

FARA proposes science-led agricultural transformation

The African continent possesses 60% of the world's arable land and 70% of its water as well as human capital - key elements for successful production. But the question is: Is Africa lacking in technology and mechanised systems to fully gain momentum as a global producer and supplier?



Science - a catalyst for change

"The role of science in enhancing agricultural productivity, competitiveness and market access in Africa is too important for it to be outsourced," says Dr Yemi Akinbami, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) at *Celebrating FARA* being held in Johannesburg this week.

The celebratory event is tagged "Renewing, Repositioning and Refocusing FARA", and placed under the theme: *FARA - Delivering Africa's Future Through Science-led Agricultural Transformation*. It has brought together key industry players to review the progress made at country, sub-regional and continental levels.

Lessons are being drawn from milestones reached and discussions held to come up with solutions that will set the strategy for delivering Africa's future over the next decade through science-led agricultural transformation.



Image source: <http://faraafrica.org/>

Some of the world's top opinion leaders on agriculture in Africa are presenting over the three-day period (from 26 to 28 November), including Professor Calestous Juma, an internationally recognised authority on the application of science and technology to sustainable development. He was named one of the most influential 100 Africans in 2012 and 2013 by the *New African* magazine. His keynote address amongst the impressive list of guest speakers will be Smart Harvest: the role of science, technology and innovation advice in African agriculture. Other discussions include climate change, food sovereignty versus food security and a focus on the promotion of youth engagement with the creation of the Youth Agripreneur Model.

Science vital to African agriculture

"Without the catalytic role of a science agenda, the transformation dream will only be a mirage," says Dr Akinbami. No nation has achieved social and economic growth without using the power of science. Africa needs to use science and technology to leverage more value out of the resources available on the continent and African leaders will have to invest more of their own resources in this area. "Being able to demonstrate the power of science to support agriculture and development is at the heart of this FARA event. This is particularly important when you consider that 75% of the Africa population depends largely on agriculture.

Game changer

FARA has been a game changer for 15 years and is altering the landscape of African agricultural development in order to reach the target for 2030 to become the majority supplier for food security across the globe. Its transformative agenda impacts on economic transformation and inclusive growth. FARAs work will create the monumental shift from Africa being importer of food to the importance of becoming an exporter.

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