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We never sleep

African farmers organise award

on November 28, 2013 / in [News](#) 6:15 pm /

Farmers organisations in Africa will be honoured tonight at the first Africa Farmer of the Year Award (AFOYA) in Accra, Ghana, at a function put together by the African Investment Climate Research (AFRICRES), in partnership with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Regional Farmer Organisations throughout Africa.

The awards aim at showcasing and rewarding successful Farmer Organisations (FOs) in Africa, and acknowledging the vital role that these FOs play in promoting sustainable agriculture in the African continent.

This year's event will honour farmer organizations in five main categories such as *Governance, Accountability and Professional Capacity, Income Diversity, Female and Youth Participation, Advocacy and Market Access*.

At the end of the event, an overall Africa FO of the Year will be crowned among the 5 sector winners. The winners will each receive prizes for the various sectors.

Commenting on the conference and the awards, the Managing Director of AFRICRES Professor Nicholas Biekpe, noted that Farmer Organizations continue to play a key role in achieving food security in Africa and therefore deserve recognition.

AGRA's Director of Communications & Public Affairs, Ms. Sylvia Mwichuli, also stressed the importance of the awards, noting that these will motivate farmer organizations to continue to work towards achieving a green revolution in Africa. She also reiterated the commitment of key stakeholders in the agricultural value chain, including AGRA and AFRICRES, in promoting sustainable agriculture in the African continent.

"These Farmer Organization awards will celebrate the FOs for their role in eradicating poverty in the African continent through agriculture," Ms. Mwichuli stated.

Prelude to this award this evening a conference with the theme "**Farmer Organizations in Africa: Strengthening Information-Sharing and Partnerships**" that brought together Regional and National Farmer Organisations, Representatives from African Governments, Farmer Organisation Support Agencies & Institutions, Researchers, Private Sector Institutions, and NGOs was held yesterday.

Issues affecting Farmer Organizations in their efforts at ensuring food security in the African continent were discussed at the conference as part of activities marking the Awards.

The Farmer Organization Conference also gave stakeholders the platform to discuss issues affecting smallholder farmers in the following key focus areas: Getting better seeds to Africa farmers; improving soil health; providing better access to markets; Building partnership to change policies and; strengthening farmer organization capacities.

Ms. Sylvia Mwichuli said the conference held yesterday gave smallholder farmers profound knowledge on how to tackle some of the challenges they face and turn them into opportunities through sharing of practical experiences.

AFRICRES and AGRA's platform, she believed, also helped in strengthening the partnerships among FOs, Service Providers, Agricultural Support Institutions, Governments and other FO-Support Agencies and Institutions.

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