



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
and  
UNITED NATIONS PROJECT OFFICE ON GOVERNANCE

Aide-Memoire

Expert Group Meeting/Workshop on Sustainable Modernization on Agriculture and Rural Transformation (SMART) in Africa: indicators of potential and readiness, and lessons from Korea

17-19 December 2008  
Addis Ababa



## Background and Justification

That agricultural development is key to achieving broad-based economic growth and the Millennium Development Goals of poverty and hunger reduction in Africa is overwhelmingly recognized. Notwithstanding, the performance of the continent's agriculture has been disappointing over many decades, resulting in increasing rural poverty, declining per capita food production, increasing food imports now estimated at US\$ 25 billion per year and rising food prices. Africa's prospects for achieving internationally agreed development goals, such as the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, remain rather bleak. Inadequacy of past approaches and solutions have been a major cause of this situation for it has led to failure to produce tangible and sustained results, has caused the Green Revolution to bypass Africa and has been a major reason for the persistent hunger and the extreme human misery on the continent.

The failure to build on past successful experiences has been an important aspect of the underlying inadequacy. Evidence is available which suggests that not all African efforts to achieve green revolution or sustainable rural transformation have been vain. There have been pockets of successes or good practices, which were characterized by significant productivity increases in various parts of the continent. Examples of these successes include production of tea in Kenya in the 1990s, cotton in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal in 1979-1981 and 1992-1993; maize, wheat, sorghum and teff in Ethiopia in the 1990s; New rice (NERICA) in West Africa in recent years, maize in south Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in the 1930s and 1980s, and in Malawi in recent years.

The above examples suggest that many African countries may have good potential to achieve Sustainable Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Development (SMART) or Green Revolution that could help reduce significantly food insecurity and poverty. Further, recent encouraging shifts in attitude towards African agriculture and the movement that brought African agriculture back to prominence seem to underline African readiness to effect SMART. The latest milestones of these shifts and movement are reflected in the recent commitments and resolutions<sup>1</sup> of African Heads of State in favour of agriculture and Africa's increasing interest in the social and in the successful economic and social development witnessed in Asian countries in general and the Republic of Korea's Seamaul movement in particular.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in partnership with the United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) is organizing an Expert Group Meeting in order to address the above issues.

## Objectives

The main objective of the Expert Group Meeting is the review of the main challenges and opportunities related to the realization of Africa's green revolution potential with focus on the indicators of this potential and the continent's readiness to make use of its own and Korean

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- <sup>1</sup> The commitment made by African heads of States and government in July 2003 in Maputo to increase resources for Agriculture and Rural Development to at least 10% of national budgets within 5 years;
  - The 9-13 June 2006 African Fertilizer Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, where African heads of States decided to create enabling policies for more use of fertilizer by African small holder farmers in order to modernize African agriculture in a sustainable way and cause an African Green Revolution;
  - The Ministerial Resolution on the Abuja Food Security Summit (4-7 Dec 2006) calling for the promotion of focused action to implement selected critical commitments already made in the past Summits;
  - The commitment made by African heads of States and government in the Abuja food security Summit Declaration (7 December 2006) to ``identify African successes and support sharing of positive experiences with a view to their adaptation, replication and up-scaling``; and
  - The commitment made by African heads of States and government in the Abuja food security Summit Declaration (7 December 2006) to ``establish, in consultation with the African Development Bank (ADB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) a funding mechanism or adapt existing ones to mobilize additional resources for purposes of up-scaling agricultural successes within and across countries in Africa``;



successful experience in the field of sustainable agricultural and rural Transformation. Immediate objectives are:

- Review of the unique particulars of African agriculture, related implications for the achievement of green revolution and rural transformation;
- Review of Approaches of agricultural and rural development in Africa;
- Development of a common SMART index using indicators of SMAAAART potential and readiness;
- Review of SAEMAUL Undong, the Korean successful approach to rural development; and
- Application of Saemaul Undong approach as a viable model for agricultural and rural transformation in Africa.

## **Format**

The EGM will take place over the course of three days. Day 1 will primarily consist of context presentations and discussions on (i) issues related to African rural development with a focus on the unique features of African agriculture and the past approaches used for its development, (ii) indicators of potential and readiness of Sustainable Modernization of Agricultural and Rural Transformation (SMART) in Africa, and (iii) Saemaul Undong approach to agricultural and rural transformation. Participants will be provided with a half-day-long overview of the Saemaul Undong leadership training program with guides to educate local leaders, systems of managing and monitoring project progress, outcome evaluation, and detailed information on incentive package and inter-municipal/ village competition.

Day 2 will be devoted to two break-out sessions which will be on (i) indicators of SMART potential and readiness and (ii) Application of SAEMAUL approach to Agricultural and rural Transformation in Africa. Participants in session (i) will harmonize and merge the indicators towards a common SMART index. In session (ii), the applicability or transferability of Saemaul Undong approach to African countries as a viable rural development model will be reviewed. A plan of action for this replication will be developed with focus on ECA-UNGC-Korea Saemaul Undong Initiative for Agricultural and rural transformation in Africa. The plan will include programmes and activities related but not limited to field pilot projects supported by awareness creation, capacity building, database establishment and management, and networking.

Day 3 will focus on the presentation of the results of the break-out sessions, followed by the adoption of the recommendations and the closing of the meeting. All participants will be asked to fill out an evaluation sheet at the end of the meeting.

A Final Report will be drafted by UNECA and UNPOG and widely circulated through the UNPOG website ([www.ungc.org](http://www.ungc.org)), United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) at [www.unpan.org](http://www.unpan.org), or the website of the meeting ([www.uneca.org/smart](http://www.uneca.org/smart)) no later than one week following the ending day of the meeting.

## **Participants**

The meeting will bring together about 40 high-level experts and practitioners in the fields of agricultural and rural development from Africa and Asia. There will be representatives from each of the 5 sub-regions of Africa, Republic Korea, UNECA, UNPOG, ESCWA, other UN institutions and international assistance programs. In particular, the meeting will draw participation from Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda which have, during the past Ministerial Conference in Cameroon, expressed the highest degree of interest in receiving an in-depth information and training experience on the Saemaul Undong approach to agricultural and rural development.



## **Date and venue**

The meeting will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 17 to 19 December 2008 at UNECA in the United Nations Conference Centre. The draft background papers, provisional agenda and programme of work will be sent to participants in advance of the meeting. These documents will also be posted at the website of the meeting.

## **Administrative Arrangements**

UNECA and UNPOG will provide all invited participants with round-trip economy class air-tickets and a Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) at the Addis Ababa rate. ECA protocol officers will meet all participants upon their arrival at the airport. All non-sponsored participants are kindly requested to provide their flight itineraries to ECA so as to facilitate airport pick-up and drop-off. ECA will make all hotel reservations for participants. In case of shortage of good hotel accommodation in Addis Ababa during the duration of this meeting, accommodation will be secured at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), which has beautiful hostel rooms as well as other facilities. Transportation will be provided to take participants to the venue of the meeting.

An entry visa into Ethiopia is absolutely required. The visa can be obtained from the Ethiopian embassy in the country where the participant resides if there is an Ethiopian embassy in the country. A business visa can also be obtained upon arrival at the Addis Ababa airport upon presentation of the letter of invitation from ECA. Participants are expected to pay for their visas.

## **Contacts**

All communications on the meeting should be directed to:

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