

**MEETING REPORT**  
**July, 16th – 2008**

**Lessons learnt from Mali Conferences**

**Venue: CIFOR Conference room**



## **0. Introduction**

With a grant received from New Field Foundation, WOCAN has financed the participation of three WOCAN members to the MALI agro ecological and pastoral conferences organized in November 2007. Based on the lessons learnt there, WOCAN representatives to these conferences agreed to share knowledge with rural women coming from the villages covered by their organizations. It was a one day meeting that took place in Yaoundé in the premises of CIFOR Conference Room. In addition to WOMED (Women in the move for equal Development), REFFAD (African Women Network for Sustainable Development) and EFOKHOUYU, other important and interesting women farmer groups were invited to this meeting.

## **I. Objectives**

The objectives of the meeting were:

- To Strengthen women knowledge on subjects such as Climate change, poverty reduction Biofuels, Aid Policy, GMOs etc. and see with them the link with the currents changes in local livelihoods.
- To Identify problems faced by local communities and the actions taken or proposed to resolve them,
- And to Come up with a list of local communities priorities and needs in the domains of Agriculture and NRM.

## **II. Programme**

The workshop program was structured to achieve the above objectives. Three main subjects have been discussed during the meeting:

- **Climate Change,(by Jane Tarh)**
- **Biofuels (by Monique Yigbedeck)** and
- **Hunger (by Germaine Njeh)**

## **III. Workshop outcome**

The various presentations and the ensuing discussions were very interactive with the use of simple and concrete examples.

The challenges during the presentations was also to help rural women make the links between global considerations and local realities, in order to seek for ways to prevent or overcome hunger, adapt to climate change and position themselves in the debate concerning biofuels.

The themes discussed were the followings:

- **Climate change (By Jane Tarh)**

What is climate change? What are the signs that reveal climate changes to you? what are changes you are noticing when you compare your farm productions? how is the climate, the

temperature and the rain behavior now compared to the past? Etc. are some the questions through which Jane, organized the presentation.

For rural women, Climate change can be seen through the facts below:

1. Price of Chinese imported rice is increasing and this affects our diet and our agricultural systems.
2. New varieties of corn, cassava and beans discovered and distributed by IRAD to farmers are not better than the traditional one
3. Some water animals disappear
4. Increase in HIV-AIDS
5. Water pollution that causes a lot of fungal diseases
6. Exposure to conflicts (fight for resources)
7. Decrease in the quality of nutrition
8. Decrease in feeding paces

▪ **Hunger (by Germaine Njeh)**

What is hunger, causes and problems that are related to hunger?

For Mrs Njeh, hunger is caused by

- The lack or the non availability of food ,
- The extreme financial poverty of households that lack money to satisfy their needs,
- The damages caused by animals.
- Poor quality of soil that do not permit to produce enough quantity of food for everybody.

▪ **Biofuels (by Monique Yigbedeck)**

What are biofuels, what is Africa position in the debate concerning biofuels, what will be the consequences if Africa accepts to be part of biofuels development?

For the presenter, biofuels development in Africa will cause a lot of problems giving the fact that a larger number of the poor Africa population is not well equipped to face the effects of biofuels. With biofuel development, Africa will strongly depend on importations and aid policy. However, she does not have means to sustain the importations. In addition, overexploitation, forest degradation and deforestation which are already a major threat to African forests will be intensified with increase carbon emissions and environmental pollution

In order to minimize the impact of biofuel development, Africa for instance should promote its self reliance on food stuff ("*auto suffisance alimentaire*") in order to avoid returning in the colonial system where cocoa and coffee were introduced in African economies and prices fixed by colonial forces

#### **IV. Discussions and Recommendations**

##### **Discussion**

1. Rural women farmers believe women contribute to deforestation and climate change while clearing land for agriculture. In Cameroon in fact, 70% of farmers are women and should be aware that they are destroying land and resources year after years.

Because of their low capacities to clear huge parcels, their main agricultural practices consist of “slash and burn and shifting cultivation”. Forest communities believe that by these practices, the soil is enriched and the production is much more better than in order practices

2. Rural women farmers also believe that Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are not adapted to African soils as well as to African agricultural and cultural systems. To illustrate their opinion, they referred to the new varieties of corn, maize, cassava and bean that was distributed many years ago to farmers. From seedlings of each variety, it was not easy to reproduce the variety; farmers were obliged each time to buy the seedlings from IRAD, and used chemical fertilizers to ensure good yields. Also, farmers pointed out the fact that, the existence of strong roots while preparing farm land, oblige them to burn before planting. According to these women, burning is also a very way means of pest control.
3. Rural women farmers also link climate change to modification of rainy cycle. “there is to much rain...rain come’s more earlier... what do not permit us to plant some specific plants like egussi”.

#### **V. Recommendations**

From the various presentations and the ensuing discussions, participants agreed on the following recommendations:

- To improve yields and life conditions, rural women farmers need to be professionalized into specific farming related activities. For that they need to be trained in land and resources management, time management, marketing and pricing strategies, production of organic manure and/or composting, diversification of sources of incomes, agroforestry techniques etc. They also need to avoid the use of farming methods that contribute to damage organic nutrients of lands.
- To improve yields and avoid the use of chemical fertilizers, women farmers should mix agriculture with pastoralism. They should promote biological methods of pest control.
- Based on their existing traditional and informal saving and loan sector, women farmers should organize to finance forest activities and commercialize their productions.
- To WOCAN women suggested the production of posters or flyers containing specific messages directed to farmers. The language used should be simple and easy to be understood.
- The NGOs representatives invited to the meeting suggested the possibility of using WOCAN Website to disseminate information related to some of their main activities, achievements and perspectives.

- Some key idea of projects have been suggested to WOCAN as following:
  - Project 1: How to combat plant diseases without pesticides ?
  - Project 2: Impact of improved traditional cookers on firewood consumption and forest resources management
  - Project 3: Improvement of information systems through existing community radios.

## Appendix 1: List of participants WOCAN meeting with rural women (16th July, 2008)

	Names and Surnames	Institutions	Coming from	address
1	Ms Mbu Catherine	EFOKHOYU	South West	
2	Ms Ncha Janet	EFOKHOYU	South West - KESSAM	79366060
3	Ms Sabina Enow	EFOKHOYU	South West -Manfé	76 27 98 38
4	Ms Avezoo Christine	REFADD	Elang par Zoétéélé.	
5	Ms Jeanne Marie Mindja	REFADD-GRAMUE UNESCO	Yaounde	77 78 10 75 Mindja73@yahoo.fr
7	Monique Yigbedeck	REFADD - IUCN	Yaounde	Monique.yigbedeck@iucn.org
8	Ms Enow Tambe Sussana	WOMED	Manyu Division	
9	Bessong Nem Maria	WOMED	Manyu Division	
10	Orock Otang Erret.	WOMED	Manyu Division EYUMEDJOCK	75 06 18 03
11	Ms Njeh Germaine	WOMED	Yaounde	germainenuck@yahoo.co.uk 77 01 5369
12	Ms Danielle Lema Ngonon	WOCAN – CIFOR	Yaounde	DanielleLemaNgonon@wocan.org
13	Bruno Mvondo	ONEPCAM	Ebolowa	
14	Ms Gelas Elisabeth	CRADIF	Mbalmayo	77 67 60 79 cradif2002@yahoo.fr  www.everyoneweb.fr  Fax: 22 28 12 29
15	Ms Meka	Fondation Solidarity Parents and Childrens	Yaounde	
16	Ms Ngu M Beatrice Ngufor Tamasong	Ministry of livestock  NOWEWARD CBO – Bamenda	Yaounde	75 08 06 48, Ngubengum@yahoo.com
17	Ms Bessem Vivian	EFOKHOYU	Manyu Division	99 84 08 92 – ashumel@yahoo.com

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## **Women Organising For Change in Agriculture and NRM (WOCAN)**

**Yaoundé 16th July 2008**

**CI FOR Conference room (Nkolbisson)**

### **Agenda**

8h: Arrival of participants

9h: Wellcome speech Cyrie Sendashonga, CI FOR Regional Coordinator and WOCAN steering comité member

9:10 - Wellcome speech Danielle Lema Ngono, WOCAN Regional Coordinator.

9: 20 - Presentation of participants

9: 45 - Coffee break

10:00 - Presentation of women networks – women associations (area of intervention – main achievements – problems – perspectives)

- EFOKHOYU – REFAAD- WOMED (Ms Monique, Ms Jane Tarh And Ms Njeh Germaine)
- NOWEWARD (Ms Ngum Beatrice Ngufor)
- CRADIF (Ms Gelas)
- FUFEDA (Ms Meka)
- FERRUDJAL (M Mvondo Bruno)

12: 00 - Lunch

14:00 – Working group

15: 00 – Restitution

17: 00 – Recommandation and closing remarks.



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### **Title: Proposition to use the remaining budget from the NFF Grants (TFR07-02348)**

The West and Central Regional office of WOCAN intend to organize a meeting for rural women that will be selected and invited from the different zones covered by REFFAD, WOMED and EFOKHOYU (the three organization from which the ladies that has represented WOCAN at the Mali conferences are from).

REFFAD, WOMED and EFOKHOYU, are women's organizations that are engaged in agriculture and NRM in Cameroon. The representatives of these organizations are WOCAN members as individuals. And are very interesting in collaborating on a permanent base with WOCAN. Their activities and objectives are fitting well with WOCAN's Global vision.

The three organizations are engaged in improving women's situations specifically in rural areas of the humid forest zone of Cameroon. And, with the remaining funds received from NFF, we intend to organize a meeting between the representatives at the Mali meeting and rural women coming from the Humid Forest Zone of Cameroon.

During this meeting, rural women will present an update of their activities, their problems, and their wishes. The participants at the Mali meeting will give well prepared presentations on what they learned and how to benefit from it to improve rural women's situations.

For REFFAD women will come from the East, the Center and the South Divisions. For WOMED and EFOKHOYU women will come from the South West and the North West divisions also part of the Humid Forest Zone of Cameroon.

It will be a one day meeting that will be organized in Yaoundé (see the budget below).

Considering the fact that the remaining NFF budget is **US \$ 587**, WOCAN will complete the budget with **US \$998**.

#### **Expected Output**

The following outputs are expected:

1. Strengthen women knowledge on subjects such as Climate Change, Poverty Reduction strategies, Biofuels, International aid Policy etc. and the link with the changes in local livelihoods within local communities.

2. Identify problems faced by local communities and the actions taken or proposed to resolve them,
3. Come up with a list of local communities priorities and needs in the domains of Agriculture and NRM.

<b>Budget</b>	<i>Exch. Rate: 429</i>	
	<b>Amount in CFA</b>	<b>Amount in USD</b>
<b>Hotel rooms and accommodation for 10 rural women</b>	214 500	500
<b>Transportation costs</b>	85 800	200
<b>Meals and incidentals</b>	128 700	300
<b>Material for meeting (photocopies, pens, files, paper etc.)</b>	42 900	100
<b>Communication and miscellaneous</b>	50 790	135
<b>Meeting room</b>	150 000	350
<b>Total</b>	<b>679,965</b>	<b>\$ 1585</b>

#### Expected Output

The following outputs are expected :

- **Strengthen women knowledge on subjects such as Climate change, poverty reduction Biofuels, Aid Policy, GMOs etc. and see with them the link with the currents changes in local livelihoods.**
- **Identify problems faced by local communities and the actions taken or proposed to resolve them,**
- **Come up with a list of local communities priorities and needs in the domains of Agriculture and NRM.**

Danielle Lema Ngono N.P.  
WOCAN Regional Coordinator  
West and Central Africa