Fact Sheet ● AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION WORKSHOP: ABIDJAN, SEPT. 26-29, 1995

1. Cooperating Institutions

African Development Bank
Agency for International Development, Africa Bureau, Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD/PSGE/FSP)
Institut du Sahel (INSAH)/Programme Régional de Renforcement Institutionnel en Matière de Recherche sur la Sécurité Alimentaire au Sahel (PRISAS)
Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University (MSU)

2. Participants Involved

AFR/SD/PSGE/TDT: Tom Olson, George Gardner, Brian D'Silva, Mildred Morton
USAID/REDSO/WCA: Coffi Prudencio, Sanath K. Reddy
G/EG/AFS: Ralph Cummings
Coordinators: Lual Deng (ADB), Moussa Batchily Ba (INSAH), John Staatz (MSU)
ADB: A. Aklilu, Oumar Aw, Lual Deng, Charles Lufumba, Charles Mbwanda, Nadir Mohammed, Brave Ndisale
Burkina Faso: Kimseyinga Savadogo
CILSS: Yamar M'Bodj (Executive Secretariat)
Club du Sahel: Serge Snrech
Côte d'Ivoire: Pity Balle, Louis Ban-Koffi, Kama Berté, Aisata Camara
Ethiopia: George Abalu, Hagos Gebre (paper contributor but could not attend), Daniel Molla
Ghana: Sam Dapaah, Yerfi Fosu
IFPRI: Ousmane Badiane
INSAH: Moussa Batchily Ba, Touba Bedingar, Josué Dioné, Fatoumata Sanogo, Hamdou Rabby Wane
Christian Michelsen Institute (Norway): Johan Helland
MSU: John Staatz, Youssouf Camara, Laura Farrelly
Nigeria: Anthony Ikpi
Sierra Leone: Dunstan Spencer, Kandeh Yumkella
South Africa: Luther Sibisi, Johan van Rooyen

1Version of Fact Sheet: October 1996
Swaziland: Glenn Magagula
Winrock International: Pierre Antoine, Henk Knipscheer
Zambia: Benedict Kapita, Guy Scott (paper contributor but could not attend)
Zimbabwe: Gordon Sithole

3. Objectives

The workshop, held in Abidjan on Sept. 26-29, 1995, brought together 40 senior African researchers and policymakers, along with a few participants from Europe and North America. The Africans came from 19 different Subsaharan nations, and represented 22 distinct African and international organizations. The aim of the workshop was to identify strategic investments and policy actions that African governments, firms, and organizations and donors can undertake to foster agricultural and economic transformation. The challenge was to identify ways of fostering agricultural transformation that will stimulate broader economic growth while increasing food security, reducing poverty, and protecting the environment.

4. Approach

The structure of the workshop involved three modules. The module laid out the challenges and key issues of agricultural transformation. These issues were introduced by three presentations, followed by discussion and debate. The second module involved case studies of experiences with agricultural transformation in different geographical regions of Africa. The third module consisted of smaller working groups focusing on three distinct aspects of agricultural transformation: Group 1) technology issues, in particular the criteria for defining agro-ecological zones and the production, diffusion, and use of technologies; Group 2) investment issues, with an emphasis on problems of financing and access to credit; and Group 3) institutional and policy dimensions, focusing on macroeconomic and sectoral policies, land tenure, and integration/regional cooperation. A workshop report synthesized the key recommendations of the working groups.

5. Papers Presented at Workshop


5.1. Outputs to Date


6. Ongoing Research and Outreach Activities and Impacts

Short synthetic reports and policy bulletins on key issues identified by the workshop.

A report describing how strategies for fostering agricultural transformation can be incorporated into overall Bank Group lending operations.

A workshop proceedings volume to be made available to key research and policy centers in Africa.

Partly in response to the Abidjan meeting, CILSS (Comité Permanent Inter-état de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse au Sahel), a West African regional organization with nine member states, launched a special initiative on Agricultural Transformation in the Sahel in December 1995. The initiative is headed by Yamar M’Bodj, a participant in the Abidjan workshop. Several other participants, including Josué Dioné, Kimseyinga Savadogo, Touba Bedingar, and H. Rabby Wane, have contributed analyses to this Sahel-wide initiative. John Staatz and Thomas Reardon of MSU also participated in the December 1995 meeting in Bamako that launched this initiative:


- December 1995. Mali. Presentation by John Staatz to the CILSS meeting on Agricultural Transformation in the Sahel. Presentation entitled “Role stratégique des systèmes agricoles et alimentaires dans la lutte contre la faim par la promotion d’une croissance économique durable.”

Concepts developed at the workshop have been instrumental in the design of UNIDO’s new Alliance for Africa’s Industrialization. This is UNIDO’s contribution to the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa. The Alliance aims to re-orient UNIDO’s efforts towards strengthening agriculture-industry linkages in order to foster agricultural transformation. Dr. Kandeh Yumkella, a key participant in the Abidjan workshop, was named in 1996 to lead this UNIDO initiative.