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The AIMS Project Aims to Improve Agri-Input Markets in Mozambique

"Constraints to the use of agri-inputs in Mozambique are different from those in many other African countries," says Dr. Lawrence (Larry) Hammond, Chief of Party of IFDC's new Agricultural Input Markets Strengthening (AIMS) project, based in Beira, Mozambique.

"Mozambique has a low population density, with plentiful land for farming," Hammond says. "Fertilizer use is almost nonexistent, mainly because of its high cost but partly because many farmers consider the soil highly fertile. But most of it isn't. Crop yields in Mozambique are among the lowest in Africa."

The AIMS project works with both the public and private sectors to improve the availability of fertilizer, improved seeds, and other agri-inputs in Mozambique by lowering costs and providing training and encouragement to agri-input businesses. AIMS is sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

About 146,000 tons of fertilizer enter Mozambique yearly through the Port of Beira—but only 23,000 tons stay in the country, and it is used by large sugar and tobacco plantations. Watching fertilizer being sacked are Dr. Larry Hammond, (left), AIMS Chief of Party; Pascoal Peira (center), Marketing Specialist, Port of Beira; and Manuel Ginga Gonçalves, AIMS Assocation Development Specialist (right).

"The goals of AIMS are similar to those called for in the *Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for an African Green Revolution* adopted at the Africa Fertilizer Summit in June 2006—to increase farm production through the use of agri-inputs," Hammond says.

AIMS Partners

IFDC is implementing the AIMS project in partnership with Mozambique's Ministry of Agriculture, including the National Directorate of Agrarian Services (DNSA), the Agricultural Research Institute (IIAM), the National Directorate of Agrarian Extension (DNEA), the Agricultural Promotion Center (CEPAGRI), and other national institutions.

International partners in AIMS are the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and the Citizens Network for

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IFDC is a public international organization (PIO), governed by an international board of directors with representation from developed and developing countries. The nonprofit Center is supported by various bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, private foundations, and national governments. IFDC focuses on increasing and sustaining food and agricultural productivity in developing countries through the development and transfer of effective and environmentally sound plant nutrient technology and agribusiness expertise.

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Foreign Affairs (CNFA). AIMS' activities are also interlinked with those of the project Empowering Private Enterprise in the Development of Agriculture (EMPRENDA).

"Our program for development of agri-input dealers initially focuses on the inland 'corridors' from the port cities of Beira and Nacala," Hammond explains. "But policy issues will have both a national and regional impact."

Fertilizer Imports and Sales in Mozambique

In 2006, 146,000 tons of fertilizer entered Mozambique through Beira—but 53,000 tons were in transit to Malawi and 70,000 tons to Zimbabwe and Zambia. Only 23,000 tons stayed in Mozambique and that fertilizer was imported and used by large sugar and tobacco plantations who can take advantage of economies of scale. About 33,000 tons entered via the northern port of Nacala; 100% was shipped by rail to Malawi.

Alberto Rafael Penicela (left) started his own agri-input business after attending a training workshop in Malawi sponsored by IFDC and Sasakawa-Global 2000. Here, he and assistant Sonia Moria (to Penicela's left) serve a customer in his shop, Agricultural Supplies and Veterinary Medicines, in Chimoio, Mozambique.

Sorting seeds for quality at an agricultural cooperative in Nampula, Mozambique.

"AIMS will conduct studies on the feasibility of establishing a fertilizer-blending facility near the Beira port," Hammond says. "Also, Mozambique has natural gas and phosphate rock resources. We plan to study the cost of building an ammonia-urea complex."

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"All fertilizer distributed by the private sector—only around 5,000 tons in 2006—is trucked in from South Africa," Hammond says. A typical urea shipment may be produced in Saudi Arabia, then sold and shipped by sea to a wholesaler who warehouses it in South Africa. The fertilizer then moves by truck in small quantities—no more than 28 tons per truck—to Maputo, Mozambique's capital. From there, it's trucked to Mozambique's few fertilizer dealers inland, such as in Chimoio or Nampula.

"Fertilizer prices are high not only because transportation costs are extremely high, but also because consumption is low," Hammond says. "Ironically, higher fertilizer use would lower the price."

A lack of credit is another problem. The government owns all land, so farmers and dealers can't use land as collateral.

"The low population density in the countryside makes it even harder for dealers," Hammond says. "They can't operate without customers. We will help dealers set up demonstration plots near their shops to show farmers the benefits of agri-inputs—making the dealers capable of supplementing information provided by extension agents for local farmers."

AIMS also trains dealers in the safe handling and use of crop protection products.

"Consolidating small purchases could lower costs," Hammond says. "A Mozambican dealer who imports 1,000 tons might consolidate his order with a 10,000-ton shipment going to Malawi and avoid the cost of road shipment from South Africa."

Martin E. Mason of the USAID-funded EMPRENDA, says, "It's a sad situation. Markets are here, but farmers can't capitalize on them because they can't afford—or even get—inputs." Mason is Senior Production Adviser to the Nampula-based EMPRENDA project, which supports activities of three NGOs: the Cooperative League of the United States of America (CLUSA), the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), and the Business Support Center for Farm Associations (CAN).

"We're struggling to find an economic and practical way to import fertilizer," Mason says. "Last year we bought fertilizer that was imported from South Africa in Chimoio, about 1,500 kilometers south. After trucking the fertilizer to Nampula, our costs were $60 for a 50-kilogram bag of 14-20-0 NPK. In contrast, a farmer in the United States would pay only $25 for the same sack of fertilizer.

"Sixty dollars is a cruel price for farmers with an average family income of $80 per year," Mason says. The 50-kilo bag could be put into farmers' hands far more cheaply if imported directly to the port of Nacala, about 200 kilometers away, he points out. But all fertilizer that enters through Nacala goes to Malawi.

"Most farming is slash-and-burn," Mason adds. "A farmer clears and cultivates 2 or 3 hectares for a few years, then moves on to clear more land. No tractors are available to smallholder farmers. All work is with a worn-out hoe, so few farmers can cultivate more than 3 hectares."

Development of Local Resources

"AIMS will conduct studies on the feasibility of establishing a fertilizer-blending facility near the Beira port," Hammond says. "Also, Mozambique has natural gas and phosphate rock resources. We plan to study the cost of building an ammonia-urea complex."

IITA and ICRISAT in Mozambique

Chicken is a national dish in Mozambique. About half of the broilers consumed are raised in Mozambique, and half are imported from Brazil.

"Feed accounts for 75% of the cost of raising a broiler in Mozambique," says Sicco Kolijn of IITA. "The country's 16 commercial poultry operations use 25,000 tons of soybeans yearly. But Mozambique's soybean production is only 5,000 tons a year."

IITA is working through AIMS to increase the production and availability of improved soybean and cowpea seeds for agri-input dealers to market. The objective is to grow more poultry locally and reduce imports. Similarly, ICRISAT works to improve seed production of maize and groundnuts.

Farmer Organizations are Potential Agri-Input Distributors

"The biggest problem facing our farmers is a lack of agricultural inputs," says Moises Sebastiao Raposo, Manager of IKURU (the Makua word for "strength"), a farmer-owned organization that buys, processes, and markets sesame, groundnuts, cashew, soybeans, and beans. IKURU is comprised of 200 farmer associations with 9,000 members and is based in Nampula, in northern Mozambique.

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Agri-input dealers are rare in urban centers such as Nampula—but nonexistent in the rural areas. "That's why IKURU wants to become an input distributor," Raposo says. "We hope to import enough fertilizer for 400 to 500 hectares in the next crop, which farmers will plant in late 2007. We plan to gradually increase imports to serve 5,000 hectares—and 1,000 farmers—within 5 years."

Another IKURU member, the Business Support Center for Farm Associations (CAN) near Nacala, about 125 km east of Nampula, buys and sells groundnuts and sesame for 22 farm associations with 780 members.

"We've never marketed fertilizer, but we're providing farmers 20 tons of 14–21–00 NPK on credit this year," says Mussa Asostinho, CAN Manager. The Center hopes to soon form a cooperative both to identify and take advantage of new markets and to introduce new technologies and inputs.

Mussa Asostinho (center) is Manager of the Business Support Center for Farm Associations (CAN) near Nacala. For the first time, CAN is providing farmers 20 tons of fertilizer on credit.

Nampula Agricultural Research Station

"There will be no African Green Revolution unless farmers have better access to fertilizer and other inputs," says Fernando Chitio, Regional Director of the Nampula Agricultural Research Station. The biggest problem that Mozambican farmers face is the high cost of inputs. But farmers must use fertilizer or production will continue to stagnate. "Yet recommended quantities may vary. If a farmer can harvest 3.5 tons per hectare by applying 200 kilos of P_2O_5 fertilizer, but can get 2 tons by using 50 kilos, the lower rate may make more sense economically."

"The high cost of fertilizer is the biggest problem that farmers in Mozambique face," says Fernando Chitio, Regional Director of the Nampula Agricultural Research Station.

IFDC Releases *Africa Fertilizer Summit Proceedings*

The *Africa Fertilizer Summit Proceedings* are now available in paperback or on CD from IFDC. The Summit, held in June 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria, sought to generate the *uniquely African Green Revolution—a revolution that will help the continent in its quest for dignity and peace,* called for by Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General.

The 182-page Proceedings includes summaries of presentations and background papers on how to address the soil nutrient crises that Africa faces and how increased use of mineral and organic fertilizers can catalyze farm production. The 1,100 participants included five current or former African Heads of State, ministers of agriculture, and international agricultural leaders.

Nigeria's former President Olusegun Obasanjo chaired the Summit. Obasanjo wrote in the preface, "In 6 years we expect to…see the true role of the Summit as an instigator of the African Green Revolution, one that will have enabled our continent not only to feed itself but also to achieve all basic necessities for its people: education, safe drinking water, health care, and peace and stability." Obasanjo called the Summit "a crucial milestone in our quest to rapidly reverse our low agricultural productivity and accelerate food security for our needy population."

Dr. Norman Borlaug, the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, said that leadership is the "all-important" ingredient in increasing Africa's food supply. "I want to see that African Green Revolution on the way to changing food production!" said Borlaug, who is often called the "Father of the Green Revolution" in Asia and Latin America.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said, in a video address, "You at the Africa Fertilizer Summit have an awesome responsibility: to leave a healthier soil for our children and grandchildren, and more important, hope for the future."

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Dr. Amit Roy, IFDC President and CEO, wrote, "Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing an agricultural crisis. Cereal yields in Africa have stagnated at about 1 ton per hectare for the past three decades, and per capita food production has decreased."

Participants wrote the historic *Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for an African Green Revolution* at the Summit's conclusion. The document called mineral and organic fertilizers a "strategic commodity without borders" and declared that all cross-border taxes and tariffs should be lifted.

"Due to decades of soil nutrient mining, Africa's soils have become the poorest in the world," the *Abuja Declaration* states. The document calls for fertilizer use in Sub-Saharan Africa to increase from today's average of 8 kg/ha—the world's lowest—to at least 50 kg/ha by 2015.

The Proceedings includes the *Abuja Declaration* in English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic.

The Proceedings can be ordered, in paper or on CD, on the IFDC Web site http://www.ifdc.org. Each paper copy includes a CD of Summit background papers.

WACIP Will Improve Lives of Cotton Farmers in West Africa

Cotton is the main cash crop of the "C-4" or "cotton four" countries of West and Central Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mali. IFDC is implementing a 3-year project to reduce poverty for cotton farmers and increase farm production, ginning, and textile operations in the C-4 region, among the world's poorest areas.

"WACIP's goal is to increase farmers' incomes in these cotton-growing zones, both from their cotton and non-cotton crops," says Dr. Sarah Gavian, IFDC Chief of Party for the new West Africa Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP).

WACIP is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as the largest part of its $27 million initiative to improve West Africa's cotton sector. The IFDC-led implementing team includes Abt Associates, Aid to Artisans, and three U.S. universities: Auburn, Michigan State, and Tuskegee.

"We're improving the technologies involved in the whole cotton system, including rotational and alternative crops, and adding value to cotton products by developing niche processing and marketing opportunities," Gavian says.

"We'll try to find more markets for cotton byproducts such as cotton seed, meal, and cake. We're also working with policymakers and development agencies to encourage a more favorable climate for agribusiness."

WACIP will address cross-cutting issues such as ensuring participation of women, helping disadvantaged groups, and evaluating the environmental impact of increased fertilizer use.

"The challenge is to produce cotton sustainably without robbing the soil of nutrients or poisoning it with pesticides," Gavian says.

Most C-4 cotton is grown using conventional techniques. To reduce farmers' costs, WACIP will link producer organizations to extension agencies. The linkages will help farmers use better seed and integrated soil and pest management techniques, along with better fertilizer and pesticide mixes.

"In many cases, we know what combinations of inputs will boost yields—but the question is how to reinforce national research and extension systems so they can roll out those technologies to farmers in remote areas," says Blaise Fadoegnon, a former cotton researcher and now coordinator of the WACIP program in Mali. "The WACIP team is strengthening linkages between U.S. and African research institutes." WACIP will link farmers to international fair trade markets and markets for organic and sustainably produced cottons.

Robert Groot, IFDC Africa Division Director, says, "To reinforce the cotton production system, WACIP will use the IFDC-developed Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE) approach. CASE will help farmers gain technical skills, improve business management, and develop vital agribusiness linkages."

WACIP will also help improve the efficiency of cotton gins, decrease contamination of cotton lint, and transform the lint into locally produced fabric and garments, Gavian says.

Gavian has lived and worked in West Africa for more than two decades. She previously worked in Ghana and Nigeria for the International Food Policy Research Institute. Gavian has also led initiatives to address the HIV/AIDS problem in agricultural and food security planning.

WACIP will help improve the efficiency of cotton gins.

KAED Helps Organize Agro-Industrial Field Day

IFDC's Kyrgyz Agro-Input Enterprise Development (KAED) project organized an outdoor agricultural equipment show in June 2007 in Chuy, Kyrgyzstan. The field day was funded by USAID in collaboration with the German company, Amazone Ltd.

Such forums help develop agro-industrial companies, cooperatives, and farms in Kyrgyzstan. The field days link dealers and farmers to agricultural machinery manufacturers, demonstrate quality agricultural equipment, and help reduce input and operating costs. Participants visited demonstration fields and observed improved cropping and harvesting machinery and new technologies.

"A shortage of agricultural machinery and lack of up-to-date technology are the main problems of Kyrgyz agriculture," said Kambaraly Kasymov, First Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Water Management, and Reprocessing Industry, in his opening remarks.

Ken McNamara, a USAID representative for the Central Asian Republics, and Dr. Hiqmet Demiri, KAED Chief of Party, also addressed the farmers and representatives of agricultural cooperatives, financial institutions, international organizations, and technical service companies.

KAED staff (from left) A. Aslanov, D. Djumabaev, and Chief of Party Dr. Hiqmet Demiri at the Amazone Ltd. Field Day in Chuy, Kyrgyzstan.

"The field day encouraged establishment of an association of agro-technical service companies that will lobby for the interests of agricultural machinery and technical service companies in Kyrgyzstan," Demiri said.

As a result of the 1-day outdoor show, the Amazone representative in Kyrgyzstan sold a seeding machine for €22,000 ($30,323) and agreed to supply two seeding machines and one fertilizer spreader. "The total amount of deals concluded at the field day came to €80,700, or $111,232," said Manas Samatov of Amazone.

"Farm shows like this are an excellent way to promote products to customers," Manas said. "It's better for farmers to see a product in person than in a magazine."

Headquarters' Research Improves Technology Flow to Afghan Farmers

More than 25 years of war and drought have devastated agriculture in Afghanistan. IFDC is implementing the Food for Agricultural Revitalization and Market Systems (FARMS) project in Afghanistan, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to support development of the agricultural sector. The Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) is IFDC's partner in the FARMS project.

Afghanistan's most pressing agricultural problem is inadequate furrow and flood-type irrigation systems. Both systems limit the area and productivity of irrigated agriculture.

"To grow more fruits and vegetables on less land, Afghan farmers must change from their traditional irrigation methods that have field application efficiencies

Water is applied to research tomato plants being irrigated by the bucket drip system in the greenhouses at IFDC headquarters by (left to right) Vaughn Henry, Senior Technician—Greenhouse Services and Ronald Smith, Senior Technician—Greenhouse Services.

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of 50% or less," says Dr. Steven Kovach, Program Leader in IFDC's Soil and Nutrient Dynamics Program.

"FARMS recommends a micro-irrigation system with drip and mini-sprinklers that have 80% to 90% field application efficiencies."

Kovach and other IFDC scientists support FARMS through greenhouse research at IFDC headquarters in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, U.S.A. They use a bucket drip system in conjunction with different fertilization schemes: "fertigation," or injection of fertilizers through drip irrigation, incorporation of fertilizer granules in the soil, and deep placement of fertilizer tablets. The purpose is to improve water and nutrient efficiencies. FARMS research to develop drip irrigation systems for vegetable production is conducted in Afghanistan in cooperation with MAIL scientists.

Water being applied by the bucket drip system at the Quargha Research Station. Homayoun Watan, who is in charge of FARMS Research and Extension project (right, pointing), explains the irrigation system to Dr. M. Aziz Osmanzai, Director of the Agriculture Research Institute, MAIL.

IFDC and MAIL staff placing drip tubing for the bucket drip system at the Quargha Research Station, Kabul, Afghanistan.

1000s+ Promotes Agricultural Clusters and Value Chains in Mali

The IFDC project From Thousands to Millions, or 1000s+, promotes the development of agricultural clusters and competitive value chains to intensify agriculture and improve the livelihoods of rural communities through the Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE) approach. Partnering with local organizations, 1000s+ provides training on advocacy and market negotiation; facilitates contractual transactions; and organizes platforms to foster dialogue, exchanges, and linkages along the value chains.

Meet some entrepreneurs who are fostering changes that improve lives in rural West Africa.

The Maize Cluster

El Hadj Moussa Traore tells the story of his enterprise, the El Hadj Moussa Traore Flour Mill of Koutiala

"The shortest road is the one that you know" is a proverb in Bambara, a local dialect of Mali. I'm glad I took the short road that led me here today. Difficult financial circumstances forced me into the cereal processing business, but now I'm doing fine. The market for processed maize is growing, and I can't even satisfy the demand.

El Hadj Moussa Traore has started a successful processing company for maize byproducts with support from AMEDD, a 1000s+ partner in Koutiala, Mali.

In 2003, I was among 565 employees included in a "restructuring" program in the textile company where I worked—but really, it was a layoff. The cereal byproducts market looked promising so I decided to take the self-employment road. I used my layoff package to buy some land and four processing machines. We now produce yellow maize byproducts, particularly broken maize used to prepare a local porridge.

My team is an example of men-women parity. We have three men: the manager, the miller, and the storekeeper; and three women who screen and winnow maize.

Maize processing starts with manual screening to remove pebbles, immature grains, and other impurities. The clean grain then goes to the shelling machine, then to the mill. The bran, flour, germ, and broken grain are separated by screening and winnowing.

The years 2004 to 2006 were dark ones. I faced two big problems: a lack of reliable grain supply and finances. You're never sure that you'll get the quality and quantity of grain that you pay for. Shortages in weight are a serious problem. Imagine: for each 100-kilogram bag of maize that you buy, you often get only 95 to 97 kilos.

Another problem is that each bag usually has 1 or 2 kilos of impurities—pebbles and debris.

Things started to change last year, when I was introduced to the Malian Association for Rural Development, or AMEDD, an NGO based in Koutiala and a partner of 1000s+. AMEDD invited me to discuss my project and offered support.

For example, I had a ton of maize bran in stock that narrowly missed rotting. I didn't know the real value of this byproduct, which makes 23% to 30% of the production. In January 2007, I participated in a Koutiala trade fair that AMEDD organized. There, I met the local prefect, who needed maize bran for his stockyard. That was a golden deal!

The publicity I gained through the cluster activities is bearing fruit. Today, I can't even meet the growing demand. My advice is: Never miss opportunities to meet other people and expose oneself. Participate in trade fairs and exhibitions. It's a guaranteed investment!

The maize cluster makes grain procurement easier and safer. We now have the *Cooperative des exploitants motorisés de Koutiala* (Cooperative of Mechanized Producers) to negotiate contracts to assure delivery of the quality and quantity of grain needed at reasonable prices.

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I can make a profit of CFA 2,000 to 3,000 [$4.20 to $6.30] on each 100-kilo bag of processed maize. In 2005, I bought 15 tons of maize and sold 75% of finished product at different prices at different periods of the year. My income was CFA 562,500 [$1,185]. In 2006, I processed 20 tons, with a profit of CFA 1,085,500 [$2,287]. I can't complain. Things are moving in the right direction.

In fact, now I use only a tenth of my production capacity because of financial limitations. But I *could* process a ton a day. That is my goal. I count on the support of AMEDD and 1000s+ to achieve it.

The Soybean Cluster

The 1000s+ project helps women of Sincina to better produce and market *soumbala*

"We produce the best *soumbala* in the region," says Aminata Dembele, Administrative Secretary of the *Association des Transformatrices de Soja de Sincina* (Association of Soybean Processors) of Sincina, a village in Koutiala District in southern Mali. "Women come from Segou, Bamako, and Mopti to buy from us. Our soumbala is also appreciated in Cote d'Ivoire and Mauritania."

Soumbala is a traditional spice made from the grain of *nere* (*Parkia biglobosa*), a native tree that grows in the forests and savannas.

"Forest products like *nere* are the main income source for rural women who traditionally have not had easy access to productive resources," says Sogoba Bougouna, AMEDD Program Manager.

"But *nere* grain was becoming scarce because of deforestation and declining productivity. The Malian Cotton Company had introduced soybean production into the region in 1998 through its diversification plan to counterbalance the impact of the cotton crisis on the farming communities, so we replaced *nere* with soybean in our soumbala production. With 1000s+ support, we're helping the Sincina women better produce and market soumbala made from soybean."

Aminata Dembele explains, "It takes days to make the soumbala. We roast, winnow, and wash the soybeans, then boil and let them ferment."

Malian women forming soumbala into 4-cm balls to be sold in the market.

Down on their knees, the women mash the fermented grains manually with stones for hours. They form balls, about 4 cm in diameter, that will be smoked to perfect the taste. The soumbala is then sold in the market at a price accessible to all: three balls for CFA 25 [$0.05].

"The price never changes. What varies is the size of the balls," says Binto Dembele, another AMEDD member.

The price of a 100-kg bag of soybean averaged CFA 18,000 [$38] from December to August 2006. But when processed into soumbala, the bag of soybeans sold for an average of CFA 25,000 [$53]—a profit margin of CFA 7,000 [$15].

"Each woman can produce three 100-kg bags a week, or about 24 tons of soumbala a year," says Arouna Bayoko, an AMEDD field agent.

"The women rely on their own networks to sell their products, but we're helping expand their market," Bayoko says. "The trade fairs that we organize with support from 1000s+ give them opportunities to meet and make deals with buyers from other regions and even other countries."

Yaya Denon, a local soybean supplier, hopes that soumbala production can be developed further. "It remains a women's business. I think they should move up from traditional, local production and target the regional market. That would be good for my business too!"

Sogoba Bougouna says, "We want to introduce more mechanized production to alleviate these women's workload."

Aminata Dembele confides, "My husband has 4 wives and 13 children. Each wife must take care of herself and her children. Our soumbala production usually starts only after five in the afternoon because we work all day on our husbands' farms. We in the association help one another find the means to feed our families and ourselves."

Africa Committee of IFDC Board Meets, Takes Field Tour in Mali

The Mali office of the IFDC Africa Division hosted the annual meeting of the Africa Committee of IFDC's Board of Directors in Bamako May 31-June 1. Chairing the meeting was Prof. Ruth Oniang'o, Chairperson of the Africa Committee and Member of Kenya's Parliament. Other Board members who attended were Soumaïla Cissé, President, West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA); Dr. John Hardman, President and CEO of The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.; and Dr. Amit Roy, IFDC President and CEO.

Attending as an observer and special guest was Monique Calon, Senior Economics Adviser, Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation (DGIS).

The Africa Committee was briefed on IFDC programs in Sub-Saharan Africa including From Thousands to Million (1000s+), Competitive Agricultural Systems and Enterprises (CASE), Market Information Systems and Traders' Organizations in West Africa (MISTOWA), and Catalyze Accelerated Agricultural Intensification for Social and Environmental Stability (CATALIST). Also discussed were activities of the Marketing Inputs Regionally (MIR) project, including development of agri-input markets and harmonization of regulatory frameworks for seed and pesticide sales. Initiation of the West Africa Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP) was announced.

On a field trip to Koulikoro, Mali, members of the Regional Chamber of Agriculture briefed the Committee on how local farmers and traders access market information through MISTOWA, how the local farmers' cooperative helps procure fertilizer, an action plan for sesame marketing through 1000s+, and soil fertility management for vegetable crops through the Sustainable Integrated Production System.

Monique Calon and John Hardman during discussions at the meeting of the Africa Committee of the IFDC Board.

Prof. Ruth Oniang'o, who has served on the IFDC Board since 2001, pointed out how IFDC programs bring together stakeholders in African agriculture: farmers, policymakers, opinion leaders, and the private sector.

"Individual farmers can't influence the markets much," Oniang'o said. "But they *do* have influence when organized into farmers' associations or cooperatives.

"I saw, on the field trip, how MISTOWA works through farmers' organizations with West African sesame and mango growers, and processors of shea butter,[1] to open international markets."

MISTOWA also enables farmers and traders to post free offers to buy or sell produce or inputs on the Internet—and by text messaging on cell phones—to access regional and international markets through TradeNet, Oniang'o pointed out. TradeNet (www.tradenet.biz) was initiated through a partnership of MISTOWA and BusyLab, a Ghana-based software company.

John Hardman said, "The philosophies and approaches of the Carter Center and IFDC for agricultural development are similar. We both listen to, and work with, farmers and agri-input dealers at the grassroots level. IFDC work often overlaps with our programs. For example, the Carter Center's Sasakawa-Global 2000 program works mainly with extension programs helping small-scale farmers increase crop yields in Africa in cooperation with associations of farmers, traders, and input dealers that IFDC has helped organize."

Nobel Laureate Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, who served on the IFDC Board from 1994 to 2003, is President of the Sasakawa Africa Association, which serves as the SG-2000 governing body.

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[1]Shea butter is made from nuts of the shea tree, which is grown across West Africa, and is used in the manufacture of cosmetics.

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"I succeeded Borlaug on the IFDC Board—keeping the Carter Center-IFDC link intact," Hardman said.

"During the 2 years I've served on the Board, IFDC activities in Africa have expanded greatly, along with the potential to help farmers."

Monique Calon said, "DGIS sponsors 1000s+ so one of my main interests, obviously, was to see if the project is achieving its objective—reducing poverty in a cost-effective way.

"IFDC has assured us that through 1000s+, family incomes will increase by 30% to 50% and production of targeted crops will double—at a cost of only $25 per farm family. These benefits are expected to reach 1 million farm families—involving 10 million people—by 2010," Calon added. She commented on how 1000s+ is exploring how to take the "agribusiness cluster" approach, developed through CASE, to other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

"1000s+ isn't creating new institutions or technologies—it's coordinating and improving communication among various stakeholders to improve the value chain in commodities."

Calon described the marketing of shea butter "…a classic case of developing the commodity value chain. Malian women have used shea butter as a cosmetic for centuries, but it was never marketed in volume outside of Mali." CASE introduced improved processing methods and linked shea producers to outside markets.

"Using traditional processing, shea farmers never earned more than CFA 200 [$0.42] per kilogram. But Mali farmers now sell shea butter to cosmetic manufacturers in Senegal for CFA 550 [$1.14] a kilo," Calon said.

Calon believes that an African Green Revolution is feasible. "But we all know it must be different from the Green Revolution of Asia and Latin America," she said. "Having this meeting in Africa helps us see better how to catalyze it."

Staff from the IFDC Africa Division who participated in the meeting were Robert Groot, Director; Dr. Arnoldus Maatman, Project Coordinator, 1000s+; Dr. Marjatta Eilittä, Program Leader, Agribusiness Program; Dr. Sarah Gavian, Chief of Party, WACIP; and Dr. Abdoulaye Mando, Leader, Natural Resource Management Program; Ms. Ketline Adodo, Communication Specialist; and Ms. Isabelle Adzoh, Senior Administrative and Finance Officer. Dr. Thomas Hargrove, Coordinator, Information and Communications Unit at IFDC headquarters, also participated.

The Africa Committee of the IFDC Board went on a field trip to Koulikoro, Mali. Left to right are Prof. Ruth Oniang'o, Dr. Amit Roy, and Dr. John Hardman.

Announcements

Mr. Christopher A. James joined IFDC as Analyst – Laboratory in the Research and Market Development Division (RMDD) on July 16, 2007. Mr. James received a B.S. degree from the University of North Alabama in chemistry and industrial hygiene. He is currently working toward an M.S. degree in biochemistry from the University of Alabama in Huntsville where he was a graduate teacher assistant. Mr. James' contact information is Office 172, e-mail cjames@ifdc.org, and telephone extension 267

Mr. Jan J. Nijhoff joined IFDC as Senior Scientist – Economics (Trade) in the Research and Market Development Division (RMDD) on July 26, 2007. Mr. Nijhoff received an M.S. degree in agricultural marketing and management from Cranfield University, Silsoe College, UK. From September 2005 until joining IFDC, Mr. Nijhoff served as Senior Regional Agriculture and Trade Analyst, Deputy Team Leader of the Economic Growth Office for USAID/Zambia. From October 1999 to August 2005, Mr. Nijhoff was responsible for managing and contributing to agricultural marketing and trade policy programs for the Agricultural Economics Department, Michigan State University. These programs were funded by USAID, The Rockefeller Foundation, and The World Bank in Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa. Prior to these appointments, he worked as a researcher with B&P Financial Services Ltd., South Africa; Adviser and Chief Technical Adviser for FAO, Tanzania and Zambia; and Assistant Manager of Consultancy Services, Cranfield University, Silsoe College, UK. Mr. Nijhoff's contact information is Office 239, e-mail jnijhoff@ifdc.org, and telephone extension 320.

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