World Bank to share with the secretariat information on their upcoming funding opportunities at CARD countries.

(2) CARD activities other than NRDS implementation

In order to (i) increase the recognition about CARD, and (ii) strengthen networking and partnerships with relevant stakeholders, the CARD secretariat had made presentations about the CARD initiative at various occasions such as the 3rd Africa Rice Congress (GRiSP global forum) in Oct 2013 in Yaounde and will also organize a CARD side event during the 4th International Rice Congress to be held on Oct 29th, 2014 in Bangkok.

To enhance the integration of NRDS into CAADP Investment Plans at country level, three-year training and dialogue program has been organized by JICA, in which CAADP and CARD focal points from 20 countries have participated so far.

The CARD secretariat has launched the pilot country-specific analysis on the investment environment for the public private partnership. Selected private sector (domestic and international) partners will be interviewed to identify policy and market factors which attract/ distract private investment in rice in respective countries. The results of interviews will be analyzed and summarized as annexes of NRDS for advocacy work. The pilot is carried out in Kenya and might be expanded to other countries, if good results are obtained.

(3) Discussions

The meeting expressed the overall satisfaction on the update of CARD activities and provided a few comments to the secretariat:

- The CARD activities should also be evaluated in terms of the quality of documents (e.g. NRDS, Seed Road map)
- The meeting acknowledged the needs to help improve the traction and implementation of NRDS, CARD mainstreaming and other CARD initiatives at country level through, for instance, joint advocacy at agriculture sector donor working groups of CARD member countries.
- CARD progress and achievement include not only what the secretariat does, but also what the CARD steering committee members do together under the CARD initiative. It is, therefore, important to increase the synergy of SC members’ activities
- CARD progress and achievement should be perceived and presented in a bolder

manner.

The meeting also noted the importance of information sharing with the secretariat on their upcoming funding opportunities in order for NRDS task force of respective countries to effectively connect the financial resources to the implementation of NRDS concept notes, and agreed to share funding information as much as possible.

4. Update on South-South Cooperation.

The progress of activities related to South-South Cooperation was shared in the three presentations followed by the discussion session.

(1) Stocktaking of best practices in rice sector

With the financial and technical support from IFAD, the CARD secretariat took stock of best practices related to rice value chain development and NRDS integration into overarching development framework in order to share successful CARD countries' experience with other African countries. Ten cases from eight countries were identified as best practice, and their replicability to other countries was assessed based on the IFAD scalability assessment framework. The detailed description of the cases and results of the scalability assessment were compiled in a document, and this document will be published as soon as formatting and translation are completed.

(2) South-South Cooperation (SSC) platform for rice mechanization in Africa

AfricaRice presented an update on the EU/IFAD-funded project on SSC for rice mechanization in the context of CARD. Achievements of this one-year project include the establishment of an Africa-wide Rice Mechanization Task Force, organization of study tours to Brazil and Thailand for African rice mechanization experts, and the establishment of an on-line platform for interaction between rice mechanization experts across Africa and beyond.

(3) WAAPP Remote Learning Program

In July 2014, World Bank and JICA held a high level meeting and agreed to strengthen collaboration on remote learning programs through a partnership between CARD and Western Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP). Against this backdrop, the CARD secretariat and WAAPP agreed to cooperation within the WAAPP Remote Learning Program where CARD will (i) share its experiences and know-how of the video conferencing seminars with WAAPP and (ii) connect WAAPP with CARD's resource persons (partners) for them to be resource persons for the program.

Although the initial plan for the pilot session on seed was scheduled at the end of September 2014, it has not yet been materialized due to communication gaps at WAAPP side. This could potentially be a good example of partnership among CARD stakeholders, and the CARD secretariat asked for advice from the meeting on the way forward.

(4) Discussions

The meeting highly appreciated the progress made in the SSC, with a few comments and suggestions on the WAAPP Remote learning Program:

- The CARD SC members acknowledged that remote learning program is a cost effective means of transferring knowledge among CARD member countries. Hence the secretariat is encouraged to work on the materialization of the WAAPP Remote

Learning Program.

- The WAAPP Remote Learning Program has a potential to be expanded to other parts of Africa and benefit other CARD countries, involving CARD partners other than JICA and the World Bank. Thus it needs to be supported.
- Private sector should be included in the WAAPP Remote Learning Program.
- The issue of communication gap among WAAPP stakeholders is being addressed, thus the remote learning program could be organized as initially agreed by the secretariat and WAAPP (WB)

5. Pilot Initiative on Improved Rice Seed Sector

The progress of the initiative was presented by the CARD secretariat. All ten target countries, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda have gone through situation analysis, target setting and strategy development in the first working week. The draft Rice Seed Development Strategies were subject to a peer-review by CARD SC members at a regional workshop in February 2014, followed by a video conference seminar for the country teams on rice seed quality control organized by the CARD steering committee members, including AfricaRice, FAO, IRRI, JICA and JIRCAS. All countries revised the draft Rice Seed Development Strategy through the second working week based on the inputs from the video conference seminar as well as resource persons. Guinea has completed the official validation of the document. Validation process in the other nine countries is presently on-going. Through the third working week, Tanzania and Uganda had recently drafted concept notes that can help implement the strategies. The third working week in the other participating countries will be carried out in the next few months. Upon validation of the Rice Seed Development Strategy, the CARD Secretariat will assist the country taskforces in fund matching activities that will help implement the concept notes drawn under the proposed rice seed development strategies.

6. Way Forward for CARD activities

Four presentations were made with respect to CARD activities in coming years for endorsement by the meeting, followed by discussions:

(1) The 6th CARD General Meeting (GM6)

The CARD Secretariat presented points the meeting should agree regarding the GM6 such as timing, venue, side program (study tour or pre-conference seminar), and the management such as co-chairing.

The secretariat also proposed the draft agenda for GM6 for comments. Proposed agenda included: i) progress on NRDS implementation and the key factors involved in successful implementation, (ii) pilot initiative on seed and mechanization, (iii) South-South Cooperation (best practices, mechanization, SSTC project on statistics and WAAPP remote learning initiative, (iv) overall rice production, marketing, policy and institutional perspectives, and (v) Toward 2018 and beyond (evaluation of CARD activities and what is next).

(2) Strengthening country level coordination of CARD activities

Due to the weak national level collaboration among the CARD steering committee

members in some countries, the CARD Secretariat proposed a pilot for strengthening country level coordination among the CARD steering committee members in order to enhance CARD related activities such as NRDS implementation. The secretariat expressed its willingness to draft a concept note on this subject, if the proposition is acceptable for the meeting.

(3) Scaling up of the CARD Seed Pilot Initiative

Taking the progress in the Seed Pilot Initiative presented in the previous session, the CARD secretariat proposed to expand the pilot initiative to all CARD member countries. The implementation process including its timeframe was suggested for discussion and approval by the meeting.

(4) Follow up of the CARD Mechanization Pilot

CARD launched the Mechanization Pilot in 2012 to identify (i) policy actions that can provide enabling environment for the private sector and (ii) technical actions that can lead to selection and manufacturing of appropriate machineries for rice production and processing. While necessary policy and technical actions were identified, they were fragmented and therefore there is need to complete the pilot process by compiling the results of the pilot in a strategic document as it is done in the CARD Seed Pilot Initiative. CARD Secretariat proposed the follow up plan of the mechanization pilot for comments and overall endorsement by the meeting.

(5) Consensus

The meeting discussed on the above items and came to following consensus:

- GM6 will be held in the week of November 16th in 2015 in Côte d'Ivoire, with a pre-conference seminar
- Regarding the GM management, the in-coming co-chair from the CARD steering committee will be AfricaRice, and the country co-chair from Francophone countries will be Côte d'Ivoire (host country) and the one from Anglophone countries is to be decided.
- GM6 should focus on the CARD progress against the set target in both overall rice production and productivity (overall by AfricaRice, and national level by countries).
- The program of GM6 should include a significant number of presentations by member countries (e.g. NRDS implementation status, seed pilot initiative)
- GM6 should include more presentations on the CARD SC members' activities
- The meeting agreed to assist the proposed country level coordination, and instructed CARD Secretariat to draft the concept note. Potential pilot countries include Ghana, Mozambique, and Rwanda.
- The meeting endorsed the plan for scaling up of the Seed Pilot Initiative as well as the one for the follow up of Mechanization Pilot.

7. Towards 2018 and beyond

To sustain the momentum gained through the CARD initiative on doubling rice production, CARD Secretariat proposed to continue its activities for the NRDS implementation, Pilot Initiatives on rice seed and mechanization, capacity building and promoting conducive business environment. To help decide the future course of the initiative, the CARD Secretariat proposed a process of the evaluation on CARD for the meeting to consider. The proposed timelines suggested that the evaluation report will be finalized by 2017 and

presented at the next TICAD meeting (to be held in 2018).

The meeting generally accepted the proposition with the following changes:

- Evaluation of the CARD initiative should be conducted by an external evaluator with an African perspective and should be conducted much sooner, to be concluded by mid-2015.
- Evaluation should cover activities by the CARD secretariat as well as by the CARD steering committee members in capacity development, country level coordination, technical contributions, outcomes of the GRiSP science forum, strengthened partnership, and impacts on social aspects.
- The modality of the CARD initiative should also be reviewed. It should cover implementation and management mechanisms, methodology and partnerships.
- Not all CARD contributions to rice sector development can be numerically evaluated. Therefore, to assure the comprehensiveness, the CARD initiative should be evaluated by a set of both quantitative and qualitative indicators, figures and narratives.
- A mid-term review on CARD should be conducted, and the result should be presented at GM6.
- The TOR for the mid-term review will be drafted by AfricaRice, and it will be finalized by the end of 2014 by the SC members, especially with the contribution by FAO.
- Meanwhile, SC members with financial resources such as IFAD, JICA and the World Bank will explore the possibility of mobilizing their financial resources for the mid-term review process.

The meeting also agreed to continuously discuss the future of CARD (beyond 2018). The final decision will be made after taking inputs from stakeholders at the 6th General Meeting.

8. Tour de Table

SC members shared with each other their rice related activities as followings:

(1) AGRA

The main activities carried out in the rice sub-sector by AGRA and in particular the seeds program (PASS) includes:

- Training of students at masters and PhD level in a number of countries. Nearly each country now has a rice breeder either still in training or have completed. Every year a minimum of two rice breeders graduate with PhD while at MSC the average is 3.
- Seed production: Rice seed is produced in almost all countries of operation with Tanzania leading the list followed by Nigeria, Uganda and Mali. In terms of volumes produced, these too have been on a steady increase for instance in 2007 only 99 metric tons were produced, in 2011 about 2,755 MT while in 2013, the tonnage stood at 12,913.
- Rice variety development: There are several rice breeding programs going on and have resulted in several varieties being released. Some varieties are direct introductions from institutions like AfricaRice and IRRI while others are exclusively developed by local breeders especially those who worked on rice during their PhD research projects and have continued to push them through the variety release process. A case in point is Uganda where 2 varieties have been released, 2 in Nigeria, 2 in Mali, 2 in Mozambique and 1 in Kenya.

- Business development service: The markets program of AGRA has provided business development services to some companies dealing in rice grain to expand their business. This has happened in Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana. The beneficiary companies have been able to develop sellable proposals that have attracted funding to move business to a higher level.

(2) AfricaRice

CARD related activities conducted by AfricaRice in 2014 include:

- The Center has launched a website called Rice eHub (www.ricehub.org), with detailed information on scalable technologies and collaborative rice R&D activities in ‘rice sector development hubs’. These Hubs are regions strategic for rice sector development, as identified by the various countries (NARS and ministries) and private and public sector development partners. Approximately 70 Hubs have been identified in 24 countries since 2012. Rice R&D efforts by AfricaRice and partners are concentrated in and around these Hubs. This is expected to facilitate out-scaling of rice innovations in a collective manner, within a value chain context.
- AfricaRice is also starting to organize ‘rice innovation fairs’ in collaboration with national partners. The first innovation fair was held in Cotonou Benin in September 2014 and involved a wide range of rice value chain actors and R&D partners from Benin and Togo.
- The Africa-wide Rice Breeding Task Force regroups efforts of rice breeders from NARS (30 countries), AfricaRice, IRRI, CIAT and CIRAD. The Task Force enables to spot highly performing rice breeding lines early using a systematic genotype x environment approach involving hundreds of test sites across the continent. Best lines are named ‘ARICAs’ which stands for ‘Advanced Rices for Africa’. So far 11 ARICAs have been named, some of which have already been officially released in West and East African countries.
- AfricaRice and national partners are implementing a Japan funded Emergency Initiative for Rice in Africa, focusing on seed and mechanization. The seed component of this initiative has been highly successful, reaching almost 70,000 farmers by October 2014. The mechanization component has experienced some delays but will enable farmers in Rice Sector Development Hubs to gain access to highly effective small-scale machinery, including power tillers, thresher-cleaners and rice mills. The project will come to an end by March 31, 2015.
- The AfricaRice/CABI publication ‘Realizing Africa’s Rice Promise’ was launched in October 2013 and can now be freely downloaded from the AfricaRice website or bought from CABI as a hard copy.

(3) IFAD

The IFAD activities have revolved around designing and implementing some rice-related projects.

- In the West and Central Africa region, rice projects were designed in western Cote d’Ivoire, Lower Guinea and six Nigerian States. It is likely that the implementation of the

rice projects will start in early 2015 in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea. However, it is difficult to predict when project implementation will start in Nigeria owing to the fact that it was not on the Government borrowing plan to be submitted to the National Assembly.

- In the meantime, rice projects have been ongoing in Cameroon, the Gambia, Madagascar, Rwanda and Senegal.
- In terms of South-South Cooperation, Rwanda benefited from some technical assistance from a SRI team in Madagascar, leading to improved agronomic practices and increased on-farm yields.

(4) IRRI

In the framework of IRRI objective in Africa, which is to improve and sustain rice production, actions have been taken to reinforce research activities in East and Southern Africa (ESA).

- The IRRI-ESA regional office build in Burundi has been officially inaugurated in October 2013
- Building laboratories is under progress and will be completed in December 2014, including one lab for Plant Pathology, one for Molecular Biology and one for Grain Quality and seed health. Those labs will be equipped and operational in the year 2015.
- IRRI insists on partnership in action with AfricaRice, NARES and other institutions active in rice research or in the rice sector development.

(5) FAO

The Assistant Director general Regional Representative for Africa visited Africa Rice to share thoughts on a partnership meeting that FAO will organize at The Windsor Golf Hotel and Country Club in Nairobi, Kenya on 24-25 November 2014. The partnership meeting will offer a platform for exchange on challenges/opportunities for attaining rice self-sufficiency in SSA, and to agree on the key elements of a proposed Program/Initiative, as well as the framework and modalities for its implementation.

The main objectives of the meeting are:

- Present, discuss and validate a comprehensive Sustainable Rice Systems Development Programme for Africa;
- Establish the partnership for the development and implementation of the Rice Program, building on existing initiatives
- Discuss and define the roles and responsibilities of all relevant partners and agree on the coordinating mechanism
- Advocate and pledge for resources mobilization for the Program development and implementation.

(6) FARA

FARA's hands on activities within CARD outside the steering committee roles, is on the rice mechanization platform. FARA alongside AfricaRice and IRRI is co-facilitating the project, in which the fund is provided by IFAD.

- FARA co-organize the visit of the mechanization stakeholders to Brazil and Thailand for initiation of partnership for exchange of knowledge and technologies and brokerage of

business partnership. An online platform has been established with about 200 stakeholders interacting and exchanging knowledge on mechanization of rice value chain in Africa. A recent interaction that links agricultural mechanization with climate change issues recorded over 1,000 rich exchanges of knowledge and information that could guide the development of policies and new initiatives.

- Information gathered from recent targeted exchanges on rice mechanization is currently being developed into publication (in-print and e-book) for dissemination among CARD stakeholders in Africa. FARA holds the responsibility to extend the lessons from the rice mechanization initiative to other commodities, in this direction FARA will be developing a continental initiative on agricultural mechanization with rice as entry point.

(7) JICA

- Total 43 projects, with the modality of Technical Cooperation, Grant and Loan, are currently under implementation in 21 CARD member countries (19 in West Africa, 13 in Central and South Africa, and 11 in East Africa), all of which are in line with contributing to NRDS implementation in each CARD member country.
- With aim of strengthening CAADP-CARD alignment, JICA in collaboration with the CARD Secretariat conduct three-year region focused training program titled “Promotion of African Rice Development through Strengthening Coordination between CARD and CAADP for Sub-Sahara African Countries”. The second year of the training program was organized in August 2014, in which 26 government officers (both from CAADP and CARD) from 18 CARD member countries took active participation.
- In the context of promoting South-South Cooperation, JICA provide financial supports with IRRI as well as PhilRice to conduct Third Countries Training Program, “Season-Long Rice Farming Extension Training Program (2011-2015)”, in which researchers and extension officers in CARD member countries are the target participants.

(8) JIRCAS

- In its current Medium-term Plan, JIRCAS is implementing a flagship research project titled “Development of Rice Production Technologies in Africa”, which was designed for supporting the CARD initiative. Major activities are being carried out in Ghana, and 15 researchers including university professors are being involved this year. Already three years and a half have passed since its start and the project has generated various useful results. During the last one year, some very practical and ready-to-use results were published.
- One example is on phosphate rock application into paddy field. The result showed almost equivalent effect on rice yield as commercial phosphorus fertilizers. Second example is the effect of rice seed priming, a pre-treatment of seeds. The result identified the best method of treatment and showed improvement in germination rate in various rain-fed conditions. There are other useful results such as information of silica deficiency situation, new breeding materials for phosphorous deficiency condition and so on. This year, the project added a socio-economic component in order to study rice value-chain, and a preliminary study has already been conducted in Madagascar.
- Another update is that the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Japan commission a new study on “Improvement of Micro Reservoir Technologies” to JIRCAS

to support the CARD initiative.

(9) World Bank

- The Bank has a portfolio of 40 rice-related projects in the 23 CARD countries, consisting of 29 on-going loan operations (3 regional level, 26 country level), and 11 in the pipeline.
- The Bank has been active in enhancing partnerships, in line with the spirit of the CARD Initiative, which includes:
 - JICA: Following the successful collaboration with Sustainable Rice Development Project (SRDP) of Sierra Leone, WAAPP, our regional project in the West Africa, identified a program of regional collaboration with the JICA HQs in June 2014, which has facilitated such collaboration as joint planning of the second phase of SRDP (suspended due to Ebola outbreak) and participation of WAAPP government officials in the JICA season long training courses in Japan. Up-scaling effort is going-on within the framework of the Bank – JICA High Level Dialogue to promote corporate level collaboration and the area of collaboration to other CARD countries and regions will be identified by early 2015.
 - Africa Rice Center: The Bank celebrates the development of ARICA varieties developed through the Japan PHRD Grant of 2008. Arrangements are being discussed between WAAPP and AfricaRice so that this regional program contributes to the registration and dissemination of these varieties from early 2015. This includes the seed distribution for the three Ebola-affected countries that are suffering from the food shortage and resultant lack of seed for the next cropping season.
 - IRR: IRR's hub in Eastern and Southern Africa in Burundi (IRRI-ESA) has been providing the quality technical assistance to the Bank's Kivu-Tanganyika Growth Pole Project in planning the Participatory Variety Selection, as an effort to enhance the competitiveness of the market-oriented rice production in Ruzizi Plain.
- The Bank takes this opportunity to renew its commitment to the CARD Initiative to jointly achieve the goal of doubling the rice production, harnessing the comparative advantage of other SC members. To this end, the Bank would like to consider modality to support the Initiative as well as to enhance the further technical collaboration with the Secretariat, such as on-going joint effort of WAAPP and the CARD Secretariat in developing WAAPP distant learning program.

9. AOB

- SC members agreed to continuously assist Ebola hit CARD member countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) through their operations.
- During the cocktail following the meeting, the WB representative proposed to organize an additional CARD Steering Committee meeting in June 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss the outcome of the mid-term review and prepare GM6. This proposal met with general approval.

(END)