



UNU-INRA *Sparkle*

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Enhancing Capacity for Managing Africa's Natural Resources

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Climate Change, Agricultural Trade and Food Security in ECOWAS



Agriculture is the key sector of the economies of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), supporting about 60% of its population. However, the impact of climate change on the agricultural sector seems to be making it difficult for the region to feed its large population. It has become imperative to critically examine the potential adjustments in intra West African agricultural trade as a response to the changing climate and to understand further, the linkages between agricultural trade and climate change policies in ECOWAS.

In response to this, UNU-INRA, with support from the African Climate Policy

Centre (ACPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), is implementing a project on “*Climate Change, Agricultural Trade and Food Security in ECOWAS*”. The aim of the project is to assess whether agricultural production systems and trade policies in ECOWAS can be adjusted to alleviate the impact of climate change on food security and promote sustainable development in the region. As part of the project, the Institute has carried out country assessment studies in 13 West African countries including Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The comparative analysis of the individual country reports revealed that, though the countries have different characteristics, there are abundant water resources and large amounts of arable land in the ECOWAS region, which present opportunities for increased agricultural production. Food security is improving but a significant proportion of the population is food insecure particularly those who depend on markets to access food especially during the dry season. The findings pointed out that the response of the countries to the impact of climate change will be affected negatively by the high level of poverty, poor infrastructure, and institutions that are

not performing optimally because of lack of human and material resources and inadequate coordination. The available evidence suggests that, there has been little or no attempt to mainstream climate change concerns into agricultural development and trade policies in the sub-region.

NEWS

UNU-INRA Participates in OSAA High-Level Experts Group Meeting in New York



Dr Elias T. Ayuk, UNU-INRA Director

UNU-INRA, at the invitation of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) of the United Nations, participated in a high-level expert group meeting convened in New York, on February 24, 2015. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), the African Union Commission (AUC), the African

Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) co-convened the meeting on the theme *“Towards the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063: Enhancing the Management of Africa’s Extractive Industries to Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development, Structural Economic Transformation and Inclusive and Resilient Economic Growth”*.

UNU-INRA was represented by Dr Elias T. Ayuk, the Director of the Institute. The Director’s panel discussion centred on how the post 2015 development agenda can facilitate technology transfer, which is critical for Africa’s industrialisation. He observed that the proposed sustainable development goals are more technology-centric than the millennium development goals. He stressed on the need for a holistic approach to technology development and transfer. In his opinion, the Post 2015 agenda provides unique opportunities to address, among others, global technology governance, economic diversification as the backbone of industrialisation, and implementation and policy space for technology development. He emphasized that, for the African continent, commodity-based industrialisation should receive high priority.

Validation Workshops Held in West Africa



Workshop Panel

UNU-INRA held national validation workshops in 12 West African countries from January 29 – March 26, 2015 to discuss the preliminary findings of country assessment studies on the Institute’s project on *“Climate Change, Agricultural Trade and Food Security in ECOWAS”*

Held in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo, the workshops brought together key national stakeholders involved in climate change, agricultural production and trade, and food security issues to review draft country assessment reports on the studies and make input to improve the data quality.

The validation workshops drew on average about 30 experts in each of the participating countries. These included climate experts, meteorologists, hydrologists, ecologists, agricultural and trade experts, soil scientists, researchers from relevant institutions, government officials from key ministries, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as local and international development partners.

Green Economy and the SDGs



The Green Economy Research Fellow of UNU-INRA, Dr Calvin Atewamba participated in a two-day regional green economy workshop held in Cairo, Egypt, from the 28th February – 1st March, 2015. The workshop, organized by the United Nations

Environment Programme (UNEP) jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank, with the support of European Union (EU), was on the theme “*Inclusive Green Economies (IGE) for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in Africa: From Inspiration to Action*”.

A key message at the workshop was the need to increase investments for green economy initiatives in order to facilitate the achievement of the economic, social and environmental goals outlined by the global community in the proposed UN sustainable development goals (SDGs). Research and capacity development also emerged strongly as important areas to focus on in facilitating green economy transformation in Africa. The discussions also emphasised the need for businesses to integrate social and environmental benefits into business models, so as to provide jobs and livelihoods for local communities and thereby contribute to social equity.

Vetiver Grass: An Effective Green Technology



Chrysopogon nigritana: African Vetiver Grass Species

Vetiver grass can be a cheaper and effective green technology that offers a great opportunity for Africa to revolutionise wastewater management in order to ensure sustainable development. This was a key message in a presentation delivered by Dr Effiom Oku, UNU-INRA Research Fellow for Land and Water Resources at the 39th Annual Conference of Soil Science Society of Nigeria, held on the theme “*Managing Nigeria Soils for Food and Nutrition Security and Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation*”.

In his presentation on the topic “*Enhancing Wastewater Quality for Irrigation and Soil Pollution Prevention: A Climate Smart Solution in an African Grass Species*”, Dr Oku shared a key finding from the Institute’s research project that revealed that African species of vetiver grass “*Chrysopogon nigritana*” is capable of reducing toxic heavy metals including phosphates, arsenic, cadmium and magnesium in effluents from industrial and wastewater from domestic sources. He therefore called on Nigeria and

other African countries to consider adopting the vetiver technology in treating wastewater.

SMEs Mentored on Business Growth



Participants of the Bootcamp

InfoDev and SNV in partnership with Ashesi University, Ernst & Young and the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA) trained and mentored selected potential green businesses on business planning and marketing strategies, at a two-day session dubbed “Green Innovators Bootcamp” in Accra. The event held from 27th to 28th February, 2015 at Ashesi University College campus, aimed to equip entrepreneurs and small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) with business training, mentorship, expert guidance and practical suggestions to refine and shape their business plans and marketing strategies.

The bootcamp formed part of the Ghana Climate Innovation Center project, which when operational, will provide financing, mentoring, training and business advisory services to support emerging entrepreneurs and new ventures involved in developing locally appropriate solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Center will be hosted and managed by a world-class consortium led by Ashesi University in partnership with SNV, Ernst & Young, and UNU-INRA. It is being supported by the World Bank, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Netherlands Government.

UNU-INRA Commits to Green Business Promotion

UNU-INRA is advocating for green business models to be incorporated in businesses in Africa to facilitate the continent’s transition towards a green economy. This is being done through research projects, capacity development programmes and the production of knowledge products on green economy. In line with this, the Institute has organised a one-week Green Business workshop for African researchers, entrepreneurs, environmentalists and economists from 9th – 13th February, 2015, in Accra, Ghana.



Cross section of the workshop participants

The training workshop, which was under the theme “Greening Business through Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services” aimed to equip the participants with the necessary tools to be able to identify potential risks of their business activities on the environment and develop effective management strategies to mitigate them. This was organised for Francophones following a similar workshop organised for Anglophones last year. There were 20 participants including 4 females from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, and Rwanda.

New Research Experts Joined UNU-INRA



Dr Felix Ogar Takim



Mr Shiferaw Mitiku Tebeka

UNU-INRA has received two new research experts, who are undertaking different research projects at the Institute. Dr Felix O. Takim, a lecturer from the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, is a Visiting Scholar. He holds a PhD in Agronomy with specialisation in Weed Ecology. His research project aims at identifying ideal locations for suitable maize varieties.

Mr Shiferaw M.Tebeka, a PhD Scholar in Cooperation and Banking Management, with specialisation in Rural Marketing Management, is from Kerala Agricultural University, India. The main objective of his research project is to examine the impact of Green Economy on the potential of fisheries sector to mitigate poverty and unemployment in Africa.

New Publications

- ✚ Harnessing Land and Water Resources for Improved Food Security and Ecosystem Services in Africa
- ✚ Economic and Financial Analyses of Small and Medium Food Crops Agro-Processing Firms in Ghana

Events

- ✚ Workshop on Harmonizing Methodological Framework for Climate Change, Agricultural Trade and Food Security in EAC and ECOWAS

Date: 6th – 7th April, 2015

Venue: Accra, Ghana

- ✚ Methodology and Progress Review Workshop

Date: 8th – 10th April, 2015

Venue: Accra, Ghana



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About UNU-INRA

UNU-INRA enhances the capacity of African researchers to conduct research on natural resources management issues to inform policy formulation and implementation.

Although UNU-INRA is an institute of the United Nations University (UNU) system, it was an African concept developed by some committed top African scientists. Its establishment is supported by the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union (AU). On this strong political and moral support, UNU-INRA was established in 1986.

Sparkle is a quarterly newsletter of UNU-INRA.

It is an acronym for Sustainability through Partnership in Africa where Resources are optimally utilized using Knowledge that is holistic, Leadership that is inclusive and Economy that is green