



भारतीय कृषि एवं खाद्य परिषद्
INDIAN COUNCIL OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

2016

Report on Africa Meeting on ensuring long term Food Security



Indian Council of Food and Agriculture

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India – Africa Cooperation in Agriculture

Indian Council of Food and Agriculture hosted a 14 member African delegation from eleven countries in New Delhi 18 Jan, 2015, mounted by African Union and led by Michigan State University, US. The visit in India was coordinated by TERI, which is the Consular General of Michigan State University in India. On this occasion, ICFA signed two MoUs with Michigan State University and with TERI for working on technology transfer, training and entrepreneurs development in Africa and conducting global studies on trade, technology and food security related issues. ICFA Chairman, Dr. MJ Khan also announced the launch of ICFA Working Group on Africa to be hosted by ICFA in India and co-hosted by MSU and AU with 15 members each from India and Africa and five members from US.

Welcoming the delegation, Dr. MJ Khan, Chairman ICFA highlighted in brief the genesis of ICFA and its broad vision in areas of policy research and advocacy; business and trade facilitation and as apex platform for partnerships. He is of the opinion that the future developments in a country like India shall be driven by a vibrant entrepreneurial climate and the Start-Up India Programme launched recently in the country. Similarly, the African nations too can pursue an entrepreneurship led development of their respective countries with India as a partner. He pointed out that training and exposure visits are important for introducing the African agriculture community into the latest technologies and practices in a country like India. This can be effectively facilitated by the partnerships to be inked later this evening in the form of letter of intent between this delegation and ICFA. Dr. Khan referred to the globally recognized IT prowess of India as a country and pointed out India's strength in implementation of information and communication technologies (ICT) from which Africa could benefit greatly. He stressed the need for trustable accreditation in today's world and African nations could benefit from the learning of Indian accreditation and Quality standardisation institutions like Quality Council of India (QCI), which has also association with ICFA. He mentioned about the current activities going on in India on Farmers' Producer Organizations (FPOs) which has been so far a good experience and has been coordinated by agency like SFAC. Dr. Khan announced the launch of ICFA Working Group on Africa and expressed hope that it will pave the way for increased interactions and flow of India's learning and experiences for African agriculture development.



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Director General of ICFA, Mr. Alok Sinha highlighted the importance and relevance of India Africa collaboration in the agriculture sector. He pointed out the diversity of India in terms of its agro-climatic zones which has imparted the country deep experience and the African nations could benefit from this experience of India in agriculture as a country. He mentioned about the very large pool of scientists and specialists available in India with the most intensive field experiences in agriculture from which the African nations could greatly benefit.

Prof. Karimbhai Maredia, leader of the delegation and Senior Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources in the Michigan State University, said that African Bio-safety Network of Expertise (ABNE) is a continent-wide initiative whose overall goal is to assist African countries in their efforts to build functional bio-safety systems for sustainable and safe application of agricultural biotechnology with the Michigan State University as the facilitator. The main goal of ABNE is to enhance the capacity of African countries in harnessing modern agricultural biotechnology for improved food security, increased income and livelihoods while at the same time avoiding potential risks to the environment and human health. Prof. Maredia expressed hope that the MoU with ICFA signed will be facilitating the best learning in biotechnology in areas like Bt cotton in a country like India along with several other areas of agriculture. He expressed hope that the African nations would also gain a lot from the works of the likes of Prof. PJ Kurien, the father of cooperative movement in India, who was an alumnus of Michigan University.

Distinguished Fellow and Senior Director of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Dr. Vibha Dhawan said that TERI as an organization with its 1200 employees, is trying to do its bit in the area of agriculture and food security of the nation. She recalled how in 1988, through her first and direct work in the agriculture sector on quality planting material, she was introduced to the intricacies of the agriculture sector and the farming community of the country. The way farmers cope with various uncertainties while farming is something that is seen to be believed and organizations like TERI realizes the hardships of farmers and tries to work its way towards providing meaningful solutions. She expressed her hope that this kind of interaction would be sustained in the coming days too and the Memorandum of Understanding signed between ICFA and TERI will provide a meaningful platform towards further work and associations.

Agribusiness expert, Mr. Vijay Sardana highlighted the immense untapped potential of the African nations in agribusiness. He pointed out that Africa can make an annual business of at least USD 10 billion annually just from agricultural trade with India. He pointed out how from his recent visit to several African nations, he noticed a strong competitive advantage of the



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continent in terms of soil, social system and infrastructure like roads. Through the distinguished delegates present in the meeting, he urged the African countries not to underestimate their potential and that time has come for both India and Africa to engage in “Agri-based Diplomacy”. He also urged the delegates to take lessons from India’s several failures of the past in agriculture and not to copy everything from India.

Dr. RP Singh, Secretary, All India Agricultural Universities Association, highlighted the strength of some African markets for India in agriculture in terms of seed, farm machinery, inputs and irrigation. Countries in the Northern and Western Africa have surplus irrigation water and a large part of it is going waste. He mentioned that the Western and Southern part of Africa is good for growing pulses. Apart from various agri commodities, the continent can also focus on meat and dairy industry.

Mr. Ravi Verma, MP and ICFA Parliamentary Working Group Chairman referred to the recent Indo African Summit which provided a clear intent and stronger message of India’s commitment and more active interest at political level in India to engage with Africa for bilateral relationship and trade.

Dr. Dinesh Kumar, ICFA Working Group Chairman on Cooperatives and CEO of NCUI, highlighted the similarities between India and Africa. These similarities provide a strong ground for cooperative led growth in agriculture in both India and the African nations. He mentioned how the cooperative movement in Namibia led by a lady Co-operator can do wonders in fostering growth and development in the sector. He said India has currently about one million cooperative societies and Africa, which is relatively weaker in cooperatives, can benefit from the lessons learnt by India.

ICFA Horticulture Working Group Chairman and President of the Indian Horticulture Society, Dr. Chadha mentioned that soon after the Green revolution in India, focus of the government shifted to diversification in agriculture through horticulture, dairy etc. Horticulture sector of India has grown by leaps and bounds and currently India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables, largest producer of coconut and spices apart from becoming important producer country in various other horticultural products. India has over the years developed a robust system in the field of horticulture with the available of quality planting materials and also separate institutions for products like citrus, grapes, banana, onion, garlic etc. He urged the delegation to identify important areas where the respective African countries could benefit from the experience of India in horticulture.



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Dr. M. Moni, Chairperson of ICFA Working Group on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and former DG, NIC underscored the vast experience of India as a country in implementation of ICT in agriculture for over 30 years now. As a part of South Cooperation, India can facilitate adoption of cutting edge ICT in agriculture for various African countries and help them develop an information system for agriculture. ICFA through its Working Group on ICT can provide support in this regard. He also pointed out that several courses can be introduced on e-governance in the African countries.

Anil Jauhri, CEO of the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) under the Quality Council of India (QCI) provided a brief overview of some of the important activities of QCI in terms of quality control and accreditation and also highlighted the importance of quality control for African Countries. He informed that QCI has formed a global consortium in training and has already trained 16 countries in areas of quality control. He highlighted how accreditation is becoming increasingly important in International trade. Mr. Jauhri informed that under India- Africa Cooperation, training programs in quality control and accreditation have already been conducted.

Dr. JS Sandhu: Dr. JS Sandhu, Deputy Director General of ICAR said that ICAR is the largest research body in the field of agriculture globally with over 100 institutions under its aegis and being equipped institutionally on biotech and bio-safety and now a deemed university coming up on agri-biotech in the eastern part of India. Working aggressively in areas of food grain production and other areas of agriculture, ICAR is playing its role in providing food and nutritional security to the 1.25 billion populations of India and the African countries can benefit from this rich experience of ICAR.

Dr. MM Alam, Executive Director, Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) pointed out the ongoing activities of CARD in important areas of training and exposure visits. The long experience and competence of CARD in this area could prove to be handy for various African countries interested in learning from Indian agricultural systems and practices through various educational and exposure tours to India.

Mr. Gandhi, ICFA Board Member and the largest grower and marketer of Stevia in India, highlighted the opportunity of Stevia as an exportable agri commodity. He told that many parts of Africa too have got congenial agro-climatic conditions for growing Stevia on large acreage. Countries like Japan have high demand for Stevia but the agro-climatic conditions of these countries not suitable for Stevia cultivation and this provides a lot of opportunity for India and



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the African countries to promote Stevia, which is good for the society too from health point of view, as it is an alternative to sugar for diabetes patients.

The delegates from the Africa included Mr. Ouro-Koura Agadazi (Togolaise), Mr. A. W. Gemelal (Ethiopia), Ms. V. A. Opoku-Agyakwa (Ghana), Mr. Moussa Savadogo (Burkina Faso), Mr. K. M. N. Shongwe (Swaziland), Mr. A. Tokoro (Togolaise), Mr. S. O. Obwogo (Kenya), Mr. I. A. Mdee (Tanzania), Ms. A. G. Kamau (Kenya), Ms. L. Mbongo (Namibia), Mr. H. M. Moimbo (Kenya), Ms.D. K. Musonda (Zambia), Mr. C. I. Okpoko (Nigeria) and Ms. O. O. Olajitan Popoola (Nigeria) who expressed their happiness to be a part of this interaction organised by ICFA and hoped to put in use the rich experiences in their respective countries for the development of agriculture.

This meeting concluded, by the signing of two important agreements, Letter of Intent between ICFA and MSU and Memorandum of Understanding between ICFA and TERI. The documents were signed by Director General of ICFA, Mr. Alok Sinha, Prof. Karimbhai Maredia of MSU and by Dr. Vibha Dhawan of TERI.