

REPORT OF THE SIDE EVENT ORGANISED BY SASAKAWA AFRICA ASSOCIATION AT THE 2024 AFRICA FOOD SYSTEMS FORUM, KIGALI, RWANDA

The banner features a green background with a close-up of corn leaves. At the top left is the SAA logo (a green map of Africa with 'SAA' in yellow) and the text 'SASAKAWA AFRICA ASSOCIATION' in green, with the tagline 'Walking with the Farmer' in grey below it. To the right is the 'AFRICA FOOD SYSTEMS FORUM 2024' logo, which includes a colorful arc and the text 'Innovate, Accelerate and Scale' and 'FORUM ON AFRICA'S FOOD AND NUTRITION TRANSFORMATION'. The main title 'FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION:' is in large white letters, followed by 'EMERGING INSIGHTS FROM MEGA INITIATIVES' in yellow. Below this, event details are listed: '02 Sept., 2024' with a calendar icon, '09.45am (UTC/GMT +2)' with a clock icon, and 'MH2, Kigali Convention Centre Kigali, Rwanda' with a location pin icon. A central image shows two women in a field of green crops, one in a patterned top and the other in a red headscarf, both smiling and holding ears of grain. At the bottom, a white bar contains logos for various partners: IsDB, UN Women, UN Women Fund, AGRA, IITA, BASICS-II, EYA, and the African Union.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA), in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) Nigeria office, Building an Economically Sustainable Integrated Cassava Seed System-Phase 2 (BASICS-II), and the African Development Bank (AfDB), organized a side event during the 2024 Africa Food Systems Forum. Themed **“Food Systems Transformation: Emerging Insights from Mega Initiatives”**, the event highlighted impactful interventions in food systems transformation and the essential role of international financial institutions and organizations like IsDB, AfDB, AGRA, and the Sasakawa Africa Association.

Key case initiatives discussed included the Building an Economically Sustainable Integrated Cassava Seed System (BASICS-II), Kano State Agropastoral Development Project (KSADP), Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) ClearingHouse, AGRA Nigeria projects, and SAA supported by the Nippon Foundation. The event emphasized knowledge sharing, adaptation of successful intervention models, and strategies to enhance sustainability.

The program included a welcome address, opening remarks, a framing presentation, a panel session, and closing remarks.

WELCOME ADDRESS

Dr. Mokoto Kitanaka, President of the Sasakawa Africa Association, in his welcome address, highlighted the transformative potential of various agricultural initiatives. He noted that while these projects have driven progress, the extent of their impact on food systems transformation remains underappreciated. He expressed hope that insights from the event would guide future investments for greater impact.

OPENING REMARKS

Governor Abba Yusuf Kabir of Kano State, Nigeria, represented by Dr. Danjuma Mahmoud, Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, acknowledged the progress of the KSADP in addressing the challenges of food insecurity, climate change, and soil degradation, in his opening remarks. He shared how the project is driving food systems transformation by intensifying agro-pastoral practices and improving crop and livestock productivity.

FRAMING PRESENTATION

Dr. Godwin Atser, Country Director of Sasakawa Africa Association, Nigeria, provided a detailed overview of how various agricultural initiatives are responding to Africa's food security challenges. He cited several key interventions, including:

- **SAA supported by The Nippon Foundation**, impacting over 10 million African farmers in Africa with its strategy focus on regenerative, nutrition-sensitive, and market-oriented agriculture while addressing capacity building, inclusiveness and digitalization.
- **The IsDB and LLF-funded funded KSADP**, achieving over 150% yield increases in rice, maize, millet and sorghum in northern Nigeria.
- **The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation-funded BASICS-II Project**, doubling cassava yields in Nigeria and Tanzania, with expansion into multiple African countries.
- **The AfDB-funded TAAT initiative**, targeting 40 million farmers with technologies to double productivity in various key crops.
- **SAA-AGRA Consortia project**, enhancing farmers' resilience and increasing productivity, incomes, and livelihoods across rice, maize, soybean, cowpea, and vegetable value chains in Niger State, North Central Nigeria.

Dr. Atser posed key questions to the panel, focusing on lessons learned, successes, areas for improvement, and scalability.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderated by Ms. Ethiopia Tadesse, Head of Communication and Advocacy at the Sasakawa Africa Association, the panel featured project leaders and experts, including:

- Prof. Lateef Sanni, Project Manager, BASICS-II
- Dr. Rufus Idris, Country Director, AGRA Nigeria
- Dr. Mel Oluoch, Director for Strategic Partnerships, Sasakawa Africa Association
- Dr. Solomon Gizaw, (Head of TAAT ClearingHouse
- Abdulrasheed Hamisu Kofarmata** (Project Coordinator, KSADP/SAA)

The panelists shared insights from their respective projects:

BASICS-II Project:

- Focused on promoting improved cassava varieties and empowering Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs (CSEs), many of whom are women.
- Leveraged technologies like Semi Autotrophic Hydroponics (SAH) for rapid seed multiplication.
- Emphasized private sector ownership and regulatory frameworks for sustainability.

AGRA Consortia Projects:

- Increased yields across multiple crops through a public-private consortia model.
- Highlighted the AGRA 3.0 strategy for aligning with local political economies and creating 3 million jobs in agriculture through partnerships with the MasterCard Foundation.
- Emphasized the need for financing available to seed producers to help them scale production.

SAA supported by The Nippon Foundation :

- The Nippon Foundation grants have significantly increased productivity and technology adoption through effective extension service delivery.
- Collaborating with 32 universities, the grants have strengthened extension systems and developed innovative dissemination models.
- A strong focus on inclusivity empowers women, youth, and people with disabilities.
- The grants also promote job creation, reduce post-harvest losses, and foster value addition through private service providers. Investments in mechanization have encouraged greater participation by women and youth.
- Emphasis is placed on enhancing value addition within Africa to boost farmers' incomes and create jobs rather than exporting raw materials.

TAAT ClearingHouse:

- TAAT (Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation) is scaling proven technologies to advance sustainable agriculture, improve soil health, and support climate adaptation. These technologies have reached millions of farmers across Nigeria, Ethiopia, Benin, and other African countries. They have enabled Nigeria to achieve self-sufficiency in rice and boosted wheat productivity in Ethiopia, while also accelerating cassava commercialization.
- In collaboration with SAA, TAAT promotes climate-friendly technologies in rice production in Benin and Nigeria to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The consortia model, involving CG Centres, development organizations, and private and public sector actors, has been highly impactful.
- For sustainability, TAAT emphasizes linking funding to agricultural technologies and integrates them into project designs to ensure long-term success.

KSADP/SAA:

- The crop value chain component of the KSADP is helping reduce poverty and enhance food and nutrition security for vulnerable populations in Kano State. This is achieved through sustainable agricultural practices, post-harvest technologies, market linkages, input provision, mechanization, and enterprise development across various value chains.

- Funded by the IsDB and LLF, the project has reached 366,000 farmers across Kano's 44 local government areas. Its success lies in tailoring interventions to the unique needs of stakeholders, a content-specific approach that KSADP prioritizes.
- For long-term sustainability, community and industry stakeholders, along with public and private partners, must be engaged. Robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) processes, enabling real-time feedback, will support necessary adjustments throughout the project lifecycle.
- Moving forward, there is a need to develop climate-resilient strategies, and as the project embraces digital transformation, ensuring user-friendly digital solutions for farmers is essential.

COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND ANSWERS

Members of the audience had opportunities to make comments and ask questions, some of which are captured below:

Q1: How do we ensure so-called “smallholder farmers” graduate to big farmers?

Abdulrasheed Hamisu: The KSADP is fostering business environments across 2,000 communities in the 44 local government areas by training beneficiaries in market-oriented agriculture. We link them with a consortium of research institutes, seed companies, and financial institutions for market-driven investments. A notable example is the community-based seed multiplication initiative, where farmers produce seeds for seed companies. This has led to increased yields and productivity, thereby elevating many farmers' statuses.

Q2: To what extent are you integrating lessons from research institutes, as well as from countries like India and China that were once in Nigeria’s position?

Prof. Lateef Sanni: NRCRI, CRIN, and IITA are the primary sources of technology, collaborating with other CG Centres to leverage and share knowledge. Additionally, we engage local institutes; for instance, NSPRI has become a significant provider of storage facilities for institutions across the country, including Sasakawa, IFPRI, CRIN, and the Borno State government in Northern Nigeria.

Q3: How do we ensure that the jobs being created are sustainable in terms of employment and entrepreneurship?

Dr. Rufus Idris: Jobs are not only generated through on-farm activities but also through value chain development, which enables young people to engage economically in areas such as digital extension, mechanization, small and medium-scale enterprises, financial access, and market linkages.

GOODWILL MESSAGES

Lawrence Kent, Senior Program Officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, recommended that the successful templates used by the BASICS project, TAAT, Sasakawa Africa Association, AGRA, and the Islamic Development Bank-funded KSADP should be replicated in new geographies for greater impact.

Dr. Biola Kazeem Badmos, Senior Agriculture and Food Security Specialist at the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), urged development institutions to collaborate on food system transformation to achieve food security, healthy diets, economic prosperity, social well-being, and environmental sustainability. He noted that the transformative initiatives highlighted at the event have sparked ideas for designing impactful interventions to address climate change, health crises, and improve the lives of millions.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Martin Fregene, Director of Agriculture and Agro-Industry at AfDB, represented by Prof. Sule Ochai, a senior policy consultant with the AfDB, emphasized that “Africa must feed Africa.” This philosophy drives AfDB’s significant investments in agriculture and the latest Feed Africa strategy, which incorporates the ideas discussed at the side event. He encouraged participants to reflect on the following questions:

- What happens to beneficiaries after a project or intervention ends?
- When new technologies are introduced to farmers, do they adopt them?
- How can we address post-harvest losses that are pushing farmers into poverty?
- In what ways can seeds, fertilizers, and healthy soils contribute to the growth of Africa’s agriculture?

PARTICIPANTS

The event drew over 280 participants, both online and in-person, representing diverse organizations, professions, and regions.

PHOTOS



Front row of participants at the event



Dr Makoto Kitanaka, President, Sasakawa Africa Association



Dr Danjuma Mahmoud, Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kano State



Dr Godwin Atser, Country Director, Sasakawa Africa Association, Nigeria



Panel session: L-R: Ms Ethiopia Tadesse; Prof Lateef Sanni; Dr Rufus Idris; Dr Mel Olouch; Dr Solomon Gizaw; Mr Abdulrasheed Kofarmata



Lawrence Kent, Senior Program Officer with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation addressing participants via Zoom



Dr Biola Kazeem Badmos, Senior Agriculture and Food Security Specialist, IsDB, addressing participants via zoom

ANNEX

SPEAKERS AND EVENT PROGRAM



SASAKAWA AFRICA ASSOCIATION
Walking with the Farmer



AFRICA FOOD SYSTEMS FORUM 2024
Innovate, Accelerate and Scale

FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION:

EMERGING INSIGHTS FROM MEGA INITIATIVES

📅 02 Sept., 2024 | 🕒 09.45am (UTC/GMT +2)

📍 MH2, Kigali Convention Centre
Kigali, Rwanda



SPEAKERS



H.E. ENGR. ABBA KABIR YUSUF
Executive Governor of Kano State, Nigeria



DR. MAKOTO KITANAKA
President, Sasakawa Africa Association



MR. LAWRENCE KENT
Senior Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



DR. GODWIN ATSER
Country Director, Sasakawa Africa Association, Nigeria



MS. ETHIOPIA TADESSE
Head of Communication and Advocacy, Sasakawa Africa Association



DR. BIOLA KAZEEM BADMOS
Senior Agriculture & Food Security Specialist Economic & Social Infrastructure, Global Practice and Partnership Directorate, Islamic Development Bank (IDB)



DR. MARTIN FREGENE
Director, Agriculture and Agro-Industry, African Development Bank (AfDB)



PROF. LATEEF SANNI
Project Manager, Building an Economically Sustainable Integrated Cassava Seed System, Phase 2 (BASICS-II)



DR. RUFUS IDRIS
Country Director, AGRA, Nigeria



DR. MEL OLUOCH
Director, Strategic Partnerships, Sasakawa Africa Association



DR. SOLOMON ASSEFA GIZAW
Head, TAT Clearinghouse



MR. ABDULRASHEED HAMISU KOFARMATA
Project Coordinator, Kano State Agropastoral Development Project

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Event Program

9.45 – 9.50

Welcome Remarks

Makoto Kitanaka, *President, Sasakawa Africa Association*

9.50 – 9.55

Opening Remarks

Abba Yusuf Kabir, *Executive Governor of Kano State, Nigeria*

9.55 – 10.05

Framing presentation

Godwin Atser, *Country Director, Sasakawa Africa Association*

10.05 – 10.45

Panel Discussion:

Food systems transformation: Emerging insights from mega initiatives

Panelists

Rufus Idris, *AGRA Nigeria Country Director*

Mel Oluoch, *Director for Strategic Partnerships, Sasakawa Africa Association*

Lateef Sanni, *Project Manager, BASICS-II*

Solomon Assefa Gizaw, *Head of TAAT ClearingHouse*

Abdulrasheed Hamisu Kofarmata, *Project Coordinator, KSADP/SAA*

10.45 – 11.00

Q&A Sessions

11.00 – 11.10

Goodwill messages

Lawrence Kent, *Senior Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

Dr. Biola Kazeem Badmos, *Senior Agriculture & Food Security Specialist*

Economic & Social Infrastructure, Global Practice and Partnership Directorate, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

11.10 – 11.15

Closing Remarks

Martin Fregene, *Director of Agriculture and Agro-Industry, African Development Bank (AfDB)*

Moderator:

Ms Ethiopia Tadesse,

Head of Communication & Advocacy, Sasakawa Africa Association



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