

Editorial

Dear readers,

For this twelfth and special issue of the Quarterly newsletter on agriculture and biotechnology, «DABA», the team of the Agripol section whose mission is «to draw up and define concerted policies for a sustainable agriculture in Africa» has invited experts who have specialized in issues concerning the development of the African agricultural sector, so that they can share their vision with our readers in relation to various thematic areas.

Consequently, this issue that marks DABA's three years' publication deals with many major issues for the development of the agricultural sector. A study titled «Structuring and Professionalization of Po: Situation of African cotton sectors», has been written by **Moussa Sabaly**, AProCA President. As an experienced farmer's leader, he tackles the lingering issue of farmers' organizations, a link crucial for the development and consolidation of the African cotton sectors.

Another article titled «Biotechnology and cotton growing: challenges and prospects of Bt cotton growing in Africa», has been produced by **Dr. Jeffrey Vitale**, Professor at the University of Oklahoma (USA). He has worked for Monsanto and closely collaborated with the researchers of Inera. His contribution is represented by the conclusions of different works he conducted in Burkina Faso; this, from research to marketing of Bt cotton. In addition, he talks about the profits that cotton producing African countries can make from the adoption of Bt cotton as well as the potential gains the different stakeholders of the African cotton sectors can get.

This twelfth issue takes a look back at the ceremony during which this publication by **Enda Diapol** and AProCa was launched and elaborates on the risks and opportunities of transgenic cotton marketing in Africa. That meeting, which was organized on Thursday November 24th 2011 at the Cyber Sinkou (Ucad), enabled the actors who attended it to exchange and talked about the various issues raised in DABA.

Regarding subsistence crops, the Editorial Committee devotes a column to Oxfam Gb, an Non-Governmental

Organization that conducts advocacy campaigns for a better management of agricultural issues in relation to the economic development of African countries, with a special emphasis on the assistance of the underprivileged. **Mrs. Samira Daoud**, who is responsible for Advocacy on Agriculture in West Africa, denounces the inconsistencies noticed in agricultural policies at the regional level (Ecowap) and

in national agricultural policies implemented in African countries. Her article, «Food security and poverty reduction in Africa: role and position of family farms» puts a special emphasis on the importance of taking into account an agricultural development model based on family farms; this, in order to reach food security advocated by African countries.

Climate change has nowadays become one of the major concerns that need to be addressed by the inhabitants of the planet. Certain climatic upheavals have occurred these last few years because of people's behavior. Therefore, it is important to put in place relevant strategies to reverse this trend, particularly in the agricultural sector which has really been hit by the consequences linked to climatic variations. That is why, in this issue, the opportunity has been given to **Oumar Sango**, Manager of the project *Climate Change, Oxfam Mali Livelihood Program*, to share his views in «Climate Change: what are the sustainable alternatives for African agriculture?»

To end this special issue, **Ms Wédemi Karine Raïssa Ouédraogo**, has devoted one article on the pole *Agriculture policies* of **Agripol**, publisher of DABA. A component of the NGO Enda Perspectives Dialogues Politiques (Enda Diapol), Agripol has a vast experience in the management of issues which relate to the development of African agriculture, particularly in the cotton sector.



Mamadou Alimou BARRY
Programme Officer,
Head of Pole Agripol,
alimou.barry@endadiapol.org

Focus on cotton production

Little by little, producers' organizations that were originally created in the shape of village associations have been structuring themselves during these last two decades, reaching today structuring levels on larger scales. At the same time, their functions have undergone a real change; thus covering a wider range of services. Indeed, they are professionalizing themselves. We will try to briefly present the situation of cotton producers' organizations in Western and Central Africa.

During the 90s, at a time of «State» sectors, producers' organizations appeared as minor actors of the sector, in the sense that the scenario left little room for consultation between all actors, no matter their «status». The State, as the sole «owner» of cotton companies, was responsible for the management while producers would only produce. They had only to carry out orders, that is to say, to conform to technical themes as exactly asked. The main functions and services of the sector were fulfilled by the cotton company, from inputs supply to loan management, through technical supervision and training.

The privatization/liberalization phase witnessed a certain measure of assertiveness among producers. Better structured farmers' organizations were put in place in some States.

The goal of this strategy was to reinforce producers' participation in the management of the sector by positioning themselves in decision-making spheres. This evolution has translated into a transfer of competence in the management of certain functions of the sectors towards producers' organizations. More than a decade after this new configuration, the least that can be said is the fact that things have evolved positively. In almost all cotton-producing countries in Western and Central Africa, there is an unequivocal organizational dynamics within producers depending on various options

(Unions, Federations, Confederations, Associations, etc.). This organizational process has even been chosen as a model in organizing actors from other sectors.

Cotton producers fully participate in debates that occur at national level on issues related to cotton, in order to express and defend their opinions. The acknowledgement of the position and role of the producer, who was formerly regarded as a secondary or minor actor, is indeed a significant step that can be attributed to their enhanced knowledge in relation to actors' new role in the sector.

However, it is important to underline the various difficulties that hinder the good operation of many farmers' organizations and often mar the quality of their participation in debates within sectors.

In fact, many producers' organizations present some malfunctioning characteristic of a lack of autonomy and of a real professional foundation. They often have very little means, compared to the role they are expected to fulfill. They badly lack the means by which they can correctly exercise their new role. In many countries, producers have achieved privatization without any financial means and the support needed to tackle this new approach.

Since its creation, AproCa has been working for the emergence of cotton producers' national organizations that are big and important, capable of playing an active role in the competitive and sustainable management of African cotton sectors. The cases of the Association des Fautières de la Filière Cotonnière de Côte d'Ivoire (Afficot-CI) and the National Union of Central-African Cotton Producers (Unpcc) are enlightening. In those countries, organizations act as a legal entity and constitute unique national platforms that bring together all cotton producers.

Therefore, this capacity building which aims at a greater professionalization of



Moussa SABALY
President of African Cotton Producers
Association (AProCA),
communication@aproca.net

its members has taken the form of organizational diagnoses in certain national platforms, in order to help them identify their strengths and weaknesses to determine and prioritize the major areas to improve and the changes to make for greater efficiency in terms of organization and operation.

All things considered, and although the situation is difficult, major positive changes are noticeable in the structuring and accountability of producers' organizations. Producers are better involved in management, which allows them to make some proposals and, sometimes, through their organizations which are becoming more and more credible, to defend themselves more convincingly.

In their current form, producers' organizations are young compared to the life of cotton production. The conditions for their profitability remain a major challenge as well. Their development needs to be supported; the achievements made are to be preserved and reinforced. ■

DABA
A Quarterly newsletter
on agriculture and biotechnology.

Director of publication: **Moussa MBAYE**
Coordonnator: **Mamadou Alimou BARRY**
Redaction Team: **Mamadou Alimou BARRY - Abdoulaye KONE - Wédémi Karine Raïssa OUEDRAOGO - Marina Isabelle G BAMBARA - Claire DUBROCA - Miriam KEITA - Moussa TALL**
Layout: **Noma Camara**

Contacts :
ENDA DIAPOL, Sicap Sacré Coeur Transition 4, villa n° 8773 - B.P. : 7329 - Dakar - SENEGAL
Tel. : (221) 33 825 36 20 -
Fax : (221) 33 825 36 32 -
E-mail : agripol@endadiapol.org -
Web: <http://www.endadiapol.org>

CLIMATE CHANGE

What are the sustainable alternatives for African agriculture?

Climate change (Cc) is one of the major environmental changes of this century. It is a reality and it has already had a negative impact on the development of African agriculture. Countries whose economy depends largely on agriculture remain vulnerable to climate change and are faced with several challenges linked to such change.

If nothing is undertaken, climate change will worsen the living conditions of farmers, fishermen, cattle breeders and people who live in the forest; those people are already suffering from the impacts of climate change. Rural communities, particularly those that live in an already fragile environment, are confronted with the ever-increasing immediate risks (poor harvests, loss of livestock and reduced stocks of fish, water and forest products).

Even if Africa hardly contributes to man-made climate change, it remains one of the first continents to be hit by the consequences of climate change. According to some experts, extreme climate change will become more and more frequent and intense with some direct impact on Agriculture, water resources, arable land, livestock, forests; in other words, on the sources of income for African populations all over the continent. In a nutshell, if the current situation goes on, African communities and their economies will be hit by the direct impacts of climate change.

African agriculture, which is the main sector that feeds a great segment of the rural and urban populations, is nowadays confronted with the following important challenges: the management and use of water resource, the management of arable lands, the adoption of appropriate and adapted technologies; the investment in the rural world; the availability of information and knowledge to anticipate and adapt to climate change, etc. Based on the above, Africa which contributes only 3% of green gas emissions (Gge), according to the Inter-Governmental Group of Experts on Cc (Iggeec) must adapt to the consequences of climate change for which she is hardly responsible. That is why it is important to implement adaptation measures.

According to several organizations¹, «adaptation to climate change is a priority to safeguard the long-term efficiency of our investment in sustainable development and the eradication of poverty». The numerous mechanisms and instruments to enable African countries to adapt to Cc and/or adopt mitigation strategies (carbon tax, REED's initiatives, the Clean Development Mechanism (Cdm), National Adaptation Activities Programs to Climate Change (Naapcc) for least developed countries, the recent green gas emission alleviation programs (Ggeap) and other mechanisms are slowly making progress on the African continent where 2% of Cdm projects are implemented.

Despite all those mechanisms and tools, certain interesting initiatives can be observed in the regions of the continent, particularly in West Africa. These initiatives, in Mali, have made it possible to train seeds producers in sowing techniques; to enhance their awareness of climate change and to supply them with seeds that are adapted to local rain patterns.

The development of agricultural insurance in Mali to tackle the numerous agricultural risks has made it possible to reach 3,177 cotton producers and 193 maize producers in the agricultural regions of Bougouni and Koutiala within the framework of a pilot project. Those initiatives are based on a vast local experience in relation to climate change and its impacts.

These populations have developed several strategies and experiences to adapt. Conscious of the poverty of soils and the high cost of inputs, they developed some capacities to produce organic fertilizers in order to improve the fertility of the soils and their yield. Gradually, certain late crop varieties (millet, maize, sorghum) have been given up for quick-growing crops to adjust to the shortening of the raining season. Various activities, such as market gardening, small-scale breeding, firewood sale, the processing and marketing of Shea butter, arboriculture, have also been undertaken by the populations to minimize their exposure to climate change.



Oumar SANGO
Climate Change Project Manager,
Livelihoods Programme Oxfam Mali
osango@oxfam.org.uk

The results of the vulnerability assessment led by Enda Energy in Mali, «assessment of vulnerability and capacity building for small producers under the Oxfam cotton program», have also allowed a good perception of climate change among the communities. At a practical level, this has translated into initiatives that made it possible to tackle the kind of climate change observed. These initiative, though laudable, present many limits. A better structuring of producers' associations has been also noticed on the ground.

One of the challenges facing African agriculture consists in giving to a vulnerable population the means of feeding itself and adapting to current and future climatic conditions that are expected to be more and more hostile. To achieve that, planning the adaptation process implies better risks management in all development sectors, thanks to available means. The establishment of a risks management culture that integrates the issue of climate change into longer-term planning is fundamental to increase the resilience of individuals and countries.

At local and national levels, policies and budgets must enjoy important support in order to anticipate the effects of climate change. Local and community organizations must be supported so as to plan their own adaptation processes and improve the environmental security within the context of climate change. This will allow Africa to lead its own adaptation strategy, its choices and political options directed towards multi-sector adaptation to climate change. ■

¹ World Bank, OCDE, African Development Bank

Role and position of family farms

By the year 2030, a population of 8,2 billion people will need to be fed. Therefore, food production should globally increase by 50%. In a context of increasing shortages of lands and water, feeding a mainly urban population by adopting more sustainable production methods, will be quite a challenge, particularly in Africa which represents alongside the Middle-East the region which depends the most on food imports.

The challenge is all the more sizable as the number of under-fed people is still very high: the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) puts them at 925 million people, due less to a lack of food than the inability of the poorest populations to get food at an affordable price. Tanzania, for example, which is self-sufficient in terms of food production, is regularly faced with food insecurity.

Consequently, efforts to increase both food production and food availability are needed, as well as measures that will ensure that the poorest and most marginalized populations have a purchasing power that can allow them to buy food. Yet, 65% of poor and under-fed people live in rural areas and depend, directly or indirectly, on agriculture for their subsistence. Therefore, it is vital to support small family farms to have a much bigger impact in terms of income generation and food security.

In fact, a vast literature and conclusive evidence show that the



Samira DAOUD
*Responsible for advocacy on agriculture
in West Africa - Oxfam*
SDaoud@oxfam.org.uk

measures which aim at improving productivity and food production by small farmers as well as facilitating their access to markets, would not only improve their purchasing power but also greatly increase the availability of food and thus contribute to world food security¹.

In West-Africa, there is an ongoing major debate which deals with the agricultural development model, mainly the type of farms that must be promoted. Many governments are convinced that traditional farming, family farms, cannot ensure the development of agriculture. At best, leaders argue that co-existence between socially-oriented small farms (use of manual labor, limitation of rural exodus, food self-sufficiency) and agro-business, founded on big-size capitalist farms.

Farmers' associations (Fa) have made the defense of family farms as one of their major preoccupations at both national and regional levels. As far as such

associations are considered, agricultural policies must lay the foundation for the modernization of family farms by ensuring for them access to adequate financing, agricultural inputs and a safe market for their produce.

As Ecowas' regional agricultural policy, Ecowap explicitly acknowledges family farming as one of the bases for the development of West-African agriculture.

However, as part of the implementation of farming investment plans for the next five years of Ecowas and its member States, it seems that the importance given to small family farms does not necessarily translate into clearly-targeted measures. Worse, certain countries draw up new large-scale programs clearly directed towards agro-business. One of the challenges consists in ensuring that the definition of policy instruments does reflect the importance of small farms, and that interventions, particularly by donors, support specifically this form of farming.

The efficiency of small production units in most developing countries is shown by an impressive body of empirical studies that indicates that there is a reverse relationship between the size of a production unit and the productivity of the lands. Thus, in labor-intensive poor economies, small producers are not only more efficient but –as they represent also an important segment of the rural and poor populations - the development of

small production units has a positive impact on growth and poverty reduction.

Despite largely affecting the environment, the Green Revolution in Asia has proved to what extent agricultural growth achieved by a great number of small units could transform rural economies and reduce poverty significantly. Other studies have proved that more equitable land distribution does not only lead to economic growth but also helps ensure that this growth is beneficial to the poorest.

Vietnam, which used to be a country with a food deficit and a big importer of foodstuffs, is nowadays the second largest exporter of rice in the world, to a large extent thanks to the development of small farms and an important land reform. Moreover, in 2007, it had a poverty rate that was less than 15% of the population, against 58% in 1979.

In addition, small farm provides lots of jobs for rural youths, beyond the production phase, if the conditions are created to encourage access to markets, and hence the development of a value chain. Thus, by providing at the local level foodstuffs in non-developed areas, and consequently by avoiding high transportation and marketing costs combined with the import of products, small producers contribute to greater food security.

The support provided to small producers has a multiplier effect on the rural economy because of the increase in producers' income. For instance, studies on the subject show that a 10% increase in crops yield leads to a reduction

which goes from 6 to 10% of the number of people living with less than 1 USD a day, and that a 1% increase in agricultural GDP per capita has led to an increase of 1, 61% income per capita of the fifth among the poorest population in 35 countries. Thus, the Green Revolution has resulted in the increase of 90% in the average net income of small farmers in South India between 1973 and 1994.

In addition, during the 15 last years, quick agricultural growth has not been positively correlated with large scale farming models. For instance, during that period, Brazil's agricultural growth rate, based on a large-scale agricultural model, has been overtaken by China's or even by not less than eight Sub-Saharan African countries (Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique and Nigeria), whose agricultural sector is dominated by small farms. Indeed, it has been noted that if economies of scale could be achieved in the processing and marketing of farm produce, that was much less true when it comes to production.

Consequently, the real problem is not the failure of the family farm model that would be inefficient, but the fact that small farmers have never enjoyed the support or the regulatory environment required to prosper. Because of under-investment and a lack of access to resources (inputs, loans, lands, markets, etc), small farmers register low yields.

Obviously, what is needed is a significant public investment in small farms. Despite the lack of access to markets, funding, infrastructure and technology enjoyed by big farms, the 500 million small farms that exist in

Southern countries already provide for the subsistence of almost two billion people; that is almost one third of the world's population, without mentioning the unfair competition they are subjected to on local, regional and world markets. Indeed, most small producers must compete on markets that are quite demanding in terms of quality and health security, and biased with the agricultural subsidies and trade barriers used particularly by OCDE countries.

In order to reach the objectives of increased food production and accessibility to food while ensuring the preservation of the environment, it would be advisable to adopt an approach that would combine support to (family) subsistence agriculture in the face of the risks and vulnerability; capacity building for small farmers to access funding and regulation that would allow them to increase their productivity, production and competitiveness; the implementation of investment plans for the poorest, support to complementarities between small and large farms, whenever it is possible.

Conditions are favorable for change and action is urgent. As pointed out by Ibrahima Coulibaly, representing Mali's farmers' organizations, in front of the Council of World Food Security on October 21, 2011: *«They don't have the right to tell us: You will eat, once you are competitive».* ■

¹Agriculture at the crossroads, IAASTD, the evaluation initiative launched in 2008 by 64 governments, and written by 400 scientists from 100 countries.

BURKINA FASO

The significance of Burkina Faso's Bt cotton experience for Africa

Maintaining the sustainability of cotton production in West Africa has the potential to contribute greatly to West Africa's agricultural sector and her rural economies. Cotton is well adapted to local environments, and when integrated into a mixed farming system with cattle and cereal crops, it is one of only a handful of cropping systems in Sub-Saharan Africa likely to be capable of significant productivity increases over the long-term.

An attractive feature of Bt cotton is that it can increase productivity in the near-to short-term, unlike varietal and pest eradication programs that require long-term investment horizons. Africa's overall use of agricultural biotechnology, however, still lags far behind adoption rates seen throughout the world. Although Africa produces 20 percent of the world's cotton, it accounted for less than 3% of the world's area of Bt cotton, which in less than 15 years has spread to about 16 million ha globally. Regulatory and institutional constraints, influenced to some degree by opposition groups, have delayed the introduction of bioengineered crops in Africa while commercial release and adoption of biotech crops has proceeded on most other continents, to the benefit of smallholder producers. Of the 10.3 million farmers growing biotech crops in 2006, close to 90% were small resource-poor farmers from developing countries. Nearly all of the smallholder producers growing Bt cotton were from either China or India, which had 6.8 and 2.3 million producers, respectively.

Insects have traditionally been a major threat to sustaining cotton production over the long-term on nearly all continents. Continuous cotton production accelerates the build-up of pests, which can cause substantial production losses on cotton fields. In Africa the long-term build-up of pest pressure from growing cotton remains one of the most significant and

economically important problems facing West African cotton producers. In West Africa, conventional approaches to control pests through chemical sprays have grown increasingly ineffective as pest populations have developed resistance. In a typical year, for example, the Burkina Faso cotton sector may spend over \$60 million for chemically based pest control products, yet recent studies in Burkina Faso have found significant pest damage on fields that were treated using a standard regimen of six seasonal sprays, sometimes reaching yield losses of 70% in extreme cases.

Frustrated by conventional pest control methods, key Burkina Faso government and industry stakeholders began working with Monsanto in 2001 to introduce Bt cotton in locally adapted cotton varieties on a commercial basis. Since then, Burkina Faso has emerged as the most progressive country in the West Africa region regarding biotechnology. In 2008, after five years of field testing, monitoring, and developing biosafety legislation and protocols, Burkina Faso became only the second African country to commercially release Bt cotton. Adoption has proceeded quickly in Burkina Faso, from an initial release of 12,000 ha in 2008 to slightly over 125,000 ha in 2009. In 2010, an estimated 400,000 ha of Bt cotton was planted.

Socioeconomic analyses were performed for the 2009 and 2010 growing seasons and the results have been quite positive. Data collected from grower surveys across all Burkina Faso cotton growing regions in 2009 (over 190 surveys) and 2010 (over 170 surveys) revealed yield benefits for Bt cotton of 21% and 29%, respectively, while reducing pesticide applications by 66% or more. Overall increases in net profit per hectare for Bt cotton growers were estimated at \$87 USD for 2009 and \$84 USD for 2010. For 2010, this represented a 175% increase in income over conventional cotton, and a 44%



Jeffrey Vitale PhD

Assistant Professor, Agricultural Economics
Oklahoma State University Stillwater,
Oklahoma, USA
jeffrey.vitale@okstate.edu

increase in total household income. We estimate that national level economic impacts could reach as much as \$63 million USD per year with 66% of this remaining with the grower.

Evidence of environmental and health benefits has also been indicated through the adoption of Bt cotton. Survey responses regarding pesticide poisonings reveal that over 50% of cotton growing households have reported poisonings in the last 5 years, a majority of which can be linked to pesticides used in cotton fields to control the worms that are targeted by Bt cotton. Planting Bt cotton can reduce pesticide sprays by 66% or more, greatly reducing potential pesticide exposure and the resulting negative health and economic impacts (medical expenses and lost wages).

Bt cotton may serve as a working example of how African countries can address enhanced sustainability using modern, science-driven technology to increase production levels while reducing input use and energy consumption. If Bt cotton continues on its current trajectory in Burkina Faso, its success may create a gateway for the future introduction and development of other biotech crops in Africa. While capacity may have been lacking initially, through proper planning, management, and partnership with the private sector, Burkina Faso has demonstrated that African countries can successfully introduce GM crops such as Bt cotton and, in so doing, move toward regaining a competitive stance in world markets while providing environmental and social benefits. ■

PUBLICATION OF A BOOK ON BT COTTON-GROWING IN AFRICA

Enda Diapol and AProCA make up for the deficit of communication on the issue

Within the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Cotton Program (2007-2011) and in collaboration with AProCA leaders, Enda Diapol has submitted the lessons learned by the pioneering countries: South Africa, Burkina Faso and India in the field of genetically-modified cotton farming. This study's major findings have been compiled in a publication launched on November 24th, 2011 at the Sinkou complex of the University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar (Ucad).

«*Bt Cotton: Risks and opportunities of transgenic cotton farming in Africa: Lessons learnt by South Africa, Burkina Faso and India*» is the title of the book co-produced by Enda Diapol and AProCA and presented to the public on November 24th, 2011. The publication reviews all institutional, technical and agronomic issues linked to transgenic cotton in South Africa, India and Burkina Faso. In these countries, the book recounts the introduction process regarding this new variety up to its latest stages. The factors that affect its success and failure have been analyzed; mainly five of them have been selected and proposed to actors, particularly decision-makers, cotton companies and producers, among others. Those five factors provide a base for all decision-makers who are interested in genetically-modified cotton grown on family farms or rain-fed.

Enda Diapol's initiative is due to the fact that cotton represents one of the main exports of Western and Central African (WCA) countries. As a means of subsistence for a large part of the working population which is estimated at 30 million people, cotton is going through hard times. As a matter of fact, since 2001, the drop in world prices, subsidies granted to Westerner and Asian cotton-growers, problems related to producers' organization and the management of cotton companies have badly hurt this crop in WCA countries. In addition, cotton farming has become more and more demanding because of climate change and the resistance of pests; this, despite the recent upsurge in world rates. This situation resulted in massive use of chemical inputs (insecticides) with its negative effects on the environment and human health,



Moussa Tall

Journalist Consultant
Director of a public relations firm,
«Nora 2000».
samoulat@yahoo.fr

not to mention the increase in production costs.

Gmc: a controversial panacea

In order to overcome these difficulties, some experts and big firms, among which are Monsanto, Bayer and Syngenta, recommend the introduction of biotechnology, particularly genetically-modified cotton, named bacillus thuringiensis cotton or «Bt cotton». These multinationals argue that, in Africa, it could increase productivity by reducing production costs, labor time and by significantly improving the economic and financial conditions of African cotton producers.

If countries like Burkina Faso have already enacted a law on the adoption and marketing of Gmc, in most cases, many civil society organizations, such as NGOs and farmers' associations have rallied a «crusade» against the introduction of Gmc into WCA countries. They argue that the so-called advantages are not proven and the negative impacts on the economy,

society, environment and health are very significant. Therefore, it was necessary to objectively inform cotton-producing countries, particularly WAC countries, about the various social, economic, health and environmental dimensions of transgenic cotton; this, in order to enable them to decide objectively if the adoption of this new variety is a wise move.

During the launching of the book, three fundamental positions emerged. The supporters of the first one recommend the adoption of transgenic cotton, for it is a unique opportunity for producers. Those who hold the second position think that, due to the lack of studies on the impact on the environment and health, the only thing to do is to simply reject this technology. Finally, the third and more conciliatory position recommends more research that would make it possible to have improved varieties. In the meantime, the debate goes on!

It must be noted that the launching ceremony was attended by Mass Lo, the Executive Secretary of Enda Tiers Monde; Moussa Mbaye, Enda Diapol Coordinator; Mamadou Alimou Barry, Head of Agripol; Abdoulaye Kone, Advisor to Agripol. It was Kone himself who presented the book. Two panelists, namely Dioma Kamansira, Communication Officer of AProCA and Sidy Ba (Enda Pronat), the focal point of Copagen in Senegal, led the discussions.

These were extended to the public, including many people, with researchers, academics, university students, members of farmers' associations and civil society organizations among others. ■

AGRIPOL

Social dialogue and capacity building for development

The Agricultural Policies Pole, called Agripol, is a component of Enda Diapol that deals with issues related to agriculture. Conscious of the importance of the agricultural sector for the economies of African States, Agripol has chosen as its motto: to work for the implementation of concerted policies for a sustainable agriculture in Africa.

To make real actors of change of under-privileged people is the mission of Enda prospectives dialogues politiques (Enda Diapol), one of the entities of the International NGO Enda Tiers Monde. It is through the promotion of consultations between different development actors, particularly those who are at grassroots level (rural people) and policy makers (state actors and partners).

With its vision of «*a productive agriculture that integrates all the concerns of the actors of the agricultural sector, supported by States and sub-regional organizations, in view of food security and poverty reduction, leading to a sustainable development*», Agripol aims at four main objectives. The first one is to build the political, strategic and technical capacities of the agricultural sector actors in view of quality participation in negotiations and decision-making instances. The second one is to promote debate on major issues in order to better equip rural actors for the definition, drawing up, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of agricultural policies. The third objective consists in producing studies focusing on challenges facing the rural world on one hand, and on the other hand to put at the disposal of actors strategic information that can be easily understood. The last objective is to encourage consultation between the

different categories of actors through advocacy and the networking of different parties.

Since its creation in 2011, Agripol has been broadening its scope of work. It is not only about advocacy for more coherent agricultural policies, but also about challenges related to reform and the sustainability of agriculture, particularly the cotton sector. Agripol is also interested in agricultural development issues in general, namely agricultural investment, diversification, access to market, large-scale production and farms modernization etc., as well as in issues related to climate change and the alternative offered by biotechnology in the agricultural sector, among others. All these activities help accomplish Agripol's missions.

By the way, the Agripol section has initiated a certain number of activities intended for the Association of African Cotton Producers (AProCA). This has enabled this organization to defend, at WTO, its position on subsidies given to cotton-growers in Northern countries and China, to the detriment of African producers. This success story has made of Enda Diapol, through Agripol one of the development actors and a specialist in the agricultural sector in general, as well as political in issues linked to the development of African in particular. Thus, based



Wèdemi Karine Raissa OUEDRAOGO
Project Manager
Enda Prospectives policy dialogues
raissa.ouedraogo@endadiapol.org

on Research-Action, Agripol works for the development of African agriculture thanks to the production and dissemination of reliable and objective information for grassroots actors.

Based on the assumption that political poverty, namely the exclusion of a majority of the population from decision-making spheres, overrides the other forms of poverty (economic, technical, organizational, etc.), Enda Diapol is working for actors to reconnect with all the issues linked to the environment in order to promote social justice in several key fields, particularly agriculture, integration and cross-border cooperation, fishing and migration among others. ■

The current issue of the newsletter has been achieved with the support of:

