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**Communiqué at the end of the One-day 4th APRNet National
Multi-Stakeholders' Forum on: "Making Agricultural Policy Research
Work for End-Users"**

**Organized by the Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet)
on Wednesday, 23rd August 2017 at Valencia Hotel, Wuse II, Abuja,
Nigeria**



Preamble

The One-day National Multi-Stakeholders Engagement Forum recognizes the efforts of the present administration led by President Muhammad Buhari towards diversifying the economy of Nigeria through sustained agricultural transformation. The forum was organised by the Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet) and aimed at exploring best options for making agricultural policy research work for end-users thereby improving the livelihood of farmers and other agriculture industry players. The APRNet is a group of professionals from different areas of specializations in the Agriculture sector working through inclusive engagement of multi-stakeholders relevant for sustainable agricultural development in Nigeria and Africa via evidence-based advocacies for decision making to advance Agriculture and other agro-allied enterprises. The forum, which was well-attended included representatives from diverse fields with interest in agriculture and rural development both at national and international levels. It commenced with an opening speech by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, FMARD (Chief Audu Ogbeh ably represented by Alh. M. Azeez of FMARD), opening speeches from The President APRNet, Dr. Anthony O. Onoja; IFPRI-Nigeria leader Dr. George Mavrotas and a key note presentation by Professor A. Voh, the Executive Secretary, Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN) and The Vice Chancellor of University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Prof. Benjamin Ozumba, represented by Prof. A. I. Achike).

Other highlights of the forum included a presentation on "The Role of Multi-Stakeholders in Addressing Food Security and Other Critical Challenges of Agricultural Development in Nigeria" by Dr. Anthony O. Onoja (President, APRNet and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Port Harcourt), short remark by Dr. George Mavrotas (International Food Policy Research Institute, IFPRI-Nigeria Programme leader) with commendations on the level of success recorded by the current APRNet leadership under the regime of Dr. Anthony O. Onoja and the entire Executive Council of APRNet in areas of journal publication, seminars, workshops, research and other deliverables; and finally, a keynote address titled: *Sustainable Agricultural Research for End-Users in Contemporary Nigeria* presented by Prof. N.E.S. Lale (Vice Chancellor, University of Port Harcourt (represented by Prof. O.M. Adesope). The Volume 2 of the Nigerian Agricultural Policy Research Journal (NAPReJ) was also unveiled and shared freely among the participants at the event.

Lead papers presented were: (1) *Success Stories and Challenges of Bridge Building Across Nigerian Agricultural Value Chains: The Kogi State Experience* by Barr. Kehinde Oloruntoba (Honourable Commissioner for Agriculture, Kogi State)



represented by Mr. Titus Adakole, (2) *Strengthening Collaborations Among Agricultural Professional Societies, Policy Makers, Mass Media and scientists for Improved Advocacy and Agricultural Development in Nigeria* by Dr. Saweda Lenis Liverpool-Tasie (Michigan State University, USA and Leader, Feed-the-Future, Nigeria Agricultural Policy Programme, NAPP), (3) *The Role of the Media in Agricultural Research* by Mr. Emmanuel Cousin (Nigerian Union of Journalists, NUJ, Abuja), and (4) *Effects of Gross Domestic Product, Unemployment, Inflation, and Government Expenditure on Agricultural Output in Nigeria (1980-2014)* by Dr. Data Irene Ekine (An APRNet 5th Agricultural Policy Seminar Presenter with Eyitope John Ajayi both of Rivers State University, Port Harcourt).

Other lead papers presented were: (5) *Responsible Conducts of Agricultural Research for Effective Engagement of Multi-Stakeholders in Agricultural Policy Making Process* by Prof. Job Nmadu (Vice President, Nigerian Association of Agricultural Economists, NAAE), (6) *Revisiting Intellectual Property Rights and Innovations in Nigeria as Catalyst to Agriculture Led Growth in a Distressed Economy* by Mr. Realwan Okpanachi (LLM) (Joe Abrahams [SAN] & Company), and finally, (7) *Prospects and Challenges of Using Transdisciplinary Methodology to Package and Communicate Agricultural Research Findings to Policy Makers* by Prof. A.I. Achike (University of Nigeria, Nsukka).

Some other notable participants included the representatives of the Honourable Minister for Budget and National Planning; Executive Director, National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, represented by Dr. Philemon T. Haggai, Department of Science and Technology, NIPSS; Professor Ernest Aiyedun, Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship Studies, University of Abuja, Dr. Mason Nwafor. of IITA, the President, Agricultural Society of Nigeria (ASN) ably represented by Prof. Jude Mbanasor.

Observations

Whereas the following observations were made that:

- (i) Nigerian universities and research institutes are being under-utilized within the agricultural research and development space, among others, due to poor funding;
- (ii) the problem-solving agricultural research is useful for agricultural and national development;
- (iii) despite its relevance, public spending on agricultural policy research has continued to decrease over the years;



- (iv) a holistic participatory approach of researcher-extensionist-farmer linkage need to be intensified via relevant agricultural Apps (such as Ask-Valerie)
- (v) a high level of hunger and malnutrition pervaded in the country and became more severe in the last two years. This coincided with growing national food deficit and an abysmal decline in food production within the past few years, resulting in resentment against the government in some quarters of the country - a situation that may be associated with the increased wave of agitations and militancy across the country.
- (vi) some state governments are making frantic efforts to align with the present administration's consolidated agricultural transformation, The Green Alternative (e.g. Kogi State), while others still need to key in for increased impacts;
- (vii) the media appears not fully integrated (from idea conception through project implementation) into the Agricultural Policy Promotion, growth and development in Nigeria due to inadequate training to critically report agricultural innovations, poor agricultural policy support and low funding;
- (viii) majority of agricultural research do not emphasise Intellectual Property (IP) Rights and Patenting because, the present agricultural IP policy on seeds, plants and animals do not support IP and patenting even though they are relevant for commercialisation and bank collaterals;
- (ix) agricultural policies have seldom been conducted with a view to solving a problem with different disciplines working jointly to create new conceptual, theoretical, methodological and translational innovation not achievable through a discipline-specific approach;
- (x) adoption of trans-disciplinary research involves a bottom-up approach involving farmers, the media, researchers, policy makers and government at different levels.
- (xi) environmental challenges especially climate change (especially in form of desertification, flood, unpredictable onset of rainy seasons) resulted in poor farm productivity and output of agriculture in Nigeria. The situation is exacerbated by poor financial interventions to meet the requirements to adapt and mitigate the spate of the negative effects of climate change on agriculture.

Resolutions

The APRNet 4th Multi-Stakeholders' Forum hereby makes the following resolutions that:



1. There is need to prepare a comprehensive data base of all relevant end-users of agricultural policy research results;
2. APRNet should be encouraged to work with relevant government agencies to help review agricultural policies including extension policies to make moribund agencies active; inputs of APRNet and other professional organizations in national budget drafting with respect to agricultural sector should be sourced by the Nigerian government;
3. APRNet and the NAPP should be engaged in promoting capacity building of extension workers in ICT utilisation for increased efficiency in Nigeria;
4. Government should support advocacy for increased incentives for successful research efforts and investments in research fairs to leverage on the gains from governmental and nongovernmental agencies interventions;
5. The present effort to promote Public-Private Partnership (PPP) along the agricultural value chain should be sustained to encourage establishment of agribusiness enterprises and incubation centres;
6. Nigerian Government and other actors in agricultural development should engage farmers, research institutes, researchers, faculties of agriculture in universities and professional associations (such as APRNet, FAMAN, ASN, NAAE, ADAN etc) and indeed, the media and private sector in planning, policy formulation and implementation in the sector for sustainable agricultural development. The stakeholders mentioned above should appreciate the synergy that comes with collaboration by seeing its value, have the mindset as allies not competitors and strategically identify their unique present and potential strengths;
7. APRNet and other professional associations should involve the media from idea conception to project implementation to engender viable communication, advocacy and dissemination of positive project results;
8. agriculture curriculum for award of higher degrees and agricultural policy research should involve government and industry stakeholders to make the results relevant and easily adoptable;
9. the relevant sections of the agricultural policy should be reviewed to promote some level of Intellectual Property (IP) Rights and Patenting to stimulate agricultural growth, technology transfer and boost the economy;



10. APRNet, with support of her national and international partners, shall advocate and promote trans-disciplinary agricultural policy research to achieve the desired impacts in a sustainable manner.
11. Nigerian government should vigorously pursue policies and programmes that would directly bring about sound family planning and improved food security in the nation's households.
12. Nigeria needs public investment to adapt or enhance infrastructure development, fund agricultural research and extension, supply improved farm inputs (e.g. fertilizers and high yielding seeds), rural infrastructure, climate information, financial services and market access under a changing climate and a receding economy.
13. APRNet shall lobby for the relevant sections of the agricultural policy to be reviewed to promote some level of Intellectual Property (IP) Rights and Patenting to stimulate agricultural growth, technology transfer and boost the economy.

Signed: 

Dr. Anthony O. Onoja (PhD)

President, APRNet

