

**THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

**AGRICULTURAL SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS MEETING**

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**AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN TANZANIA**

**By**

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**MAFS**

# **AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN TANZANIA**

## **1. THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Agricultural research is an important support service to the agricultural sector in Tanzania. The main objective of agricultural research is to develop, test, disseminate and promote appropriate crop and livestock production technologies for the farming communities in the country. The main focus of the research effort has been to increase agricultural productivity through generation of client oriented technologies, addressing the needs, interests and opportunities of the technology users. Agricultural research is therefore directed towards identifying, and developing technological innovations that are both economically, socially and environmentally acceptable. Therefore, Agricultural research, in combination with other technical fields, provides additional modern and vital technologies and inputs to traditional farming knowledge.

The policy objective of agricultural research is to develop demand-driven, cost-effective technologies which can be disseminated to farmers for the development of the agricultural sector. The Agricultural Development Strategy, now in preparation, recognises agricultural research as one of the key support services necessary to transform Tanzania's agriculture into an effective, efficient and highly competitive sector capable of ensuring food security and fostering the nation's economic growth.

Through its network of research stations, the Department of Research and Development (DRD) has developed and disseminated several technologies to farmers aimed at improving agricultural and livestock productivity for food and export, enhancing farm income and food security. The development of these technologies has taken into consideration the existing agro-ecological and socio-economic variations, needs and opportunities of the various farming communities.

## 2. CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

The challenges which have been affecting agricultural research in Tanzania, like in many African countries include:

- Fragmentation of research among several institutions i.e. the Ministry, the University, TPRI and the private sector.
- A too large research agenda for the available resources i.e. there is pressure to do everything at the same time.
- Inadequate and often decreasing funding for research (often around 0.5% of the agricultural GDP).
- Rundown physical infrastructure.
- Low salary scales and remuneration of research staff, hence unable to attract and retain competent scientists, leading to limited human resource capacity.
- Weak Research – Extension - Farmer linkage.

Our major constraint as we face the future is the **human resource** capacity. The Department for Research and Development in the Ministry has been affected by the recruitment freeze effected since 1992. In these eight years, the Department has lost a substantial number of scientists mainly through retirement, death and departure for greener pastures. During this period, the Department has **lost** about 50 scientists. Consequently, we remain with a substantially reduced and **aging** cadre of scientists. Ironically the Department for Research has now become the most vulnerable poaching ground for trained professionals by other research institutions including the universities.

## 2. WAY FORWARD

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has started to address some of the challenges and constraints mentioned above so as to improve research outputs. Efforts have been initiated in the following areas:

- Collaborative research between the Ministry and Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) has been institutionalized through a NORAD grant of Tshs. 5.0 billion to carry out collaboration agricultural research in Eastern and Southern Highlands Zones for four years up to 2003/2004. We are therefore making use of SUA's human resource capacity to address identified research priorities in the above mentioned zones.
- Our research management and programming has been decentralized to the seven agro-ecological zones. These zones are empowered to identify their research priorities and allocate resources accordingly. The research agenda is therefore dictated by resource availability.
- In taking cognizance of the Government's financial resource limitations, the Ministry has now begun to involve some of the key stakeholders and beneficiaries of the research outputs to contribute to research funding. In this regard, research for tea, cashew, tobacco, sugarcane, pyrethrum, coffee and cotton is either wholly or mostly funded by cess collected from the sale of the respective commodity. Tea research is now fully privatized and coffee and tobacco research will shortly follow suit.
- Likewise, the DRD is in the process of establishing Zonal Agricultural Research Funds in each Zone whereby the District Councils and other stakeholders are requested to contribute some of their revenues to the fund to enable agricultural research address priority problems affecting agricultural productivity. So far the Funds have become fully operational in Lake, Northern, Central and Southern zones. We plan to sensitize more councils this year to solicit their interest in contributing funds to agricultural research.
- With regard to the physical infrastructure, the on-going World Bank - supported project, the Tanzania Agricultural Research Project, phase II (TARP II) is partly addressing this issue through the provision of transport, farm machinery, irrigation

facilities, office and laboratory equipment. The rehabilitation of some of the offices, laboratories and staff houses is also included in the credit.

- Tanzania is an active participant in regional agricultural research networks established to address research issues of common interest. Our scientists are involved in such networks for East and Central Africa (ASARECA) where donors like the EU and USAID have provided funds for research in excess of USD 35m for a period of five years starting this year. We are also participating in similar networks for the SADC countries (SACCAR) where the EU is considering providing a grant for research.
- In order to fulfill our mandate and to adequately achieve the envisaged goal of agricultural research in the country we humbly request the Government to lift the freeze on recruitment, at least for the scientists, as it did for the Universities two years ago. The Department of Research and Development needs to recruit at least 75 young scientists in the next 5 years (i.e. up to 2006).

I Submit.