

Title of meeting	A Call for Establishment of an Agricultural Biodiversity Initiative for Africa (ABIA)
Responding to Theme 9	Peri-urban agriculture
Organizers	FARA and Bioversity International
Date and Time	11 June, 09:00-11:00
Contact person	Kwesi Attah-Krah

Purpose:

To seek views from stakeholders and discuss possible elements of a strategic and coordinated action on agricultural biodiversity resources management in Africa.

Background:

Africa's agricultural biodiversity resources could play a central role in efforts to meet development challenges and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on poverty, hunger, malnutrition, health and environmental health. Indeed, agricultural biodiversity remains central to the livelihood and survival strategies and well-being of the rural poor. It also remains the basis for the genetic enhancement of agricultural plant and animal species.

Currently, strategic and coordinated action on agricultural biodiversity and genetic resources management in the continent is generally weak. The focus of agricultural research is on just a few crops and commodities, ignoring the larger pool of agricultural biodiversity resources. Research and development activities to enhance understanding and deployment of this rich resource have consequently been declining. As a result, even though Africa is rich in agricultural biodiversity resources, the continent is yet to optimize benefits from them. Even more alarming is the increasing threat of extinction of these biodiversity resources, both in fields and farms, as well as in gene banks.

The above analysis shows the need for a strategic and coordinated plan to change mindsets in relation to agricultural biodiversity, to increase awareness of its potential for development, galvanize policy support and action towards its conservation and use, and promote regional collaboration in its conservation and management. To address the above-mentioned issues, FARA has initiated discussions towards development of an agricultural biodiversity initiative for Africa (ABIA), and held preliminary discussions with Bioversity International to outline the idea. This side event at the FARA AGM was recommended to deliberate further on this issue and seek wider stakeholder input and consensus in its development.

Participants at side-event:

Participation is open to ALL, particularly representatives of Sub-regional organizations (SROs), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), NARS including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Universities, Farmer Organizations, Private Sector, Advanced Research Institutions (ARIs), CGIAR Centres, and donor agencies.

Schedule of Events:

- **Facilitator:** Dr Kwesi Atta-Krah, DDG, Bioversity International
- **Rapporteurs:** Sidi /Jojo/ Raymond

Time	Topic	Chairperson/Facilitator/ Speaker
(5 minutes)	Opening & welcome remarks	Chairperson: Dr. Babagana Ahmadu, African Union Commission
(25 minutes)	Agricultural Biodiversity Initiative for Africa (ABIA) within the context of the FAAP (a joint FARA-Bioversity presentation)	Dr Monty Jones, Executive Secretary, FARA
(5 minutes per SRO)	Responses on proposed ABIA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-Regional Organizations • CGIAR Centres Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASARECA, CORAF, SADC-FANR, AARINENA-N. Afr. • Ravi Prabhu, CG Alliance
(1 hr)	General Discussion on the proposal Synthesis and next steps: Report to Plenary, FARA GA 2007	

Pertinent questions to be considered for discussion at side-event:

1. What should the initiative cover, and how could it be operated?
2. Value addition of the initiative, complementarity to other initiatives and roles of FARA, SROs, NARS, networks, IARCs and other parties.
3. Resource mobilization strategy

Key Outputs Expected

- Consensus on establishing the ABIA initiative.
- Awareness on initiatives on agricultural biodiversity conservation and use.
- Next steps determined including recommendation on the ABIA initiative to the FARA GA 2007
- Text on ABIA, for submission to FARA GA 2007 for approval.