



Agricultural Policy Research Network

c/o International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
6 Ogbagi Street, Off Oro-Ago Close, Garki II, ABUJA
Website: www.aprnetworkng.com Email: info@aprnetworkng.com

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

ELECTION AND INAUGURATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Following the election and inauguration of the Executive Council of APRNet on November 24, 2009, the Executive Council held an inaugural meeting on the same day and identified immediate and short-term priorities.



Prof. Eric Eboh, the man who was elected President, APRNet, to carry the mantle of leadership

The immediate priorities included the full constitution of the Executive Council, the appointment of key officers to support the Executive Council and the incorporation of the organisation as a legal entity (that is, registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission). The short-term priorities included the mobilisation of new members and creating awareness about the organisation. Other short-term priorities were the design and implementation of simple but effective dialogue activities to promote the research links with policymaking and practice. It was also thought that the organisation should facilitate training/capacity development and professional networking for members.



Some members of the pioneer Exco of APRNet, from right –Dr. Victor Oboh (Secretary), Prof. Eric Eboh (President), Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Egbuna (1st Vice President), Dr. Pius Ike (Treasurer)

INCORPORATION

Since the election of the Exco, the incorporation of NAPRNet was given topmost priority. The registration of NARPNNet as a corporate entity is very fundamental to building formal and contractual relationships. But, the process has lingered due to challenging bureaucratic circumstances. Registration was one of the key issues discussed during the last EXCO meeting held on 17 August 2010. We invited the Solicitor to give us progress report. We are pleased to report that CAC has approved our application to register the organization's original name as 'Nigerian Agricultural Policy Research Network (NAPRNet)'. To this end, the lawyer is preparing relevant documents for signatures and verification. Thereafter, final approval will be expected from the Office of the Attorney General of the Federation. Please, let us know if any of you have any contact in the AGF's office to ensure a speedy facilitation.

The registration of NAPRNet as a corporate entity with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) has continued to face some challenges. But, the EXCO has intensified efforts to tackle these challenges. Despite unexpected bureaucratic delays, we have made reasonable progress. After our attempt to register as „Incorporated Trustees“ was declared technically

infeasible, we commenced the process of registration as a „not-for-profit organization“ (Limited by Guarantee).

Following the submission of relevant documents seeking for final approval, in September, 2010, the Office of the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) recently queried the inclusion of the word „Nigerian“ in the name. The AGF office provided two options which include either to delete the word 'Nigerian' in the proposed name thereby allowing the new name to be „Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet)“ or justify the name - NAPRNet- by obtaining an Act of the National Assembly (that is, sponsoring and realizing a Bill to the effect).

We subjected these options to votes. The decision of members through email feedback favoured the deletion of the word “Nigerian”, so that the modified name will become Agricultural Policy Research Network“ (APRNet). The option of sponsoring a bill and securing the enactment of Law was considered as highly unrealizable and unnecessary for our existence. According to one of the responses- “it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than getting a bill sponsored and passed through the Nigerian National Assembly”. Meanwhile, the unanimous decision of members to opt for “APRNet” has since been communicated to our lawyer who has commenced the process of filing appropriate documents. Given the long tortuous experience with this registration matter, we do hope that this stage is the final hurdle to cross for our registration to be complete. Meanwhile the EXCO is grateful to members for their quick responses to consultations on this subject matter.

CONSTITUTION OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

At the start of the year, the EXCO is still short of one member – nominee from the National Planning Commission (NPC) despite repeated contacts with the Commission. The President, during the last EXCO meeting, volunteered to personally follow up with the NPC. The Secretary had drafted another request letter which the President had since submitted to the Commission. Follow up is in steady progress. Current indication shows that the National Planning Commission would soon write APRNet to give their nominee.

But, today, the Executive Committee of APRNet is now fully constituted. This is as a result of the official nomination to take the remaining slot – that of the National Planning Commission. The Director (Agriculture and Industry) in the National Planning Commission has been officially nominated by the Honourable Minister of National Planning to represent the Commission in the NAPRNet EXCO. We are happy to welcome the Director and look forward to benefitting from the Commission’s wide network of government and non-government agencies and organizations

PUBLICITY AND MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Publicity and membership drive remains top on our agenda. We have stepped up efforts aimed at mobilizing both local and international members. So far, the secretariat has posted parcels containing brochure and registration forms to over 20 tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These were addressed to our members -(where they exist) and Heads of Departments. Some have called the secretariat to acknowledge receipt while others are yet to do so.

We must also commend some of our members for introducing their colleagues to NAPRNet and this has paid-off with the registration of about 6 new members. In addition, the Network continues to have an international outlook with the registration of an international member – Aichata Keita, a Malian national studying in Paris, France. We implore all our members to personally publicize the activities of NAPRNet in their various organizations.

Recently the membership list of NAPRNet got a boost with the registration of seven additional persons. The last batch of members is made of very prominent Nigerians with vast experience in the agriculture sector as well as in international development. The list include: *Josephine Egwuonwu (Winrock International)*, *Rita Okorie (Bank of Agriculture)*, *Benjamin Odoemena (International Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD)*, *Dr. Oyesola Olumide (National Programme for Agric and Food Security - NPAFS)*, *Maiwada Zubairu (NPAFS)*, *Francis Ikwueme (Hyvel Engineering)* and *Ayodeji Coker (NPAFS)*. NAPRNet family is pleased to welcome these new members on board and hope that they will bring their wealth of experience to bear upon the vision, goals and objectives of NAPRNet. Formal introduction of these members will be done as soon as we receive their bios. On this note it is proper to commend the exemplary efforts of our dear President – Prof Eric Eboh who facilitated the contacts and mobilized these individuals for NAPRNet membership. We continue to implore all our members to personally publicize the activities of NAPRNet in their various organizations and provide the secretariat with feedback accordingly.

Membership as at December 2010 stands at 40nos.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

APRNet members benefitted from a 2-day workshop on *Scientific Writing and Research Communications* held in Enugu between 31 August and 1 September, 2010. The workshop was organized by the African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE), Enugu with special course fee waiver for APRNet members. Five (5) APRNet members participated in the training workshop. We encourage members to explore similar opportunities to collaborate and synergize with other like-minded networks and organizations in capacity building, research and policy advocacy.

Furthermore, discussions with Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN) is still in progress to jointly organize a national seminar on '*Promoting the use of Agricultural Research*

in Policy making and industry'. We are also exploring other 'consultancy opportunities' for APRNet members and details will be communicated to you in our subsequent mails.

APRNet has continued to explore available opportunities aimed at enhancing the capacity of its members. On 27 October, 2010, APRNet with support from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Abuja organized an on-line training on the use of Mendeley program. Mendeley is an online desktop and web program that is used by high class researchers for managing and sharing research papers, discovering research data and for collaboration. Ms Katarlah Taylor, a Washington DC based, Library & Knowledge Management Specialist with IFPRI facilitated the training session. Three members took part in the training and they described it as very innovative and useful.

WEBSITE

There have been committed efforts to launch our website into full operations. Plans are in top gear to set up a blog spot for web-based discussions. Our web manager, Dr. Victor Ajieroh informed us recently of his non-availability to continue in this role, due to a new job placement that will engage much of his time. EXCO wishes him well and asked the secretary to manage the website in the interim. In addition, APRNet has approved an internship application from one, Miss Ruth Uhiene to support the secretary in website development and management. Miss Uhiene is a final year student of Computer Science at the University of Abuja. The appointment is free of cost to APRNet. Miss Uhiene will be fully introduced to you as soon as she finishes her documentation with APRNet.

To further boost our capacity in web-based communications, Ms Valerie Rhoe has volunteered to organize an on-line training on the use of Mendeley. Members are expected to participate on-line using 'Go-To-Meeting' interactive medium and will be duly informed of the date and time. We are very hopeful that with these arrangements in place, web-based interactions will soon commence in earnest.

SUPPORT FROM IFPRI

The EXCO in her last meeting formally acknowledged receipt of items and equipment donated to NAPRNet by IFPRI. The President thanked IFPRI for the donations and assured that they will be put into optimal use for the benefits of APRNet.

NEWS BITS

The EXCO has approved the appointment of Mr. Innocent Azih of NESG as APRNet's Assistant Secretary. He will support the secretariat to allow the Secretary devote more time to the management of the website.

Ms. Valerie Rhoe (Program Coordinator) announced that she will be relocating to Washington DC, (USA) at the end of her tenure in December, 2010.

IFPRI is renovating the library and developing a website for the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Abuja. Individuals and organizations are encouraged to donate books and relevant publications to stock the Ministry's library.

The African Institute for Applied Economics has indicated interest to register as a corporate member of NAPRNet. Other private organizations like NESG and AFAN are encouraged to follow suit.

The NARPNNet Exco is scheduling courtesy visits to key officials in the agricultural research and policy community, including the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria.

BRIGHT PROSPECTS FOR 2011

The outlook of APRNet in 2011 is very bright. Our optimism is driven by the expectation that the year 2011 will witness the fruition of some collaborative programmes in capacity building, research networking and policy dialogue, which APRNet EXCO has been working upon since the beginning of 2010. Members are encouraged to make intellectual and technical contributions as may be necessary for the realization of these programmes.

The key priorities for 2011 are the registration (incorporation) of our organisation, mobilisation for new members, exploration of collaboration/partnerships and resource mobilisation.