

**The Third Global Conference on Agricultural Research for
Development
GCARD3**

Organized by
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(CGIAR)

Statement by

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Mr. Chair;

Distinguished fellow-members of the Panel;

Ladies and gentlemen.

1. I would start by thanking GFAR, and the CGIAR system, for inviting IFAD to participate in GCARD3. I am, particularly, honoured to serve as a catalyst for Theme 2 of the conference on *“showcasing results and demonstrating impact”*.
2. Before going further, I bring warm greetings from our President, Dr Kanayo F. Nwanze, a renowned research scientist, in his own right. He considers an effective research-development nexus to be a key pillar of sustainable development, and delivered keynote addresses to both GCARD1 and GCARD2.

IFAD investments in agricultural research

3. IFAD invested over half a billion US dollars in agricultural research during three decades. Every year we invest six and half percent (6.5%) of the lending programme into grants dedicated almost exclusively to such research. This comes to a yearly investment of over US\$65 million. The investments cover both biophysical research and, crucially, inter-disciplinary research linkages to scale up their impact.

Results and impact IFAD achieved

4. It is essential that we continually enrich the technology shelf. Otherwise agricultural productivity will remain unacceptably low. So, what kind of good-science based solutions have been supported by IFAD?

5. **First**, one of the most outstanding examples of IFAD’s pioneering co-investments supported the innovative Africa-wide **biological control of the cassava mealybug** that was decimating crops in the entire cassava belt of sub-Saharan Africa. As a result of the initiative 20 million lives were saved at a cost of US\$20 million. That means every dollar spent saved a valuable life, which is a pretty good value for money under any cost-benefit analysis.

6. **Second**, IFAD is proud of contributing to the development of the now well-known NERICAs (**New Rices for Africa**) by scientists at the Africa Rice Centre in the 1990s. NERICAs offer many advantages: they mature earlier than traditional varieties; they demand less labour because of fewer weeds; and they are drought tolerant. With minimum inputs, yields increased from 25 to 250 per cent. Today, inclusive public, private, producer partnerships, co-invest to scale up the use of NERICAs across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond, like some agro-ecologies of South Asia.

7. **Third**, another major success story is IFAD’s co-investments in “**Evergreen Agriculture**”: the practice of incorporating selected trees or shrubs with crops. In 2010, the European Commission and IFAD supported ICRAF to test the concept in Eastern Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda) building on more than a decade of community-based agroforestry research in the Sahel. The project resulted in fourfold soil moisture increases, enabling farmers to harvest a healthy crop of maize when others failed. Among the multiple spill-over benefits are sufficient protein supplements for cows and goats. IFAD investments are scaling up the technology.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

8. For my *fourth* example I would like to take you to the harsh Arid and Semi-Arid Lands of East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania). Fifty three percent (53%) of communities there live below the poverty line, and thirty percent (30%) of their children aged five years and below are malnourished. In these areas IFAD supported a partnership between ICRISAT, Africa Harvest, and others to test high yielding sorghum cultivars resistant to key biotic and abiotic stresses. Yields increased from 0.8 tons to 2.0 tons per ha, and even reached 3.2 tons/ha on some trial sites. The initiative promoted intercropping of sorghum with dry land legumes like cowpeas and pigeon peas. It also linked farmers to commercial users of quality sorghum grain, like the malting industry. This is another excellent example of a public private producer partnership in AR4D.

9. My *fifth* example from Africa, takes us to the livestock sub-sector. It is a research success driven by its community-based, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dimensions. Due to changing demographics, demand for meat in Africa is increasing. An ILRI project co-financed by the EU and IFAD promoted the pig value chain through improved production and marketing. It transformed slaughter waste into clean energy in the form of biogas, while improving sanitary conditions. It promoted forage production and improved soil carbon sequestration. Finally, it successfully piloted a business hub with farmer cooperatives and is now promoting a private-public partnership to increase profit margins for farmers.

10. *Finally* for my *last* example I turn to the “**Root and Tuber Crops Research and Development for Food Security in the Asia-Pacific Region (FoodSTART)**”, which is now entering its second phase. It targeted poor rural households linked to investment projects in five countries (**Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, and Philippines**) where RTCs contribute significantly to food security. The project, particularly, targeted indigenous peoples and women. And the outputs and outcomes of the action research, which brought several CGIAR centres together with focus site teams of NARS and Universities, included: a food security framework for RTC food security assessments; models and forecasts for RTC production; research methodology and guidelines to conduct food security assessments; and many collaborative relations with large scale IFAD investments in five countries in the areas of RTC value chain and enterprise development, farmer business schools development, and knowledge management.

11. All these examples show that agricultural research for development can contribute to providing the means for around one third of humanity to break out of poverty and hunger. There are some five hundred million smallholder farms worldwide supporting around two billion people. With effective agricultural research, these people can increase their productivity and reduce their vulnerability.

Some expected outcomes from GCARD3?

12. It is a happy coincidence that IFAD’s Medium Term Programme (2016-2018) under the “**IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025: Enabling Inclusive and Sustainable Rural Transformation**” and the “**CGIAR Strategy 2016-2030**” respectively include targets of taking around 100 million poor people out of poverty. It

demonstrates how closely IFAD and the research establishment are aligned. Therefore, I am sure many of you will agree with the following outcomes we would expect from GCARD3.

13. **First**, we must be more efficient in using the resources made available to research by increasing the impact of every dollar. To achieve the desired cost efficiency ratios everyone must play their part effectively to reach impact at scale. There is evidence that in Uganda one person was lifted out of poverty for every US\$16 spent on agricultural research. Imagine what we could achieve together?
14. **Second**, research must put the poor smallholders themselves at the centre. In the past, investment in research focused on productivity enhancing technologies. These prototypes are now available for testing and evaluation through collaboration with NARS, the private sector and civil society. We must all engage more with farmers themselves in setting research priorities and in using their indigenous knowledge systems. It is only when smallholders genuinely own the outputs of research will they adopt them. For this we must respond to their specific agro-ecological and socio-economic needs.
15. **Third**, we must build strong partnerships. When conducted through inclusive, interdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder platforms, agricultural research can deliver highly adoptable products, which ensure high impact and transform rural livelihoods.

16. ***Fourth***, research must be fully embedded in operations for them to be scaled up and replicated through investments. Focus must be on bringing the “D” in R&D to be at par with the “R”, which traditionally was over-emphasized. For this to happen, IFAD emphasises embedding research grants in our lending programmes, currently standing at a yearly commitment of US\$1.1 billion.

17. ***Fifth, and last***, domestic investments in research must increase. In 2006 African Governments pledged to spend at least 1% of agricultural GDP on agricultural research. However, by 2013 only 8 countries reached that target. According to the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Africa had in 2013 just 70 agricultural researchers for every million people, compared with 550 in Latin America and 2,640 in North America.

Mr Chair, Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues

18. The above confirms that as a unique international institution, set up as a UN Agency and an international financial institution, IFAD’s “*level head for business and warm heart for people*” is a happy combination driving its strong engagement in a multi-stakeholder *agricultural research that leaves no one behind*. As one of the two facilitating agencies of GFAR we supports R4D partnerships which clearly have greater development impact prospects.

Thank you for your attention.