



Ministry of Agriculture

# WAAPP LIBERIA INFO

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NEWSLETTER 002 – June 2014

WEST AFRICA AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM

PROGRAMME DE PRODUCTIVITÉ AGRICOLE EN AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST



**PRESIDENT SIRLEAF LAUNCHES THE SYSTEM OF RICE INTENSIFICATION, (SRI) IN MONROVIA.**

**THE FIRST CONSIGNMENT OF IMPROVED SEED RICE DISTRIBUTED TO FARMERS IN SOUTHEASTERN LIBERIA UNDER THE WAAPP LIBERIA PROJECT**

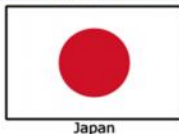
**WORLD BANK AND PARTNERS CONCLUDE MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE WAAPP LIBERIA PROJECT, RATE IT MODESTLY SATISFACTORY**



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**AfricaRice**  
Rice science at the service of Africa  
La science rizicole au service de l'Afrique

**IITA**  
Research to Nourish Africa



## Editor's Note



**ELVIS H. SIRLEAF**  
**EDITOR**

And your humble servant, the first officer of this flight, and the now functional National Communication Technical Working Group, on behalf of Captain J. Cyrus Saygbe, Sr and crew, have packaged in this edition some of the key success stories of the project over the last reporting period.

Someone once told me; "if you don't talk about what you are doing, do not be angry or disappointed when no one talks about it". One of several reasons for which our work at WAAPP/the Ministry of Agriculture will become a success is when we talk about all the things that are happening. Providing the right information on time to the right audience and using the right tools will tell the stories and dispel wrong perceptions and notions. This is just one way, with several others being utilized. So in this story telling duty of mine, I can only hope that this second edition of our newsletter achieves its purpose, which is to report of what is happening in the Liberian agricultural sector with the intervention of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program, WAAPP.

Visibility is a key aspect of all WAAPP activities, as such, we are committed to the task of telling our beneficiaries and stakeholders all about the project. This is evidenced by the several sign and billboards erected in the project counties, short videos and audio dramas, infomercials and such, prepared for airing on local television and radio stations, noted in the form of brochures and leaflets, etc.

Hearts off to all those who made positive contributions to our premier edition produced last year. Also, we highly appreciate all the contributions made to this second edition. Your comments, encouragements and criticisms all help us want to be better people at what we do. It is also important for us to recognize the tireless efforts of our farmers, extension workers, agro partners and all other actors along the chain that are throwing in their all to make agriculture what it ought to be in Liberia. My gratitude goes to Philip N. Wessch and Victor K. Seah for the editorial assistance. Once again, I am grateful that I can make a contribution to this process in my own little way.

Let me close with some borrowed words from French poet Jacques Rigaut: "Don't forget that I cannot see myself, that my role is limited to being the one who looks in the mirror."

  
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**Message from the Minister of Agriculture Dr. Florence A. Chenoweth**



**DR. FLORENCE A. CHENOWETH**  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE  
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

There are many positive things that are happening within Liberia's Agricultural Sector. The West Africa Agricultural Productivity

Program, (WAAPP) Liberia Project is

just one of them. I am happy that our WAAPP project is working in such a manner that recognition is beyond our borders. Thanks to all the actors who have played a part in getting us thus far.

When I received the report from our representatives at the WAAPP Regional Meetings that were held in May, 2014 in Lome, Togo, I was delighted that the country had moved one step forward. The WAAPP Liberia Project in terms of overall performance rating from November 2013 to April 2014 was judged as ***“Moderately Satisfactory”***. This is commendable. Liberia is now in the same category as Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal and others. It can be recalled that for the past two years the overall performance rating of WAAPP-Liberia has always been ***Moderately Unsatisfactory*** risking Liberia's chances of benefiting from the next phase of funding from our partners.

The country has moved up in rating. This brings joy and happiness to all of us. What also comes along with this positive rating is our contentment to do even better during the next rating of participating WAAPP countries in November 2014. I am confident that the WAAPP Liberia team within the Program Management Unit (PMU) of the Ministry of Agriculture is committed to improving the performance of the project. My confidence is further echoed by the strong leadership and wealth of experience that Dr. Moses Zinnah brings onboard as head of the PMU, as well as the experienced and diligent staff of the WAAPP Liberia project. We cannot fail.

I have had the opportunity of listening to some of the strong positive comments by our colleagues in the regional WAAPP projects in terms of the hard work of the Ministry of Agriculture in implementation of the WAAPP Liberia project in particular and the agriculture sector in general. Let me use this medium to reiterate the Ministry of Agriculture's commitment to deliver and make Liberia food secured. While this is not an overnight thing, there are significant strides being made by several interventions, including the WAAPP initiative. Let us exercise a little patience and show a little more appreciation for the efforts being made so far.

Our partners have been steadfast in their efforts to see us succeed. On behalf of the President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and people of Liberia, let me register our gratitude to you for your assistance. We look forward to your continuous commitment to this endeavor of making our country food secure.

Presently, the ministry is keen on achieving some key tasks, something that will boost the project's rating as well as the ministry's and the country's image. These include, among other things: Adopting and implementing the ECOWAS Protocols on Seeds, Fertilizers and Pesticides; Establishing a Seed Certification System, including constitution of a National Seed Board; Developing a plan of action to fill in the existing gaps to make improved certified seed rice available to Liberian farmers; and Developing a long-term Strategic Plan for the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI).

We need to work harder to resolve the outstanding implementation issues and challenges to meet the expectations of our partners to ensure that the performance of Liberia rated as ***“Satisfactory”*** during the next WAAPP Regional Meetings in November 2014.

**Dr. Florence A. Chenoweth**  
Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Liberia

## **Message from the Director of the Program Management Unit, (PMU)**



**DR. MOSES M. ZINNAH**  
DIRECTOR, PROGRAM  
MANAGEMENT UNIT (PMU)

In May 2014, I sat at a Regional WAAPP meeting in Lome, Togo and listened to the announcement that WAAPP Liberia was now rated a step higher than what it has been since the project got underway in 2012. It was gratifying to hear the good news, because the work that is being done by the magnificent team in the

WAAPP Coordination Unit in the Program Management Unit (PMU) is now being recognized by major stakeholders. It also indicates that Liberia is being seen by the outside world as taking a step toward improving the agriculture sector. When good results are shown after support have been given by the Government and its donor partners, there is always a tendency for more support to follow. I am grateful to the Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Florence Chenoweth) for affording me the opportunity to lead a team of professional colleagues in the PMU in the design and implementation of several projects on behalf of the Government of Liberia and its donor partners.

My message in the last edition of the WAAPP Liberia Info spoke of the beginning of the long term development effort for the country with the intervention of the WAAPP Liberia project. I indicated that Liberia is on the path of sustainable transformation in the Agriculture sector. With the appreciable level of interventions and success that the

project has had so far, it is a fact that something is happening in the sector.

The project has made available several new rice-based and cassava-based technologies available to farmers. Smallholder farmers are now benefiting from the new and improved seed rice and cassava cuttings that are being cultivated at the Central Agricultural Research Institute, (CARI) with support from WAAPP. Hopefully, this will go a long way in helping our struggling farmers in their quest to earn more income and improve their livelihoods and reduce food insecurity and poverty in Liberia.

Under the first phase of this project, we are concentrating on human and institutional capacity building. Thus, WAAPP is currently supporting the training thirty seven (37) young Liberian students who are pursuing their master's and doctorate degrees in highly ranked universities across Africa. With the return of these new breeds of Liberian agricultural scientists, the on-going revamping of CARI's infrastructure, and its newly developed 10-year research strategic plan, we expect more demand-driven research activities to be carried out at CARI.

**Dr. Moses M. Zinnah**  
Director, Program Management Unit  
Ministry of Agriculture, Liberia

## Message from the National Project Coordinator



**J. CYRUS SAYGBE, SR.**  
**NATIONAL PROJECT COORDINATOR**  
**WAAPP LIBERIA**

“We are each on our own journey. Each of us is on our very own adventure; encountering all kinds of challenges, and the choices we make on that adventure will shape us as we go; these choices will stretch us, test us and push us to our limit; and our adventure will make

us stronger than we ever know we could be.”

I read this quote somewhere and couldn't help but make this my opening line, simply because on this journey as the National Project Coordinator of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program, Liberia Project, I have seen challenges and had to make choices. I have been stretched, tested, and pushed to my limit. Through it all, I have come to realize that all it has done is make me a stronger person, stronger than I have ever imagined my potential will allow me become.

Liberia is a country that has seen prolonged setbacks in several areas. The agricultural sector is no exception. I must admit taking up this post, I didn't see all the work that was there to do. The task of convincing people who are already accustomed to a particular way of life to change to something we think is better and can have greater gains. The task of having to put up with exasperated people lashing at us because of the slow pace agricultural activities have been carried out in the country. Now, with a better understanding of their enthusiasm for speedy and sustained progress in the agricultural sector, I have a fair appreciation of their push for us to do more work.

There are several gains that have been made since our last reporting period about half a year ago. Several capacities have been built, and that process is still ongoing. We can refer to the works being carried out at the Central Agricultural Research Institute, (CARI) in Suakoko, Bong County as part of our institutional capacity building program. There are new structures, including housing units for scientists, the recruitment of a consultant to develop a 10 year Strategic Plan for CARI, the recruitment of a firm to develop CARI Master Plan and Supervision works, amongst others. Farmers have begun receiving improved varieties of seed rice and cassava cuttings under the WAAPP Liberia multiplication scheme. Several local organizations; farmers, farming groups, processors, transporters, marketers and other actors along the value chain or the Innovation Platform are presently benefiting from the project's intervention. The system created to stir the activities of the new way we are going to farm and carry out agricultural activities in the country, the Innovation

Platform has been set up in each of the counties in which WAAPP is being implemented in Liberia.

Among other countries, Liberia has moved to another stage in the performance rating by the World Bank, and has also qualified for the second phase which is the remaining five years, even though the project has just gone 2 and the half years into the implementation of the first phase. This is largely due to the magnificent works being carried out by the Project Implementation Unit with support from the Ministry of Agriculture. As I did in our last edition, let me appreciate the wonderful team that I have been blessed with to carry out this task. This is becoming a success because of the mammoth and significant support you are giving. Individually, you have all brought on board true values that are in line with the overall goals of the project. I could not have asked for a better team.

Positive actions and commitment to what we do, and a little support from the ordinary people in their little ways will help us get there. Honore de Balzac once said, “Most people of action are inclined to fatalism, and most of thought believe in providence.” Tell me, Liberians which do you think we're going be?

Let me personally appreciate the Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Florence Chenoweth and her able team for creating the enabling environment for the project to operate smoothly to meet its Project Development Objectives. At mid-term the Project's total direct beneficiaries has reached 80% (39,520 beneficiaries against a target of 50,000) of which 39% are female, more than 8,000 ha of the targeted area has now been put under cultivation with improved varieties of rice and close to 20,000 producers have adopted the improved technologies made available under the Project. It is also worth to note that encouraging results have been achieved in terms of capacity building with 37 young researchers and extension agents, including 12 female, presently undergoing their Masters(32) and PhD (5) studies in various Universities in the region; the first graduates are expected back in 2015 (for the masters students) and 2016 (for PhDs students). With respect to seed production, the project supported the production of 270 metric tons of both lowland and upland rice foundation seeds, and 25 hectares of improved cassava through CARI and with the participation of the private sector and Universities and there are prospects that additional 300 metric tons of improved rice seeds and 88 hectares of cassava will be available by the end of the planting season of August 2014.

**J. Cyrus Saygbe Sr.**  
National Project Coordinator, WAAPP Liberia



## President Sirleaf Launches the System of Rice Intensification, (SRI) in Monrovia.

Calls on the Ministry of Agriculture to get more involved into interventions of this kind that will help deliver food to the people.



**PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF CUTS THE RIBBON TO THE FARM ENTRANCE AS AGRICULTURE MINISTER CHENOWETH AND CHAP DIRECTOR BIMBA HELP. (R) MONTSERRADO COUNTY DISTRICT 4 REPRESENTATIVE FAHNBULLEH LOOKS ON**

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has launched the System of Rice Intensification, (SRI) in Liberia. Speaking on Friday, May 9, 2014 at the ceremony held at the office of the Community of Hope Agriculture Project (CHAP) in Zubah Town, Duport Road, the Liberian Leader called on the Ministry of Agriculture to get more involved in initiatives that will help provide food to the local people. President Sirleaf who also recounted her government's promise to make Liberia food secure, said this is the kind of intervention that is going to make that promise a reality. In response to a request made earlier by the CHAP Executive Director Rev. Robert Bimba, President Johnson Sirleaf promised to work with the appropriate authorities to issue a title land deed, that will give CHAP the right to own the land for development purposes.



**MADAM ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF  
PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA**

young energetic people who can use their hands to work.

The President then encouraged the young people within the community to take up jobs and contracts on the CHAP agriculture field, something she is prepared to finance to enable them pay their school and other fees. She said it was now time to discourage hand-downs to

In her annual address to the Nation in January 2011, the Liberian Chief Executive mentioned the CHAP intervention in the Duport Road community as a wonderful endeavor with the propensity of significant gains.



**DR. FLORENCE A. CHENOWETH  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE**

Speaking earlier, Agriculture Minister Dr. Florence Chenoweth reiterated her ministry's commitment to making Liberia food secure in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the Agro Scientist, there are several

interventions that the ministry is presently involved with in all 15 counties of Liberia, and the CHAP initiative was just one. Madam Chenoweth who joined President Sirleaf, Montserrado County District 4 Representative Hon. Boima Fahnbulleh and other dignitaries to cut the ribbon to the farm entrance and harvest the first bash of improved rice under the SRI program, also encouraged the local people to get more involved in growing food. This, she said will be their little contribution to the fight against poverty.



**NEWLY HARVESTED RICE FROM THE CHAP SRI FIELD**

Community of Hope Agriculture Project (CHAP) is a faith-based entity that has worked in urban and rural communities in Liberia since its establishment in August 2008. Founded by Apostle & Mrs. James M. Bimba, CHAP seeks to reduce hunger in the country and is a development arm of Abide in the Vine Fellowship Inc.

It is geared towards training local farmers, women and youth and provide them with basic farm tools and equipment to increase their productivity and provide them with job opportunities. CHAP which also receives part of its funding from the Ministry of Agriculture through the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP) Liberia, is specialized in the production of certified seed rice, vegetables, maize, and cassava cuttings. The Organization is also engaged in capacity building through adult literacy, organizational development, and with expertise in SRI rice production. CHAP is a member of the Farmers Union Network, (FUN).

The new method of rice planting was introduced at a workshop hosted in December 2013, by the Ministry of Agriculture and CHAP, with funding from WAAPP Liberia. The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) program was discovered in Madagascar by the French Jesuit Henri de LAULANIE, an agricultural engineer. SRI is an innovation that changes the conventional practices of rice growing. In practice, it consists of producing rice with less seeds, water and fertilizers on a soil rich in organic matter and well ventilated.



**MONTERRADO COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE BOIMAH FAHNBULLEH**



**PRESIDENT SIRLEAF IN CONVERSATION WITH A FARMER**



**A FARMER DEMONSTRATES THE NEW METHOD OF WEEDING**



**A HAPPY FAMILY AT HARVEST**



**WORLD BANK AND PARTNERS CONCLUDE MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE WAAPP LIBERIA PROJECT. RATE PROJECT MODERATELY SATISFACTORY , WITH SEVERAL MORE POTENTIALS TO EXPLORE.**

*Staff Writer*

A World Bank Mission to Liberia completed the assessment of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program, WAAPP Liberia. The Mission's visit which lasted from April 7-11, 2014 was to conduct a Midterm Review (MTR) of the project being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). The Team Comprised the World Bank Co Task Team Leader to Liberia Dr. Abimbola A. Adubi, the coordinators of WAAPP Sierra Leone and Guinea Mr. Pete Kaindhahen and Dr. Boubacar Diallo respectively, the coordinator of the Japanese Funds for the Mano River Union Madam Kenyeh Laura Barley, Procurement and Monitoring and Evaluation representatives from the World Bank and CORAF/WECARD which is the coordinating body of all WAAPP projects in the region, among others.



**DR. ABIMBOLA A. ADUBI  
WORLD BANK CO TASK TEAM LEADER**

Dr. Adubi who led the team on several field visits to project counties said, he was impressed with the level of work that had been achieved so far. According to the Co Task Team Leader, supporting the effort of the local farmers to gravitate from the method of farming they are currently engaged in, to machinery, will make work easier and achieve more, is a top priority under the World Bank funded project. Seeing farmers on one of the out growers sites in Bomi County engaged in manual labor with their hands, he noted that it was clear that the people want to farm, and helping them achieve their desire will be helping the country achieve its food security agenda in the future. He spoke when the mission toured the facilities of the producers of Bomi Gari in Banana Farm, Bomi County.

Dr. Adubi stressed the need to engage in Farmers' Field Schools where they can learn the new farming and planting methods that are being introduced under the WAAPP project. He also requested that the improved planting materials that have been developed in the country and adopted from other WAAPP participating countries be made available to farmers soonest, to enable them meet their planting season.

The World Bank Co Task Team Leader praised the producers of Bomi Gari for the value added component, and called on the project to draw up marketing plans for the product. He also encouraged the out growers to enter into written agreements with the original owners of the lands that are being used for farming activities to avoid land conflict that are potential issues in activities of this kind.



**HON. ERNEST DAVIS DISPLAYS  
A PACK OF BOMI GARI DURING THE VISIT**

For his part, the county's Development Superintendent Hon. Ernest Davis said the county's authority was prepared to work with development partners to ensure that the lives of its people are transformed. Hon.

Davis noted that the county has vast land that projects like WAAPP and the local people can dialogue and draw up agreements to afford the project carry out several farming activities within the country. He registered the Government's commitment to see food security become a reality in Liberia in the soonest possible time. According to the Bomi County executive, with the vast land and rich soil the country has, there should be no reason why Liberia cannot feed itself and neighbors. He promised his county's commitment to commit to farming and dispel the



**CARI BOSS AARON G. MARSHALL (L) EXPLAINS TO DR.  
ABIMBOLA A. ADUBI ON THE FIELD VISIT TO CARI**

notion that people from Western Liberia are not good at farming.

The week-long visit also took

the team to the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) in Suakoko Bong County, where WAAPP is presently multiplying improved seeds and cassava cuttings for distribution to the local farmers. The Team Leader of CARI guided the tour of over 50 hectares of upland and lowland rice that have been improved at the research institute, as well as several tons of seed rice that are ready for distribution. According to Aaron Marshall, CARI is also engaged in the production of 50 hectares of improved cassava cuttings for the WAAPP project, some of which are also ready for distribution.



CARI is working with scientists from Africa Rice Center (Africa Rice) and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in breeding and multiplying improved planting materials for the project counties, as well as mentoring young Liberian scientists who are expected to take over after the visiting scientists depart.



**L-R: WAAPP SIERRA LEONE COORDINATOR PETE KAINDANEH, WAAPP GUINEA COORDINATOR DR. BOUBACAR DIALLO AND WAAPP LIBERIA COORDINATOR J. CYRUS SAYGBE, SR.**

countries with Liberia said, there were great potentials for Liberia to develop and improve in the agro sector. He named the land, rich soil, enthusiasm of the farmers to work even in the absence of tools and commitment from initiatives like the WAAPP Project as key indicators that Liberia will do well if the local people are committed to growth.

The Mano River Union was represented by the Coordinator of the Japanese Funds Madam Kenyeh Barley, who pointed out the need for active female participation in the agricultural activities of Liberia. Madam Barley who questioned the percentage of females engaged in the activities on every farm or processing center visited, said, women can best move things when they are given equal opportunities as their male counterparts. She called on the project to respect the female requirement of 40 percent under the regional arrangement, and even go beyond. The MRU Resident Representative Lawrence Morris and MRU Program Officer Alpha Baldeh also formed part of the mission.



**MADAM KENYEH BARLEY  
MRU JAPAN FUNDS  
COORDINATOR**



**J. CYRUS SAYGBE, SR.  
WAAPP LIBERIA  
COORDINATOR**

WAAPP Liberia Coordinator J. Cyrus Saygbe Sr. at the end of the mission thanked the participants for the lessons shared and promised to improve on those areas that were marked for improvement. He also noted that a lot of support in the areas of capacity building for CARI, staff, implementing partners and the provision

The Coordinators of WAAPP Sierra Leone and Guinea who joined the mission to share experience from their respective

of machines and other materials to help improve the farming activities of the local people will be strongly considered under the final half of the project first phase.

The Midterm Review is being carried out in all the WAAPP 1C participating countries in West Africa. At mid-way into the implementation of the first phase of the project which is for five years, a delegation comprising all the major stakeholders involved with the WAAPP projects in the region visits every participating country to assess the work being done, as well as challenges faced. Being a support mission, the visit was also intended to make corrections and recommendations for areas that need improvement.

### **50 Metric tons of Improved Seed Rice Distributed to Farmers in Southeastern Liberia**

*Ministry of Agriculture / WAAPP Liberia Delivering on its Promises to Feed Liberia*



**STAFF OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, CARI, AFRICA RICE, MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND WAAPP POSE FOR A GROUP PHOTO WITH THE PACKAGED RICE**

The Ministry of Agriculture has begun the process of distributing improved seed rice to the Southeastern part of the Country.

At a brief ceremony on Thursday, March 6, 2014 held the Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) in Suakoko, Bong County to send off 50 Metric tons of improved seed rice to the Southeast, the team leader of the research institute noted that it was the effort of several valued actors along the way that made the event a success. Aaron Marshall named a young Liberian scientist Nathelyn Baysah as the staff of honor for the event.

According to the CARI Boss, Ms. Baysah has committed herself to the rice multiplication



**CARI TEAM LEADER AARON G. MARSHALL AND MS. NATHELYN BAYSAH**

process since her return to Liberia after studies abroad.

Mr. Marshall named the improved varieties as Nerrica L19, Nerrica 14, Suakoko 8 and Lac 23. He also thanked WAAPP for the confidence CARI has enjoyed so far from the project. He noted that the 50 Metric tons of improved seed rice packaged for transport to WAAPP project counties was just a beginning. Team Leader Marshall disclosed that over 300 Metric tons of improved seeds are also being multiplied and packaged under the WAAPP/CARI multiplication agreements, as well as over 48 hectares of cassava cuttings that are being packaged for transport.



**HON. OUSMA TALL  
ASSISTANT MINISTER,  
PLANNING, MOA**

Also speaking was the Assistant Minister for Planning and Development at the Ministry of Agriculture, Hon. Ousma Tall who applauded the World Bank, Government and people of Japan, WAAPP Liberia, CARI and other partners for the level of work done so far.

The Junior Minister also expressed the gratitude of the Minister of Agriculture Dr. Florence Chenoweth whom he represented at the ceremony held in Suakoko, Bong County. He pointed out that the project was on the right trajectory in its drive to provide improved technologies to the country. This, he said, is a plus in shifting the thrust of agriculture, something the ministry has been working towards for several years.

Hon. Tall said the process of Liberia feeding itself was well underway with developments of this kind. He said the Ministry was committed to the process of seeing Liberia become food secured in the not too distance future.



**MOTHER ESTHER  
FEMALE RURAL FRAMER**

A female farmer who represented the rural female farmers spoke of the pride and joy that farmers will have after receiving improved seeds that will generate more yields. Ma Esther also stressed the need for female farmers to be prioritized, since they are ready to farm. She noted that rural female farmers depend on proceeds from their farms to educate their children.

According to her, women vulnerability is a serious issue, and single mothers are the most vulnerable.

For his part, the National Project Coordinator of WAAPP Liberia J. Cyrus Saygbe, Sr



**MINISTER TALL AND J. CYRUS SAYGBE  
LOAD A BAG OF RICE TO THE TRUCK**

noted that it was a dream come true, something that would never have been possible without the coordinated efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, CARI and Africa Rice.

Mr. Saygbe noted that the improved seeds were 98% purity certified, a goal that the MOA and WAAPP have worked to achieve. He noted that in the beginning, it seemed a long way to go, but seeing the first consignment being transported to the beneficiaries, was encouraging.

He called on the beneficiaries to use wisely the seeds and help multiply them for further distribution. WAAPP Liberia is committed to the process of achieving food security for the country.

#### **NEW METHODS OF RICE PLANTING INTRODUCED IN LIBERIA UNDER THE SYSTEM OF RICE INTENSIFICATION (SRI) PROGRAM.**

*OVER 70 AGRICULTURE STAKEHOLDERS BENEFIT FROM A TRAINING WORKSHOP IN KAKATA, MARGIBI COUNTY*

*Staff Writer*



**PARTICIPANTS AT THE TRAINING IN KAKATA, MARGIBI COUNTY**

Farmers in Liberia are expected to adopt a new way of cultivating lowland rice to obtain high yield after the completion of a 3 day training workshop in Kakata, Margibi County. The workshop which was held between December 17 to 20 2013, was attended by several stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The new method is being introduced under the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) program. The SRI was discovered in Madagascar by the French Jesuit Henri de LAULANIE, an agricultural engineer. SRI is an innovation that changes the conventional practices of



rice-growing. In practice, it consists of producing rice with less seeds, water and fertilizers on a soil rich in organic matter and well ventilated.



**Dr. Gaoussou Traore** Coordinator,  
Center of Specialization in SRI-Rice in

Two experts Dr. Gaoussou Traore, Coordinator of the Center of Specialization in SRI-Rice in Mali and Dr. Daniel H. Saldu of Sierra Leone facilitated the working sessions and practical on-farm planting exercises.

At the opening ceremony of the workshop on Tuesday in Margibi county, the Executive Director of the Community of Hope Agriculture Project (CHAP) Rev. Robert Bimba said, SRI requires the training of farmers and others to ensure that the practice becomes successful in Liberia, something that will sustain rice production.

According to the SRI Liberia Champion, the mandate is to prepare 70 dedicated trainers as SRI champions for scaling food security in Liberia. And at the end of the training, they will be expected to recruit more farmers and teach them the new practice of rice planting.

Rev. Bimba noted that the method was first practiced at CHAP project office in Zubah Town, Du Port Road in Paynesville outside Liberia's Capital City. He clarified that the role of his organization after the training is to ensure that the participants that are



**Rev. Robert Bimba**  
CHAP Executive

trained will return to their various counties and villages to train others on the new methods of planting. He also disclosed that forms will be signed by the beneficiaries of the training, demonstrating their commitment to carry out the task required.

Speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Director of the Program Management Unit (PMU) Dr. Moses Zinnah called on the workshop participants not to only acquire



**Dr. Moses M. Zinnah**  
Director, Program  
Management Unit, MOA

knowledge from the training, but to make sure it becomes a success in Liberia.

In his own words, "Workshops without actions are meaningless, so I am therefore challenging all present to take the training to other farmers across the country to improve our food production". Dr. Zinnah said the dependency on rice importation is a tragedy for a country, and there is a need for something to be done to address this problem.



**J. Cyrus Saygbe, Sr.**  
National Project Coordinator  
WAAPP Liberia

For his part, the National Project Coordinator of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP) Liberia J. Cyrus Saygbe, Sr. described the event as historic, as this was the first of its kind in the country. The WAAPP Liberia boss said the country was now joining other countries in the intensification of rice production, something that his project is pleased to be a part of.

Mr. Saygbe welcomed the idea of SRI which he believes will empower a lot of farmers in Liberia, and help reduce the huge importation of rice.

About 60 percent of Liberia's staple food rice is imported from foreign countries, and Liberia is still on the path of being food secured.



**PARTICIPANTS OF THE WORKSHOP AT THE DEMONSTRATION  
SITE DOING PRACTICAL PLANTING OF RICE**

The National SRI workshop was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture through the initiative of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP), with funding from the World Bank, Japanese Trust Funds and the Government of Liberia along with a local partner; Community of Hope Agriculture Project (CHAP). The national SRI Trainer of Trainers workshop is an important activity of the implementation of the regional SRI project in Liberia.

## World Bank Co Task Team Leader to Liberia Dr. Abimbola A. Adubi Talks about his impression of the WAAPP Project and his work in Liberia With WAAPP Liberia Communication Specialist Elvis H. Sirleaf



After the Midterm Review of the WAAPP Liberia project, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Wrap Up meeting for 2014, WAAPP Liberia Communications Specialist hosted the Co Task Team Leader on a special interview. It was a sunny day in the later part of May, 2014. The interview was conducted at the Golden Gate Hotel in Paynesville, near the country's capital city.

### Question

*Let's Begin this interview with profiling you, Sir. Tell us a little bit about yourself. Who is Dr. Adubi?*

### Answer

My Name is Abimbola Adubi. I come from Nigeria where I had my first, second and third degrees in Agricultural Economics, and all along, I have been working with small holder farmers in enhancing their activities in agricultural development. I worked briefly at the University of Ibadan [the Federal Republic of Nigeria], then I worked at a research and training institution in Nigeria called National Center for Economic Management and Administration. After that I joined the World Bank I then worked briefly in Nigeria and also worked briefly in Sri Lanka before coming to Liberia.

### Question

*Tell us about your work here in Liberia with the World Bank, what exactly are you here to do?*

### Answer

With the World Bank I am the Senior Agricultural Specialist, and my role is actually to support the World Bank programs in agriculture. And specifically for Liberia, I am assigned to assist the project of the World Bank support to Liberia in the area of cassava, as well as rice for WAAPP [West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program], and for tree crop, coco,

coffee, oil palm and rubber for the small holders in order for them to be able to gain access to finance and technologies in their production.

### Question

*Liberia is a country with so much work to do, looking at all the setbacks as a result of the prolonged war and other factors, tell us, how did you feel when you were assigned to serve in Liberia?*

### Answer

Honestly when I was given the opportunity to come and serve in Liberia, I was a little bit scared because I know it's a post conflict country, there war issue is there, there will be lots of challenges and so. But when I came, haven't moved with people and walked around, I saw a lot of potential. Potential in terms of the resources you have, potential also in terms of the willingness and commitment of people to make a difference. And for me, that is the most important thing.

### Question

*Let us talk about WAAPP, one of the projects with which you work. What is your overall impression of the project so far? In that you can touch on the gains that have been made so far, the challenges and the WAAPP team that has been put together.*

### Answer

Well, initially when I came I think I had some problems with the WAAPP team, because I felt the team was not working as expected, and there were lots of difficulties in understanding each other. Where I come from, and from what I have been doing, I am always a person that drives for results and I'll want to ensure that we get that result, no matter what we do. Because if we don't get the results, no matter the effort you are putting together, it will amount to nothing. But later, I think we got to understand each other and I can now see a lot of commitment, team work in the team, and I think with the kind of drive we have and the targets we have ahead, I can see all of the members of the team now striving to take up



their responsibilities and within that responsibility, trying to achieve something which I think is very good. I think things are better now that it was when I first came.

#### **Question**

*After you evaluation, what can you say are the gains that the project has been able to make so far?*

#### **Answer**

The first and the most important thing for us to not forget that Liberia is a post-war country, so we are in the process of rebuilding those structures that have been battered. I think in that area, the project has tried in seeing what it can do to build up and support CARI, which is the research institute. In terms of infrastructure, in term of research support from international agencies like IITA [International Institute for Tropical Agriculture] and Africa Rice [Africa Rice Center]. In that element, I think WAAPP has tried. Now the second area which in the next two years we want to see a lot of achievements there is the WAAPP support to enhancing productivity of rice and cassava in Liberia. One, we want to see a situation where there will be increase in yield, and an improve production for the farmers. We want to see a situation where farmers produce and there is market for their products. So the Value Chain element, which WAAPP is also working on, the Innovation Platform, the enhancement of productivity of these farmers, the new varieties being introduced, as well as the new technologies that WAAPP has been able to access within West Africa that is coming into Liberia, these are the new things that I see that have been lined up to give us the kind of results. So far so good, with the way WAAPP is going, as long as there is no decrease of momentum, You can be sure all the things that I have lined up, in the next one of two years, we are able to achieve them to the maximum. Then we will get to where we intend to get to. And within a short time also, New varieties of rice are coming up and it's clear that we can actually use different system given the land, culture and environment in Liberia to get higher yields for rice, as well as improved productivity in cassava production. So I think things are lined up to be able to give us the desired results.

#### **Question**

*You have had several field visits under the WAAPP Project. Tell us what you have been able to gather from the local farmers, their readiness to work. Are they prepared to do what WAAPP through the Ministry of Agriculture with support from the World Bank is hopping to achieve in Liberia.*

#### **Answer**

In my field visit, I was not just interested in what WAAPP is doing. I was also interested in what the farmers are doing and how they feel about WAAPP. And for me, one thing which is common to all the small farmers, and which we are also seeing in Liberia is that you have farmers that are ready to embrace government programs, as long as it is going to lead them to a higher income. So I see that commitment on the part of the farmers and what we need is to be able to support them with information regularly, as well as technology that can push them to the right place. So for now, I think there is commitment on the part of the farmers, I think there is also a kind of drive form farmers to go the extra mile in clearing more lands, putting more into production, believing that at the end of the day WAAPP will support them in terms of marketing the products, processing, all the other downstream sides of the value chain. So WAAPP has a problem now, and the problem you have is to ensure

that that commitment you have been able to obtain from the farmers, you don't let them down. So for now, that is what I have seen and that should be the target to ensure that those promises we have made, those drives we have started with them, we don't allow the momentum to die down.

#### **Question**

*What support, cooperation and commitment are you getting from the government, because this is a government project being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture?*

#### **Answer**

We are getting a very good support from the government through the Ministry of Agriculture, from the Honorable minister herself and the deputy ministers. I have met the minister several times and we have discussed, and I also see that this is a minister that has a vision for agaric development in Liberia. She also has a very good understanding of the sector. And for me, with what I have seen, I also told her the in terms of being self-sufficient in rice production; we can achieve it within two years. And she seems to buy the idea. Every effort to support the team that is working on agriculture, as well as to ensure that there is commitment of government in terms of financial resources, I think it is being done. Currently you have about three percent (3%) of you budget being but into agriculture. From discussions that we have had, I can see that she is making tremendous effort to ensure that more than 3% is actually pushed into agriculture and there seems to me commitment of madam president [Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf] to also ensure that that is done. So from the ministry, from the bank and from the project, I think there is a determined effort to make a difference in what we are doing.



**DR. ABIMBOLA A. ADUBI TALKS ABOUT HIS IMPRESSION OF THE PROJECT IN A SPECIAL INTERVIEW WITH ELVIS H. SIRLEAF**

#### **Question**

*You just got back from the Warp Up where WAAPP participating countries make their progress report and are rated, as well as recently concluded the Midterm Review of the WAAPP Liberia project. It is my understanding that WAAPP Liberia has now been approved for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the project, which is the remaining 5 years. What can is say caused that approval, even though the project is still into the second year of the first phase implementation?*

#### **Answer**

If you look at WAAPP implementation over the years, the rating of WAAPP Liberia has been Marginally Unsatisfactory, in other words, out of all the projects being implemented in West African countries, Liberia is

at the lowest helm. It is the one that you can call the black sheep of all the other projects. In terms of every criteria being used to rate the WAAPP projects. But I think this pass one year, one way or the other, there has been this kind of tremendous drive, tremendous strive on the part of [the] project team. And it is so cleared from the presentation [made at the Wrap up], it is so clear from what WAAPP Liberia was able to put in their look. WAAPP Liberia had gone beyond the teething stage and is now giving results on ground. So you can see the rating has moved from Marginally Unsatisfactory to Marginally Satisfactory, which means you are now at the level of other countries in the region. Countries like Ghana, Sierra Leone and others. You are now at the level which shows that the implementation drive for Liberia has reached a certain stage where you can say yes, the country is ready to move forward. And that is why you were able to get access to the second phase of WAAPP.

#### **Question**

***One serious concern is that WAAPP Liberia is still being evaluated with the remaining WAAPP IC countries, even though the project in Liberia was delayed for over a year. This could have been a factor for which the country was being rated Marginally Unsatisfactory. Don't you think so?***

#### **Answer**



**WORLD BANK CO TASK TEAM LEADER  
TO LIBERIA DR. ABIMBOLA A. ADUBI**

Let me tell you this, in a race, when you have all those who want to run the race lined up, when the referee blows go! At that stage, if you are still tying the lace of your shoe, it does not matter. The most important thing is that the race has started. So for WAAPP 1C, the train has left the station. The fact that you started one year late because of you delay in country, it is not the delay of the project. When it is midterm, it is midterm for all the projects. So I

think the message will go straight that as far as we are concerned in the Bank, the one year delay which you had, has nothing to do with the number of years. The days, months and years are counting. So we should not forget that the moment money is released, the moment project is approved, from that day, we start counting that implementation has started. So the responsibility is on government to put a very capable team in place to ensure that bureaucratic delays are removed, so that at the end of the day you can achieve what you intend to achieve. So that is why the one year actually did not count. But let me say with the pace you are moving, you can actually cover the one year if you continue along this line you are moving. The one year will be a thing of the past. Because at the end of the day, what is important is the result, whether it takes you three years to achieve the result or it takes you one year or six months. The most important thing is that what are the results on ground.

#### **Question**

***Normally in processes of this kind you have high and low points. In closing, let's talk about your best and worst moments so far. You can begin with either one.***

#### **Answer**

I think the low point for me was when I first came. I met a team that was not working to my style, who wants business as usual and I think my first meeting with the team was not good because I was almost telling all of you that your contract will not be renewed. Also as far as I am concerned, you are not ready to work and that I was going to report you to the minister. And I think I did report you to the deputy minister saying the team that you put in place doesn't look as if they want to do something. But I don't know, maybe that was the Liberian spirit that was hiding before. That was my low spirit. I came to a country where I was expecting things to move, things were not moving. And I was really, really dejected, that I was not going to achieve anything here. Because in all the countries I have been to, I have worked in such a way that those projects I have handled have gotten awards from the World Bank. Not just because we were pushing them forward, but because they were bad projects, we turned them around and they got awards for excellence from the bank, in terms of their results on ground. So when I got to Liberia, I was expecting a similar thing but when I came, it was different. So that was my very, very low point. My best moment I must confess to you, was these last months when things started changing. I see WAAPP and Tree Crop leaders now standing up. So maybe the kind of knock that was given you at the beginning, stirred up everybody and I see everybody now coming up. The communication is doing his work the way it supposed to be done. The M&E is looking at what he can do to make the result frame work ok, the Project Coordinator is not only thinking of a salary. There was a point when I asked him to send a salary stricter to me, and if it were possible, we were going to revised it downward. But I can see a lot of things working now. On the field, in you planning and you are also working as a team. So for me, that is my very high point. Because now, I can say confidently, with the potential that I see in Liberia, with the current WAAPP team, as well as the team in Tree crop, in the next two years, things are going to change. I always give myself a target anywhere I go. And my target, with your cooperation and the way I see you working, in the next two years, Liberia should be self-sufficient in rice [and cassava] production. And it is possible.

#### **Question**

***Let's take you closing statement.***

#### **Answer**

Liberia has a lot of potential. In terms of the natural resources that you have. The years of civil war has actually eroded so many things, including the capacity of people to be able to do and make something meaningful out of it. It has also reduced the confidence level of people and the trust that people have in how things can work, or how government can work. But one thing you also have going for you is commitment. There is a renewed commitment to make Liberia work. So if you combine the renewed commitment with the potential in terms of resources that you have, this is exactly what World Bank needs to make things work. And I see those things coming up, and as long as they are pursued vigorously, and there is no reduction in commitment, I can assure you we will definitely achieve our goals within two, three years, and there will be difference.



## MOA Trains Rural Women in Agriculture Leadership

Ken Kumeh



As part of its capacity building initiative aimed at empowering smallholder farmers to increase food production in Liberia, the Ministry of Agriculture between March 7 and 9, 2014, trained over 50 rural agriculture women in various leadership disciplines; including Finance and Budgeting, Assertive Communication, Banking and Saving and Resource Mobilization among others. The three-day intensive training was held in Suakoko, Bong County, under the theme *“Promoting Women’s Leadership in the Agriculture Sector”*.

According to Miss Cheryl Williams, Gender Focal Officer at the Ministry of Agriculture, the leadership training is geared towards empowering rural women and youths to improve their productive skills to ensure food and nutrition security in the country.

She noted that women who constitute more than 43 percent of the agriculture labor force are being marginalized and disadvantaged in many ways and forms, something that is preventing them from having direct access to agricultural resources to improve their skills and knowledge in organizational management, including leadership and decision making.

The Public Relation Specialist at the Ministry of Agriculture Mrs. Gertrude Francis-DeShield also challenged participants at the training workshop to be more participatory and assertive in making decisions. She said the passive nature being demonstrated by most women in the past was responsible for the level of marginalization and abuse they received from their male counterparts. Mrs. DeShield said decision making in organizational management should be based on consensus and unanimity and not by instructions.

Also speaking at the workshop was the comptroller at the MOA Mr. David Snab who urged participants to always plan their project and program activities in line with budgetary allocation. He said the budget

planning process should not be left alone with the finance department but rather it should involve all units at all stages. According to him, this “bottom-to-the-top” approach in budget preparation increases efficiency and transparency in organizational management.

The participants at the *Promoting Women’s Leadership in Agriculture* workshop were drawn from the WAAPP Liberia project counties; Bomi, Bong, Margibi, Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Maryland and Sinoe Counties. Other participants were drawn from the University of Liberia and Cuttington University.

## WAAPP LIBERIA COMPLETES MEDIA TRAINING OF JOURNALIST AND EXTENSION WORKERS.

By: Victor Seah



### PARTICIPANTS LINED UP FOR A GROUP PICTURE AFTER

The West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program has concluded a three day training workshop for journalists and agriculture extension workers. The workshop was held at the Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) in Suakoko, Bong County.

The event which was carried out from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 brought together journalists and extension workers from the eight WAAPP project counties. Over forty participants from Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Gedeh, Margibi, River Gee, Maryland, Sinoe and Montserrado counties attended.

The event also brought together government officials, the Administrator of the Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI), Senior Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program as well as other facilitators including Newton Woyeh and Victor Seah of the United Nations Mission in Liberia and Ken Kumeh of the Ministry of Agriculture.



**Hon. Rixck W. Barsi-giah**  
**Assistant Minister, Tech. Service**  
**Ministry of Information Cultural**  
**Affairs and Tourism**

Representing the Government of Liberia was the Assistant Minister for Technical Services at the Ministry of Information Culture Affairs and Tourism Rixck W. Barsi-giah who said the Government of Liberia is committed to the production of food in Liberia as well as food security.

Assistant Minister Barsi-giah said the gathering of extension workers and journalists in Central Liberia to brainstorm and learn ways of communicating agricultural activities, signified that Liberia is certain and progressing to meet its obligation for food production.

Mr. Barsi-giah said it was important for the journalists at the Bong County meeting and those working in the agriculture sector to acquire knowledge that will enable them properly implement the objectives of WAAPP, and help the Government of Liberia achieve its goal of food security. He congratulated WAAPP for including a representation from the Government of Liberia at the three day training of extension workers and journalists.

Facilitators at the workshop lectured on the concept of Behavioral Change in Communication (BCC), script writing in the agricultural style and identifying communication targets and tools. Other topics included the formulation of messages, using social media as a professional tool for



**L-R: WAAPP Liberia Communication Specialist Elvis H. Sirleaf, U.N. Mission Senior Trainer Newton S. Woyea, Sr., Assistant Information Minister Hon. Rixck W. Barsi-giah, WAAPP Liberia M&E Officer Edward P. Borloh, Ministry of Agriculture Communication Officer Ken Kumeh and UNMIL Radio Editor Victor Seah**

communication, Adobe Audition for radio program production, monitoring and evaluation in communication for both extension workers and media representatives from WAAPP project counties among others.

Other activities that formed part of the workshop included a field trip to the WAAPP – CARI Rice field at the Kpatawee Waterfalls and the Cassava Multiplication field in Suakoko. Participants visited the fields to see first-hand, what WAAPP Liberia is actually doing to multiply seed rice and cassava cuttings that will be distributed to farmers in the various project counties.

Some of the participants praised WAAPP for providing a first time opportunity to view the farms and visit the waterfalls.



**Participants Visiting the WAAPP-CARI Rice Field at Kpatawee**

At the end of the training, participants thanked WAAPP for the workshop and said the event promotes capacity building for both extension workers and journalists in reporting and networking with farmers and partners in the agriculture sector. The participants appealed to WAAPP to carry out more training. The event was climaxed with a football match against the Cuttington University, in Suakoko Bong County. The participants and facilitators of the workshop formed the WAAPP Liberia team and went against the University team in a match the ended 5-0 in favor of the University. Analysts who watched the believe that the WAAPP Liberia team could have pulled a better performance, had the team spend longer time training together. The University team was made up of mainly youngsters who were actively playing football.



**The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) Completes the County Engagement, Awareness and Sensitization Meetings of the WAAPP Project Counties**  
**“Local Farmers, Processors and Stakeholders of Rice and Cassava have had their say”**

*Judoemue Kollie & Naomi Falika*



**A GROUP PICTURE OF PARTICIPANTS AND COUNTY OFFICIALS AFTER THE BONG COUNTY MEETING**

The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) through one of its food crop projects, the West African Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP-Liberia) has engaged local farmers from seven of its eight project counties on the production of rice and cassava to enhance the country’s food security.

The engagement exercise started Monday, February 24, 2014 in Gbarnga, Bong County, and continued on to the other project counties in the Central and Western Regions of Liberia and later to the Southeastern part of the country. The Exercise was concluded in late



**A Female Farmer Speaking at the Engagement Meeting**

March in Plebo, Maryland County.

At the engagement meetings held in the project counties, farmers expressed the hope for the project to help improve their productivity and increase income generation.



**A Local Farmer at the Engagement**

According to them, the project should help to address some of the challenges faced by farmers in the agricultural sector.

They named constraints such as inadequate provision of farming tools, poor marketing, and lack of access to land, as some major obstacles confronting them in their various counties.

John Lahai, a farmer in Suakoko District, Bong County said WAAPP program was a welcome gesture in his county. “With the education received concerning the program, farmers specialized in producing rice and cassava in Bong County are very happy. It is our hope that it would help us improve in farming to support our families” he pointed out.

Mr. Lahai said that getting farm land in his county is a serious problem that requires urgent attention. “There are many in the county engaged in rubber farming instead of growing food crops. This is making land scarce for us,” he lamented. He estimated the cost for renting farmland in his county at U.S. \$500.00 yearly per acre. Farmer Lahai said renting land at this price seriously reduces his annual earning. He stressed the need for government to derive a land tenure policy for agriculture to improve farmers’ income.

For her part, Sarah Brown, a farmer from Margibi County, said that female farmers in her county were determined to grow more cassava for the market but are lacking tools to farm.

“We would like to appeal to the Ministry of Agriculture and its partners to assist us with the needed tools,” she requested.



**Edward P. Borloh WAAPP Liberia M&E Officer**

In his opening statement on Monday, February 24, in Gbarnga, Bong County, WAAPP-Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation officer, Edward Borloh, said that the WAAPP program was designed to address challenges in the agriculture sector of Liberia to increase food

production.

He said that human resource capacity building in the sector, infrastructure upgrading, and support to local farmers in terms of the provision of improved planting materials, modern technology and the creation of a market for farmers to sell their produce are some of the input the project seeks to provide.

According to Mr. Borlor since the launch of the project in November 2012, 37 Liberian students have benefited from scholarships for advanced studies in agriculture and other disciplines at various African universities.

He said that the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) in Suakoko, Bong County has also been partially revamped through the project to meet the research needs of farmers.

Mr. Borloh disclosed that the program seeks to prioritize the inclusion of up to 40 percent female farmers to reduce vulnerability among women in the agriculture sector.

Also speaking was Assistant Minister for Extension and Research at the MOA, Honorable Paul Jallah who asked farmers to take the program seriously to produce more food for the country.



**Hon. Paul K. Jallah**  
Assistant Minister, Extension  
Ministry of Agriculture

Minister Jallah took the same message to several farmers and stakeholders who attended the engagement meetings in several counties

He deliberated on the topic: “The Benefit of Extension for Liberian Farmers. According to him, there are many farmers who want to engage in commercial farming but lack modern technology.

“The ministry will be providing tractors and power tillers and other modern equipment to ensure that farmers are able to increase their yield,” he disclosed.



**Hon. Allen Gbowee**  
Superintendent, Gbapolu County

Speaking at the the meeting in Bopoplu City, Gbapolu County Superintendent Allen Gbowee, called on his citizens to venture into agriculture to make the county food secured.

He welcomed the project and promised to play a monitoring role for its smooth implementation in the County.

The Country Manager of ADRA, the organization that is leading the Innovation Platform development for the project in Gbapolu County said, his organization has years of experience in the area of IP development, and was presently engaged with the farmers and actor along the chain in the development of the platform.

Dr. Emmanuel George said ADRA which has been on relief work in Liberia was committed to the objectives and aims of WAAPP. He thanked the Ministry of Agriculture for believing his organization’s ability to perform the required task.

The ADRA executive who also took the over 200 Kilometers drive to the event location pledged to work with the county authorities and partners in ensuring that the task is achieved to expectation.



**Dr. Emmanuel George**  
Country Manager, ADRA

All other project counties with the exception of Sinoe were covered during the county engagement campaign. Sinoe meeting was postponed due to visit by the Liberian president on the same day.



## The Ministry of Agriculture with Support from WAAPP Liberia Conducts Training on Agricultural Research

### Innovation Platform Training for Agriculture Stakeholders

*By: Judoemue Kollie*

In an effort to address challenges faced in the agricultural sector of Liberia, over 75 stakeholders to participate in a 3 day workshop on agricultural research development, February 19-21, 2014 in Kakata, Margibi County.

The participants comprised stakeholders from non-governmental organizations in the agriculture sector, civil society farmer's organizations, extension workers, and local farmers.

The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture with support from the West African Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP-Liberia), which is funded by the World Bank and the governments of Japan and Liberia.

It was intended to strengthen the capacity of WAAPP's stakeholders in understanding the process and skills for the application of Integrated Agricultural Research for development to impact agriculture in the country.



**Hon. Ousman Tall**  
Assistant Minister, Planning  
Ministry of Agriculture

Speaking during the opening section of the workshop on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture Dr. Florence Chenoweth, the Assistant Minister for Planning and Development at the Ministry of Agriculture Hon. Ousman Tall said the workshop was key to agricultural development in the country.

“The issue of integrated research

for development for agriculture is important and needs to be taken seriously,” he noted.

He said producing rice and other crops in an integrated manner was necessary in enhancing food security and will require extensive research by stakeholders in the agriculture sector. According to him the workshop would help greatly in achieving the goal of his ministry to increase food production. He asked the participants to take the training serious in order to stimulate the production of local crops.

Minister Tall also said that though Liberia has had competing demand for its reconstruction drive, the government still prioritizes agriculture.

“Investment in the agriculture sector has improved over the years with seven percent funding according to studies from the World Bank,” he disclosed.

The Junior Minister's disclosure clearly shows that most of the fundings to support agriculture in the country come from external sources, as the allotment for agriculture in the national budget stands at 2.4 percent far below the Maputo declaration on food security which mandates African leaders to allot 10 percent in their national budgets for agriculture.

This the Minister clarified that 10 percent allotment in the national budget for agriculture is a burden for the country considering government's numerous obligations at the moment. He said what is critical, “is how to ensure that funding meant for the sector reaches poor farmers to eradicate poverty from their lives.

Speaking earlier, the National Project Coordinator of WAAPP-Liberia, J. Cyrus Saygbe spoke of the program's beneficiaries in the 8 project counties, and disclosed that the project will also benefit the rest of the country in its drive to contribute to the process of ensuring that Liberia becomes food secured.

Mr. Saygbe stated that the participants of the workshop are champions of the innovation platform that will promote WAAPP's activities in the country.

Meanwhile, in his presentation, the workshop facilitator, Dr. Fatunbi A. Oluwale admitted that there are many challenges facing Africa's agriculture sector, and that this requires research for improvement.

He named the limited marketing, mechanization, environmental degradation and others as factors that we must address to experience growth in the sector.



**Dr. Fatunbi Oluwale**  
Facilitator

“We need to embark on a thorough research to find a solution to Africa’s food security,” he noted.

Dr. Oluwale, who is the program officer for Sub Saharan Africa Challenge Program, said the development of agriculture in Africa does not depend on policy makers as perceived by some.

He said until agricultural stakeholders recognized the problems confronting agriculture in Africa, we will always have a problem in the sector. “Africans must grow what they eat and do not continue to import poverty through dependency on countries in Europe and Asia for food. We are to find a way for agriculture research not to create problem of food insecurity. This also requires putting in to place a good frame work on how to utilize agricultural funds needed to support agriculture,” he mentioned.

## Journalist Gets Award for Extensive Coverage of WAAPP Liberia Activities

*By: Naomi Falika*



**Judoemue Kollie**  
Award Recipient

A local Liberian journalist has been awarded the Dr. Anatole Kone’s Award for Outstanding Coverage of WAAPP activities in Liberia. Judoemue Kollie of the Daily Observer Newspaper in Monrovia received the award in Suakoko, Bong Count, in

December 2013, during the media training hosted for journalists and extension workers.

Presenting the award, the Program Officer of Post-Harvest Technology & Value Addition at the Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) Madam Abibatu Kromah called on the recipient to take pride in the recognition, as it only comes to those who truly work hard and deserve it. Madam Kromah also called on other participants of the training to take up the challenge of getting more involved in the WAAPP Liberia and Ministry of Agriculture activities by doing reports and features that will tell the success stories of the sector. This, according to the CARI executive, will help inform the public and dispel the notion that nothing is happening in the sector.

Receiving the award, Journalist Kollie registered his amazement in being selected. Kollie said though he was committed to reporting on agricultural issues in Liberia, he has had several years of journalism practice, and not a single group had recognized his effort to this level. “Not only is this a surprise to me, it is also the first of its kind in a public manner like this”, he said. The Daily Observer reporter called on his colleagues to celebrate with him, but also take up more time assessing and reporting on the Liberian agriculture, a sector that has been dormant for a protracted period. He pledged to continuously engage stakeholders to the gather information and report professionally on what is happening.

The Dr. Anatole Kone Outstanding Coverage Award is presented every year to a deserving person who spends extensive time covering the activities of the WAAPP project. Dr. Anatole Kone is the Head of Communications of the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD),



**Dr. Anatole Kone**  
Head of Communications,  
CORAF/WECARD

the regional coordination body of the WAAPP. This was the first award presented for coverage of the activities of WAAPP Liberia within the Ministry of Agriculture.