

Agriculture at a Crossroads



IAASTD International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge,
Science and Technology for Development



Executive Summary of the Synthesis Report

IAASTD

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and Technology for Development

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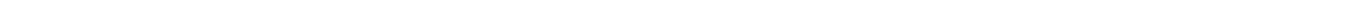




International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science
and Technology for Development


Executive Summary of the Synthesis Report

This summary was approved in detail by the Governments attending the IAASTD Intergovernmental Plenary in Johannesburg, South Africa (7-11 April 2008).



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Foreword

The objective of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) was to assess the impacts of past, present and future agricultural knowledge, science and technology on the:

- reduction of hunger and poverty,
- improvement of rural livelihoods and human health, and
- equitable, socially, environmentally and economically sustainable development.

The IAASTD was initiated in 2002 by the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as a global consultative process to determine whether an international assessment of agricultural knowledge, science and technology was needed. Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) opened the first Intergovernmental Plenary (30 August-3 September 2004) in Nairobi, Kenya, during which participants initiated a detailed scoping, preparation, drafting and peer review process.

The outputs from this assessment are a Global and five Sub-Global reports; a Global and five Sub-Global Summaries for Decision Makers; and a cross-cutting Synthesis Report with an Executive Summary. The Summaries for Decision Makers and the Synthesis Report specifically provide options for action to governments, international agencies, academia, research organizations and other decision makers around the world.

The reports draw on the work of hundreds of experts from all regions of the world who have participated in the preparation and peer review process. As has been customary

retariat. We would specifically like to thank the cosponsoring organizations of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank for their financial contributions as well as the FAO, UNEP, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for their continued support of this process through allocation of staff resources.

We acknowledge with gratitude the governments and organizations that contributed to the Multidonor Trust Fund (Australia, Canada, the European Commission, France, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) and the United States Trust Fund. We also thank the governments who provided support to Bureau members, authors and reviewers in other ways. In addition, Finland provided direct support to the Secretariat. The IAASTD was especially successful in engaging a large number of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in its work; the Trust Funds enabled financial assistance for their travel to the IAASTD meetings.

We would also like to make special mention of the Regional Organizations who hosted the regional coordinators and staff and provided assistance in management and time to ensure success of this enterprise: the African Center for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Kenya, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in Costa Rica, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Syria and the WorldFish Center in Malaysia.

The final Intergovernmental Plenary in Johannesburg, South Africa was opened on 7 April 2008 by Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP. This Plenary saw the acceptance of the Reports and the approval of the Summaries for

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