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for Rural Development

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**“Back to Office” report**

CAADP Africa Forum 2009

<b>Reporter:</b>	Yihenew Zewdie
<b>Mission dates:</b>	29 November – 04 December 2009
<b>Mission location:</b>	Nairobi
<b>Mission objectives</b>	
<b>Objective:</b>	To attend the ‘CAADP Africa Forum 2009’ meeting.
<b>Networking / advocacy:</b>	Participation in the Forum helped to interact with country and regional level CAADP coordinators about progress with post-compact CAADP implementation and the opportunities CAADP Africa Forum could afford to the involvement of farmers’ organisations.
<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Key issues / outcomes:</b>	<p>The CAADP Africa Forum 2009 was organised by the NEPAD Secretariat (CAADP/Agriculture Unit) with support from GTZ, the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture hosting the event. This event evolved out of NEPAD’s commitment to owning the Forum and setting the agenda. In keeping with the ownership of the Forum by NEPAD Secretariat, the main theme of this year’s meeting (‘The Bottom of the Pyramid – Agricultural Development for the Vulnerable’) was selected from among the four sub-themes that formed the July 2009 AU heads of State and Government Summit.</p> <p>Opening remarks by representatives NEPAD/CAADP (Prof. Mkandawire), and official opening statements and keynote speeches by Kenya’s Ministry of Agriculture set the scene. This was then followed by a brief overview of the value addition of the CAADP Africa Forum platform in terms of enhancing sharing of lessons and experiences on what works in agriculture in Africa with particular focus on the chosen themes. Theme-specific presentations and discussions were made on the role Pillar Lead Institutions (PLIs) could play in linking the vulnerable to mainstream agricultural growth. The sets of issues discussed here included the availability and practicability of Pillar tools to country CAADP systems; strategies around demand-driven pillar support to countries; and progress with synergies among the PLIs in supporting CAADP processes. Case studies dealing with the main theme of the Forum – The Bottom of the Pyramid: Agricultural Development for the Vulnerable - were discussed at length during breakout sessions. These sessions brought together diverse experiences – community initiated and donor-funded – from a number of Sub-Saharan African countries including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Niger and Togo. The summary presentations that followed clearly demonstrated the ample opportunities the Forum created with respect to the exchange of ‘success stories’ and practical experiences in terms of addressing the concerns of the vulnerable through enactment of pro-poor policies, implementation of purpose-tailored programmes and CSO advocacy. Country-focused perspectives on CAADP implementation were also discussed drawing case materials from Benin, Ethiopia, Niger, Togo and Senegal.</p>

	<p>Another important aspect of the Forum was the opportunity it provided for the Pan African Parliament (PAP) to share their thoughts on the role they could play in CAADP advocacy. In this regard, the need for stronger and regular interaction between PAP and NEPAD/the CAADP process as well as the importance of a proactive role on the part of PAP were stressed.</p> <p>The Forum also provided space for national and regional farmers' organisations to present their experiences with CAADP engagement and this was followed by extensive discussion as to how non-state actors could feature prominently in the next CAADP Africa Fora. In this respect, issues discussed centred on linkages between farmers' organisations and CAADP focal point persons, strengthening of FOs at country level to become more effective advocates of farmers interests' and enhanced CAADP implementation. The plenary level discussions with farmers' organisations had been preceded by a side meeting between AUC/NEPAD and farmers organisations. Side meetings were also organised by FANRPAN to discuss about next steps concerning the development of COMESA regional compact.</p> <p>Presentations, group discussions and side meetings were also punctuated by a daylong field trip to five different sites chosen to exemplify attempts being made to integrate the vulnerable into the agricultural growth agenda of Kenya. Several participants claimed to have learnt from these trips and some thought of devising strategies to scale up approaches and activities they saw in the field in their respective countries.</p> <p>Overall, several participants saw considerable value in enabling the Africa Forum to embrace CAADP values and processes, hence the renewed name: CAADP Africa Forum. Besides, the Forum helped create a consensus for farmers' organisations and the private sector to be given key roles in setting the agenda for the upcoming Fora, AU institutions and development partners providing the necessary organisational support.</p>
<p><b>Participants:</b></p>	<p>About 160 participants attended the meeting, the majority of whom originating from 19 African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Participants here included representatives of ministries of agriculture, country level agri-business sector, CSOs/think tanks, and national and regional farmers' organisations. Attendees also included AUC/DREA, NEPAD/CAADP, COMESA and all PLIs. Representatives from CIDA, EC, FAO, the German development cooperation system (including GTZ, DIE and InWEnt), Irish Aid, WFP and USAID also attended the meeting. Plenary level speakers were drawn out from NEPAD/CAADP, PLIs, AUC/DREA, PAP, Think Tanks, regional farmers' organisations and Ministries of Agriculture including those from Kenya.</p>
<p><b>Lessons learned:</b></p>	<p>The multitude of technical agricultural issues discussed and experiences shared during this Forum have confirmed the Forum's important role as a <i>technical</i> platform where senior agriculturalists all over the Continent could learn from each other about the tools of their trade. An issue that needs to be given due consideration in future organisation of the Forum relates to the need for distinguishing the focus of the CAADP Africa Forum and that of the CAADP Partnership Platform (PP). While the Forum is expected to focus largely on sharing of best practices and lessons of experience by practitioners in agricultural development, the PP is meant to guide CAADP as a delivery</p>

	<p>mechanism at a senior level. To this extent, one sees (in hindsight) avoidable overlaps between this year's CAADP Africa Forum and what could be expected from CAADP PP. Also, mechanisms need to be devised to link the outcomes of the PP with that of the Forum and vice versa.</p>
<b>Agreements/next steps:</b>	<p>Agreement has been reached by the traditional Africa Forum organisers and NEPAD/CAADP to explore modalities of involving farmers' organisations in setting the next CAADP Africa Forum agenda. The upcoming meeting to establishing Pan African Farmers Platform (scheduled provisionally for mid-January in Tunis) was thought of as an opportunity to exchanging views on the subject.</p> <p>Given that this Forum is expected to complement, and not to duplicate, the CAADP PP, an understanding was reached for NEPAD to look into how best the CAADP Africa Forum adds value to the PP. In this regard, exchange of information (including physical meetings) between organisers of CAADP Africa Forum and those of CAADP PP was suggested as an option to consider. With respect to CAADP Africa Forum, the need for aiming at clear outputs and strategies for documentation and dissemination of best practices and success stories were identified as areas where greater effort have to be directed towards in the coming months.</p>
<b>Distribution:</b>	CAADP DP Task Team members and Platform Secretariat.