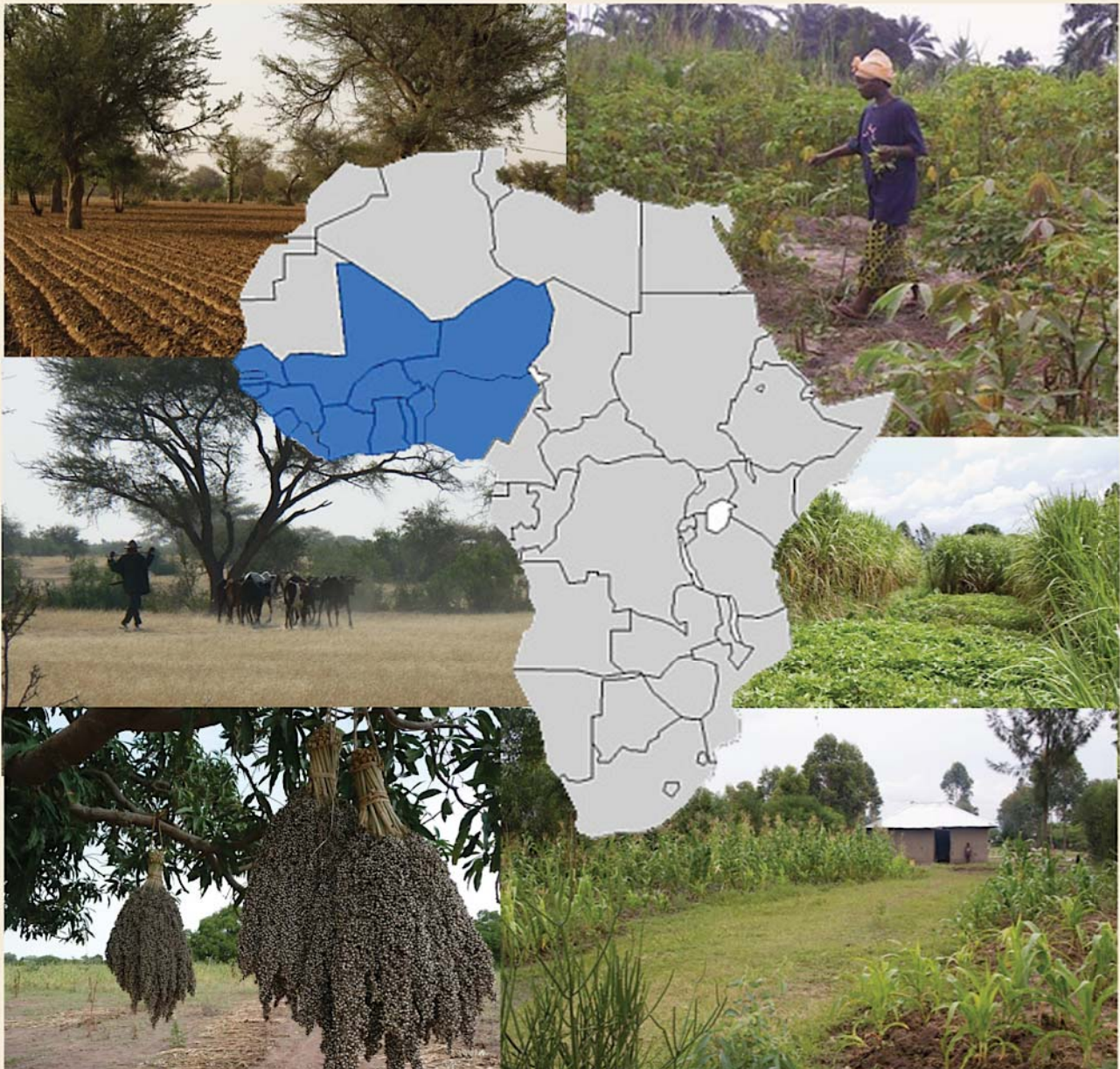


High level policy dialogue between the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and small scale farmers on the priorities and governance of agricultural research for development in West Africa



1st to 3rd February 2012
in Accra, Ghana

The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and its partners are currently facilitating an inclusive process of farmer deliberations on the kind of agricultural research small scale farmers and food processors want. Work is now underway in the Andean Altiplano of South America, South Asia, West Asia, and West Africa.



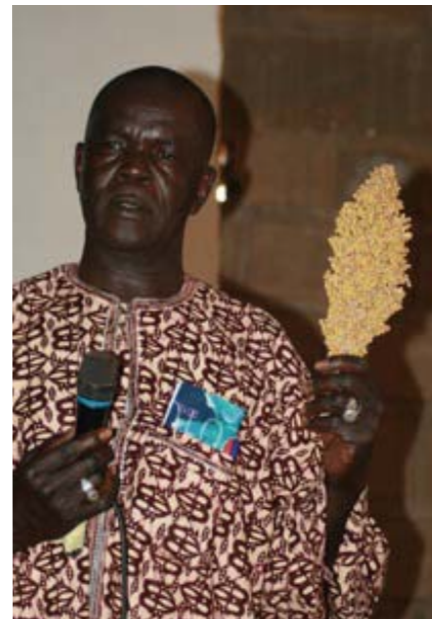
As part of this multi-regional process, a series of citizens' juries have been held in Mali over the last six years. Their aim was to allow ordinary farmers and other food producers, both men and women, to make policy recommendations after cross examining expert witnesses from different backgrounds.



The three citizens' juries held so far have explored the following themes:

- ***GMOs and the future of farming in Mali.*** In January 2006, at a citizen jury organised by the government of Mali's Sikasso region, 45 farmer jurors voted against the introduction of genetically-modified crops in Mali. The citizens' jury allowed the jurors to cross-examine 14 international witnesses representing a broad range of views on this controversial issue. These included biotech scientists, agencies such as the FAO and farmers from South Africa and India with first-hand experience of growing GM crops.
- ***What kind of knowledge and agricultural research do small scale producers and food processors want?*** This citizens' jury, held in January 2010, involved 45 jurors drawn from different agroecological zones in Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Benin.
- ***Democratising the governance of food and agricultural research.*** Held In February 2010, this third citizens' jury involved 40 men and women farmers who questioned specialist witnesses from West African and European countries on this subject.

The citizens' juries were guided by an oversight panel to ensure that the entire process was broadly credible, representative, trustworthy, fair and not captured by any interest group or perspective. After hearing the specialist witnesses and deliberating, the farmers presented their conclusions to policy makers and the media.



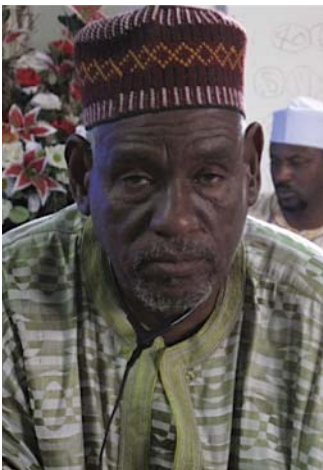
Altogether, the farmer jurors made over 100 recommendations on the priorities and governance of agricultural research for West Africa. In the follow up to this unique deliberative process, West African farmers asked to have an open High Level Policy Dialogue with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and its main donors.

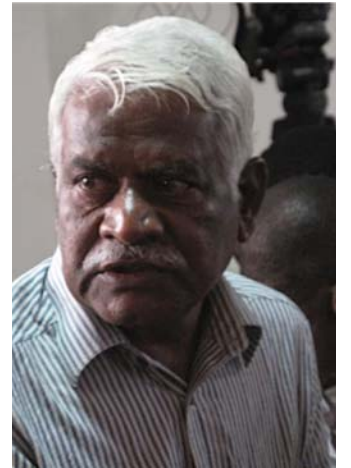


The policy dialogue took place on 1st to 3rd February 2012 in Accra (Ghana) and involved one hundred participants, including:

- Small scale farmers and food processors from Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal, and Sierra Leone – 39 participants (men and women)
- AGRA's President and 11 senior staff chosen to represent AGRA's different programs as well as 10 partners of AGRA in Africa (farmers, agro-dealers, PhD students...) – 22 participants in total
- Some of the main donors of AGRA: The Gates Foundation and DFID
- Representatives of farming communities with experience of the impacts of the first Green Revolution in Asia (India, Iran, Thailand, The Philippines), East Africa (Kenya), and Latin America (Mexico) - 18 participants
- The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and two members of his office
- Oxfam-Novib's Executive Director and a staff person from Novib's Global Link
- Members of the UK House of Parliament and the All Party Parliamentary Committee on Agroecology
- The President of ROPPA (Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa)
- A representative of the Inter-parliamentary Committee of the Monetary Union of West Africa (CIP - UEMOA)
- IIED and West African steering committee representatives







This High Level Policy Dialogue was chaired by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Professor Olivier de Schutter and co-chaired by the Executive Director of Oxfam-Novib, Farah Karimi. The honorary guests included a representative of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the UEMOA (Saïdou Kabore), the President of the ROPPA (Ibrahima Coulibaly), and the President of AGRA (Dr. Namanga Ngongi).



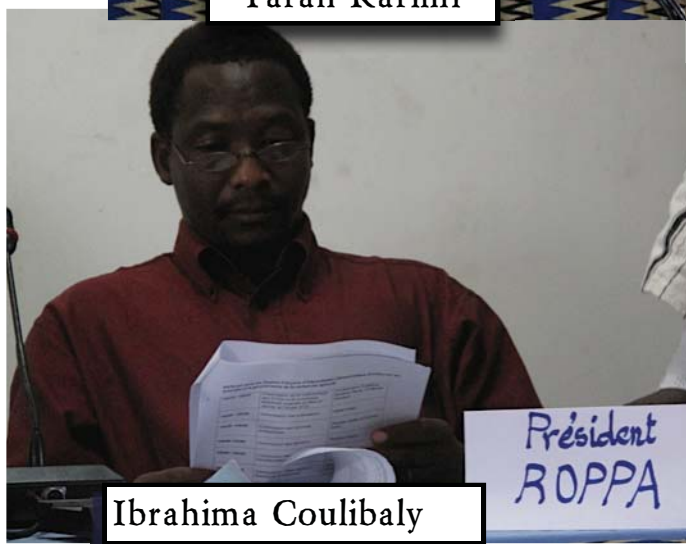
Saïdou Kabore



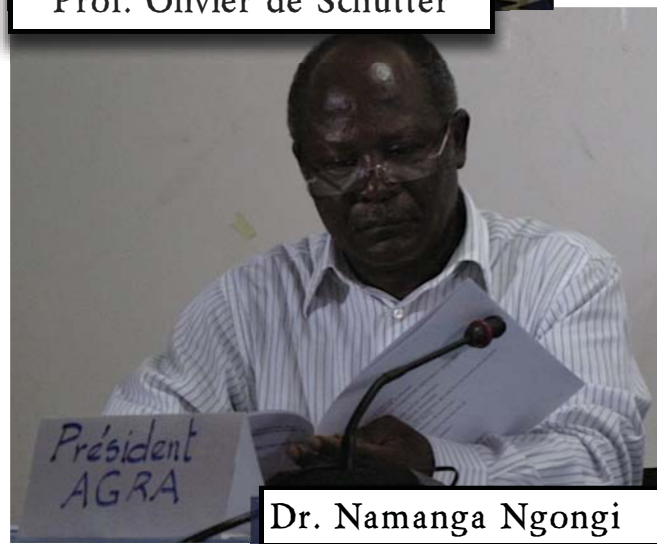
Farah Karimi



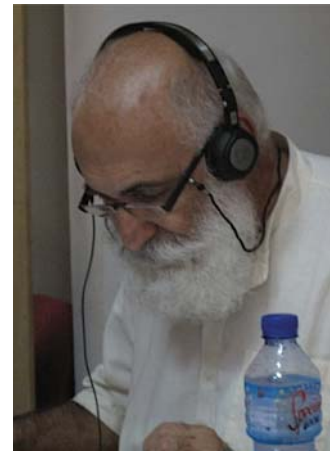
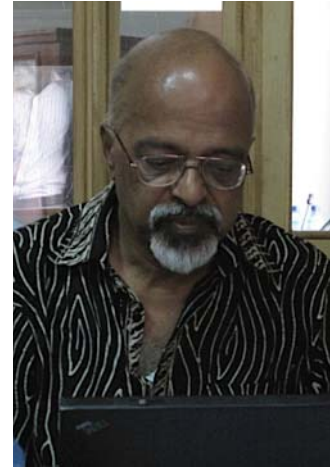
Prof. Olivier de Schutter



Ibrahima Coulibaly



Dr. Namanga Ngongi



Interpretation team





IIED and African organisers of these events recognised the need for diversity and the need for an inclusive agenda that puts small farmers at the centre given the complexity of West African farming systems. This High Level Policy Dialogue was therefore designed to allow small scale farmers and food processors to present and discuss their recommendations on the directions and governance of agricultural research with AGRA and its main donors.

The dialogue was inclusive and respectful of plural perspectives and divergent viewpoints. It allowed all participants to identify areas of mutual agreement and also difference on what kind of agricultural research for development is needed in Africa for poverty alleviation and the eradication of hunger.





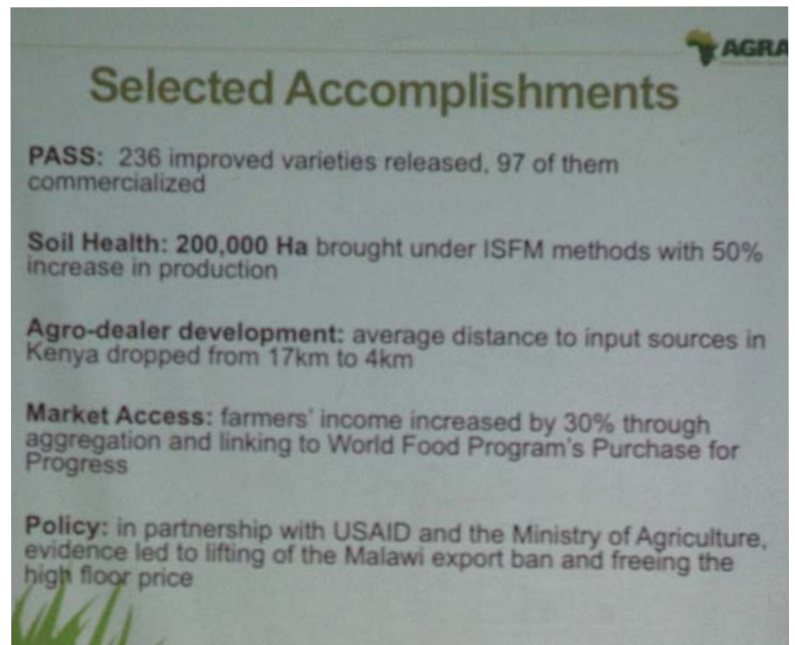
West African farmers involved in the citizens' juries on the priorities and governance of agricultural research present their findings and recommendations.





AGRA scientists and their partners presented their vision and programs on:

1. Priorities for plant breeding and seed selection
2. Options for managing soil fertility
3. Priorities for developing markets
4. Policies needed to transform Africa's agriculture.

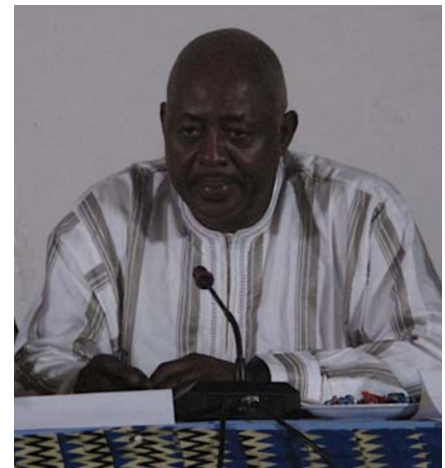




The policy dialogue in Accra also included a video conference link with the House of Parliament in London (UK). The video conference allowed senior staff of the Department for International Development (DFID), Members of the Parliament, and invited observers to follow the policy dialogue between AGRA and African farmers as well as ask questions during two 2 hour sessions. The UK All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Agroecology and IIED hosted the video conference event in London, with Baroness Sue Miller (APPG) and Dr Camilla Toulmin (IIED) co-chairing the discussions in the UK Parliament and Prof. Olivier de Schutter in Accra.



Facilitated discussion aimed at identifying the convergences and divergences between AGRA's and farmers priorities for research and their respective vision of agricultural development.



Exploring ways of strengthening the converging research agendas of farmers and AGRA: participants identify specific points of convergence and agreements on how to build on their shared priorities for agricultural research in West Africa.



Small group discussions allowed farmers and scientists from different regions (Africa, Asia, and Latin America) to further clarify the divergences between AGRA's and farmers' strategic priorities for agricultural research and their respective visions for development in West Africa.



Plenary session to share conclusions and policy recommendations for different actors (governments, international community, AGRA, donors, farmer organizations, etc)

Outcomes of the policy dialogue

- The policy dialogue successfully provided an inclusive and safe space for small scale farmers and food processors to discuss the priorities and governance of agricultural research with AGRA and other influential actors shaping the future of agriculture in Africa.
- The participatory methodologies and processes allowed men and women farmers to directly represent themselves in the policy dialogue rather than rely on intermediary organisations (NGOs, policy think tanks.....) to articulate their perspectives.
- By enabling open and frank face-to-face discussions in a moderated space, the policy dialogue allowed for a better understanding of the respective visions, values and agendas of AGRA and West African farmers. In particular, the policy dialogue gave AGRA and its partners a unique opportunity to directly hear from farmers their own views, analysis, and recommendations on what kind of agricultural research they want.
- Two of AGRA's main donors – The Gates Foundation and the UK Department of International Development (DFID) – were able to participate in the deliberations between AGRA representatives and farmers from West Africa. Both donors wish to further discuss the outcomes of the policy dialogue held in Ghana and through the video link with the UK House of Parliament in London.
- Farmer exchanges for mutual learning and intercultural dialogues took place between farmers from Asia (India, Iran, Thailand, The Philippines), East Africa (Kenya), Latin America (Mexico), and West African farmers. Men and women farmers from these different countries used the safe communicative spaces provided in Accra to explore the parallels between the first Green Revolution and the proposed new Green Revolution for Africa.
- Participants were able to clarify their respective visions of agricultural research for development in Africa and identify areas of agreement (convergences) and disagreement (divergences), and start discussing how to build on common and different agendas. The more detailed outcomes of this policy dialogue are available in a separate document validated by all participants.



Facilitators and organizers:



Donors:



For more information

Pimbert, M., B. Barry, A. Berson and K. Tran-Thanh, 2010. Democratising Agricultural Research for Food Sovereignty in West Africa. IIED, CNOP, Centre Djoliba, IRPAD, Kene Conseils, URTEL, Bamako and London.

<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/14603IIED.pdf>

Pimbert, M., 2012. Putting farmers first: reshaping agricultural research in West Africa. IIED Policy Brief, London.

<http://pubs.iied.org/17122IIED.html>

Fisher, S., 2012. West African farmers heard at UK Houses of Parliament.

<http://www.iied.org/blogs/west-african-farmers-heard-at-uk-houses-parliament>

IIED press release, 31st January 2012. <http://www.iied.org/natural-resources/key-issues/food-and-agriculture/putting-farmers-first-democratising-and-reshaping->

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

<http://www.agra-alliance.org/>

Democratising Food and Agricultural Research - a global initiative facilitated by IIED's Agroecology and Food Sovereignty Team

www.excludedvoices.org

www.ecid-nyeleni.org

Photo Credits & Design:

Pouya Sepehr and Ali Asghar Didari (CENESTA)

Khanh Tran-Thanh, Marie Monimart and Michel Pimbert (IIED)