

CHAP Newsletter on 7th CARD GM and CARD High-Level Meeting held in Tokyo, Japan, October 2-5, 2018

October 8, 2018



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Executive Summary:

The Coalition of African Rice Development (CARD), an initiative established in 2008 after the Global Food crisis, held a meeting in Tokyo, Japan, through TICAD. As CARD's 1st phase has ended, the meeting was about sharing the successes and lessons learned and finding a way forward for 2019-2030 to support the doubling of rice production.

Community of Hope Agriculture Project (CHAP) is a beneficiary of JICA training program in Japan and the Philippines from 2014 to 2017. CHAP is non-profit organization in Liberia established in 2008 which serves as a leader of the Rice Sector and has worked with CARD/NRDS as a facilitator in support of Liberia's rice sector. CHAP currently serves as the focal organization for promotion of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in Liberia under the regional WAAPP project and it is one of the implementing partners of the ongoing Japanese Rice Grant through IFAD and MOA since 2016, a program making significant impact in Liberia.

CHAP participation in the recently-ended CARD GM was very important in sustaining the gains made and considering how to ensure there is a private-sector window to scale up CARD and Rice programs in Liberia.

The meeting brought together 32 Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries with representatives from JICA, AGRA, Africa Rice, Government of Japan, IFAD, World Bank, WFP, NEPAD, etc. The CARD structure has three levels: CARD member countries; steering committee members who are donors, universities and others; and a secretariat.

The CARD member country group, which constitutes the highest decision-making body, was able to approve the CARD 2nd phase framework at the recently-ended meeting. Liberia was represented by Rev. Robert S.M. Bimba, Executive Director of CHAP and SRI Focal Point, and Dr. Joseph Sesay of MOA. Personally, CHAP extends profound thanks and appreciation to the Government of Japan, the CARD Secretariat, and JICA for sponsoring my participation, flight, accommodations, visa, etc.

Objective of 7th CARD GM:

- To validate the results of the final evaluation on the 1st phase of CARD
- To lay the groundwork for the 2nd phase of CARD

Venue: JICA Research Conference Hall

Date: October 2-5, 2018

Major outcomes:

CARD 2nd phase strategy approach was presented and approved and is comprised of the following:

Rice Strategy Approach:

- **Resilience:** to assert stability in rice production in the face of climate change and the rising population growth
- **Industrialization:** to promote the engagement of rural and urban enterprises in production, processing, value addition, and marketing of locally-produced rice

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- **Competitiveness:** to enhance the quality and value of the locally-produced rice and thereby substitute for importation
- **Empowerment:** to enable the relevant stakeholders (including women and youth) to harness the socio-economic rewards of rice farming

CARD also set an overall goal for further doubling rice production from 28 Million MT to 56 Million MT by 2030. The attainment of said vision heavily depends on the work of local and national governments.

CARD member countries were challenged upon return to ensure that they deliver on key targets in fulfillment of the NRDS such as:

- Reestablishment of each country's NRDS for those expiring in one year (as in the case of Liberia) to meet prevailing realities
- National government to make rice a priority for development partners as that is the only way development partners could finance rice projects at the country level
- National governments to take ownership of the CARD/NRDS

Some key challenges in SSA:

- Most farmers lack adequate knowledge of key elements for higher productivity such as proper field leveling, planting in line/rows, adapting new innovations
- Lack of functional irrigation systems
- Very few countries are committed to prioritizing rice development and meeting the CAADP Malabo Declaration aspirations
- Very limited budgetary support for rice development in some countries
- Climate change and the possibility of global food crisis recurrence
- High cost of inputs such as fertilizers, tractors, etc., that farmers find hard to access

As a non-profit and private sector entity, CHAP's next steps are as follow:

1. Work closely with the national NRDS country team to ensure that Liberia is fully on board and functional so as to meet key deliverables such as restructuring of the NRDS task force, requesting reversion of the NRDS, and carrying out consultative meetings in setting country priorities.
2. To ensure that the private sector and non-profit organizations have a role in the NRDS implementation
3. CHAP Liberia's focus with JICA support should be the following:
 - Irrigation development
 - Policy advocacy for the enactment of a seed law
 - Seed road map strategy development
 - Small mechanization strategy development
 - Capacity-building of smallholders and technical personnel from the private sector
 - Emphasis on policy advocacy for the agriculture sector to be free of politics as it is meant to be treated as a business
 - Work closely with NRDS Focal Point

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Recommendations:

1. JICA International ensures that JICA Liberia will have an agriculture project related to rice starting in 2019 that works with both non-profit and private sector
2. Capacity-building training by JICA be given to folks in the non-profit and private sector as well and not limited to government only (as my inclusion had made significant impact)
3. That in Africa, well-produced and milled rice be showcased at the upcoming TICAD VII in Japan next year. (This is something we are willing to work with CARD Secretariat)
4. Japanese private sector investors who express interest in coming to Liberia be encouraged by JICA Liberia and Government of Liberia to come invest in machinery and fertilizer manufacturing.
5. Access to finance for smallholders, non-profit and private sector actors in the rice value chain
6. CHAP and other private sector actors be given the opportunity to implement Rice project in the Country directly through JICA