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THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN COUNCILS AND CHURCHES IN WEST AFRICA FECCIWA

Fact sheet: Advancing Family Farming in West Africa The Solution to Combating Hunger and Poverty in West Africa

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Churches advocate for maximum support to family farmers to feed people

Churches support UN International Year of Family Farming Family Farming- Farming God's Way

Genesis 1:29-31: When God created everything, behold it was good. Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground everything that has breath of life in it I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

When God created men and all the creatures of the earth, he placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. God planted a garden eastward in Eden and he made it to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food (Genesis 2:8-9). After creating the human being both male and female God made provision for their feeding and sustenance. God gave men dominion over everything in Genesis 1:28 but with a condition to

Family Farming benefits local development and breaks the cycle of Hunger and Poverty

Key Recommendations

FECCIWA and its member churches call upon West African governments to commit a decade in supporting family farming to end hunger and building resilient livelihoods of vulnerable communities in West Africa through:

- ▶ Increasing investment to support smallholder agriculture
- ▶ Building national capacities for food production, supply and resilience to food crises and disasters
- ▶ Promoting the regional market for the development of family farming agriculture
- ▶ Realign National and Regional Policy Frameworks towards the needs of family farmers.
- ▶ Support for Family Farms and local private sector first and foremost rather than large scale industrial agriculture in West Africa
- ▶ Support food crops production and diversification of activities and ensure proper functioning of local markets

"Family farmers are integrated in agricultural value chains, but benefits are often not reaching local people. Family Farmers must be enabled to receive a decent remuneration for their produce. Through proper storage facilities, processing and timing of sale, value addition can be achieved. Family Farmers with their abilities to organize and form cooperatives will be vital in order to assert negotiating power to influence on supply and demand."

Family Farming- Farming God's Way

take care of the land (Genesis 2:15). God's intention was that creation provides for all people, today and in the future. One needs to take care of the garden so that the garden can produce and take care of the gardener.

The principles of taking care of the garden are laid down in Exodus 23:11: "But the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild animals may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard and with your olive orchard."

Through this verse, God is teaching that, in order to be sustainable, there must be rest for the land, the workers, and the animals, so they may all become more fruitful afterwards, having this rest renew them. Food production or any form of agriculture is considered sustainable when it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, humane and adaptable. When soil is over-used without being given time to rest in the name of maximizing production, the soil loses its moisture and fertility.

Traditionally, food production in Africa remained at subsistence level and the farming system was based on shifting cultivation and bush fallow farming. Under these practices, soil fertility was periodically restored to cultivated land by the shifting of cultivation to fresh, rested ground, allowing the recently cultivated land to rest and recover. According to the UN report by De Schutter, to date, agro-ecological projects have shown an average crop yield increase of 80% in 57 developing countries, with an average increase of 116% for all African projects. It further states that, recent projects conducted in 20 African countries demonstrated a doubling of crop yields over a period of 3-10 years.

What is Family Farming?

- ▶ It includes all family-based agricultural activities, and it is linked to several areas of the rural development.
- ▶ It is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labor.
- ▶ At national level, there are a number of factors that are key for a successful development of family farming, such as: agro-ecological conditions and territorial characteristics; policy environment; access to markets; access to land and natural resources; access to technology and extension services; access to finance; demographic, economic and socio-cultural conditions; availability of specialized education etc.

- ▶ "Family farming and small-scale food production improve food provision, social and environmental sustainability and safeguard livelihoods for the majority. (UN International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, IAASTD 2008).

Who Are Family Farmers?

- ▶ They are stewards of Biodiversity
- ▶ They are the main food providers for billions of children, women and men
- ▶ They are Climate Change Fighters
- ▶ They are entrepreneurs, boosting local economies
- ▶ They support sustainable rural development



Family farmers are stewards of their environment: Help them to sustainably develop their capacities

BOX 1: 2014 International Year of Family Farming

2014 was formally declared by the United Nations to be the "International Year of Family Farming" (IYFF) to raise the profile of family farming and small holder farming in alleviating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and allowing a sustainable development, in particular in rural areas. West African Churches support UN International Year of Family Farming.

FECCIWA and the member churches are call for a decade in advancing family farming to end hunger and building resilient livelihoods for vulnerable communities in West Africa. FECCIWA calls for the full implementation of key regional instruments supported through long-term funding, and with increased emphasis on accountability and transparency.

Reposition family farming as a central tool for sustainable development and increase investment to support smallholder agriculture in West Africa:

- ▶ Allocation of 10% of the annual GDP as per the 2003 Maputo Declaration towards supporting smallholder farmers
- ▶ Monitoring the budget spending of how much has been allocated to support family farming in West Africa
- ▶ Promoting access to credit so as to enable smallholder farmers to modernize their farms and increase their revenues.

Call for investments for Agricultural Production and Rural Development

Governments should implement policies and technical options addressing the root causes of food crises by promoting greater resilience among vulnerable populations and sustainable food and nutritional security overall through:

- ▶ Enable the private sector and civil society organizations, including those representing smallholder farmers, to participate in consultations at the national and regional levels so that they can contribute to agricultural development initiatives.
- ▶ Support sustainable farms (integrated management of soil fertility, strengthened support services to producers, and dissemination of improved technologies);
- ▶ Ensure better secure land access rights for family farmers (particularly women and the youth) and prevent large, opaque land acquisitions by international investors, so as to encourage investment on family farms.
- ▶ Prevent and managing food crises and other natural catastrophes (early warning systems, crises management systems, support for the rehabilitation of zones after crises, and development of compensation mechanisms/insurance against catastrophes);
- ▶ Social protection instruments for family farmers and other small-scale food producers should be set in place, which can be effective safety nets in times of need.
- ▶ Grain reserves, provided by local production, are needed to stabilize prices and as a social security tool, in order to support food sovereignty.

Promote the regional market for the development of family farming agriculture

National agricultural policy reforms should be cognisant of prevailing diversity in agricultural farming systems, supportive of farmers' needs, promote local and regional niche markets, and stimulate intra-regional trade through: Strengthening regional economic communities (RECs) to facilitate integrated stakeholder consultations, especially including smallholder farmers and women, for identifying

common needs, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Developing agricultural value chains and promoting markets (development of the different food value chains including peri-urban, export crops, short-cycle breeding, agro-forestry products, non-industrial fishing and aquaculture; development of product processing; and promotion of national, regional and international trade).

Churches' Concerns for Family Farming

Globally, the number of hungry people has dropped significantly over the past two decades, but 842 million people continue to struggle with hunger every day. 12% of global population, or 1 in 8 are suffering from chronic hunger, regularly not getting enough food to lead active and productive livesⁱ. The vast majority of chronically hungry people live in developing regions. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest prevalence of undernourishment (24.8%), with only modest progress in recent years (FAO SOFI 2013). The global food crises of 2007 brought renewed attention to agricultural challenges, ranging from climate change to energy and water scarcity, population growth and youth unemployment, land acquisitionⁱⁱ and biofuel demand, migration and urbanisation, and the decrease of investment in agricultural research for the past decades.

Land grabbing- In West Africa, countries like Mali, Sierra Leone, Benin and Liberia are targeted by foreign investors for food and agro-industrial raw materials yet, they cannot feed their own populations and women do not have secure access to land.



FECCIWA Policy Briefs on challenges in agricultural development

Dumping- Enhancing the ability of smallholder farmers to access market opportunities is one of the most pressing developmental challenges facing governments in Africa. Opening up of African markets allows the massive influx of subsidized products sold below its cost

Churches' Concerns for Family Farming *cont'd*

price and making unfair competition to local producers.

Population Growth and Urbanization (the double challenge for the future)- The population of West Africa is expected to grow by 150 million in the next 20 years. In the same time, the number of agricultural producers is expected to remain stable. The first challenge of the ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) is "to adequately feed a growing and rapidly urbanizing West African population..."

Climate Change- Climate change is another unprecedented threat to food security. This will particularly affect the most vulnerable smallholders and nomadic pastoralists who are reliant on rain-fed agriculture. Researchers have credibly predicted that 55 to 65 million more Africans will be at risk of hunger by the 2080s, as a result of a global temperature rise of less than 2.5°C^{iv}.

Investment Trends- West Africa spends an average of USD 8 billion on food imports, representing about 18 percent of the total value of all combined goods imports. Clearly, if the Region is able to disburse some USD 8 billion annually to acquire foodstuffs (CEA, 2008), it should be able to mobilize at least 4 to 5 billion dollars to build sustainable production bases, guaranteeing its food security and a smooth functioning of the internal market. The cost of the Regional Investment Program is estimated at USD 900 million over five years^v.



West African Church Leaders Visit to Community farms in Tema, Ghana

Progress to Date on Regional Commitments

West Africa as a region has put in place a number of policies to support agriculture and family farming and

progress will go a long way if these are well implemented and necessary investments made. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) developed an Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) as the means of implementing CAADP in West Africa. Adopted in January 2005, ECOWAP is based on a vision to build *"a modern and sustainable agriculture, founded on effective and efficient family farms and the promotion of agricultural enterprises through private sector involvement."* In its operational phase, the agricultural policy has a regional agricultural investment plan incorporating policy instruments *whose goal, in essence, is to help boost regional agricultural production, regulate the functioning of the market and provide better access to food for vulnerable populations.*

The Regional Agricultural Investment Program (RAIP) has three main objectives: i) promoting strategic products for food sovereignty and security (maize, rice, cassava, livestock and livestock products), ii) promoting a favorable environment for regional agricultural development, and iii) reducing vulnerability and promoting sustainable access to food for the population at large. The Detailed Development Plan for Agriculture (PDDAA) program was therefore put in place in 2003 to accomplish the following: sustainable improvement of farm production; development of fisheries and fish farming; enhanced accessibility to the land as well as to sources of financing; a more robust farm produce collection and marketing system; upgrades to both the information management system and innovations; improvements in the state of nutrition; emphasis on institutional development and human resources.

These instruments accompanied by an operational structure and financing mechanisms, are supposed to address bottlenecks faced by small farmers effectively. *The fundamental question is whether these policies and policy instruments are able to "promote positive development of sectors favoring small farmers. Are these policies able to help restructuring professional agricultural organizations in order to promote synergies between their initiatives and the private sector to overcome some of the endemic constraints faced by small farmers such as supply of inputs and access to markets?"*

Investments for Agricultural Production and Rural Development

Successful implementations of both national and regional agricultural plans require significant resource mobilization strategies, competent institutional capacities, enhanced agricultural extension services and strong stakeholder partnerships and participation. Given the importance of agriculture to the African economy, in 2003 African governments (Maputo Declaration) agreed

to invest 10% of the national GDP in agriculture to boost productivity. The Detailed Development Plan for Agriculture (PDDAA) created in 2003 by the Assembly of the African Union recommends allocating 10% of national budgets to agricultural development in the aim of achieving an annual agricultural growth rate of 6%, in compliance with the set of recommendations issued at the African Union summit held in Maputo in July 2003. However, only 4 of 19 African governments have met Maputo Declaration targets of 10% of budgets to agriculture. This lack of investment in agriculture and smallholder farming is holding back food production and will delay progress in reducing the numbers of hungry people in the region.

According to a World Bank Report (2013), "Agriculture and agribusiness together are projected to be a US\$1 trillion industry in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by 2030 (compared to US\$313 billion in 2010), and they should be at the top of the agenda for economic transformation and development." The New Alliance for Nutrition and Agriculture launched in 2012 seeks to promote investments that accelerate implementation of African country plans for improving food security and nutrition. The danger is that it is not clear if there will be sufficient safeguards to ensure that investment decisions are guided by the needs of communities rather than transnational and corporate actors whose primary orientation is profit. Evidence from the Côte d'Ivoire's Cooperation Framework, for instance, outlines promises "to reform land laws and make other policy changes to facilitate foreign private investment in agriculture. In exchange, Côte d'Ivoire receives hundreds of millions of dollars in donor assistance, as well as promises from eight foreign companies and their local partners to invest nearly US\$800 million in the development of massive rice farms.^{vi}



*Sime Darby Oil Plantation in Liberia
Liberian Church Leaders frowned over Oil Farm Plantation
for bio - fuel Production*

BOX 2: Large scale farming schemes by foreign investors are not the solution for food security

Foreign investors gain access to land and water in West Africa, by so called Public Private Partnerships. Terms of agreements often remain opaque to local communities, even though international

treaties claim their "free, prior and informed consent." (UN Guidelines for Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests 2012)

Investors may pledge social investments, jobs and opportunities for affected communities. But without effective enforcement measures these pledges will remain unfulfilled. Too often official parties are in complicity. An example from Sierra Leone: "When members of Sierra Leone's Council of Churches visited Lungi, one of the villages that had sublet land to Addax Bio-energy for the next fifty years, they found a community that felt betrayed. Addax had taken over the swamplands, the best areas for growing food crops. The company paid some compensation, but much less than the value of the crops that could have been generated from the land by the people themselves. Addax did not only use the land but also took over the water, pumping it from the Rokel River and returning it polluted with herbicides and fertilizers. Women reported that the water could no longer be used for drinking.

- ▶ NEPAD- three main interrelated long-term objectives of NEPAD are eradicating poverty, accelerating growth, and reversing the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process. To help achieve these goals, NEPAD calls for attaining and sustaining an average growth of real GDP of above 7 percent a year for 15 years (NEPAD 2003a).
- ▶ CAADP-It is an African initiative supported by African governments, the African Union, and NEPAD. The initiative intends to accelerate agricultural growth, poverty reduction, food and nutritional security, aiming for a growth rate of agricultural productivity at least equal to 6%, through an allocation of at least 10% of public expenditures in agriculture. CAADP is implemented through four pillars: increased area under sustainable land management systems served by reliable water control, improvement of rural infrastructure and trade capacity to facilitate market access, increasing food supply and reducing hunger, agricultural research, dissemination and adoption of technologies.

Family Farming-Investing in Food Sovereignty

Nearly half of the economically active population in developing countries an estimated 2.5 billion people live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for both their food and income^{vii}. In Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA), 82% of the rural population lives in countries where agriculture is a major source of growth, accounting for 32% of GDP



Local poultry farmers can provide wholesome food.

on average. The main source of employment in the West African Region is agriculture. In fact, over 65 percent of the population works in the agricultural sector. More than half of them are women and more than two-thirds are young people. They operate mainly in family farms with an average plot size of around one and a half hectares. Family farms are much smaller in comparison to commercial farms. Some studies carried out in Ghana in 1997 (Owusu et al., 2002) counted 800,000 family farms growing cocoa with an average area of 3 hectares per farm, among which 80% had less than 4 hectares. In Benin, the average size was 3.3 hectares (Minot et al., 20015). In Mali, cotton production is carried out by more than 200,000 agricultural households with fewer than 15 people and 10 hectares (Toulmin & Guèye, 2003).

Even if production is primarily for home consumption, there is an increase in the sale of production due to the growing need for liquidity. Increasingly, grains provide households with both food and income in addition to other activities such as trade, livestock, handicrafts, fisheries, etc (CAADP Review Report 2010).



Farmers' organizations must have a say in policy and investment decisions

BOX 3: Food Sovereignty

- ▶ Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.
- ▶ Food sovereignty is opposed to the concept of food sufficiency, which heralds the generation of revenue for purchasing foods from international markets.

Churches promote food sovereignty and its Six pillars in West Africa:

- ▶ Focuses on food for people
- ▶ Puts control locally
- ▶ Values food providers
- ▶ Builds knowledge and skills
- ▶ Localizes food systems
- ▶ Works with nature



Churches support: Eat what you grow and grow what you eat campaign in Togo

References

ⁱFor more information please visit: <http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/home/en/>

ⁱⁱ<http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3458e/i3458e.pdf> (FAO SOFI 2013)

ⁱⁱⁱ“When members of Sierra Leone's Council of Churches visited Lungi, one of the villages that had sublet land to Addax Bio-energy for the next fifty years, they found a community that felt betrayed. Addax had taken over the swamplands, the best areas for growing food crops. The company paid some compensation, but much less than the value of the crops that could have been generated from the land by the people themselves. Addax did not only use the land but also took over the water, pumping it from the Rokel River and returning it polluted with herbicides and fertilizers. Women reported that the water could no longer be used for drinking

^{iv}Dr J. Lorimer, Oxford University Centre for the Environment, background research paper on the predicted climate change impacts of greatest relevance to Oxfam, quoting M. Parry et al. (1999) 'Climate change and world food insecurity: a new assessment', Global Environmental Change 9, supplement 1.

^vSoule, G. (2013), Analytical review of national investment strategies and agricultural policies for the promotion of staple food value chains in West Africa, In: Rebuilding West Africa's Food Potential, A. Elbehri (ed.), FAO/IFAD.

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii}[Http://www.ifad.org/events/agriculture/background.htm](http://www.ifad.org/events/agriculture/background.htm)



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The Fact Sheet was Produced by FECCIWA Secretariat, and
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The Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA), in the name of the thirteen member countries advocates for better conditions that ensure sustainable access to sufficient and affordable food for all people. By the Prophetic Voice of churches, members raise awareness on political and social issues, which affect agricultural and rural development. FECCIWA uses its Network of Christian Councils to dialogue with policy makers and advocate for change in West Africa.