



NAIROBI DECLARATION ON AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES

We, more than 400 participants comprising: extension practitioners from public, private and civil society organizations, farmers, policymakers and representatives of the research and development community, academia, the private sector, donor agencies, financial institutions and the media from 75 countries; congregated in Nairobi, Kenya from 15 to 18 November 2011 for an international conference on *Innovations in Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services: Linking Knowledge to Policy and Action for Food and Livelihoods*.

RECOGNIZING:

- That smallholder agriculture and family farming is the core contributor to agricultural production in most developing countries, and therefore vital for achieving food and nutritional security goals, for reducing poverty and improving livelihoods and for responding to climate change;
- That within dynamic innovation systems, extension plays an indispensable role as facilitator, knowledge broker and matchmaker between service providers and support agencies on the one hand and smallholder farmers and other entrepreneurs especially women and youth on the other;
- That efficient agricultural extension and advisory services strengthen the capabilities of smallholder farmers to take advantage of realistic and remunerative opportunities through access to knowledge, credit, markets and related services;
- That a coalition of public, private and civil society actors at national, regional and international levels is needed to revitalize and modernize agricultural extension and advisory systems in support of agricultural innovation.

NOTING:

- That the conference generated significant interest, mobilized multiple stakeholders and demonstrated a need for greater emphasis on extension and advisory service within the global agricultural development agenda;
- That in response to the disarray caused by underinvestment in extension and advisory services; extension practitioners, farmers' groups, researchers, policymakers and development partners are generating a wave of imaginative attempts to revive extension;
- That a plethora of demand-led, situation- and context-specific, gender sensitive and climate-smart policies, strategies and initiatives are being implemented;
- That this multitude of policies, strategies and approaches has yet to achieve the desired impact on the agricultural and rural sectors;
- That policy and institutional changes are urgently needed to create realistic and remunerative opportunities for smallholders;

- That national funding for agricultural extension and advisory services remains at a low and variable level;
- That the renewed national, continental and global interest and commitments for increasing investment in agriculture provides a momentous opportunity to deliver extension and advisory services that are farmer-centred, participatory, well funded, demand-driven and performance oriented.

EMPHASIZING:

- The need for national agricultural and extension policies, strategies and approaches that are inclusive, context-specific and contribute to national, continental and international development goals;
- The need for capacity building, greater coordination and professionalism in the provision of extension and advisory services;
- The need for enhanced use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), both old and new, and engagement of the media in expanding the reach and impact of extension and advisory services.

BEING CONCERNED THAT:

- Failure to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders and service providers and develop mechanisms for working together could result in further erosion of extension and advisory services, with negative consequences for agriculture, rural areas, family farming and smallholder farmers, especially women and youth.

WE HEREBY CALL UPON ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING GOVERNMENTS, EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS, FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL BODIES, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, CIVIL SOCIETY, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND DONORS TO WORK TOGETHER TO:

- Develop clear policies and strategies for extension and advisory services in a participatory manner and put coordination and quality assurance mechanisms in place;
- Advocate for increased funding within national budgets and develop and implement public, private and donor funding mechanisms that ensure sustainability, risk sharing and efficient use of funds to provide high-quality demand-led services;
- Promote and facilitate continuous capacity building, learning and foresighting as well as greater use of ICTs and the media which take into account culture and gender in the provision of advisory and extension services so that millions of smallholder farmers can move up the value chain;
- Develop and implement participatory processes for monitoring, evaluation and impact assessments and for conducting research on extension to facilitate learning, accountability, efficiency and empowerment.

The coalition of partners established through this conference remains committed to advocating and implementing effective extension and advisory services for agricultural and rural development.

Therefore, the participants call upon the conference organizers to continue to provide platforms at different levels for extension professionals and researchers and farmers to meet, exchange and improve their capacity to mobilize smallholders' knowledge, labour, land, water and genetic resources for global food security.

Dated this 18th day of November 2011