



## Brussels Policy Briefing no. 30

### Agricultural Resilience in the Face of Crises and Shocks

4 March 2013, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC),

#### Introductory remarks

**Michael Hailu, Director of CTA**

Honorable Dr. Akin Adesina, Minister of Agriculture of Nigeria  
Mr. Staffan Nilsson President of the European Economic and Social Committee  
Mr. Achille Bassilikin, ASG for Sustainable Development, ACP Secretariat  
Mr. Denis Salord, Head of Unit, EC-DEVCO  
Mrs. Rajul Pandya-Lorch, IFPRI  
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

I welcome you warmly to the **30th Brussels Development Briefing on Agricultural Resilience in the Face of Crises and Shocks**. Today we are observing five years since the start of the briefing and I thank you for your support and enthusiasm for making the briefing such a successful engagement and a useful forum for information sharing and dialogue on key ARD issues for ACP countries.

Let me thank Mr Stefan Nilsson for welcoming us once again to these excellent facilities.

It is a great pleasure to have Honourable Minister Dr. Akin Adesina with us today. I have known him for many years in his role as a researcher and a strong voice for agricultural development in Africa. It is exciting to see him in his new role as a policy maker introducing many important innovations in Nigerian agriculture.

We are also very pleased to continue our partnership with IFPRI in organizing joint briefings on key topics as we did before on food price volatility and nutrition and health. I thank our good friend Rajul who has helped to cement this strong partnership with IFPRI.

Once again, we are fortunate to have a distinguished panel of speakers bringing different perspectives as well as a wide range of expertise.

We also have with us today Mr Kalilou Sylla, the Executive Secretary of the ROPPA who is also chairing the Panafrican Continental Farmers Organisation (PAFO) and he is joined by colleagues from the other regional African farmer's organizations.

As you will have noticed, the briefings bring together a wide range of stakeholders involved in agriculture and food security across the ACP. As the ASG noted, over the last two years, CTA has also facilitated briefings in a number of ACP regions in collaboration with partners following specific requests from regional groups. These briefings have been helpful in identifying regional challenges and opportunities and in facilitating experience sharing and learning across regions. We also supported the first national level briefing, which was held in Haiti last week on

Agricultural Resilience by PROMODEV and the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the EU, CARICOM, IICA and FAO. It brought 120 experts to discuss the huge challenges the country faces in the agricultural sector and explore ways to strengthen the sector.

We deal today with a very important topic, building resilience, which is at the core of agriculture and rural development and which has become more challenging than ever in the face of threats such as food price spikes, rising energy and fertilizer prices, floods, hurricanes, tsunamis and droughts. Add to this the gloomy prospect of a 4-degree rise in temperature and its devastating impact on food production. Against this background, agriculture has also to cater for a rapidly increasing demand for food arising from population growth and changing dietary preferences.

Building resilience in smallholder agriculture will not only address the needs of hundreds of millions of smallholder farmers which account for a large share of vulnerable and food insecure populations in ACP, but will also ensure food and nutritional security for entire populations.

Building resilience in agriculture requires improved agricultural techniques and practices such as pest, disease and drought-resistant seed varieties; reducing post-harvest losses and food waste; less dependence on non-renewable energy; improving risk sharing and insurance schemes for smallholders; and providing better access to technology and information.

Building resilient agriculture will also require long term strategies and interventions that build on agro-ecological knowledge to enable smallholder farmers to counter environmental degradation and the negative impacts of climate.

It has been demonstrated that effective approaches can be used to build resilience against agricultural shocks, including: technologies and practices that reduce yield variability; financial services and insurance schemes for poor farmers; measures that help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

CTA has been actively addressing many of the issues related to strengthening resilience in agriculture by supporting multi-stakeholder dialogues, information sharing, awareness raising and capacity building activities across the ACP.

For instance, last year CTA organized a series of consultations for small island developing states addressing their inherent vulnerabilities and resilience where it brought together policy makers, farmers groups, researchers and the private sector to discuss challenges, explore opportunities and exchange best practices. A number of follow-up actions emerged from these and other consultations, including::

- Sound policies and strategies, innovation, **sharing of expertise and up-scaling best practices** are key to build resilience in SIDS and other ACP countries.
- **Governance** is key to promote sustainable development and no resilience can be built without good and decentralized governance systems. The role of public sector in providing an enabling environment has been the driver behind growth in successful economies such as Mauritius.
- **Interregional integration and regional cooperation** can be very efficient in some areas even if a number of implementation challenges remain. **Diversification is key for small economies and vulnerable countries** and it can be promoted through sound policies and interlinkages between **sectors (agriculture, tourism, ICTs...)**. Vulnerable

rural communities need improved production systems, technologies and markets but also social policies.

- The need to develop smart **partnerships between public, private** and development partners is strongly highlighted. This is an area CTA addressing within its value-chain development programme on.
- **Documenting best practices** and successful models is important in view of upscaling them.

CTA has been following up with some of these issues and developing partnership projects to address them.

I hope you will find the briefing today informative and enjoyable.

Thank you for your kind attention.