

## New agreement on capacity development and poverty reduction

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on capacity development and poverty reduction in Africa was signed on 4 November 2005 by Prof. Firmino Mucavele, NEPAD Chief Executive, and Prof. Andrew Gidamis, Executive Director of the African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD) based in Kenya.

AICAD is an autonomous regional training and research institution jointly founded and financed by the governments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, with the technical and financial support by the Japanese Government through JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). Its mission is "to link knowledge to application within communities in order to reduce poverty in Africa".

The main program thrusts are: research and technical development, training, and information and knowledge sharing, with a focus on agricultural and rural development. An extensive network has been developed, including 15 universities in the region, to promote collective efforts.

AICAD has been offering various training courses, such as rural women's empowerment, strengthening of farmers' organisations and extension services over the years.

Its mandates and activities are in line with the vision of NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), which advocates the strengthening of African institutions and capacities as well as regional collaboration.

Notably AICAD has been actively supporting the dissemination of New Rice for Africa (NERICA) through technical assistance to field experimentation and the variety selection by farming communities and knowledge sharing. NERICA is a key commodity being promoted under the CAADP to increase food security in Africa.

AICAD facilities include a conference hall, seminar rooms, computer laboratories, library, canteen and hostel. Staff members consist of professionals from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania as well as a team of JICA experts.

Through the MOU, AICAD's resources and the regional network will be made available to further advance the development agenda of the CAADP.

**NEPAD NEWSLETTER Issue 118 - 25 November 2005**