



T: +27 (0) 12 804 2966
+27 (0) 12 804 3186
F: +27 (0) 12 804 0600

141 Cresswell Street, Weavind Park, 0184
Private Bag X2087, Silverton, 0127, Pretoria

Press Release

FANRPAN Celebrates [Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security](#)

and

FANRPAN and Consortium Members Announce Grant to Improve Nutrition Outcomes through Optimized Agricultural Interventions (ATONU)

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and its consortium partners **today announce a \$16 Million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to implement the “Improving Nutrition Outcomes through Optimized Agricultural Interventions (ATONU)” project.** This project seeks to improve nutrition outcomes in smallholder farm families and poor households through tailored nutrition sensitive agriculture programs that ultimately benefit women of child bearing age and children in the first 1000 days of life.

The ATONU project consortium members include the Africa Innovations Institute in Uganda, Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania, Agribusiness Systems International, an affiliate of ACDI/VOCA, Farm Africa, the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich, the Leverhulme Center for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the UK. The ATONU project will be implemented over a six-year period, ending in December 2020. The focus countries for the project are: Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana and Uganda.

Redressing the high burden of under nutrition and stunting in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is critical. Under-nutrition is an underlying cause of nearly half of the deaths in children under-five years of age in Africa and Asia. The largely irreversible damage of infant/early childhood under-nutrition on growth and cognitive functions impairs human productivity, and could lead to a reduction of at least 8% in a nation’s economic advancement.

A major emphasis of the ATONU project will be women’s empowerment. Some 80% of food produced in Africa passes through the hands of women, yet they often have limited decision-making authority about what to grow, what to sell, and how to spend household income. Research

has shown that when women are empowered to make such decisions, children's education, health and nutrition improve. Therefore, women's empowerment will be a central concern across the project.

Her Excellency Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture at the African Union and member of the [Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition](#) says "African Leaders are mindful of the costs that hunger and malnutrition impose on the development of African citizens and economies. Those costs are understood not only in terms of individual physical growth but also in cognitive development, as well as social hardships foregone or lost opportunities for economic growth and shared prosperity. The leadership's awareness of the challenge also extends to the leadership's decision in the [African Union Malabo Declaration on Accelerated African Agricultural Growth and Development](#) where they committed to, among others, improving nutrition by bringing down child stunting to 10% and wasting to 5% over the next 10 years."

The ATONU project will provide technical assistance to integrate tailored nutrition interventions into planned and ongoing agricultural investments through (i) generating tools and frameworks for diagnosing the opportunities to incorporate tailored nutrition interventions into agriculture investments; (ii) offering technical assistance for designing, testing, and rigorously monitoring and evaluating results of the tailored nutrition interventions (proof of concept); (iii) documenting and disseminating best practices and evidence and adding to the agriculture for nutrition knowledge base; (iv) advocating for evidence-based decision making at all levels; and (v) strengthening African capacity and building a community of practice in agriculture for improved nutrition. The impact will be that smallholder farm families and poor households will have access not only to more food but also to a wide variety of safe and nutritious foods.

Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda – FANRPAN CEO and ATONU Project Director, appreciating the grant award from the foundation, said: "the grant award will help close the gap between the agriculture and nutrition communities who have to work together and bring to bear what agriculture can do for nutrition in farm families".

About the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

FANRPAN is a regional food and nutrition security policy research and advocacy network. It is coordinated from South Africa with a mandate to work Africa-wide. FANRPAN promotes effective Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) policies by: (i) facilitating linkages and partnerships between government and civil society, (ii) building the capacity for policy analysis and policy dialogue in Africa, and (iii) supporting demand-driven policy research and analysis.

For more information, please visit www.fanrpan.org