

Introduction

The Reaching Agents of Change (RAC) project started in June 2011, and is being implemented by the International Potato Center (CIP). Helen Keller International (HKI) is the major implementing partner.

RAC has three key goals:

- 1) Mobilization of at least \$18 million to orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) dissemination programs in five target countries (Tanzania, Mozambique, Nigeria, Ghana and Burkina Faso);
- 2) Substantial progress by a cadre of trained African advocates in ensuring that the use of OFSP is an integral part of strategies that address food insecurity and micronutrient malnutrition at regional and sub-regional levels in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as well as in the five RAC target countries; and
- 3) Establishment of technical capacity for successful OFSP project implementation and continued awareness raising, resource mobilization, and change agent training efforts to continue once the project has ended.

This Situation Analysis is a tool for the African advocates working on RAC's second key goal. The orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) advocates will be working with regional and sub-regional organizations to ensure that OFSP is included in their food security, nutrition and micronutrient strategies. As such, this document identifies 16 regional/sub-regional organizations and 7 international organizations and initiatives that are potential partners for promoting OFSP.

The entry for each organization includes: background information; the region or sub-region the organization targets (except in the case of the international organizations and initiatives, which work globally); how the organization influences policy; the initiatives sponsored by the organization that are most closely related to RAC initiatives (biofortification, food-based approaches to combating vitamin A deficiency, distribution of plant materials to farmers etc...); and contact information for the organization, including relevant website addresses.

The information in this Situation Analysis is not meant to be exhaustive and is therefore brief and targeted to the RAC project's needs. It is hoped that this analysis will be useful to the OFSP Advocates in making initial contact with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ANS – African Nutrition Society

Background: Established in 2008, the African Nutrition Society (ANS) is a registered scientific professional body with an interest in the nutrition agenda for Africa. ANS was established as an umbrella organization, to develop and promote the nutrition profession in Africa and to oversee the Africa Nutritional Epidemiology Conferences (ANEC), which have been running since 2002.

ANS aims to create a unified continental nutrition profession, provide a continental professional scientific forum, promote training, research and capacity building in nutrition and contribute to workforce development to meet Africa's nutrition and health policy agenda.

Region: African continent

Policy Influence: ANS works to promote the standards of scientific training, attainment, research capability and sound professional practice and leadership necessary to drive nutrition and health policy across countries. It does this through activities highlighted in the next section.

RAC-related Initiatives: ANS is one of three co-sponsors of the Africa Nutritional Epidemiology Conference (ANEC) V 2012, also referred to as the Nutrition Congress 2012. The Conference is scheduled for October 1-4, 2012 in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Dr. Kenneth Brown of HKI spoke at ANEC III in 2008 about zinc fortification. Conferences like this one and other events sponsored by ANS provide opportunities to promote OFSP. ANS also provides master classes in nutrition at the ANEC and at other times. RAC could work with ANS to develop a master class on biofortification. ANS' work on nutrition curriculum development also could also provide opportunities for collaboration. ANS publishes the African Journal of Nutrition (AJN). RAC could explore the possibility of AJN publishing an article on its work.

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ASARECA – Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa

Background: ASARECA is a sub-regional not-for-profit association established in 1994. The 11 member countries are: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. ASARECA has seven programmes: (1) Staple Crops; (2) High Value Non-Staple Crops; (3) Livestock and Fisheries; (4) Agro-Biodiversity and Biotechnology; (5) Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity; (6) Policy Analysis and Advocacy; and (7) Knowledge Management and Upscaling.

Region: East and Central Africa

Policy Influence: The General Assembly is the oversight organ of the ASARECA. It consists of all stakeholders of the Association, the Business Committee, and the Board of Directors who are ex-officio members of the General Assembly. The General Assembly reviews the strategies, priorities, and research programs of the Association. ASARECA has a programme on policy analysis and advocacy.

RAC-related Interventions: ASARECA's East African Agricultural Productivity Programme (EAAPP) started in 2009. Under EAAPP, four countries are establishing Regional Centres of Excellence (RCoEs) for agricultural research by investing in commodities identified by ASARECA as being of sub-regional importance to mitigate food insecurity. Kenya will be the centre of excellence for dairy, Uganda for cassava, Ethiopia wheat and Tanzania for rice. ASARECA's work on agro-biodiversity and agricultural centers of excellence may provide opportunities for collaboration.

ASARECA is one of the sub regional organizations managing FARA's DONATA project (see entry under FARA), which is distributing OFSP technologies in Kenya.

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AU – African Union

Background: The African Union (AU) was launched by the Durban Summit (2002). It has 54 member countries. The AU Commission has eight commissioners, who each handle a portfolio (Social Affairs, Rural Economy and Agriculture, etc...).

Region: African Continent

Policy Influence: The African Union has a bi-annual Heads of State Summit at which policy documents are considered. These documents can take many forms ranging from advisory to mandatory: statements; recommendations; resolutions (binding or non-binding); decisions; or declarations. Declarations are binding for all 54-member countries and take many years to move through the policy ratification process.

RAC-related Interventions:

1) African Regional Nutritional Strategy (ARNS) 2005-2015 developed by the AU Commission's Department of Social Affairs. The ARNS states that "Vitamin A Deficiency (VAD) puts at risk about 100 million people in at least 20 countries...It is the main cause of preventable blindness in childhood and also causes retardation of physical and mental development." The ARNS Plan of Action and Implementation Strategy includes the identification of "prominent persons in Africa as nutrition advocates" and requires that a nutrition unit be established within the AU Secretariat.

2) African Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development (ATFFND) – Meetings were held in 1987, 2008, 2009 and 2011.

3) "Cost of Hunger: Social and Economic Impact of Child Under Nutrition," is a study launched in 2009 that is being conducted by the AU Commission's Department of Social Affairs and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa with support from the World Food Programme. The study will include at least 12 countries (including 2 RAC countries: Ghana and Burkina Faso).

4) NEPAD – New Partnership for Africa's Development

NEPAD was launched in 2001 and became an AU program in 2009. In February 2010, the AU Assembly established the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NCPA). Pillar 3 of the NEPAD is Food Supply and Hunger; it aims to increase food supply and reduce hunger by raising smallholder productivity.

Relevant NEPAD initiatives:

- CAADP – Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program – was developed by IFPRI for the AU in 2003. It is the African Union's continent-wide framework guiding national efforts to increase agricultural growth. In 2011, six countries held CAADP roundtables and signed CAADP compacts (agreeing to CAADP's 4 Pillars), bringing to 29 the number of countries that have done so.
- NEPAD's Ten-Year Strategy for the Reduction of Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies (VMD) - Draft Action Plan 2008-2011. The action plan states that vitamin A supplementation is required. The following countries will receive

special support: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia.

The strategy aims to: reduce iron deficiency anemia in women of child –bearing age by one third; virtually eliminate iodine and vitamin A deficiencies; reduce other micronutrient deficiencies such as zinc and folate; and contribute to improved access to quantity and quality of food in line with CAADP Priorities.

Programs under the Food Based Dietary Approach to reducing VMDs will include increased production and utilization of vitamin A rich foods e.g. yellow sweet potatoes, palm oil etc. Under the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, Communities around schools are motivated to produce and sell to the schools low cost nutritious foods such as yellow sweet potatoes.

Contact Information:

In August 2012, at the Annual AU Summit, all of the AU Commissioners will change, having completed their second and final 4-year terms. It is also possible that the AU Chairperson will change.

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CCARDESA – Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa

Background: The Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) is a new Sub Regional Organisation (SRO) headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. CCARDESA is in the process of establishing its secretariat.

CCARDESA is a not-for-profit SRO that coordinates the implementation of agricultural research and development (R&D) in the SADC region. CCARDESA operates within the framework of the AU's CAADP Pillar IV, which has the objective of enhancing the livelihoods of African farmers. The SADC Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Food Security launched the CCARDESA and appointed its first Board of Directors.

Region: Southern Africa

Policy Influence:

RAC-related Interventions: Being a new institution, CCARDESA is not yet operational, but its mission is to coordinate agricultural research and development in SADC countries, which theoretically, could include work on orange fleshed sweetpotato.

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As a new institution, the CCARDESA Board of Directors has been recruiting for all key positions, including the Executive Director, since January 2012.

COMESA – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

Background: In 1965, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) convened a ministerial meeting of the then newly independent states of Eastern and Southern Africa to consider proposals for the establishment of a mechanism for the promotion of sub-regional economic integration. The meeting recommended the creation of an Economic Community of Eastern and Central African states. COMESA has 19 member states. The objectives of the COMESA Treaty and the COMESA Agricultural Policy (CAP) are in line with the broader Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) under the African Union (AU).

Region: Eastern and Southern Africa

Policy Influence: COMESA influences the economic policies of its member states by providing a forum at which to discuss common economic concerns and needs. Member states are expected to apply decisions taken by the membership as a whole.

RAC-related Interventions:

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CORAF – Conseil Ouest et Centre Africain Pour la Recherche et le Developpement Agricole (WECARD – West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development)

Background: CORAF began in 1987 as a meeting between the directors of fifteen francophone agricultural research institutions of West and Central Africa and Madagascar and their colleagues from French agricultural research institutions. The general objective of CORAF/WECARD is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of small-scale producers and promote the agribusiness sector.

CORAF/WECARD has 22 National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) members from the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape-Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra-Leone and Togo.

Region: West and Central Africa

Policy Influence: CORAF influences the research agendas of NARS in member countries, which in turn, can influence governmental policies.

RAC-related Interventions:

Contact Information:

Executive Secretariat – Dakar, Senegal

EAC – East Africa Community

Background: The East African Community (EAC) is the regional intergovernmental organisation of the Republics of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Burundi. The initial EAC launched in 2000 included Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Burundi became members of the EAC in 2007.

The Vision of EAC is a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa; and the Mission is to widen and deepen Economic, Political, Social and Culture integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments.

The EAC works on economic, political, social and institutional issues.

Region: East Africa

Policy Influence: Member States are united behind agreements reached

RAC-related Interventions: The EAC has agriculture and health strategies. In June 2012, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the EAC launched a new initiative to boost food production, job and income opportunities for farmers through advancing agriculture value chains in East Africa. The initiative spearheaded by UNDP's African Facility for Inclusive Markets (AFIM) and the EAC Secretariat brought together multiple stakeholders representing governments, UN agencies, private sector, farmers, financiers and civil society from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Ethiopia for an East Africa Project Facilitation Platform (PFP). The East Africa PFP is discussing partnerships in strategic agri-food value chains, especially sorghum, soy and dairy. Project promoters presenting planned interventions include Africa Harvest and East Africa Dairy Development Project.

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EAFF – Eastern Africa Farmers’ Federation

Background: The EAFF was established in 2001 to represent, lobby and advocate for Eastern Africa farmers’ interests and to build their capacities. It is an umbrella platform of over 20 million farmers belonging to farmers’ organizations in Burundi, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The EAFF council (composed of 3 representatives from each country) meets every year to provide guidance to the management and the secretariat. The day-to-day activities of the federation are managed through a board of 11 (eleven) people elected by the council, with the help of a fulltime secretariat.

EAFF is strategically positioned to ensure that all those seeking to work with rural communities from a regional level have a legitimate farmers’ forum to partner with to ensure that farmers in the villages are linked to regional, continental and international protocols. The existence of EAFF is timely and strategic to ensure that farmers of the region have the opportunity to speak for themselves. The EAFF is the only established and operational regional forum for the farmers of the region. It implements projects funded by ASARECA, COMESA, FARA, IFAD, the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern Africa and the Swedish Cooperative Centre Regional Office for East Africa.

Region: East Africa

Policy Influence: The Eastern Africa Farmers’ Federation (EAFF) Regional Policy Lobbying and Advocacy project is focused on strengthening the capacity of EAFF and her member organizations in the area of policy formulation, lobbying and advocacy. This capacity will cover the areas of problem identification, policy formulation, validation, lobbying and advocacy, and tracking. The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the lobbying and advocacy capacities of producer organizations to respond to agricultural development challenges in Eastern Africa by 2012. The project will address this objective in two ways. First, by building capacities in the fore-mentioned areas; and second, by undertaking activities in these areas, that is, actual identification of problems; formulation of policy proposals; validation of those proposals; lobbying and advocacy to policy makers and other relevant stakeholders; and lastly policy tracking. The scope of the project is the East African region, and the target groups are EAFF and eight (8) of her members in four East African countries – Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The project is funded by the Swedish Cooperative Centre Regional Office for East Africa (SCCROEA).

RAC-related Initiatives: The EAFF website does not mention biofortification, food security or nutrition. The Federation exists to give farmers a voice regarding issues that concern them most. Getting a farmers’ federation interested in RAC’s work, especially the advantages of OFSP for farmers, however, could be a potentially powerful alliance.

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ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

Background: The Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), or Communauté économique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Cedeao), is a regional group of 15 countries, founded in 1975 to promote economic integration.

Region: West Africa

Policy Influence: ECOWAS has a bi-annual Heads of State Summit and a bi-annual Council of Ministers that consider policy proposals. The documents are initially developed at the Committee level (Administration and Finance, Political Affairs, Social Affairs, etc...). Initiatives can die in committee, or if approved at that level, be sent to the Legal Affairs office, which determines whether the document should be presented to the Council of Ministers as a: statement; recommendation; resolution (binding or non-binding); decision; or declaration. Even if a policy is accepted by the Summit of Heads of States, it can still take considerable time for the ECOWAS members to apply it in their countries.

RAC-related Interventions:

WAHO -- ECOWAS' technical committee on health, the West African Health Organization (WAHO), developed two important resolutions on fortification: the 2006 Food Fortification Resolution and the 2009 Nutrition Resolution. As a result of these commitments, some 180 million people in West Africa consume fortified cooking oil (vitamin A) and wheat flour (iron, folic acid, and zinc). In addition, Vitamin A supplementation reaches around 80 percent of children twice a year in the region.

CILSS -- ECOWAS' technical committee on food security, the Comité Permanent Inter Etats de lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS) – in English, Permanent Interstate Committee Against Drought in the Sahel – was established in 1973. It includes nine countries: Gambia; Guinea Bissau; Mauritania; Senegal; Burkina Faso; Mali; Niger; Chad; and Cape Verde. It houses the technical secretariat of the Regional Food Security Council and is involved in defining the actions of Pillars 1 and 3 of NEPAD's CAADP. CILSS conducts studies on food security, natural resource management and the links between population and development. It recently published studies on the causes of malnutrition in the Sahel.

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ECSA-HC – East, Central and Southern Africa – Health Community

Background: The East, Central and Southern African Health Community (ECSA-HC) is a regional inter-governmental health organization that fosters and promotes regional cooperation in health among member states. Member states of the ECSA health community include Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. ECSA was established in 1974 to foster and strengthen regional cooperation and capacity to address the health needs of the member states.

Working within the mandate given by the Conference of Health Ministers and member states, ECSA taps into regional and international expertise to promote sharing of experiences and best practices, identifying priorities, building capacity of member states and advocating for improved policies and programmes in the region.

Region: East, Central and Southern Africa

Policy Influence: ECSA-HC influences the policies for health care delivery in member-countries by adopting policies at the Joint Action Committee level. Each country then has to domesticate the ECSA-HC policy to its individual situation.

RAC-related Interventions: In 2008, ECSA-HC passed a resolution to increase nutrition expenditures in health budgets by 20 percent and to support scale-up of high impact nutrition interventions. Progress on this process was reported on at the 2010 ECSA Ministers of Health Conference, and recommendations were made to accelerate the process.

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Provides technical assistance to the 10 member states to advocate for policy change and capacity building in the area of Food Security and Nutrition.

FARA – Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa

Background: FARA is an umbrella organization bringing together and forming coalitions of major stakeholders in agricultural research and development in Africa. It plays advocacy and coordination roles for agricultural research for development. FARA emphasizes its commitments to the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, and CAADP's goal of agriculture-led development. FARA's *Super Objective* is to sustainably reduce African food insecurity and poverty and enhance environmental conditions.

Region: African Continent

Policy Influence: The priority for FARA advocacy is to convince African governments that agricultural research is crucially important to economic development and food security and that they must increase their own investment in it, rather than placing too much reliance on donors. In 2002, the African Heads of State who met in Maputo agreed to invest 10% of their national budgets in agriculture. A mechanism to review progress towards this target has been put in place by the African Union and AU-NEPAD. Strategic efforts are now required to translate the 2002 agreement into action by all national governments and to encourage them to prioritise agriculture and agricultural research in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and other development policy instruments. To that end, FARA's M&E system is interactively linked to the AU-NEPAD M&E.

RAC-related Interventions: FARA's DONATA (Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa) project disseminates orange-fleshed sweetpotato technologies to communities in Kenya. The project has provided planting material to 2660 end users, trained farmers, trainers, and Ministry of Agriculture extension staff, and promoted OFSP technologies in local markets and agricultural shows. DONATA is supported by a grant from the African Development Bank. The project is led by FARA, managed by the Subregional Organizations (SROs), including ASARECA, CORAF, and SADC-FANR, and implemented by the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS). In Uganda, DONATA works on quality protein maize.

Contact Information

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NWG – Nutrition Working Group for West Africa

Background: Established in 2007 by several International NGOs and UN agencies, the NWG for West Africa supports countries to scale-up their action in nutrition and implements projects and activities in four key areas. Members of the NWG include: IFRC, French Red Cross, World Vision International, OXFAM GB, Save The Children UK, Helen Keller International, Aquadev, ECHO, French Embassy, OFDA, OCHA, WFP, FAO, WHO and UNICEF.

The chairmanship alternates among UN organizations and NGOs. UNICEF plays a key role on issues related to nutrition and child feeding as mandated by the UN System Agencies, and WFP/FAO on issues related to food security. The group meets once a month but can convene an ad hoc meeting anytime if necessary.

The NWG focuses on: coordination, advocacy and communication; development of effective regional and national coalitions; technical harmonization and regular situation analysis; and expansion and capacity building of human resources.

A cornerstone of its advocacy activities was appointing President António Monteiro, former head of state of Cape Verde, a Nutrition Ambassador for the region. As such, President Monteiro advocates at the highest levels for increased action and investment in nutrition by national government, to place nutrition at the centre of the region's development agenda and achieve lasting change in the fight against malnutrition in West Africa.

The NWG is supported by a REACH Facilitator and brings together organizations actively combating malnutrition in the region and committed to close collaboration. REACH is a country-led approach to scale-up proven and effective interventions addressing child undernutrition through the partnership and coordinated action of UN agencies, civil society, donors, and the private sector, under the leadership of national governments.

Region: West Africa

Policy Influence: The NWG influences policy through its Nutrition Ambassador, its monthly meetings and its activities, that are all designed to promote harmony in the sub-region regarding nutrition priorities and messages.

RAC-related Interventions:

Contact Information:

The REACH facilitator for the NWG, Sergio Teixeira, recently left the position and his replacement is being recruited.

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Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'ouest (ROPPA) (in English, Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organizations of West Africa)

Background: ROPPA was founded in July 2000 during a meeting in Cotonou of a hundred farmer representatives. The network includes organizations from 10 West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo).

In 2006, ROPPA organized a meeting of farmer organization leaders, members of parliament, officials of ministries of agriculture and trade, researchers from 13 countries of West Africa, representatives of ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS, technical and financial partners to discuss the need for West Africa to increase its agricultural production in order to become less dependent on imports. The meeting produced the "Niamey Call for Food Sovereignty of West Africa," which identifies five actions necessary to move toward self-sufficiency. The actions include a call for African Heads of State to respect the commitment they made in Maputo to direct at least, 10 % of national budgets to financing agriculture and identifies several plans for collaboration with ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS.

In 2008, four networks of farmer and agricultural producer organizations – Southern Southern Africa (SACAU), Central Africa (PROPAC), Eastern Africa (EAFF) and West Africa (ROPPA) — met in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, to establish a "Pan African Platform for the farmer of Africa". Mamadou Cissokho, ROPPA's Honorary President, is the facilitator of the Platform's steering committee.

Region: West Africa

Policy Influence: ROPPA exists to voice the concerns of smallholder farmers. As such, it hosts events at which it can make farmers' views heard, and likewise, attends events organized by others at which it can share the needs and concerns of farmers.

RAC-related Interventions: So far, ROPPA seems to focus on farmers' needs for inputs, markets and technical expertise. RAC could introduce ROPPA to OFSP to try to interest its smallholder members in producing the crop.

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SADC – Southern African Development Community

Background: The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has existed since 1980, when it was formed as a loose alliance of nine States in Southern Africa called the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Its main aim was coordinating development projects in order to reduce economic dependence on the then apartheid South Africa. The founding Member States are: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The organization became a Development Community (SADC) in 1992.

Region: Southern Africa

Policy Influence: SADC has a bi-annual Heads of State Summit that considers policy proposals. Proposals can be presented as a: statement; recommendation; resolution (binding or non-binding); decision; or declaration. Even if a policy is accepted by the Summit of Heads of States, it can still take considerable time for the SADC members to apply it in their countries.

RAC-related Interventions:

FANR -The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) Directorate is one of four directorates at the SADC Secretariat. FANR aims to ensure food availability, access, safety and nutritional value. The Crop Development Unit of FANR Directorate is mandated to promote the production, protection, processing and storage of all crops in the SADC region.

The Crop Development Unit of the FANR Directorate is responsible for coordinating, monitoring and facilitating crop development activities. The Unit runs the SADC Seed Security Network (SSSN) whose purpose is to improve access and availability of seed. One of its major achievements has been the development of the SADC common systems for variety release, seed certification and sanitary and phytosanitary.

The Crop Development Unit also develops technical documents and mobilises resources for capacity building for the Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) project, the establishment of the Regional Food Reserve Facility (RFRF), and the Agricultural Water Management for Food Security Programme (AWMFS) to promote irrigation.

Contact Information

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UEMOA - Union Economic et Monetaire Ouest Africain

Background: UEMOA includes eight countries: Benin; Burkina Faso; Cote d'Ivoire; Guinea Bissau; Niger; Mali; Senegal; and Togo. It covers an area of 3,509,600 km² with a population of 80,340,000. Heads of State and Government of the Community recently met for UEMOA's 16th ordinary session to discuss the economic challenges facing the Union and the issue of food security, especially since 2011 was marked by a sharp drop in economic growth. Security issues and peace were also discussed, as some UEMOA countries (Mali and Guinea-Bissau) are in the midst of political and military crises.

Region: West Africa

Policy Influence: UEMOA has a bi-annual Heads of State Summit and a bi-annual Council of Ministers that consider policy proposals. The documents are initially developed at the Committee level (Administration and Finance, Political Affairs, Social Affairs, etc...). Initiatives can die in committee, or if approved at that level, be sent to the Legal Affairs office, which determines whether the document should be presented to the Council of Ministers as a: statement; recommendation; resolution (binding or non-binding); decision; or declaration. Even if a policy is accepted by the Summit of Heads of States, it can still take considerable time for the UEMOA members to apply it in their countries, depending on the member-countries' legislative process.

RAC-related Interventions: The West African countries of Togo, Benin and Niger have all recently followed in the footsteps of their neighbors - Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal – and passed legislation that requires mandatory fortification of staple foods. Six of the eight UEMOA member countries are now providing essential micronutrients to their citizens because of UEMOA mandatory fortification resolutions.

Five years ago, Helen Keller International (HKI) launched the Fortify West Africa initiative to bring fortified cooking oil and wheat flour to all UEMOA countries. The recent successes in Togo, Benin, and Niger bring the region closer to the goal of reaching at least 70% of the population with essential micronutrients from fortified cooking oil and wheat flour. The success of this initiative demonstrates the potential power of high-level advocacy.

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WACP – West African College of Physicians

Background: The West African College of Physicians (WACP) was inaugurated in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1976. The College's membership originally covered the five English-speaking countries in West Africa: The Gambia; Ghana; Liberia; Nigeria; and Sierra Leone. Following the establishment of the West African Health Organization (WAHO) by the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) of which the College is an integral part, the College has integrated specialists from the French speaking ECOWAS states as Fellows of the College, making it a truly West African Organization.

The objectives of the College, as stated in the constitution, include: promoting professional training of physicians in West Africa; promoting the standards of professional practice, ethics and morals of physicians in West Africa; advising governments of the sub-region, the West African Health Organization and other relevant organizations on matters related to training, health promotion, healthcare and research in West Africa; and publishing books, journals and other scientific materials as may be considered useful in support of these objectives.

Region: West Africa

Policy Influence: WACP promotes professionalism in the medical profession by trying to influence how physicians are trained in West Africa.

RAC-related Intervention: Dr. Kabba Joiner, RAC's Regional Ambassador made a presentation at WACP's 35th AGSM November 2011 entitled: "Biofortification – The Case for Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato to Combat Vitamin A Deficiency". As a result, the Communiqué regarding the meeting includes the observation that: "It was reported that the Orange Flesh Sweet Potato given to young children is a highly cost effective method of improving their Vitamin A status." The recommendations drawn from the meeting include: "Integration of agriculture, nutrition and health extension will maximize the general health and well being of the people in the sub region to better deal with infectious diseases."

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES

HarvestPlus

Background: HarvestPlus seeks to reduce hidden hunger and provide micronutrients to billions of people directly through the staple foods that they eat. It uses biofortification to breed higher levels of micronutrients directly into key staple foods. HarvestPlus focuses on three critical micronutrients that are recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as most limiting in diets: iron, zinc, and vitamin A.

In 2004, the HarvestPlus Challenge Program was officially launched when it became the first recipient of funding for biofortification research granted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It has also received funding from many other generous donors. HarvestPlus is a global leader in developing biofortified crops. It is co-convened by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

Policy Influence: HarvestPlus collaborates with more than 60 partner institutions to produce research on reducing micronutrient malnutrition through biofortification. This is generating a substantial body of work in both basic and applied research on biofortification.

RAC-related Interventions: HarvestPlus conducted the Reaching End Users (REU) project in Mozambique and Uganda that tested the acceptability of orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) among women and young children and whether OFSP could be delivered in a cost-effective manner. The project worked with 24,000 households, and found high adoption rates using an integrated agriculture-nutrition-marketing approach over three years in Mozambique (77% of target households) and two years in Uganda (65% of target households). The REU provided the foundation for RAC.

HarvestPlus introduced yellow cassava, a new cassava fortified with beta-carotene, in Nigeria in 2011 and recently introduced iron-rich beans in Rwanda.

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FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Background: FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy. The FAO shares its experience in: early warning of food crises; detection and prevention of transboundary threats to food production, health and the environment; sustainable forest management; control of biosecurity risks to fisheries and aquaculture; establishing global entities to cope with land and water scarcity; boosting national capacity for generating and analyzing agricultural statistics; global standards, implemented through national policies and legislation.

On 21 June 2012, FAO Director General José Graziano da Silva welcomed the “Zero Hunger Challenge” announced by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in Rio de Janeiro. Ban praised Brazil's efforts to reduce poverty and hunger through its Fome Zero programme, which was designed by da Silva to reduce poverty and hunger. The initiative has lifted millions of people out of poverty by supporting local farmers and community kitchens and introducing social welfare policies such as the Bolsa Familia scheme. The FAO is supporting the new UN Zero Hunger Challenge, along with IFAD, WFP, UNICEF, the World Bank and Biodiversity International. The campaign has five objectives: 100% access to food for all, all year round; an end to stunting among children under two because of a lack of nutrients during pregnancy and in the early days of life; ensuring food systems are sustainable (although there is no reference to how this could be achieved); doubling smallholder productivity and income; and a reduction in food waste, at the farmer level, through lack of suitable storage and among consumers.

Policy Influence: As a knowledge organization, FAO creates and shares critical information about food, agriculture and natural resources in the form of global public goods. FAO plays a connector role, through identifying and working with different partners with established expertise, and facilitating a dialogue between those who have the knowledge and those who need it.

RAC-related Interventions: Launched in 1994, the Special Programme for Food Security aims to decrease rates of hunger and malnutrition. Initially, the programme targeted limited numbers of small-scale farmers, demonstrating low-cost technologies to boost food production and incomes of poor farming families. But with over 900 million people without adequate food, the effort needs to be multiplied many times over. Since 1994, 106 countries have participated in FAO's Special Programme for Food Security. More than half of the programme's budget has been provided by the national governments of developing countries.

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IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development

Background: Specialized fund of the United Nations established in 1977 to combat rural hunger and poverty in developing countries through low-interest loans and direct assistance. IFAD was a recommendation of the 1974 World Food Conference, which was organized in response to the food crises of the early 1970s that primarily affected the Sahelian countries of Africa.

Membership in IFAD is open to any state that is a member of the United Nations or its specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Governing Council is IFAD's highest decision-making authority, with 168 Member States. The Council meets annually. The Executive Board, responsible for overseeing the general operations of IFAD and approving loans and grants, is composed of 18 members and 18 alternate members. The President, who serves for a four-year term (renewable once), is IFAD's chief executive officer and chair of the Executive Board.

Policy Influence: Through low-interest loans and grants, IFAD works with governments to develop and finance programmes and projects that enable rural poor people to overcome poverty themselves. Since starting operations in 1978, IFAD has invested US\$13.1 billion in 900 projects and programmes that have reached some 400 million poor rural people.

IFAD tackles poverty not only as a lender, but also as an advocate for rural poor people. Its multilateral base provides a natural global platform to discuss important policy issues that influence the lives of rural poor people, as well as to draw attention to the centrality of rural development to meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

RAC-related Interventions:

In Ghana, IFAD's Root and Tuber Improvement Programme, made two improved varieties of sweet potatoes available to some 14 500 farmers.

In Benin, the Roots and Tubers Development Programme (PDRT) focused on increasing cassava and yam production.

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SUN – Scaling Up Nutrition

Background: SUN is a multi-stakeholder movement launched in 2010 to reduce hunger and undernutrition with a specific focus on the critical window between pregnancy and age two. The movement promotes evidence-based nutrition interventions, scale-up of successful practices, and integrating nutrition goals into critical sectors such as public health, social protection, and food and agriculture. It was endorsed by more than 100 national and international organizations. The SUN Movement Strategy will be updated in September 2012.

In 2011, SUN started identifying high-burden countries that have made progress in specific areas related to nutrition to receive direct intervention from SUN. There are 27 SUN countries; 20 are in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

In April 2012, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, appointed 27 leaders to the serve on SUN's Lead Group: Armando Emilio Guebuza, President of Mozambique; Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of Tanzania; Nahas Angula, Prime Minister of Namibia; Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Minister of Finance of Nigeria; Mr. Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of NEPAD; Mr. Rajiv Shah, Administrator, US Agency for International Development; Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director, World Food Programme; and Chris Elias, President, Global Development, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Anthony Lake, Executive Director, UNICEF, is the Chair of SUN's Lead Group.

Policy Influence: SUN countries must request to participate in SUN, demonstrate an existing commitment to nutrition as well as a commitment to move forward on nutrition. The hope of being supported by SUN is an incentive to making these commitments. At the global level, the multi-stakeholder aspect of SUN brings all nutrition stakeholders to the table, providing a unique advocacy platform.

RAC-related Interventions: All of the RAC countries, are also SUN countries. The activities SUN supports in each country vary depending on country situation, and in most countries, the process is just getting off the ground. What is the same in each country is the multi-stakeholder aspect, which provides an excellent opportunity for sharing information about OFSP. The Presidents of Mozambique and Tanzania (RAC countries), as well as the Finance Minister of Nigeria (another RAC country), and the President of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (RAC funder) were recently appointed to SUN's Lead Group. RAC should work with its country programs to explore ways of making sure that these decision makers are aware of RAC's work in their countries, and that they talk about it at SUN Lead Group meetings.

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UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

Background: UNICEF was created after World War II to provide food, clothing and health care to European children facing famine and disease. In 1953, it became a permanent part of the United Nations. It is now active in more than 190 countries and territories through country programmes and National Committees.

Policy Influence: UNICEF has the credibility to influence decision-makers, and the variety of partners at grassroots level, to turn innovative ideas into reality. UNICEF focuses on the critical impact social and economic policy issues have on children. Its work is centered around Global Economic Crisis and Recovery, Child Poverty and Disparities, Social Budgeting and Public Finance, Migration and Social Protection.

A network of UNICEF social policy advisors and officers work to develop and strengthen important external partnerships at country, regional and global levels with ministries of finance, parliaments, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, among others.

RAC-related Interventions: As a partner in the Vitamin A Global Initiative, UNICEF has three strategies for eliminating VAD: vitamin A supplements; fortifying staples; and diversifying foods. Breastfeeding is included in the category of diversifying foods, because this is where infants receive much of their vitamin A. Many vitamin A supplementation programmes are combined with the polio immunization campaigns, however, these are being phased out as the world nears its goal of eradicating polio, so another delivery mechanism must be found. UNICEF supports 95 per cent of the world’s vitamin A supplements for developing countries, with the bulk of the funding coming from the Micronutrient Initiative.

In October 2011, UNICEF launched Africa’s Nutrition Security Partnership (ANSP). The ANSP is funded by the European Union. It supports: up-stream policy development and nutrition security awareness; institutional development and capacity building; data analysis and knowledge sharing; and scaling up interventions. The partnership is working in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, and Uganda.

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USAID – United States Agency for International Development

Background: USAID was established in 1961, under the leadership of John F. Kennedy. For the last 50 years, USAID has funded projects in developing countries to promote health (including nutrition), agriculture, democracy and self-governance, economic growth and financial independence, sustainability and the environment, and education.

Policy Influence: USAID supports development projects in numerous sectors, and many of the projects have a policy component that works with host country government to make policy changes that support project goals. On a broader scale, USAID influences the positions of international donor fora by sharing its experiences and lessons learned from field work. The USAID Administrator is on SUN's Lead Group.

RAC-related Interventions: USAID works in 27 African countries focusing on:

- Boosting agricultural productivity through the Feed the Future Initiative (a \$3.5 billion commitment), by addressing the root causes of chronic hunger and poverty and spurring economic growth;
- Strengthening health systems through the Global Health Initiative, so that countries can help their children survive, overcome the threat of malaria, support safe childbirth and fight HIV/AIDS;
- Supporting democracy, human rights, and good governance;
- Increasing resilience to climate shocks; and
- Leading quick responses to humanitarian crises.

As part of its commitment to Feed the Future, the United States also supports the international Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement. The 1,000 Days partnership supports SUN by increasing advocacy and programming within this critical window of opportunity. USAID sponsors the Every Child Deserves a 5th Birthday campaign, and funded the A2Z Micronutrient and Child Blindness Project, which ended September 2011.

In May 2012, President Barack Obama announced the launch of the G8's *New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition* to promote agricultural growth and lift 50 million Africans out of poverty. In a statement from the White House, the G8 countries pledged to improve nutritional outcomes and reduce child stunting by "support[ing] the accelerated release, adoption, and consumption of biofortified crop varieties, crop diversification, and related technologies to improve nutritional quality of food in Africa." It is unclear how this Alliance will influence USAID's work.

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WFP – United Nations World Food Programme

Background: WFP is the food aid arm of the United Nations system. Food aid is one of the many instruments that can help to promote food security, which it defines as access of all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life. The policies governing the use of World Food Programme food aid must be oriented towards the objective of eradicating hunger and poverty. The ultimate objective of food aid should be the elimination of the need for food aid. WFP's multilateral character is one of its greatest strengths. WFP exploits its capability to operate virtually everywhere in the developing world, without regard to the political orientations of governments, and to provide a neutral conduit for assistance in situations where many donor countries could not directly provide assistance. WFP provides: advice; logistic support and information; and support to countries in establishing and managing their own food assistance programmes.

Policy Influence: WFP influences the policies in the countries in which it works through its close working relationships with the governments in those countries. On a broader scale, it influences the positions of international donor fora by sharing its experiences and lessons learned from field work.

RAC-related Interventions: In 2011, WFP provided fortified school meals to 25.9 million children in 60 countries. Over the last 45 years, 37 countries have taken over implementation of WFP school meals program. WFP is working to turn over management of school meals programs to country governments in more and more countries. A common component of these efforts is to locally source the ingredients used in the school meal, in order to achieve “Home Grown School Feeding.”

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