



Republic of Kenya



Kenya Agricultural  
Productivity Programme

## ENHANCING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE

*Report on the stakeholders workshop held May 2011*

### Background Information

The 7% annual growth rate required for African countries Kenya included; to achieve MDG1 of reducing poverty levels by half by 2015 is far from being achieved. The high unemployment rates among youths makes them most vulnerable to poverty a situation made worse due to the failure of the agricultural sector that employs 65% of the population of Kenya to provide real employment for youth. Farming is in the hands of the elderly, with a mean age of the farmers being 53 years as reported in KAPAP gender disaggregated baseline survey report.

As an initial step towards enhancing youth participation in agriculture, the Kenya Agricultural Productivity and Agribusiness Project (KAPAP) organized a 3-day workshop in May 2011 to enable stakeholders' share experiences, identify challenges, and develop appropriate strategies towards enhancing youth participation in agriculture. The workshop participants were drawn from all agriculture sector institutions to include various Ministries, key Institutions and NGOs.

The presentation and discussions made at the workshop revealed that agricultural sector development initiative had failed to anticipate and integrate youth concerns and the initiation of such efforts was long overdue. Innovative ways that take into account the limitations of land, the ageing farmer populations and ambitions of youth on achieving quick returns from any investments made were needed.

### Workshop Outcomes

The reports by the Ministries of Fisheries, Cooperatives, and KENFAP showed some youth focused initiatives. The '**Kuza, Kula, Uuza samaki**' initiative in the Ministry of

Fisheries is targeting youth in secondary schools and surrounding communities to sensitize them on aquaculture. The Ministry of cooperatives has initiated organized youth groups in the coffee zones to offer manual labour services to farmers while KENFAP organizes exchange tours for youth. Both the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock support in-school youths through 4K and Young

Farmers clubs. However lack of coordination, harmonization and adequate funding for these initiatives was reported. Numerous opportunities for youth engagement within the sector were highlighted by the other participating institutions.

The factors identified as affecting youth participation in agriculture included; negative perceptions, limited access to production resources and lack of institutional support and incentives towards farming. Lack of political will, accountability and support mechanisms to youth concerns in the sector was noted. Many youths perceive farmers as uneducated, unskilled and as physical laborers who receive low returns from farming when compared to other formal and informal forms of employment. Institutional issues were also identified to include; lack of a sector youth policy, failure to include agriculture among the thematic areas in the National Youth policy, as well as lack of emphasis on agriculture in the current education system. There are also no role models in the sector and majority of the out of school youth interested in agriculture face numerous constraints in regard to access and control over the resources needed to engage in viable agribusiness.

The workshop concluded that there is need for collaborative efforts among all the sector players towards enhancing youth participation in agricultural. These efforts include; the use appropriate strategies to support creative and exciting agribusiness opportunities for the youth, attitude change and enhancing youths' access to resources, review of the National Youth Policy and its implementation strategy, to be followed by dissemination of these documents to all development partners. The Agricultural Sector Coordinating Unit (ASCU) will then be supported to develop a sector youth policy and its implementation framework targeted at creating positive attitudes to agriculture and enhancing youths' access to resources. National level youth specific strategies need to be initiated to enhance youths' access to arable land and other inputs to support professional commercial farming. The success of such efforts will not only create employment opportunities for the youth, but also contribute highly towards changing agricultural production from its subsistence form to professional, agribusiness and value chain oriented systems.