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Agricultural R&D inflows still low in Africa, says IFPRI

Investment in agricultural research and development (R&D) in Sub-Saharan Africa increased by more than 20 per cent from 2001-2008, but most of this growth occurred in only a handful of countries.

Nigeria alone accounts for one-third of the increase. Spending in most of the region has stagnated or fallen, according to a new report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

In a survey of 32 African nations, the study found that investment in agricultural R&D had rebounded in many of the larger countries, primarily Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan,

Tanzania, and Uganda. However, in 13 countries, spending actually declined. Even where funding did increase, much of the money went to boost low salaries and rehabilitate infrastructure and equipment after years of neglect.

The state of agricultural R&D is particularly grave in francophone West Africa, where insufficient national investment has left programs debilitated and dangerously dependent on volatile external funding. Many of these countries are also struggling with a rapidly aging pool of scientists, many of whom will approach retirement within the

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Symposium on African integration calls for full civil society engagement

A high-level two-day symposium on the role of civil society in deepening regional integration kicked off at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Tuesday, with a strong call to civil society organizations to work in seamless partnership and advance a fully united and integrated Africa.

“The role of civil society in the African integration process must not be underestimated and has to be enforced in order to achieve

the realization of a united Africa,” said Josué Dione, speaking on behalf of ECA’s Executive Secretary, Abdoulie Jannah.

According to ECA’s Information and Communication Service (ICS), the two-day symposium aims to give new drive and a fresh momentum to Africa’s regional integration process, “which has not only been moving forward far too slow in the past decades but has also been widely restricted to the Inter-governmental system.”

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next decade.

Most countries in the study are facing human capacity challenges, such as recruitment freezes, retention problems, and researchers who either lack high-level training or are old and nearing retirement, according to the report.

IFPRI's Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators (ASTI) initiative conducted the survey in collaboration with more than 370 agricultural research agencies. ASTI is spearheaded by IFPRI on behalf of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural

For full story: <http://thecitizen.co.tz/editorial-analysis/20-analysis-opinions/10226-agricultural-rad-inflows-still-low-in-africa--report.html>

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Symposium...

In a remark, Mr. Eratus Mwencha, Deputy Chair of the African Union Commission said the main reason for the current impasse is "the lack of political will."

He highlighted some key challenges to the integration process that range from current slow or inexistent implementation of decisions, to accountability, the lack financing and the lack of a common front. These, he said, "are what Africa needs in order to build a continent that can be proud of itself."

Adding her voice to the calls, Beatrice Birungi Kiraso, Deputy Secretary General of the East African Community (EAC) warned: "As Africans we either integrate or perish."

"My dream is that one day we can all travel with one passport which is called the African passport", underlined Joseph Atta-Mensah, Director of ECA's Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Division. "We need to abolish visas and allow Africans to travel freely to other African countries."

The sessions on Tuesday reflected on the state of play of Africa's integration agenda and addressed the policies and strategies for accelerating the process. Participants also discussed possible measures towards a common African citizenship. Concrete proposals to drive forward the African integration process are expected at the close of the Symposium on Wednesday.

The more than 60 participants in attendance include representatives from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the private sector, women groups, youth, academia, the Diaspora, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the World Bank as well as other relevant stakeholders.

Source: Special to ECA

Upcoming Event

- World Economic Forum
3-5 May 2011, Cape Town, South Africa
- 2nd Africa – India Summit Forum
20 -25 May 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Freight Intra Africa 2011 Logistics for Sustainable Economic Development
27-28 July 2011 Midrand, South Africa

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