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**Summary Report of the**

**First IAALD Africa Chapter**

**Conference**

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**Held at Hotel Intercontinental, Nairobi**  
**21 - 26 May 2006**

**May 2006**

Supporting agencies and partners include CTA, IAALD, RAIN of ASARECA, IDRC, HIVOS, FAO, CABI, ITOCA, FARA, IICD, CGIAR, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Moi University and the Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange

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## List of Acronyms

AGORA	Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture
AGRIS	International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology
AHILA	Association for Health Information and Libraries in Africa
AICKM	Agricultural Information, Communication and Knowledge Management
AJOL	African Journals Online
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
CAADP	Comprehensive Agenda for African Agricultural Development
CABI	CABI
CD-ROM	Compact disc read only memory
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
HINARI	Health InterNetwork Access Research Initiative
HIVOS	Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking
IAALD	International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists
IAC	International Agricultural Centre
ICM	Information and Communication Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IM	Information Management
IMARK	Information Management Resource Kit
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
INIIT	International Institute of Information Technology
IT	Information Technology
ITOCA	Information Training and Outreach Center for Africa
KACE	Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange
KARI	Kenya Agricultural Research Institute
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAL	National Agricultural Library
NARS	National Agricultural Research System
PERI	Programme for Enhancement of Research Information
RAIN	Regional Agricultural Information Network
REPA	Reseau d'Expertise des Politiques Agricoles
TEEAL	The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library
WAICENT	World Agricultural Information Centre

# 1.0 Background

The International Association for Agricultural Information Specialists (IAALD) was established in 1955 in Gand, Belgium and is committed to ensuring creation, capture, access and dissemination of information to achieve a more productive and sustainable use of the world's land, water, and renewable natural resources. IAALD's guiding principles are to:

- Connect agricultural information specialists world wide;
- Convene meetings and catalyse dialogue among stakeholders;
- Communicate and advocate the value of knowledge and information;
- Collaborate with members and other partner organisations, facilitating educational and other opportunities.

The network links agricultural information specialists worldwide by providing a platform for information dissemination, exchange and knowledge sharing; catalyzing dialogue among all agricultural information stakeholders; improving the status and practice of agricultural information management and dissemination; and facilitating educational and other opportunities across agricultural information communities.

A number of conferences have been held world-wide to provide a forum for sharing experiences, ideas and challenges and working out strategies on how to address these objectives. A Congress was held in Nairobi, Kenya, 7-12 March 1983 and the second meeting in Africa was held in Dakar, Senegal, 24-28 January 2000. The African group attempted to come together to discuss the formation of an IAALD African Chapter but it did not prove easy to plan virtually. Agricultural information professionals in Africa however felt the urgent need to contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially to reduce the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day, and those who suffer from hunger and needed a forum that enables them to participate in the various efforts being made to improve food security and livelihoods especially among the rural communities. During the 11<sup>th</sup> IAALD World Congress held in Lexington, Kentucky, USA from 11-19 May 2005, a group of agricultural information professionals from Africa got together and decided the time was ripe to start the IAALD Africa Chapter. The group mobilized colleagues in Africa and formed an organizing committee that helped organize the IAALD Africa Conference at the Intercontinental Hotel, Nairobi, from 21-26 May 2006.

## 2.0 Introduction

The First IAALD Africa Conference aimed at creating a platform to share experiences and challenges that would help mobilise and apply agricultural information and knowledge to improve food security, win the fight against hunger, and enhance the livelihoods of rural communities across the African continent.

The conference brought together major stakeholders in agriculture and related fields, especially information and communication professionals, researchers, policy makers, extension officers, farmers, information providers, private sector players and development partners actively involved in agricultural development, among others. A total of 221 delegates attended the conference from Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

The theme of the Conference was “Managing Agricultural Information for Sustainable Food Security and Improved Livelihoods in Africa” .

The specific objectives of the conference were:

- To showcase promising agricultural information activities and results in Africa.
- To exchange ideas and help develop the skills of African agricultural information specialists in information handling and management.
- To create a platform where agriculture information professionals, scientists and other stakeholders interested in African agricultural information can interact and learn from each other’s experiences.
- To establish and launch an African chapter of IAALD.

Presentations and discussions at the Conference addressed the following five broad sub-themes:

- Building capacity in agricultural information resources management
- Enabling policy for agricultural information management
- Narrowing the digital divide
- Knowledge sharing and information systems for networking and partnerships
- Meeting the information needs of stakeholders

In sum, 19 papers were presented by participants from Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Germany, The Netherlands and Sudan. In addition a panel discussion on “Enabling Policy for Agricultural Information Management” was held. Three panellists representing information policy, technology and agricultural extension delivery institutions shared their experiences from East and West Africa. Side events organized before and during the conference included workshops, seminars, meetings and training sessions, as well as exhibitions focusing on building capacity in agricultural information resources management.

The conference was opened by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, on behalf of Hon. Kipruto Arap Kirwa, Minister for Agriculture, Republic of Kenya on 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 2006. Prof. Andrew Kaniki, the Executive Director Knowledge Management and Strategy, National Research Foundation, South Africa, delivered the keynote address at the opening ceremony. Representatives of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) delivered statements. The IAALD Africa Chapter was launched on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2006.

The conference was made possible with support from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists (IAALD), Regional Agricultural Information Network (RAIN) of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern Africa (ASARECA), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Moi University - Kenya, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (HIVOS), Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa (ITOCA), CABI , the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), the Ministry of Agriculture (Kenya), the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Kenya Agricultural Commodity Exchange (KACE) among others.

## 3.0 Conference Workshops

Participants discussed the issues arising from the workshops. The following outcomes were noted:

1. Scholarly Publications Masterclass: Improving Visibility and Use of Journals (*INASP, CABI, AGORA, HINARI*)
  - African journals are not captured in the indexing and abstracting services hence are invisible
  - African journals are mainly institutional based and this leads to rapid demise and hence their unsustainability
2. Training for AGORA and TEEAL (*ITOCA*)
  - Appreciation of the value of information is often not translated into resource allocation
  - There is inadequate marketing of electronic resources
  - Bandwidth, quality and cost for Internet connectivity remained a challenge limiting the access and use of e-resources in Africa
  - Collaboration of partners in AGORA/TEEAL is going on well and should be encouraged and the programs expanded.
  - Training of users is a key component on the success of e-resource programs in Africa
  - There is also need to increase local content in information dissemination channels.
3. Investing in Agricultural Information (*RAIN of ASARECA, FAO*)
  - There is the need to assist information managers to develop information strategies for their organisations and to establish new structures and procedures for effective information management
  - There is the need for a policy framework to be institutionalized to support the operations of the information system
  - There is the need to build capacity in information resources planning
  - There is the need to sensitize the policy makers and end users of information resources
4. Knowledge Sharing in Agricultural Research (*CGIAR*)
  - Application of good KM practices had led to team work and change in how the CGIAR conducts business
  - Knowledge management has helped change traditional meetings to become more human and non formal. There is therefore the need to adopt some unconventional approaches for doing certain things.
5. 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the CGIAR Information Managers' Consortium (*CGIAR*)
  - The meeting focused on the development of the CGIAR Virtual Library and discussed issues pertaining to management and use of the vast information resources that have been accumulated over the years

- Experience was shared on handling online journal access, institutional repositories and partnerships in conducting joint surveys.
6. Open Access: Impact on Librarians and Collection Development (*INASP/CABI*)
- There is the need to build institutional repositories
  - African researchers should be encouraged to publish more
  - There is the need to promote the Open Access Initiative
  - There is a need for improving visibility and use of journals
  - As a way forward, those in academia should pick up some of the issues raised, especially on the use of journals by researchers. There is need to emphasize accessibility and use of scholarly journals.
  - Intranets, such as the AIFA project, are useful in sharing information among IAALD members. The incoming IAALD office should put in place appropriate mechanisms for information sharing.

## 4.0 Highlights of the main Conference

The First IAALD Africa Conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya, May 21-26 May 2006. The opening ceremony was presided over by Mr. Dennis Rangi, Executive Director - Development, CABI. The conference was officially opened by Dr. Romano Kiome, Permanent Secretary on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Kenya. Dr. Joseph Kiplan'gat of the Moi University gave the welcome address. This was followed by a statement from IAALD by Mrs. Dorothy Mukhebi, IAALD 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. Statement from FAO was delivered by Dr. Stephen Rudgard, Chief WAICENT Capacity Building and Outreach) while that from CTA was delivered by Dr. Joseph Mugah - Manager Information Services and Products Department, on behalf of the Director of CTA Dr. Hansjorg Neun.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Andrew Kaniki, the Executive Director of Knowledge Management and Strategy, National Research Foundation, South Africa. Prof. Kaniki was emphatic that one way of eradicating extreme poverty, ensuring food security and improved livelihoods in Africa and attaining the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was through effective management of agricultural knowledge. He stressed the need to develop professional relationships and networking as well as strengthen and consolidate the already existing ones. He highlighted some critical issues and challenges that were not covered by the Conference sub-themes which were important for Africa. These were metadata and interoperability of systems, permanent archiving of agricultural and other scientific data, piracy and security of data and information, intellectual property rights as well as who pays for the data production and management in the era of open access. He finally stressed on the need to monitor and develop valuation frameworks for programmes designed and implemented to assess their impact on agriculture. He challenged participants to make IAALD a forum for generating African solutions to problems in managing agricultural information and cautioned about re-inventing the wheel. According to Prof. Kaniki, the African Chapter should lobby bodies such as NEPAD to put agricultural information on the Comprehensive Agenda for African Agricultural Development (CAADP) and the agendas of international development partners, among other things.

Discussions and papers presented focused on:

#### 4.1 **Plenary Session 1: FAO's Panel Discussion on Enabling Policy for Agricultural Information Management**

This session was chaired by Dr. Stephen Rudgard, Chief WAICENT Capacity Building and Outreach, FAO, Italy. The panelists for this session were Dr. Romano Kiome, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya; Dr. Thiendou Niang, Director, Reseau d'Expertise des Politiques Agricoles (REPA) and Ms. Margaret Nyambura-Ndung'u, Director, International Institute of Information Technology (INIIT), Kenya.

It was noted that most African countries lack information and communication technology (ICT) policies, let alone agricultural information policies. There is the need, therefore, to provide leadership in championing ICT policy, and also harmonize information transfer channels to ensure that appropriate media is used in reaching end users. Agricultural information management ought to be put onto national development agendas.

Participants considered the possibility of 'cut and paste', or the extent to which countries can replicate ICT policies already developed in other African countries. This was considered practical, to some extent, but different countries may have varying sectoral priorities. Development of sector-specific agricultural information and communication policy is paramount. Very few countries in Africa have both ICT policies and also agricultural information and communication strategies well laid out.

The conference recommended the development of a strategy for lobbying for agricultural information policy formulation and implementation in all African countries; and the need to sensitize policy makers on the importance of information in order to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for agricultural information communication and management. Further, there is need to develop guidelines and standards for formulating and implementing such policies.

Key issues presented and discussed were that:

- Most countries do not have agricultural information and ICT policies, except Rwanda, Tanzania and Ghana. Uganda and Kenya have drafts
- There is the need for leaders to champion the formulation of ICT policies to ensure their success (e.g. Rwanda's policy was championed by the President)
- ICT policies must be aligned to national development policies
- There is the need to put agricultural information management on national development agenda.
- There is the need for harmonisation of transfer channels to ensure that appropriate media is used to reach end users

## Plenary Session 2: Narrowing the Digital Divide

This session was chaired by Mr. Jonathan Campaigne, Director, Pride Africa, Kenya. Papers presented include: Bridging the Information and Knowledge Gap between Urban and Rural Communities through Rural Knowledge Centers: Case Studies from East Africa by Ms. Jane Frances Asaba et al., CABI Africa Regional Centre, Kenya; Agricultural Information: Improving Access to Remote Areas in Tanzania by Mr. Barnabas Kapange, National Agricultural Services Support Programme, Tanzania; Does the CD-ROM Database still have a Role to Play in Bridging Africa's Digital Divide? by Mrs. Vivienne Oguya, CTA, the Netherlands and La Contribution du Fonds International pour le Developpement Agricole a la Réduction de la Fracture Numérique en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre by Mr. Thierry Koukou Kpehor and Mr. Gilles Mersadier, FIDAFRIQUE, Senegal.

Whereas there are many divides of concern to information professionals, the conference noted that the digital gap limits access to information due to poor ICT infrastructure and high cost of telecommunication. Bandwidth cost in Africa, for example, is ten times more than in Europe and the US. There is need to develop regional networks and work together to lobby for lower costs and expansion of bandwidths.

The need to develop information management skills of all stakeholders - from researchers to farmers were emphasized and especially the need to empower women in the use and application of ICTs. Participation of the private sector was noted as critical in narrowing the digital divide.

ICTs are changing rapidly and creating more opportunities for reliable and affordable access e.g. V-SAT. However, sustainability of ICT projects is still a big challenge in most Africa countries. A portfolio of technologies is required to enable users, especially communities choose what is appropriate and affordable. Dependence on donor funding is not sustainable and there is therefore the need for home-grown initiatives for fund-raising through government and private sector participation.

In order to bridge the digital divide, participants advocated for stronger initiatives to create awareness on ICTs available for agricultural information communication and management, and skills development for all stakeholders in the agricultural sector.

Key issues presented and discussed were that:

- The digital gap limits access to information due to poor ICT infrastructure and high cost of telecommunication and bandwidth
- There is the need for private sector participation, especially to facilitate access to venture capital
- There is the need to create awareness of the applications of the ICT tools
- There is the need to develop the skills of all the stakeholders (from researchers down to the farmers)
- There is the need to collect all the information materials to enable us to create the appropriate content
- There is the need to empower women on the use and application of ICT tools  
There is the need to address the language and literacy barriers that tend to limit the use of ICT tools

- Sustainability of ICT projects remains a challenge, therefore, there is the need for government participation and fund raising

### 4.3 Plenary Session 3: Building Capacity in Agricultural Information Resources Management

This session was chaired by Dr. Thiendou Niang, REPA, Senegal). Papers presented were: FAO's Capacity Building Initiatives in Accessing, Documenting, Communicating and Managing Agricultural Information (Dr. Justin Chisenga, FAO Regional Office for Africa, Ghana, Mr. Johannes Keizer, Dr. Stephen Rudgard, FAO, Italy); Open Access and Open Source: Considerations for Agricultural Academic Libraries in Promoting Collaboration and Sharing of Information and Knowledge in Tanzania (Ms. Edda T. Lwoga and Wanyenda Chilimo, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania); Building Capacity for Sharing Forestry Information in Africa (Mrs. Margaret Sraku-Lartey, Forestry Research Institute, Ghana) and AFRISAT : un Exemple de Developpement des Capacities en Gestion des Ressources d'Informations (Mrs. Boukenem F. Diallo, AFRISAT, Mali).

It was observed that there are inadequate skills and strategies for managing digital information in Africa. Also, there is an acute shortage of local content in websites and other information channels. Africa also suffers from poor access to online information and open access resources.

Generally, participants recommended the development of training programmes and a consortium of trainers in various fields, including scientific writing, publishing, information communication and management, digitisation and repackaging of information, as well as website design and management.

The key issues raised were:

- There is absence of skills to manage digital information
- There is a low level of ICT skills among information specialists and other stakeholders
- There is inadequate access to local content
- There is the need to address the poor writing skills of some of the research scientists
- There is poor access to online information and open access sources
- There is the need to promote the use of e-resources for capacity building, and establishment of open access archives.

### 4.4 Parallel Session 1: Knowledge Sharing and Information Systems for Networking and Partnerships

This session was chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Dodsworth, CABI, UK. Papers presented were Knowledge Sharing, Information and Innovation (Mr. Dennis Rangi, Roger Day and Jane Frances Asaba, CABI Africa Regional Centre, Kenya); The Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture: Information Exchange through the LEISA Magazine and Partner Editions (Ms. Karen Hampson and Ms Anita Ingevall, ILEIA, the Netherlands); Impact of Privatisation of Advisory Services on Agricultural

Knowledge and Information Systems: Some Evidence from 'LEC' Knowledge management in Baniloara, Benin (Mr. Ismail M. Moussa, Huboldt University of Berlin, Germany); Harnessing Institutional Alliances and Partnerships in Agricultural Information Systems in Kenya (Mrs. Rachel Rege, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Kenya); Towards an Agricultural Information Network in Sudan (Ms Rafaa A. Ghobrial, Documentation and Information Centre, Sudan and Ms Ahlam I. Musa, Agricultural Research and Technologies Corporation, Sudan) and Agricultural Knowledge Linking Systems and their Effect on the Farmer (Prof. Joseph B. Ojiambo, School of Information Sciences, Moi University, Kenya).

It was noted that information and knowledge are crucial ingredients of food security and sharing of these global resources would determine the performance of innovative systems developed at all levels. Different communication approaches of knowledge sharing were discussed and knowledge sharing through participation (dialogue plus action) was considered most effective as it was more "people-centred" than "message-centred" and it emphasises "discovery rather than instruction".

Partnerships and networks were considered crucial in promoting sustainability and shared learning and opening up new opportunities. Different examples of partnerships were discussed including alliances, consortia, cooperatives and joint ventures. There is a need for developing appropriate information communication management policies and strategies.

There is the need to train stakeholders in ICT-related issues to ensure their "participation" in information generation and sharing activities that are intended for them. Farmers, extension workers and researchers need to be properly integrated to ensure vertical and horizontal information and knowledge flow.

IAALD could play a key role towards developing networks and partnerships and information portals for sharing information at national, regional and international levels. Also, of great importance is the recognition of the evolving nature of the role of information professionals as well as the changes in approaches to communicating S&T information and knowledge, hence the need for paradigm shifts in training of communicators and in re-orienting curricula towards - meeting these needs (e.g. managing digital collections). Overall, there is a need to look at communication processes, inter-sectoral delivery systems and the policies that govern them. Focus should be put on strengthening linkages between all players to ensure food security in Africa.

**The key issues raised were:**

- There is the need to train all the stakeholders in ICT-related issues to ensure that the information generated gets to them.
- There is the need for networking to facilitate sharing and exchange of information
- There is the need for all the stakeholders to work together and share information and knowledge (farmers, extensionists, researchers, policy makers) to ensure horizontal and vertical flows
- There is the need to diversify the ways of conducting meetings and workshops to ensure that adequate knowledge is shared
- There is the need to build portals to facilitate the r standardization and value addition processes instead of duplicating efforts
- There is a need for portals for sharing information and knowledge

- There is the need to include communication skills in the curricula of professional courses

## 4.5 Parallel Session 2: Meeting the Information Needs of Stakeholders

This session was chaired by Mr. Clement Entsua-Mensah of the Institute for Scientific and Technological Information, Ghana. Papers presented were: "Production and Market Information Strategy for Fisheries Production: a Case Study of Fisherfolk Cooperatives of Ijaws of Ondo State Coastal Communities" (Dr. Yemi Akegbejo-Samsons, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria); "Using Participatory Communication for Transferring Agricultural Technologies: Experience of Farmer Groups" (Ms Harriet Muyinza, Department of Crop Science, Ambrose Agona, National Post-Harvest Research Programme, Kawanda Agricultural Research Institute, Uganda - Student Presentation); "Rural Development Networks Online: a Web-based Agricultural Information System" (Mr. Dominic Juma and Ms Esther Kahinga, School of Information Sciences, Moi University - Student Presentation) and "Challenges and Opportunities in Developing Proactive Information Acquisition Practices among Smallholder Farmers for Empowerment and Poverty Reduction" (Ms Doris Matovelo, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania, Prof. Jangawe Msuya, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Prof. Egbert de Smet, University of Antwerp, Belgium).

It was noted that information and information needs assessments are important in ensuring that information is tailored to meet expressed demands and needs. This is because different stakeholders have different information needs, and there is therefore the need to identify all the different stakeholders as well as their specific needs. In the agricultural sector, it is important that the appropriate media is identified for transmitting information to farmers. Again, it is important to ensure that the information is repackaged in appropriate formats and languages for the intended users. There is also the need to integrate impact assessment into information management in order to monitor and evaluate successes and failures.

Participants recommended the use of community-based FM radio stations in communicating agricultural information in rural areas because radio is cheaper. There is also the need not only to provide balanced information, but also to promote the development and use of local content.

### The key issues raised were:

- There is the need to conduct information needs assessments (information mapping) to enable information professionals to tailor their services to specific demands and target audiences
- There is the need to bring synergy to the numerous initiatives in the region
- There is the need to repackage information to ensure appropriate content, format and language
- The charges of the media houses for repackaging and airing agricultural content is too prohibitive and this tend to limit the information dissemination activities.

## **4.6 Plenary Session 4: Reports from Parallel Sessions and Pre-Conference Workshops/Seminars**

This session was chaired by Mr. Peter Ballantyne, IAALD. Highlights from each of the parallel sessions were presented to ensure participants who did not attend the sessions were kept abreast of the discussions.

- 4.6.1 Investing in Agricultural Information (RAIN/FAO) Ms Jacqueline Nyagahima) (See Section 3.0 (3))
- 4.6.2 Knowledge sharing in African Agricultural Research, CGIAR - See Section 3.0 (4)
- 4.6.3 Training for AGORA and TEEAL in the Larger Context of Online Research Competences, ITOCA (See Section 3.0 (2))
- 4.6.4 Scholarly Publications Masterclass: Improving the Visibility and Use of Journals, INASP (See Section 3.0 (1))
- 4.6.5 Report on Parallel Session 1: Knowledge Sharing and Information Systems for Networking and Partnerships (See Section 4.4)
- 4.6.6 Report on Parallel Session 2: Meeting the Information Needs of Stakeholders (See Section 4.5)

## **4.7 The CTA Buzz Session**

The CTA ICT “Buzz Session” took place on the evening of Wednesday - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2006 by the poolside, which provided an amicable ambience for relaxing, letting loose and sharing and exchanging experiences on different ICT initiatives in Africa and how these were transforming lives. The session was facilitated by Dr. Joseph Mugah - Manager, Information Services and Products Department, CTA. Several individuals shared their experiences on how ICTs were being employed to improve access to agricultural information including market information using market information points, using cellular phones (short messaging service), telecentres and use of satellite radio among others. A key recommendation from this session was that there is a need to promote and scale up the use of appropriate and innovative communication media (ICTs) that cater for different stakeholders e.g. satellite radio and cellular phones.

The key issues raised were:

- There is the need to build private-public partnerships to provide market platforms for farmers
- Activities among various stakeholders should be undertaken in a collaborative manner
- Innovative ICTs should be used for managing and sharing information and knowledge.

## **4.8 Special Sessions and Meetings**

4.8.1 Developing a Post-Graduate Programme for Enhancement of Skills in Agricultural Information and Communication Management in the ASRAECA Region (RAIN/ASARECA)

- There is inadequate human resources with skills in agricultural information, communication and knowledge management (AICKM)
- There is a need to develop curricular that addresses these gaps and seek for funds for post graduate training to strengthen/build capacity within the region

- It was recommended that RAIN develops curricular to strengthen and build AICKM skills, collaborate with on-going initiatives and avoid duplication

#### 4.8.2 Developing Information Literacy: a Participatory Workshop (IUFRO)

This workshop was organized by the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) and gave an opportunity for participants to share problems and solutions and identify 'best practices' in the area of information management. The workshop was based on the seven pillars of information literacy model. Topics discussed included:

- Recognizing the need for information and being able to develop information management strategies
- Constructing strategies for locating information by choosing appropriate resources and identifying constraints affecting accessibility
- Developing electronic document management systems to match needs and devising an integrated approach to managing disparate resources
- Organizing and communicating information. Participants discussed citation, copyright and plagiarism and the importance in building electronic communities and networks.

Participants shared their challenges and constraints with respect to information management and the preservation of institutional knowledge. It was agreed that the range of information resources now potentially available to end users is vast and growing, therefore, information specialists face a huge task in raising awareness of the materials available, facilitating their use and increasing their accessibility, relevance and user-friendliness. It was recommended that more effort should be made to educate information managers on some of these issues.

#### 4.8.3 Experiences with Access and Use of Science and Technology Online Resources in Africa: Focus on AGORA (Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (ITOCA)

- AGORA and TEEAL programs are playing a vital role in addressing the needs of access to peer-reviewed S & T scholarly literature for research and teaching in Africa
- There is the need to create awareness and build capacity for S & T e-resources such as TEEAL and AGORA at institutions
- The recommendations were to further increase the journal titles and resources in both programs and find means to assist institutions with addressing internet infrastructure development in order to fully benefit from the programs
- This could be achieved through further collaboration with other interested partners.

#### 4.8.4 Open Access: Impact on Librarians and Collection Development (INASP)

- There is a need to build institutional repositories, share resources and collaborate in journal publishing to avoid departmental / institutional and unsustainable journals
- African researchers should be encouraged to use open access facilities to publish their research outputs and share their findings with the global scientific community. This would ensure a south-south and south-north flow of information and knowledge.

### 4.9 Educational Tours

Delegates were taken on educational tours to the Sian Flower Farm in Karen; the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and the Agricultural Information Resource Centre, Ministry of Agriculture. The trips exposed delegates to farming techniques and agricultural information resources for different target audiences.

## 5.0 Recommendations

Dorothy Mukhebi presented the conference report which the participants discussed and adopted. The conference came up with a number of recommendations:

### 5.1 Pre- conference Workshops

- AGORA and TEEAL Workshop
  - There is need for continued collaboration in providing access and capacity building for e-resources through the programs in Africa.
  - Collaborative programmes with such organizations as FARA, NEPAD and FAO can spur on and increase local content development and access in AGORA and TEEAL programs.
- Open Access
  - There should be collaboration in journal publishing to avoid duplication and enhance rationalisation of resources
  - Work with research managers to develop strategies that will motivate researchers to publish more using open access publishing channels
- Scholarly publications: improving visibility and use of journals
  - African publishers should take advantage of open access to make their journals more visible
  - There should be collaboration between African publishers to minimise overlap.
- Investing in agricultural Information
  - Information managers should be assisted to develop information strategies
  - Information managers should adopt and establish new structures and procedures for effective information management including outsourcing for skills and competencies that organisations may not have and evaluating information products and services

### 5.2 Recommendations from Opening Ceremony Presentations

- Standards be developed to address issues related to meta data and interoperability of information systems
- Guidelines and support be provided on how to handle piracy and security of information and data
- A monitoring and evaluation framework for information management and dissemination be put in place
- Priorities be set for agricultural information management issues
- The chapter should provide a collective lobbying platform on agricultural information management

### 5.3 Enabling Policy for Agricultural Information Management

- A strategy be developed to lobby for policy formulation and implementation
- Policy and decision makers be sensitised on the importance of information so that adequate resources are allotted for ICKM for agricultural research for development
- Guidelines and standards for formulating and implementing information policies be developed
- Document and share experiences in policy development and implementation

### 5.3 Narrowing the Digital Divide

- Strategies be developed for raising awareness of ICTs for development
- Development and implementation of ICT policies be encouraged
- The use of CD-ROMs be promoted to bridge the digital divide e.g. TEEAL
- More women be trained in the use and application of ICTs e.g. use of knowledge resource centres

- Portfolio or options of ICTs for different categories of stakeholders be provided e.g. radio for farmers
- Document and share experiences in policy development and implementation

#### **5.4 Building Capacity for Agricultural Information Resources Management**

- Arrange for training in ICM, web design, digitisation, repackaging of information and monitoring and evaluation
- Promote the use of electronic resources for capacity building e.g. iMARK
- Establish open access archives

#### **5.5 Parallel Sessions**

##### **5.5.1 Parallel Session 1: Knowledge Sharing and Information Systems for Networking and Partnerships**

- Innovative ways of organising workshops and meetings should be adopted e.g. the CGIAR chat show, hot issues and 'staff/management mix' discussions
- Innovative ways of reaching farmers and other target audiences must be developed e.g. targeted information services
- Train stakeholders on knowledge sharing techniques
- Build partnerships and strengthen networking activities.

##### **5.5.2 Parallel Session 2: Meeting the Information Needs of Stakeholders**

- Use community-based FM radio stations for airing agricultural information. UNESCO is promoting multimedia "radio in a box" and communities with interest can come together and seek help
- Carry out information mapping of stakeholders
- Promote the development and use of local content (in local languages and appropriate formats)

## **6.0 Launching of the IAALD Africa Chapter**

Mr Peter Ballantyne started off the process of launching the IAALD Africa Chapter by outlining the expectations of the incoming Committee. Although draft bylaws of the Chapter had been prepared and distributed for comments by registered members of IAALD, participants agreed to revisit these guidelines after the officers have been elected and have settled down. The by-laws will be discussed through d-groups.

Registered members of IAALD discussed the mode of nomination and election of the interim IAALD Africa Chapter Executive Committee. The structure of the committee was also discussed and agreed upon.

In a very brief, fair and transparent election process, the IAALD Africa members attending the 2006 conference at the Intercontinental Hotel, Nairobi, elected an interim executive committee to take the plans of the association forward. The 90 IAALD members (based in Africa) attending the week-long conference elected officers to the Chapter and charged them to set the agenda for the next three years. They are supposed to come out with activities and plans as well as define appropriate follow up steps to the issues discussed at the conference. Finally, they are to ensure that the Chapter is firmly established.

The elected Executive Committee members are:

- |                   |                                |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) President      | Justin Chisenga (Zambia/Ghana) |
| 2) Vice President | Joseph Kiplang'at (Kenya)      |
| 3) Vice President | Dady Demby (DRC/Senegal)       |
| 4) Secretary      | Gracian Chimwaza (Zimbabwe)    |
| 5) Treasurer      | Hilda Munyua (Kenya)           |
| 6) Member         | Rosaline Njike (Cameroon)      |
| 7) Member         | Elvira Timba (Mozambique)      |
| 8) Member         | Dickson Baguma (Uganda)        |
| 9) Member         | Mamoun Mohamed (Sudan)         |

The IAALD Africa Chapter was officially launched amid cheers and singing and dancing. The ceremony was presided over by the IAALD President - Mr. Peter Ballantyne and his Executive committee. The climax of the ceremony was a role play, symbolising the birth of the new "baby" - the IAALD Africa Chapter.

IAALD President: "*Mtoto amezaliwa*" - Swahili for a baby is born

IAALD Executive Committee: "*Who will own the baby?*"

IAALD Africa Executive Committee: "*We will own the baby*"

On the role of IAALD Africa, participants observed that there is need for development of D-groups to guide discussions on the various issues raised at the conference. The incoming committee is expected to develop an 'Action Plan', clearly indicating the responsibilities of various institutions and setting time frames for implementation. The committee was charged with the responsibility of acting as a coordination body to avoid duplication of efforts. The Chapter will provide a collective lobbying platform on agricultural information and provide inputs to international bodies such as NEPAD and others. Other roles for the IAALD African Chapter were: to provide a forum for generating African solutions to challenges relating to effective management of agricultural information, provide a forum for setting priorities for effective management of agricultural information and provide the formal and informal networking base. IAALD Africa members were urged to actively participate in addressing issues and challenges to make a difference. Peter Ballantyne invited the members to attend the next IAALD World Congress to be held in Japan in 2008.

In his capacity as President of the Africa Chapter, Justin Chisenga unveiled his priorities for the next 100 days which included finalising the Chapter By-laws, developing the Africa Chapter website as a communication tool, updating the D-groups used while planning for the conference and working towards establishing regional round tables for the chapter.

## 7.0 Closing Ceremony

Prof. Washitemi, Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Research and Extension at Moi University - who represented the Vice Chancellor of Moi University, Prof. David Some -

delivered the closing address of the first IAALD Africa Chapter conference. He congratulated the organisers for holding a successful conference and Prof. Joseph Ojiambo, Dean, School of Information Sciences, Moi University gave the vote of thanks.

## 8.0 Conclusion

The conference objectives were fully achieved and delegates shared and exchanged experiences, ideas and best practices. A number of training sessions were held during the pre-conference workshops on various aspects of information and knowledge management. A number of decisions were taken with a view to helping to improve access to agricultural information to all the different categories of users. Furthermore, networking took place and relationships were established and strengthened. Most significantly, the IAALD Africa Chapter was officially launched to spearhead activities that address the challenges raised and to work towards implementing the recommendations of the conference. Participants received CD-ROMs containing full text of papers presented. These are also available at the IAALD Africa website at the following URL: <http://www.IAALD-Africa.org>.