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Follow-up Consultative Meeting on the Establishment of the Alliance Africa Agricultural Co-operative Organization (AAACO)

Concept Note

- Theme:** **Strengthening Agricultural Co-operatives in Africa**
- Aim:** **To facilitate dialogue with the Alliance Africa members, partners, (including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), and collaborators on the progress made since the previous consultative meeting in Morocco and deliberate on the way forward of how the Alliance Africa Agricultural Co-operatives Organizations could address their challenges while contributing to zero hunger¹ in Africa.**
- Date:** **28 May 2018**
- Venue:** **Maputo, Mozambique**
- Duration:** **1 day**
- Targets:** **The Main target group is National and Regional Agricultural Co-operatives whose main purpose is agriculture (fishery, crops and livestock, etc) as the main economic activity and while financial co-operatives such as saving and credit co-operatives or co-operatives banks which support agricultural co-operatives to access finances are the secondary target groups.**

Background

Co-operatives contribute in addressing the developmental challenges of least developed countries and opportunities exist for leveraging the resources of the co-operative enterprise model and of the international, regional and national co-operative organisations to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to the recent report by the UN Secretary General, co-operatives are recognised to have a long-term perspective on investment in the community, which holds them accountable for the

¹ SDG 1 and Agenda 1 of Agenda 2063

community assets and commits them to sustainability and social responsibility to safeguard the use thereof by the current and future generations.

Some of the proposed strategies for strengthening co-operatives, given the key challenges that they face in their pursuit of sustainable development for all include:

- Increasing the awareness of the role that co-operatives have in achieving the SDGS;
- Generating consistent data on co-operatives to support evidence-based research, especially with regard to the SDGS;
- Establishing effective policies, laws and regulations, and
- Building the capacity of co-operatives to participate in sustainable development processes at the national, regional and international levels.

Therefore, to create an enabling environment for co-operatives to contribute effectively to the achievement of Agenda 2030, governments should review existing legislation and regulations. This will make the national legal and regulatory environment more conducive to the creation and growth of co-operatives, improvement of existing laws and regulations and/or establishment of new ones, especially with regard to access to capital, competitiveness and fair taxation.

In March 2016, the International Co-operative Alliance entered into a partnership with the European Commission, ushering in a new phase of collaboration on strengthening the co-operative movement as development actors.

The ICA-EU partnership, also called #coops4dev, aims to bring the co-operative model to the next level within international development policies and programmes. It is built around activities focused on increasing visibility, enhancing advocacy, sharing capacity building, strengthening co-operative development networking, and supporting all these with evidence from exhaustive research.

As a partner, the Alliance Africa together with ICA is driving the actions, in collaboration with members, civil society organisations, international institutions and the EU. The campaign **Co-ops for 2030** has been created within the framework of this project to enable co-operatives to learn more about the SDGs, commit to pledges to contribute to achieving the SDGs, and report their progress.

Specifically, the project aims to strengthen and enable 187 co-operative federations in 75 EU partner countries and their regional and global umbrella organizations to promote, develop and advocate the co-operative enterprise model at national, regional and global levels on behalf of their members. Activities related to strengthening the Alliance network will contribute to reinforce the regional and global structures, facilitate the development of a common identity, support policy dialogue and advocacy, and thus promote greater impact of the co-operative movement worldwide on development.

As one of the geographical zones of the Alliance, the Alliance Africa has a significant role to play in the implementation of the EU project in collaboration with the other geographical zones of the Alliance.

A consultative meeting that was held on 23 May 2017 in Casablanca, Morocco was enriched by presentations on opportunities for African agricultural co-operatives working together, followed by a panel discussion on the status of agricultural co-operatives in Africa with perspectives being gleaned from the five sub regions of Africa: Northern Africa represented by Morocco, Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Central Africa. A round table discussion on strategies for supporting agricultural cooperatives followed where development partners gave an overview of the programmes available for supporting agricultural cooperatives, as well as the opportunities available and gaps seen. The feasibility study concept was also presented and the draft Terms of Reference for the establishment of the Alliance Africa Agricultural Co-operatives Organization undertaken and amendments proposed.

Its specific objectives were:

- To understand the historical challenges of agricultural national, sub regional and regional organisations
- To identify the need for the Alliance Africa Agricultural Co-operative Sectoral Organisation.

The overall topic under discussion resonated well with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 2, which aims to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. It also commits to universal access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food at all times of the year, as well as SDG 1, which calls for an end to poverty in all its manifestations by 2030. It also aims to ensure social protection for the poor and vulnerable, increase access to basic services and support people harmed by climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters, of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. It also aims at contributing to achievement of the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa we want and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.

Some of the recommendations from the consultative meeting included:

- Agricultural co-operatives should integrate with emerging global/private investments to cope with climate change
- Agricultural co-operatives should be encouraged to work along all the value chain (production, distribution, marketing and consumption) and to diversify the crops to mitigate risks of over relying only on one crop.
- There is need for more collaboration among the co-operatives along the value-chain. To access international markets the co-operatives need to think about consumer needs, branding of their products and an effective supply chain design.
- There is need to have information on impact of co-operatives on production as opposed to just providing information on the increase in the number of registered co-operatives. More information/data is required from cooperatives to judge performance and enhance decision making.

- There is need to deliberately find ways to replicate best practices in African Co-operatives. For example the Israel Potato chain, the Nigeria Cassava chain. Co-operatives need to work as enterprises if they have to access financing.
- Development partners to be committed to the implementation of the SDGs, particularly to support agricultural co-operatives to contribute to an end to hunger in Africa.
- All agricultural co-operatives in Africa need to be members AAACO, and must leverage on ICT so that data or statistics from agricultural co-operatives can be collected to enhance better decision making. The members should be equally and equitably represented in the organization, and the organization should create a platform for the agricultural cooperatives in Africa.
- Targets for the measurement of operations of AAACO should be based on the 7 co-operative principles, volume and value of production, sales / turnover and profits, stake-holder indicators, and periodic performance audits must be undertaken to verify performance.

The overall aim of this follow-up consultative meeting is to revive the above mentioned discussions, evaluate the report of the Morocco consultative meeting and take stock of the progress made and deliberate on the way forward.

Specifically, the objectives of this follow-up consultative meeting will be:

- I. To follow-up on the recommendation of the consultative meeting that was held in Casablanca, Morocco on 23rd May 2017 and develop an action plan;
- II. To fast track the formation of AAACO and the appointment of the Steering Committee.

Proposed Schedule of Events

28 May 2018		
08:00 – 08:30	Registration	Facilitator
08:30 – 08:45	Introduction and opening remarks	Dr Chiyoge B. SIFA, Regional Director, The Alliance Africa
08:45 - 09:00	The ICA-EU Partnership Project: A brief presentation of the project and progress made so far	Mr Marc NOEL, International Development Director, The Alliance
09:00 - 09:15	Rationale of the meeting	Dr. Rose Karimi, Project Manager, The Alliance Africa
09:00 – 09:30	Presentation of the background paper	Dr Chiyoge B. SIFA, Regional Director, The Alliance Africa
09:30 - 10:00	Presentation of SADC Report	ILO
10:00 – 10.30	Possible technical Support from FAO to the AAACO	FAO
10:30 - 11:00	Questions and Answers	
11:00 - 11:15	Health break	
11:15 - 12:15	Group discussion on the way forward of AAACO	

12:15 – 12:45	Plenary Session on submission of summaries and recommendations	
12:45 - 13:15	Questions and Answers	
13:15 - 14:15	Lunch break	
14:15 - 15:15	Appointment of the Steering Committee of AAACO	
15:15 - 15:30	Health break	
15:30 - 17:00	Key recommendations on the activities of the committee	
17:00 – 17:15	Way forward / next steps	Dr Chiyoge B. SIFA, Regional Director, The Alliance Africa
	Meeting communiqué: Overall summary and evaluation	Dr. Rose Karimi Project Manager, The Alliance Africa
Closing		