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Press Release N°368/2016

Cassava Value Chain Development

Beyond Policy Making: African Union Commission in the field to get grounding in Agro-Allied Industries' Daily Real World



Kigali, Rwanda – 29 October 2016. The African Union Commission (AUC) organized from 27-29 in Kigali, Rwanda, a Regional Workshop on Cassava Value Chain Development, addressing problems of Processing and Access to Market by Small and Medium Industries. The main objective of the training was to improve the profitability and the competitiveness of SMEs through upgrading their capacity to effectively process and add value to Cassava. Small Business Industrialists in Cassava Sector gathered to highlight and share best practices related to Traditional Cassava Value Chain, Modern

Cassava Value Chain, Quality Management including Cyanide Management and Access to Market.

“Cassava is a staple food and a major source of Food Security for about 800 million people worldwide”, announced the training facilitator, Dr. George Nyombaire, Head of Research and Development Coordination Department of the National Industrial Research and Development Agency (NIRDA) of Rwanda. According to Dr. Nyombaire, Cassava plants are ready to be harvested as soon as the tubers are large enough to meet consumer requirements. Dr. Nyombaire, however, pointed out that selling of Cassava root does not generate good income to farmers in Africa. He inferred that is why adding value is key, as in many countries in Africa, Cassava is not valued. “Cassava should be made as an engine for Economic Growth and a major Contributor to Africa’s Economic Development”, he underlined.

In the same vein, Mr. Hussein Hassan Hussein, Head of Industry Division at the African Union Commission indicated that despite enormous market potential and a favorable socio-economic advantage, cassava sub-sector is relatively underdeveloped in Africa. He deplored the fact that most countries have been unable to fully value Cassava sector in a way that would increase farmers’ income and foreign exchange earnings. Mr. Hussein stated that the Africa Union needs to encourage Member States to create more awareness about Cassava as it is used in many industries such as beverage, confectionary, bakery, mining, fertilizer and cosmetic industries.

A video called “Thai Tapioca Starch: A New Choice for the New Millennium” was projected in order to enable participants to learn by example. The video showed the whole potential of Cassava through Tapioca products including Food, Sweetener and Sugar Replacement, Glue, Plywood, Textile, Pharmacy, Bio-Degradable products, Paper, Alcohol, Animal Feed, Biscuits, Bread, Snacks, Pasta, etc. “Cassava is a very valuable crop and Thailand is making millions from it. Africa should learn from that”, debriefed the Training Facilitator.

For the Small Scale Industrialists to get a tangible grounding in Agroindustry realities, a field visit was arranged at Kinazi Cassava Plant (KCP), located in Kinazi Sector, Ruhango District in the Southern province of Rwanda approximately 85 Kilometers from Kigali City. KCP is a modern and highly automated cassava milling factory boasting the highest technology cassava milling producing very high quality undisputed flour for local and international (Belgium, Canada and USA) Market. Back in the day, on their way to KCP, participants also visited an eight hectares Modern Cassava farm running by one of the factory’s suppliers.

At the end of the meeting, participants commended the AUC’s initiative to join them in the field and to get the daily reality faced by the Small Scale Industrialists in processing and trading agricultural commodities. They stressed that in addition to upgrading the competitiveness of their enterprises and therefore increasing their revenue, such

initiative will definitively strengthen the evidence-based policy-making of the Commission in supporting the Value Addition to Agricultural Commodities.



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