Member Governments Challenged to Optimise Benefits of ASARECA
The Ministers endorsed all the Executive Director’s prayers including resolutions on payment of outstanding financial arrears to ASARECA to zero balance by March 2024; supporting regional Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) initiatives; endorsement of ASARECA to coordinate CGIAR activities in Member States.

BY BEN MOSES ILAKUT

KAMPALA—Uganda’s Minister of State for Agriculture, Hon. Fred Bwino Kyakulaga, has challenged his fellow Ministers in Eastern and Central Africa to pay-up membership fees arrears to the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), the inter-governmental Association for Agricultural Research for the sub-region, to enable body perform its functions.

Maximising benefits of ASARECA

Besides payment of Membership fees, Hon. Kyakulaga, who hosted and chaired the
ASARECA Council of Patron Ministers meeting on May 18, 2023 during the AAMC, urged his colleagues to engage in intense dialogue on how to maximise the potential of ASARECA to scale out its benefits to Member States.

“The AAMC will, effective this year, be convening every two years. However, the only way we can support or define our new destiny is by improving our funding mechanisms. We must ensure that we are timely in clearing agreed contributions towards the good health of our coordinating and convening entity,” Kyakulaga said to over 350 country delegates from 15 ASARECA countries.
Hon. Bwino flanked by his colleagues Josephine Lagu Yanga (to his immediate left) and Ahmed Mathobe (his immediate right) and other ministerial delegates during the AAMC in Kampala

Backing of Member States

Flanked by his colleagues Ahmed Mathobe, the Somalia Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, and Josephine Lagu Yanga, the Minister for Agriculture and Food Security of South Sudan, Hon Bwino emphasised that ASARECA had played a critical role as a regional body by supporting the generation, transfer, and dissemination of agricultural technologies as well as facilitating market access within and across borders of member countries.
Hon. Bwino (front centre) with his colleagues Josephine Lagu Yanga (South Sudan-Left) and Ahmed Mathobe (Somalia-Right)

Increasing Fees

Hon. Bwino later held a closed-door meeting with the Ministers and high powered country delegates, to address key issues raised by the ASARECA Secretariat Executive Director, Dr. Enock Warinda. Some of the issues and prayers that the Executive Director tabled to the Ministers through the Board of Directors and General Assembly include: increment of membership fees to USD 100,000 for core members and USD 25,000 for the ordinary members; enhancement of government ownership of ASARECA by endorsing appointment of all Directors General of the (National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) into ASARECA Board of Directors; endorsement of ASARECA priorities and strategies; admission of Cameroon, Central African Republic, and the Federal Republic of Somalia into ASARECA; and endorsement of the incoming General Assembly leadership, among others.

ASARECA endorsed to coordinate CGIAR interventions

Through Hon. Bwino’s chairmanship, the Ministers endorsed all the Executive Director’s prayers including resolutions on payment of outstanding financial arrears to ASARECA to
zero balance by March 2024; supporting regional Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) initiatives; endorsement of ASARECA to coordinate CGIAR activities in Member States.

Delegates participate during the AAMC and witnessed the endorsing of game-changer resolutions during the AAMC

**Commercialisation of technologies**

The member states also agreed to: support scaling and commercialization of agricultural technologies and innovations; promote climate-smart agriculture innovations for enhanced productivity, resilience, and livelihoods; promote integrated water and soil productivity innovations; enhance capacities in digital literacy to promote utilization of digital agricultural tools; support ‘Regional Centres of Excellence for delivery of Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) services including agricultural technologies and technologies.

Other commitments included: promoting crop, livestock and aquaculture integration for improved income and food security; supporting small-scale farmers to access seasonal climate forecasts and related tailored advisory services, and formulating policies that support the development and maintenance of agricultural data hubs including soil-crop
database hubs; and increasing access to agricultural data and information for planning and decision-making.

About AAMC

The ASARECA Agriculture Ministerial Conference (AAMC) is a flagship biennial event for the Association. The AAMC comprises the Council of Patron Ministers’ Meeting (CPM), the General Assembly, the and the ASARECA Scientific Conference.

The Council of Patron Ministers is the highest governing organ of ASARECA. It comprises Ministers responsible for agricultural research in the Member Countries.

The General Assembly is the second highest organ of ASARECA. It consists of all registered Members duly admitted to the Association.

The Board of Directors is the third highest organ in the governance hierarchy of ASARECA.

The Secretariat is the coordinating and operational entity of the Association. The Secretariat is headed by the Executive Director.

Date Published: Monday, 05 June 2023
Tags: ASARECA AAMC CPM GA SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

Source URL: https://www.asareca.org/news/member-governments-challenged-optimise-benefits-asareca

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