Briefing Note on the MSc. Graduate Program in Agricultural Research Management and Policy to Support Innovation Systems:

Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

1. Overview

The Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere University in Uganda and IFPRI, the International Food Policy Research Institute are working to introduce a new two-year Masters Degree course in agricultural research management and policy to support agricultural innovation systems in East and Central Africa (ECA). Agriculture remains the engine of growth for most countries in the region, and is the most promising sector in which to achieve poverty eradication in most ECA countries. The sector has enjoyed a long tradition of development assistance investments including initiatives in the public research arena. Yet, there is growing recognition that while public agricultural research is necessary, on its own it is not sufficient to create a dynamic innovation capacity.

“Part of the problem that agricultural research faces is the fact that the one-size fits all model agricultural research system is simply not suited to the emerging reality of the developing country agricultural sector. While production, sale and consumption of major food crops remains important, a number of niche sectors are emerging with impressive rates of growth and this is coupled with fundamental changes in the nature of the sector as a whole. These include the growing importance of the livestock industry, particularly aquaculture; the diversification into horticulture and cut flowers, particularly for export; the duel use of roots, tubers and course grains for food and industrial use (animal feeds, bio-fuel, starch); increased consumption of processed foods and the growth of a processing industry; the increasing role of the private sector; corporatization of craft based industries such as herbal medicines; the exposure of producers and firms to competition, changing international trade rules and regulations such as Sanitary and PhytoSanitary standards; the knowledge intensive nature of these niche sectors; and the importance of innovation as a source of competitive advantage in rapidly evolving market and technological conditions. Factors driving these changes include globalisation of markets, rapid urbanisation, changing food preferences and the industrialisation of the food chain...”(Hall, Mytelka, Oyeyinka, 2005:3)

The Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere University in Uganda is highly interested in upgrading its course offerings to make its graduates more able to respond to these new realities in the agricultural sector. It is, for instance, in the final stages of negotiations with a donor and partners on the development of a new Masters degree in agricultural economics. It is similarly eager to introduce a new two-year Masters degree in agricultural research management and policy analysis to contribute to the agricultural development of the region. It is within

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1 This work (“Agricultural Innovation Systems: Concepts and a Methodology for Diagnostic Assessments”) is under development by Andy Hall, Lynn Mytelka and Banji Oyeyinka at the United Nations University, Institute for New Technologies (UNU-INTECH), Maastricht, The Netherlands.
this broader program of work that IFPRI and the Makerere University Faculty of Agriculture have requested a learning visit to selected institutes including the United Nations University, Institute for New Technologies (UNU-INTECH), Wageningen University and the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

2. Purpose of the visit

The main purpose is for faculty at Makerere to obtain first hand insights into how the Masters Degree program could be developed, what the key considerations would be and to seek partnerships for conceptual, methodological and operational support.

3. Profile of the Visiting team

The team will include:

(1) Dr. Frank Matsiko (Head, Extension and Education) - Makerere University, Uganda

(2) Dr. Imelda Nalukenge (Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Economics & Business) - Makerere University, Uganda

(3) Dr. Tesfaye Beshah Asfaw (Assistant Professor, Department of Rural Development and Agricultural Extension) - Alemaya University, Ethiopia

4. Duration and dates of the visit

Within The Netherlands, the learning visit is planned for 21st - 25th November 2005 and within that period, UNU-INTECH will be hosting the visiting team on the 24th and 25th of November 2005.

5. Expected Outcome

It is expected that by the end of the learning visit, the visiting team will have acquired a broad understanding of the nature of conceptual and operational inputs, resources and partnerships necessary for developing and executing a sub-regional MSc. Graduate Program in Agricultural Research Management and Policy to Support Innovation Systems.

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