

# **Progress report – SSA NGO consortium (FARA 4<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Johannesburg, 10 June 2007)**

## **1. Introduction**

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> FARA General Assembly (GA) held in Entebbe, Uganda in June 2005, about 35 NGO representatives from Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), met to launch a regional NGO Consortium in order to (the goal) to mobilize the local NGO constituency in Africa on their active participation in the agricultural research for development (A4RD) agenda. More specifically, consortium aims to:

- strengthen the linkages between the sub-Saharan Africa NGOs
- to facilitate sharing of knowledge and exchange of information and experiences among various African NGOs
- establish and strengthen research partnerships between CSOs, particularly NGOs and Farmers Organizations, on one hand and researchers and their institutions on the other hand,

At the meeting, the consortium elected a management, developed a vision statement, objectives, and biennial program of work. In addition they also have established a code of conduct, and draft a constitution,

## **2. Progress to date**

The consortium since its inception has held a number of strategic regional consultations to plan and monitor the implementation of its program of work. Among the major achievements of the Consortium are:

- initiation of a mobilization process to enhance the linkages among NGOs in Africa around ARD
- launched of profiling exercise to a) increase the membership of the consortium; b) develop a database of NGOs involved in ARD in the continent in order to facilitate the NGOs-Research linkages and partnerships
- Participated in global ARD detabes (e.g. GFAR General Conference in November 2006, and CGIAR AGM in Washington)
- developed and concluded of five case studies from all the sub-regions in the continent with the aim to document, take stock of and widely share (scaling up and out) past experiences and lessons learnt to improve future linkages between CSOs and Researchers
- Set up institutional structure by developing a communications strategy; signing a memorandum of understanding among the members; developing of code of conduct for consortium members and leaders; establishing a management committee that oversees the operations of the consortium
- At its first biennial meeting held during side-events at the FARA General Assembly in Johannesburg in June, 2007 consortium members resolved to establish a secretariat in South Africa.

## **3. The way forward**

### **3.1. Institutional strengthening of the Consortium**

Through consultations, members of SSA NGOC have resolved that there is a need to establish and run a consortium secretariat that will coordinate activities and programs of the consortium, facilitate information and knowledge sharing and help keep institutional memory. South Africa was chosen to be the location of the Secretariat. The secretariat will be run by a bilingual office manager who will be answerable to the executive committee of the consortium.

### **3.2. Program Areas in the next biennial period (2007-2009)**

#### ***1. Advocacy and public awareness.***

Advocacy will be the main thrust of the consortium. In the coming biennial the consortium will:

- a) Advocate for inclusive ARD at all levels (regional, sub-regional and global): The aim is to enable NGOs to effectively participate in the ARD processes, that is through research planning and decision making, to implementation and evaluation.
- b) advocate for and raise awareness on the role of women in agriculture and rural development
- c) advocate and raise awareness on the benefits of underutilised species in Africa for enhanced nutrition and food security
- d) raise awareness on the issue of IPR

#### ***2. Partnerships and Strategic alliance***

Closely engage with other FARA initiatives such as PEAPARD, SSA CP, DONATA and CAADP of NEPAD. In addition the consortium will closely work with FARA to enhance access to knowledge and technology.