Transforming Agriculture Extension in Africa

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Introduction: This conference, aimed at African Extension officers, is a follow-up to the international conference held in 2002 in Washington, DC on “Extension and Rural Development” sponsored by World Bank. Under the auspices of the Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture and supported by the German Development Corporation, the FAO Regional Office for Africa and the Canadian International Development Agency, this five day regional conference was organized to focus the discussion on applying this recent information to the Africa region. More than seventy participants drawn from 14 countries in Africa participated to customize the recommendations of the World Bank conference.

Purpose of Poster: Sharing background of this conference as well as some of the major conclusions, recommendations and way forward for the region. In addition, information on how to obtain copies of the conference proceedings.

Information to be Shared: Transforming Agricultural Extension in Africa promises to advance extension reforms by building upon recent analyses advocating extension reform, the conference reflects the positive trend of African governments seeking to alter traditional extension approaches. The old model of simply transferring prescriptive information on new production technologies has shifted to new approaches that enhance farmers’ abilities to confront issues and the larger universe of problems that constrain their incomes and livelihoods. Extension remains important to introduce new technologies that can help enhance small farmers’ incomes, but additional attention must go to developing agriculture so as to conserve natural resources and to enable farmers to enter into the global marketplace. Social and family issues, HIV/AIDS included, are important, as is the general strengthening of human and local social capital necessary for farmers to succeed in both farm and off-farm employment opportunities.

Conclusions: Need for National Extension services to develop their own strategic action plans. Exchange of experiences between Francophone, Anglophone and Lusaphone countries, which are normally kept separate, was highly appreciated. In the evaluation, 80% considered the conference excellent. Group work and conference organization scored 64% and 75% respectively. Need for National WORK shops after this regional TALK shop.