

Preface

The African Association of Agricultural Economists was launched in December 2004 during the Association's inaugural symposium in Nairobi, Kenya. The Association has realized remarkable growth in membership from 82 in 2004 to 250 in 2007. Its objectives include:

1. To improve liaison between agricultural economists with an interest in African issues at the regional and international levels;
2. To promote training, research, policy dialogue and interest in Agricultural Economics on the continent of Africa.
3. To contribute to broad based rural development, poverty reduction, food security and sustainable use of natural resources in the continent of Africa.

The Second conference followed a successful inaugural symposium held in 2004. The organizing committee received a total of 430 abstracts for consideration out of which 94 papers and 30 posters were presented at the conference. All submitted abstracts were rigorously reviewed and ranked by an international panel of distinguished scientists. The top ranked abstracts from each sub-theme were automatically selected. The rest of the abstracts were selected taking into consideration the balance in regional, country and gender distribution. A total of 240 participants attended the conference, a significant improvement from 90 that attended the inaugural meeting. The Main Theme of the conference was “**Agricultural Growth, Poverty Reduction and Millennium Development Goals in Africa**”. The conference provided opportunity for agricultural economists and other social scientists in the public, private and non-governmental organizations and institutions to share and assess progress made in improving productivity in African agriculture. It also promoted better networking among the professionals. Presentations, posters and discussions in the conference covered six sub-themes, as follows:

Improved Markets for African Farmers for Poverty Reduction. Topics include linking farmers to markets, achieving competitiveness in agricultural production and trade, agricultural value chains and role of supermarkets, agribusiness, trade (WTO and Regional Trade blocs) issues, globalization and infrastructure.

Advancing Technical Change in African Agriculture. Public Policy Issues and Strategic Choices with focus on biotechnology, information and communication technology, and bio-chemical and mechanical technologies

The Role of Agriculture in Poverty Reduction: Recent Experiences from Africa. Presentations will cover success stories and emerging challenges, as well as the role of education in reducing rural poverty.

Expanding the Frontiers of Agricultural Economics to Meet the Challenges of Agricultural Development in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This will involve new institutional economics, quantitative and qualitative methods, new tools to run agriculture as a business, and agricultural finance

Meeting Africa's Food and Nutrition Challenges. Special focus on agriculture growth, rural poverty and hunger; health (HIV/AIDS, malaria), food insecurity and rural poverty; and gender inequality, food insecurity and rural poverty

Agriculture, Environment and Sustainable Development. Presenters provided analysis of pro-poor growth strategies in the African semi-arid tropics, effects of drought and mitigation, and climate change and its impacts on agriculture.

This book of proceedings contains every report presented at the conference and I am confident that the transmission and utilization of this information throughout the world will greatly contribute to the economic and social development of Africa.

In response to the visible worldwide interest in development of the African Continent, researchers and all stakeholders associated with AAAE need to respond to the expectation of the people through active research and development with a global view. Future international AAAE conferences will, therefore, have enormous significance, and we look forward to the next conference to be held in 2010 in South Africa.

Musa Omare
Secretary- AAAE