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Hope For The Future

**Harvesting the Future: Technical and Institutional Options for
Agricultural Technology Testing and Transfer in Somalia**



**Somali Agriculture Technical Group (SATG)
Summary of the Hargeisa and Nairobi Workshops
November 2010**



IFAD
INTERNATIONAL
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List of Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organization
CEFA	European Committee for Agriculture and Training
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
ISG	Interim Steering Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
R&D	Research and Development
SATG	Somalia Agriculture Technical Group
SG	Steering Group
UN	United Nations

1. Introduction

The workshops “Harvesting the Future: Technical and Institutional Options for Agricultural Technology Testing and Transfer in Somalia/Somaliland” were hosted at the Ambassador Hotel in Hargeisa, Somaliland from 23rd to 24th November 2010 and at the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, Kenya from 29th to 30th November 2010.

The workshops were convened by the Somali Agriculture Technical Group (SATG) and were supported by the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Research (CGIAR), European Union (EU) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The workshops brought together various stakeholders including representation from the Ministry of Agriculture in Somaliland and Puntland, international organizations, universities, international and local NGOs, agro dealers and independent experts.

The theme of the workshops, “Harvesting the Future: Technical and Institutional Options for Agricultural Technology Testing and Transfer in Somalia/Somaliland” was both timely and significant as the current conditions both in Somaliland and Puntland are conducive for long term sustainable agricultural projects, and whereas significant hurdles still exist in South/Central Somalia, the need for intervention is still high. Presenters discussed historical experience on agriculture research and extension in Somalia, current practices and future models for interventions.

2. Objectives of the workshops

1. To understand the current and emerging context of agriculture in Somalia/Somaliland
2. To identify the key technical, institutional and policy challenges and opportunities for agricultural R&D in Somalia/Somaliland
3. To develop a short list of strategic options that SATG can, in collaboration with other (potential) development agencies, facilitate/implement to enhance delivery of agricultural support and applied research services
4. To identify/develop modalities, including resources, for fast-tracking the implementation of the priority options

The specific objective of the Hargeisa workshop, consistent with the overall objectives above, was to seek the input of the key Somali stakeholders in addressing these objectives – especially objectives 1 to 3. In Nairobi, additional input was sought by development stakeholders on objectives 1 to 3, building on the Hargeisa workshop, and a first major step in engaging development agencies working in Somalia/Somaliland (objective 3) and in specifically addressing objective 4. Some of the issues that were addressed during both workshops were: the role of public as well as private institutions and NGOs in technology testing and transfers; priorities (dry land vs. irrigated crops of commercial value); policies and regulations; and coordination mechanisms among the various players and stakeholders.

3. The Hargeisa Workshop

The Hargeisa workshop was attended by 35 participants.

Presenters at the workshop covered various aspects of the agriculture sector. The background was given by Hussein Haji, in which he gave an overview of the history of SATG, the history of agriculture research and development in Somalia, and some of the current challenges being faced. Kate Longley described the current agricultural research interventions in Somalia, including some case studies. She was assisted by some participants who presented on issues such as crop agriculture, livestock sector, fodder improvement, environmental issues, and security in relation to and agricultural inputs. Sulub Ali Aman (from IFAD) and Sergio Innocente (from FAO) then discussed the interventions being implemented by their respective organizations. The agriculture R&D status in Somaliland and Puntland were dealt with by Adan Elmi Abdullahi and Abduallahi Hussein Samater, respectively.

Participants first identified ‘trends and drivers’ related to agriculture technology testing, transfer and adoption. The important trends identified were weak extension services, poor access to agricultural technology, rural-urban migration (labour), increased sedentarization of agriculture, investment by the Diaspora, introduction of new crops and varieties, use of inappropriate seed, increased interest among donor and development agencies, population pressure, increasing land degradation and increased demand for livestock products.

The most important challenges to the agricultural sector were poor extension services, inadequate coordination and information sharing, inadequate investments in agriculture, poor institutional and policy frameworks, limited human resource skills, labour constraints, limited private sector involvement, natural resource degradation, land conflicts, limited market access, fragmented and uncoordinated agricultural technology testing and dissemination.

Partly in response to the challenges identified, the following opportunities were acknowledged: relative peace and politically enabling environment in Puntland and Somaliland, intellectual and financial investment by the Diaspora, existing research data, availability of relevant on-the-shelf technologies, willing and enthusiastic farming communities, public-private partnerships, ample natural resources for agriculture, good ICT infrastructure and donor and development agency investments.

The key functions critical to agriculture research and development in Somaliland were identified as progress tracking; technology identification and sourcing; capacity building (institutional and individual); resource mobilization and fundraising; germplasm collection, utilization, and conservation; networking; public awareness; coordination; knowledge management; priority setting; policy analysis, advocacy and formulation; early warning; technology testing, adaptation, certification, release, and dissemination.

The candidate actors most suitable to carry out the identified key functions were relevant line ministries and the Ministry of Planning; international and national research institutions, donor agencies; UN and intergovernmental/international agencies; farming communities; international and local NGOs; universities; local groups or community based organizations; private sector; media and international financial institutions.

The participants then discussed and agreed upon the priority intervention areas. These were capacity development; soil and water conservation; testing, adapting and multiplying specific technologies; improving crop protection practices; improving coordination and networking of agriculture R&D institutions and establishing a baseline of available agriculture research.

The participants reached consensus that the best way to move forward and act upon the conclusions reached above was to form a Somaliland Agricultural Research for Development Steering Group (SG) that would guide future interventions. The SG would be comprised of individuals that would represent major agriculture stakeholder groups. In the meanwhile, an Interim Steering Group (ISG) of four individuals was formed; the ISG would take on the responsibility of facilitating the formation of the SG, while at the same time laying the foundation for the SG's future work, including development of terms of reference. A timetable of deliverables and those responsible was drawn up.

4. The Nairobi Workshop

The Nairobi workshop was attended by over 60 participants.

As with the Hargeisa workshop, presenters were first given a chance to set the scene and lay foundations for the upcoming discussions. The background was given by Hussein Haji, in which he gave an overview of the history of SATG, the history of agriculture research and development in Somalia, and some of the current challenges being faced. Kate Longley gave the participants an overview of the discussions and conclusions reached at the Hargeisa workshop. The interventions carried out by FAO and Concern Worldwide, respectively, in South/Central Somalia were then described to participants. Edward Baars and Patrick Martin discussed the experiences of CEFA interventions in the same region. The United Nation's cluster approach system for Somalia was explained to the participants. Finally, Richard Jones used a short film and talk to demonstrate the experiences and success stories of agro-dealers in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The most important challenges to the agricultural sector, as identified by the participants were lack of reliable information to inform agricultural practices, absence of a central government and government institutions, lack of interest in agriculture by the youth, free food distribution in some places and coinciding at the time of harvest, climatic variability, poor infrastructure, environmental degradation, insecurity, limited market access, limited investments in agriculture, lack of enabling policy environment, monoculture and lack of crop diversity and lack of technical skills for agriculture.

The following opportunities were identified: increased funding opportunities for local organizations, diaspora factor, cash-for-work for infrastructure development, technologies for addressing climate variability, availability of resources for improving agricultural production, markets for agricultural products, private sector, opportunity to improve coordination, using local organizations/institutions, peace and stability in Somaliland and Puntland, willingness by local farmers to adopt new technologies and ban on food aid in bread basket regions.

Given the trends, challenges and opportunities mentioned above, the participants were then asked to identify the feasible institutional intervention areas with high probability of success and high impact on Somalia agriculture R&D. These were to support local R&D institutions through linkages, strengthen and support seed growers association, strengthen and support local NGOs and CBOs, coordination of agricultural R&D, facilitate the conduct of applied/adaptive research for Somalia, facilitate the development of a rapid flood response plan, strengthen and support professional associations, private sector support, strengthen and support farmers groups, strengthen and support agro-dealers, training and capacity building.

The participants then identified the feasible technical intervention areas with high probability of success and high impact on Somalia agriculture R&D. The areas identified were crop protection, strengthening of the private sector, crop diversification, investment for agricultural sector, development of a certification system, infrastructure development, fodder development, technology identification, testing, and adaptation and introduction of appropriate mechanization and operating skills.

The key functions critical to agriculture research and development in Somalia were identified as technology dissemination, resource mobilization, coordination, awareness of and compliance to standards, market development, training/capacity development, funding, financing, technology sourcing, testing and adaptation.

The participants were then involved in identifying the top actor categories and their primary roles in a typical agriculture R&D multi-institutional partnership arrangement. The actor categories were international research organizations, private sector, media, farmers, diaspora, universities and colleges, international NGOs, technical professional organizations/groups, United Nations, donors, local NGOs and CBOs.

A technology value chain was developed, and the actors assigned their respective roles. Finally, the participants agreed on a way forward and a timetable of deliverables and those responsible was drawn up.