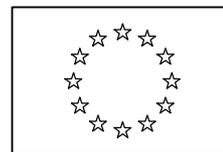




**AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION**
DIRECTORATE OF RURAL
ECONOMY AND
AGRICULTURE

**EUROPEAN
COMMISSION**
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
FOR AGRICULTURE AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT



**REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON ORGANIC FARMING
BUILDING STRATEGIES FOR AFRICA — ADDING VALUE THROUGH ORGANIC AGRICULTURE
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 11-12 JULY 2011**

INTRODUCTION

At their meeting on 17 November 2010, Mr Dacian CIOLOȘ, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development and H.E. Mrs Rhoda Peace TUMUSIIME, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, agreed on a joint AU-EU workshop on organic farming to be held to explore potential strategies for developing the sector in Africa. The Workshop was held in Brussels on 11-12 July 2011 under the joint chairmanship of the Director of International Affairs of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, Nikiforos SIVENAS, and the Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission, Dr Abebe Haile-Gabriel.

The Workshop brought together more than 80 high-level experts in the field of organic farming from across sub-Saharan Africa and the EU, mainly comprising stakeholders and organic farming professionals. In addition several EU and African governments were represented as well as international organisations.

The Workshop addressed organic requirements, the constraints on the development of organic farming and best practices from the EU and from Africa. The agenda and copies of the presentations can be found on the following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/organic-africa-2011_en.htm.

1. WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

Organic farming in Africa: Organic farming has considerable potential in Africa, particularly for smallholders and (semi-)subsistence farmers. By adopting a structured organic system, experience in East Africa shows that farmers actually increase the intensity of production (sustainably) and produce surpluses for the market. In many countries, organisations of farmers promoting the organic (National Organic Agriculture Movements or NOAMs) method have been set up. Exports to the organic markets in the EU are a strong incentive, but only for commercial operations in the familiar products (coffee, tea, cocoa, bananas, some fruit and vegetables, etc.). Development of local organic markets is advancing throughout the African continent. A proportionately higher number of women are organic farmers than is the case for conventional farming.

Approximately 1 million hectares are farmed organically under a certification scheme in Africa. In addition a far greater area is farmed traditionally and without the use of

synthetic inputs, approximating to organic methods, but without formal participation in an organic scheme. This presents the prospect that conversion of such lands to organic agriculture could be simply achieved and yields could be substantially increased from current subsistence levels. In this respect the African experience is different from that in the EU, where in general lands are farmed more intensively, with the result that conversion to organic is on average accompanied by a drop in yield (except for extensive livestock). Concerning commercial (non-subsistence) agriculture, comparison between conventional and organic, low-input and high-input systems in Africa, has shown organic yields to be comparable to conventional yields (Kenya Organic Agriculture Network-KOAN).

Organic Standards: Many organic standards have been adopted across the globe, including the EU organic standard. As well as regulating organic production, each standard controls the marketing of organic-labelled product in its territory, with the result that organic producers exporting to other territories may need to comply with multiple standards. The CODEX Alimentarius 'Guidelines for the production, processing, labelling and marketing of organically produced foods' comprises an internationally accepted standard for the purposes of WTO rules on technical barriers to trade. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), working with UNCTAD and the FAO, has developed tools for assessing equivalence through the GOMA project (Global Organic Market Access).

Few African countries have developed an official organic standard, and one region, the East African Community (EAC), adopted in 2007 a legally-binding organic standard (East African Organic Products Standard EAOPS) applicable throughout its membership – only the second regional standard in the world after the EU. It marks a concrete contribution to EAC integration and replaced 3 national standards.

Developments in the African Union: On recommendation from the AU Conference of Ministers of Agriculture (CAMA), 28-29.10.2010 (Lilongwe, Malawi), the Executive Council of the AU, at its meeting on 24-28.1.2011 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), took the decision on organic farming. In response to this, the African Union Commission (AUC) developed a draft Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Action Plan for Africa (May 2011), which seeks to mainstream EOA into national agricultural production systems by 2020 through six areas: (i) Research, Training and Extension, (ii) Information and Communication; (iii) Value Chain and Market Development, (iv) Networking and Partnerships, (v) Policy and Programme Development, (vi) Institutional Capacity Development.

Verification: Organic farmers wishing to export to the EU and other developed-country markets need to prove adherence to the relevant standard through certification by a body accredited to ISO/IEC Guide 65, or equivalent. Such certification is costly, and often carried out by foreign certifiers. For the local, national and regional markets within Africa the price premium does not in many cases justify the costs of this type of certification. In addition, local availability of certification services is crucial for producers, but often not existing. For certifiers, the profitability of services linked to a critical mass of organic products (volume) is a criterion for being present in the respective country.

Alternatives to individual farmer-by-farmer certification include group certification, 'participatory guarantee systems' (PGS), and self-declaration. The necessity for farmers to get themselves organised in groups is closely linked to certification.

Value chains: There are potential synergies between organic farming and other product schemes applied in Africa. Concerning exports to the EU, farmers may also secure market access and/or advantage if they are certified according to private farm assurance standards or an additional quality scheme such as fair trade. Organic-certified African farmers already meet by virtue of adherence to the organic standard many of the requirements of private farm assurance standards. UNCTAD has launched a project with GlobalG.A.P. aiming to use organic certification in satisfaction of part of the private standard requirements without the need for duplicate inspection and record-keeping.

Obstacles: The majority of smallholder farmers in Africa are working and marketing products individually. The organisation of farmers around value chains into groups or associations can enhance their bargaining power, as well as facilitate investments and realize efficiency-gains (e.g. group certification).

2. CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the discussion and the contributions made by experts, the co-Chairs have noted the following conclusions:

- (1) Moving forward on the Draft Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Action Plan for Africa: participants welcomed the AU Action Plan as a bold step forward for African organic farming.
- (2) Mainstreaming organic farming into agricultural policies: Suggestions were made on the inclusion of organic farming into African agriculture and rural development policies and programmes as it offers potential to add value to organic products and allows farmers to move up the value chain, e.g. by developing local branding of products, contributing to the education of the community and linking farming to tourism (e.g. ecotourism).
- (3) There was a broad agreement that the African Union should take the lead on promoting and further developing frameworks/strategies for organic farming policies throughout Africa.

By adopting organic farming practices, smallholders in particular can improve yields and intensify production in a sustainable way. However, many obstacles to the development of organic farming in Africa were identified. These include, inter alia: production organisation and management, capacity building, awareness raising, market creation and management, financial support and rigidity of quality requirements for production.

To tackle these obstacles to the growth of organic farming in Africa, the following areas were suggested for potential action:

- (4) Development of Producers' organisations with a view to increasing their bargaining power, facilitating production of a critical mass of organic product that buyers need, acting as a vehicle for training and mutual assistance, managing internal controls compliance with the organic standard, and taking concerted action to ensure adequate storage, quality control and reduce post-harvest losses.
- (5) Shaping verification systems appropriate to the intended market:

- For export to the EU and other developed country markets, formal certification is needed. In this case, accredited certifiers should where possible provide for synergies by taking full account of existing certifications to avoid duplications and increased costs. Certifiers should provide a "one-stop shop" for all certification needs of producers engaged in export. Accredited African certifiers and local audit capacity should also be used, where possible.
 - Group certification, as is already used in some cases, should be encouraged where farmers are organised into groups, and the group could manage the necessary control systems.
 - For local, national and regional markets, participatory guarantee systems as well as self-declaration, particularly by groups, could be advisable.
- (6) Organic Standards: Future developments should build on achievements so far. Standards developed on a regional basis in Africa could help to avoid fragmenting the organic sector through national standards. A single organic standard for Africa could be considered. In developing standards, stakeholders should consider closely the CODEX Guidelines and examine the applicability of the East African Organic Products Standard, in full or part, in other regions.
- (7) Facilitating exports into the EU: in the medium term due priority should be given to the most advanced African standards (as has already been done for Tunisia) for EU recognition. However, in the short term, exports to the EU can be channelled via the mechanism of competent authorities of the EU Member States granting import authorisations and in the near future by certifiers active in Third Countries being recognised by the EU for the purpose of equivalence.

This report is submitted jointly by the Workshop co-Chairs Mr Nikiforos SIVENAS, Director of International Affairs of the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, and Dr Abebe Haile-Gabriel, Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission, to the attention of Mr Dacian CIOLOȘ, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development and H.E. Mrs Rhoda Peace TUMUSIIME, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

Abebe Haile-Gabriel
 Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture
 of the African Union Commission

Nikiforos Sivenas
 Director of International Affairs of the
 Directorate General for Agriculture and
 Rural Development of the European
 Commission