



**AFRICAN UNION**  
Department of Agriculture and Rural Economy  
Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development

**UNION AFRICAINE**  
Département de l'Agriculture et de l'Economie Rurale  
Recherche et Développement des Cultures Vivrières  
dans les Zones Semi-Arides

**ROLE OF SAFGRAD AS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
ENTITY FOR FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE  
AGRICULTURE OF THE AFRICAN UNION:**

**A vision for harnessing science for food  
security and poverty eradication in Africa**

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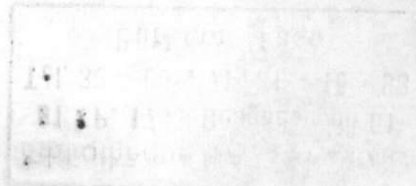
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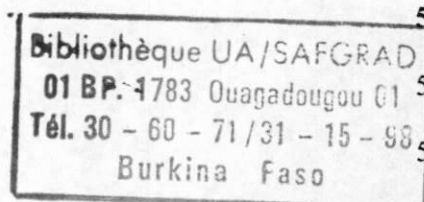


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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ADB</b>	:	African Development Bank
<b>ASARECA</b>	:	Association for Strengthening of Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa.
<b>AU</b>	:	African Union
<b>CCD</b>	:	Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>CGIAR</b>	:	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
<b>CORAF/WECARD</b>	:	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
<b>DDC</b>	:	Dryland Development Center
<b>ECA</b>	:	Economic Commission for Africa
<b>FAO</b>	:	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FARA</b>	:	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
<b>GDP</b>	:	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IAPSC</b>	:	Inter African Phytosanitary Council
<b>IARC</b>	:	International Agricultural Research Center
<b>IBAR</b>	:	Inter-African Bureau of Animal Resources
<b>ICRISAT</b>	:	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
<b>IDRC</b>	:	International Development Research Center
<b>IFAD</b>	:	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IITA</b>	:	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
<b>NARS</b>	:	National Agricultural Research Systems
<b>NGO</b>	:	Non Governmental Organization
<b>NEPAD</b>	:	New Partnership for African Development
<b>OAU</b>	:	Organization of African Unity
<b>RO</b>	:	Regional Organizations
<b>SRO</b>	:	Sub Regional Organization
<b>SACCAR</b>	:	Southern Africa Centre for Cooperation in Agricultural Research
<b>SADCC</b>	:	Southern African Development Coordination Conference
<b>SAFGRAD</b>	:	Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development
<b>SPAAR</b>	:	Special Programme for African Agricultural Research
<b>STRC</b>	:	Scientific, Technical and Research Commission
<b>SSA</b>	:	Sub-Saharan Africa
<b>USAID</b>	:	U.S. Agency for International Development
<b>UNDP</b>	:	United Nation Development Program

## FOREWORD

Food security and eradication of poverty remain the formidable development challenges of African countries in general, and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in particular. In this regard, SAFGRAD as hub of productive, economically and environmentally friendly technologies is well positioned to play a key role to particularly promote the development of science based agriculture and people centered socio-economic development.

The transition of the OAU to the African Union provides new impetus and opportunities to put African countries into the global path way of economic development as manifested by new initiatives of AU, for example, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Institutional orientations of programmes and objectives of the Commission and the subsequent creation of NEPAD also call for the consolidation of SAFGRAD technological and networking services into an efficient institution of the African Union for promoting food security, poverty eradication, and sustainable agricultural development.

This vision paper attempts to define the possible role and place of SAFGRAD in this new institutional context of the African Union. It provides an analysis of attained objectives, lessons learned, accomplishments and emerging opportunities of SAFGRAD. Furthermore, a new approach and strategies to facilitate the implementation of AU Programmes / Portfolios in SAFGRAD area of competence where it has a clear comparative advantage are proposed. Finally, new arrangements for the governance and sustained funding of the proposed institution are also suggested.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*The Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development (SAFGRAD) vision paper lies on three pillars: (1) the present context of the African agriculture; (2) the transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union that offers opportunities for rationalizing and restructuring existing OAU scientific offices; (3) the important experience and achievements obtained by SAFGRAD in terms of technology development and transfer, capacity building, diffusion of scientific information and resource mobilization.*

*A brief description of African agriculture, its weaknesses, its relationship to food security, income and employment generation, development of agro-industries, foreign exchange, in short poverty eradication and economic growth are outlined. The special case of semi-arid regions and peri-urban areas where most people live in absolute poverty, where droughts occur periodically and natural resources degradation is acute, has been emphasized.*

*The transition from OAU to AU has revealed that the attainment of AU goals and objectives requires not only new orientations and strategies, but also the revitalization of viable scientific offices inherited from OAU. Specialized AU offices and programs will achieve more impact if few conditions pertaining to sustained political and financial support, enabling institutional environment, support in resource mobilization could be achieved in the new context of the African Union and NEPAD. It is hypothesized that the new AU orientations and strategies will undoubtedly contribute to the attainment of an organization where most of the above conditions are in place.*

*The paper then emphasizes the comparative and collaborative advantages of SAFGRAD: broad experience in research and technology transfer activities in the priority areas of food security and poverty eradication, particularly for semi-arid zones; the pan-African characteristic of the program; the good working relationship and linkages established with a majority of national agricultural research systems of Africa, international research centers, sub-regional research organizations, and NGOs. Through these linkages and participation to sub-regional and regional fora / networks, SAFGRAD is well positioned to facilitate and conduct advocacy and dissemination activities leading to a widespread knowledge and adoption at the field level of AU policies in the specific areas of rural development, agriculture, food security and preservation of the environment. SAFGRAD has also good experience of collaboration with major donors of African agriculture. From 1977 to 2002, it has mobilized and managed about 50 million US dollars from donors and private sector in favor of agricultural research and technology transfer for Africa. It is expected that SAFGRAD capacity in the area of resource mobilization will be boosted in the new context through strong political support.*

*The vision of the revitalized SAFGRAD is to accelerate growth of agriculture by promoting the application of more productive technologies friendly to semi-arid environment.*

*The mandate of SAFGRAD is to contribute to the advancement of agricultural research, technology transfer and marketing as well as the management of natural resources by facilitating and coordinating the use of the scientific talents of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), International Agricultural Research Centers (IARCs) and Scientific Research*

*Organizations (SROs) to enhance food security, promote sustainable agriculture, development of irrigation agriculture, both in rural and peri-urban areas of the semi-arid zones of Africa.*

*SAFGRAD intends to strengthen its linkages with existing regional and sub-regional organizations such as the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), ASARECA, CORAF and SACCAR.*

*Within the African Union framework, SAFGRAD will fully take into account the programmes goals and objectives of the Commission pertaining to food security and poverty eradication in particular, the enhancement of the science based socio-economic development in general. A strong partnership and collaboration will be established with the other AU Bureaus or agencies as well as with relevant programme / portfolios: Rural Economy and Agriculture; Human Resources, Science and Technology; Gender Main Streaming in all aspects of socio- economic development, Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa.*

*In terms of programmes, SAFGRAD will emphasize programmes that will add value at the Continental level or across sub-regions: (1) facilitation / research coordination, exchange of information and experiences across sub-regions in the following domains of research: intensification and diversification of production systems; drought preparedness and mitigation; water and soil conservation; agricultural policies; development of technologies adapted to the socio-economic conditions of users; market development; inventory and enhancement of endogenous technologies; integrated natural resource management; biotechnology, biosecurity and biodiversity; ecological monitoring. (2) Building on SAFGRAD experience in technology transfer and marketing, promote the scaling out and wide dissemination of technologies, particularly those targeting food production and processing, income generation (particularly for women), peri-urban agriculture and preservation of the environment. Special projects to facilitate farmers' access to drought tolerant varieties, seeds, and know how on food banks establishments will be undertake in partnership with the AU Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine. (3) Contribution to the assessment of risks and advantage of biotechnology and promotion of clear and relevant regulations addressing both biosafety and biodiversity concerns in the use of biotechnology for poverty eradication and food security. SAFGRAD will also address human capacity development issues in agricultural research and investigate ways to put in place an Agriculture Technology Transfer Fund.*

*The revitalized SAFGRAD will be guided in terms of policy, programme orientation and relevance by a Steering Committee, consisting of key stakeholders, partners institutions and observers as follows: Representative of the Human Resources Development, Science and Technology Department; Representative of the Agriculture and Rural Economy Department; The directorate for Gender Mainstreaming in all aspects of socio economic development; Representative of the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa; Representative of the Executive Secretariat of STRC; One representative from each of the RECs; Representative of FARA; Representative of Private Sector in Agro-industry; Farmers' Associations/Organization/Groups Representative; Observers (as may be determined).*

*The core professional staff of the Revitalized SAFGRAD should remain lean and small since it operates through collaborative networks that enable NARS and technical professional staff of relevant institutions in benefiting countries to own and implement various programmes and project activities. It will be composed of a Director, a Research and Programme Officer, a*



*Production Market Officer, an Information & Outreach Services Officer and an Admin. & Finance Officer. Other staff may be established through specific projects funded by donors.*

*In terms of funding, AU allocates a minimum yearly budget for salaries of permanent staff and administrative costs of office. The funding of programmes will be secured through a resource mobilization strategy and relevant strategic programmes, with active support from AU Commission and other members of the Steering Committee. Special projects may also be funded through AU and NEPAD special funds such as the AU Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa.*

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