



EARRNET Organised A Cassava Quality Standards and Policy consultative meeting for the East and Central Africa (ECA) Region

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It is estimated that cassava production in Africa will increase from the current 103 million tons to 115 million tons in 2005 and 184 million tons by 2020 as a result of expansion of area and increased yield from the use improved variety. According to the sub-sector analysis, conducted in the East and Central African (ECA) countries, cassava has a great potential in the animal feed, food and flour industries. In Kenya and Uganda, for example, most companies (food, feed, pharmaceutical, paper and adhesive) indicated their readiness to utilize cassava and cassava-based products if their qualities are high and prices were competitive.

Despite all the positive indicators of using cassava in many industries, lack of quality standards and policy framework is still a major setback in utilization of cassava and cassava-based products as major raw materials. To tap these potentials, mechanism must be put in place to guarantee regular supply of high quality cassava chips, flour and starch to the manufacturing industries, and export. These require development quality standards, and having appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks in place if cassava is to play a big role in income generation and food security.

EARRNET/ECAPAPA Initiative

The East Africa Root Crop Research Network (EARRNET), in collaboration with East and Central Africa Programme for Agricultural Policy Analysis (ECAPAPA) has embarked on developing and harmonizing cassava quality standards and policy environment in the ECA region. This initiative is expected to:

1. Develop quality standards and policy of cassava-based products at national and regional levels
2. Harmonize the quality standards of cassava and cassava-based products in the region



Participants at the consultative meeting of experts on quality standards and policy (31st March 2005).

3. Increase awareness on the benefits of harmonized quality standards at national and regional levels and
4. Increase use of cassava-based raw materials in food, feed, pharmaceutical and other related industries in the region.

Consultative meeting of experts on quality standards and policy of cassava sub-sector in the ECA region was held on 31st March 2005 at the IITA/ESARC head office, Kampala, Uganda. This meeting drew experts (Photo below) from six countries in the East and Central Africa (ECA) region i.e. Burundi, DR-Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar and Uganda. The meeting was organized to review cassava quality standards and policy related issues within the ECA and develop a roadmap for harmonizing them across the region.

During the meeting, it was realized that there was no clear policies and quality standards for cassava and cassava-based products across the region. It was also noted that enhancement of cassava trade and commercialization within ECA member countries and Africa in general requires elimination of border/boundary barriers to allow easy movement of products.

Table 1. Existing quality standards for cassava

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Country	Products with standards	Remarks
1) Burundi	• Flour and chips	
2) Ethiopia	• Chips, flour and starch	Uses standards from India
3) DR Congo	• Cassava flour and leaves	Uses standards from Ghana
4) Kenya	• Chips and crisps	Developed from within
5) Madagascar	• Starch	French standards
6) Rwanda	• -	No information on quality standards
7) S. Sudan	• -	No information on quality standards
8) Uganda	• -	No standards

Therefore, the need is to develop, define, harmonise, and promote quality standards across the region with respect to planting materials, processed products, transportation and storage of these products. The focus will be on 1) Cassava (fresh tubers and leaves), b) Cassava-based products (chips, crisp, flour and starch) and c) Seed (planting materials/cuttings) as key for policy and quality standard development.

To broaden areas of trade and market, scientist/researchers need look at the available options and develop acceptable products with longer shelf life, and be able to lobby industrialist to use cassava in their industries. Standards and regulatory bodies are key in harmonizing quality standards within the region. With the involvement of policy makers, government will be lobbied to enforce tax exemption/reduction for industries using cassava and cassava-based products.

Way forward

In order to commercialize the cassava sub-sector, there is the need to establish quality standards and policy framework for cassava and cassava based products at the national and harmonize them at regional levels. This will not only ensure adequate and quality supply of cassava-based raw materials to the food, feed, pharmaceutical and other related industries but also have positive impact on production, marketing and consumption of cassava and cassava-based products in terms of food and nutritive security, increased income generation to producers, processors and consumers as well as poverty alleviation.

To begin with, three countries (Kenya, Madagascar and Uganda) will take lead in gathering detailed information and implantation of key activities leading to development and harmonization of cassava quality standards and policy in the ECA region. The meeting nominated Mr. Titus Tunje Kadere as the team leader on development and harmonization of policies and quality standards across the region. The team leader will be assisted by the national resource persons; Dr. Makokha (Kenya), Dr. Rasuarahona Y (Madagascar) and Mr. Okwadi Julius (Uganda) to spearhead implementation of project activities within their respective countries. Both coordinators of ECAPAPA and EARRNET will oversee the implementation of the project.

The relative productivity of local and improved cassava mosaic disease-resistant varieties in Uganda in 1999 and 2003

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Abstract

Farmers' plantings of cassava were assessed in ten districts of Uganda in 1999 and in seventeen districts in 2003. At each site sampled all the plants in a representative 5m x 5m quadrant were harvested to compare the productivity of local, farmer-selected varieties and those released officially as resistant to cassava mosaic virus disease. Yields were variable but greater in 2003 than

in 1999; resistant varieties consistently out-yielded the local selections by overall multiples of 1.4 in 1999 and 2.5 in 2003. These results suggest that resistant varieties produce more than half of total national production even though they predominate in only a third of all plantings.