



## Innovations can feed the world, PARI Conference concludes

Research leaders from more than 12 African countries, India and Germany held a Conference on Agricultural Innovation on 8-9 December 2016 in Nairobi. They highlighted the crucial role that agricultural innovations play for food security and nutrition. They lauded progress and new commitments by Africa's political leaders to transform the continent's agriculture sectors, but also warned that current growth trends are not yet sustainable and that progress has been volatile and unevenly distributed.

The conference was organized under the auspices of the large initiative "One World, No Hunger", supported by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in cooperation with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the International Food Policy Research Institute / Africa (IFPRI) and the Center for Development Research (ZEF) of Bonn University, Germany. Stefan Schmitz, Deputy Director General of the German Ministry, expressed his appreciation of the productive partnership with African research leaders and stressed "food security and rural development are critical for equitable and sustainable growth where it is most needed, that is in rural Africa and farming communities".

Participants noted that at a global scale, innovations have driven agricultural productivity growth in recent decades. While Africa still lags behind in this regard, the tide has been turning. Most recently, the growing momentum was prominently highlighted at the *African Green Revolution Forum* in Nairobi in September 2016 where African leaders, businesses and major development partners pledged more than US \$30 billion dollars in agricultural investments for the continent. "The strategic emphasis on agricultural development in Africa, as declared by heads of states in Malabo in 2014, is already showing positive impact", stressed Yemi Akinbami, Executive Director of FARA, "and the support by the German Government for innovation in African agriculture through the PARI project and the green Innovation centres under the One World p- No Hunger Initiative is very helpful".

The conference participants emphasized that investments in research & development are essential to ensure consistent and equitable growth that translates into higher incomes and improved food security. They pointed to research which has shown that every dollar invested in agricultural R&D has generated 3-6 \$ in returns. Close engagement of public research organizations with the private sector as key player in the development, financing and scaling of innovations was emphasized at the meeting.

In addition, investments in R&D will have to go hand in hand with skill development as a prerequisite for the widespread adoption of new innovations. Joachim von Braun, Director of ZEF, Bonn concluded "rural youth in Africa need jobs and many of these jobs can be generated through innovation in production, small farm mechanization, and in the food value chains, but more investment in skills with vocational training is needed so that innovation comes from the bottom up."

### About PARI

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The Program of Accompanying Research for Agricultural Innovation (PARI) brings together partners from Africa, India and Germany to contribute to sustainable agricultural growth and food and nutrition security in Africa and India. With the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, PARI offers independent scientific advice to the *One World, No Hunger* Initiative (SEWOH) of the German government which, among other activities, supports the improvement of food and nutrition security and sustainable agricultural value chains through Green Innovation centres in 12 African countries and India.

PARI is coordinated by the Center for Development Research (ZEF) at the University of Bonn, Germany. Implementation in Africa is led by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the technical arm of the Africa Union Commission on matters concerning agriculture science, technology and innovation, and its national partners. Additional implementing partners include the African Growth and Development Policy Modeling Consortium (AGRODEP) facilitated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI, Africa Office), the University of Hohenheim (Germany), the Technical University Munich (Germany), and research collaborators in India.

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