AERC Senior Policy Seminar XXII

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) held its twenty second senior policy seminar on March 09-10 at the Hilton Hotel in Abuja, Nigeria. The event was hosted in collaboration with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Hon. Alh. Sani Nanono, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Nigeria was the Chief Guest. He also chaired the opening session. Gov. Godwin Emefiele, Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria was represented by Mr. Isaac Okoarfo, Director, Corporate Communications, Central Bank of Nigeria, who also read his opening remarks. Hon. Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo, Minister for Industry, Trade and Investment, Nigeria gave brief remarks during the session. The welcoming remarks at the opening of the Plenary was by Prof. Njuguna Ndung’u, AERC Executive Director.

A total of 117 participants from 37 countries across Africa, including high level policy makers in the rank of ministers, permanent secretaries, members of parliament, executive directors, former ministers, governors of central banks, members of parliament, managing directors of research institutions among other dignitaries participated. The cluster of senior government officials included three ministers, one deputy minister, five former ministers, one former governor of central bank and one deputy speaker in the National Assembly. Other participants included, senior scholars and directors of various ministries and research institutes, plus representatives of the private sector and civil society.

The conference featured four presentations by thought leaders about Agriculture and Food Policies for Better Nutrition Outcomes in Africa. Session One on Agricultural Growth Patterns, Transformation, Health and Nutrition Outcomes in Africa was chaired by Hon. Issa-Toure Salahaddine, Deputy Speaker, National Assembly of Togo. The paper presenter was Prof. Germano Mwabu, University of Nairobi, Kenya. This paper was discussed by Prof. Wisdom Akpala, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). Session Two was on Nutrition Transition and the Triple Burden of Malnutrition in Africa: Status, Determination and Economic Welfare Costs. The session chair was Prof. Akpan Hogan Ekpo, Former Director General West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management (WAIFEM). The presenter was Dr. Esi Colecraft, University Ghana. This paper was discussed by Dr. Cyrille Honagbode, Policy Analyst, Centre d’Analyse des Politiques de Développement’ (CAPOD), Benin. The Third Session was on Combating Africa’s Malnutrition through Food, Agriculture and Targeted Policies. This session was chaired by Hon. Onyoti Adigo Nyikwac, Minister for Agriculture and Food Security, South Sudan. The paper was presented virtually by Dr. Mekbib Haile, World Bank, USA. The discussant for this paper was Dr. Victor Ajieroh, Senior Programme Officer, Nutrition, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

Session Four was on day Two. It was on Diet Diversity and Nutritious Diets in Africa: Effects of Farm Inputs and Trade Policies and Impact Profiling. This session was chaired by Dr. Michael Gondwe, Former Governor, Bank of Zambia and the presenters were Dr. Lia van Wesenbeeck, Free University of Amsterdam, Netherlands and Dr. Daniel Sarpong, University of Ghana. This paper was discussed by Dr. Adebisi Araba, Regional Director for Africa, The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Nigeria. The closing session of the conference was a policy roundtable on Agriculture and Food Policies for Better Nutrition Outcomes in Africa chaired by Prof. Osita Ogwu, Former Minister for Planning and National Development, Nigeria. The Panellists included Hon. Lucious Kanyumba, Former Minister for Education, Malawi; Hon. Alexander Nuetah, Former Minister for Finance, Liberia; Ms. Barbra Barungi, Managing Partner, Imara Africa; Dr. Esi Colecraft, University Ghana; Dr Chiji Ojukwu, Formerly Director Agriculture and Agro-Industries Department African Development Bank and Dr. Lia van Wesenbeeck, Free University of Amsterdam, Netherlands. After this round table a Communiqué was read out and later shared broadly.

Inspired by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supported AERC collaborative research on “Impacts of Agriculture and Food Policies on Nutrition Outcomes in Africa”, under the Analysis of the Impact of Agricultural, Food and Nutrition Policies on Nutrition Outcomes in Africa (AFPON) programme, the
Consortium identified the topic: “Agriculture and Food Policies for Better Nutrition Outcomes in Africa” as the theme for the 2020 Senior Policy Seminar (SPS). AERC used the 2020 SPS conference as the primary dissemination vehicle for the outputs of the research project. The goal was to support informed policy dialogue, and thus policy making, in relation to contributing to the recent interest in leveraging agricultural development for improving nutrition by exploring the link between agricultural policies and nutrition outcomes in Africa.