

# Rice Research in Africa



## Addressing Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

### WARDA and MDG

Africa Rice Center (WARDA) is the premier research center for rice development in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In association with its partners, it is contributing to achieving the MDGs in SSA through a greater focus on links between rice research and:

- ▶ rural livelihoods
- ▶ poverty reduction
- ▶ food security
- ▶ health
- ▶ women empowerment
- ▶ schooling
- ▶ mitigation of HIV/AIDS effects
- ▶ partnership for development

### NERICA and MDG

The New Rices for Africa (NERICAs), developed by the Africa Rice Center (WARDA) and its partners, are bringing hope to more than 30 million smallholder rice farmers in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Impact studies show that NERICAs are helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals across SSA.

### The NERICA Advantage

- ▶ Earlier maturity (by 50-70 days earlier than farmers' varieties)
- ▶ Resistance to local stresses
- ▶ Higher yields (up to 6 tonnes per ha in uplands under favorable conditions)
- ▶ Higher protein content (by 25%)



"NERICA is very valuable in the hungry season, because it is ready to be harvested, while the traditional rice is not yet mature."  
- Doto Leontine,  
NERICA farmer in Benin

"The new rice has changed our living. Our incomes have increased. We have bought clothes, a house and a bicycle."  
- NERICA farmer in Uganda

"With NERICA, I can feed my family, pay my kids' school fees, and be sure of having food all year,"  
-- Mamady Douno,  
NERICA farmer in Guinea

"Growing these rice varieties is a very profitable activity which brings enough revenue to me."  
- Abeba Allasane,  
NERICA farmer from Togo

"From the cash we get after selling NERICA, I help my husband in providing food for my children and to pay their school and medical fees, and also to buy clothes for them."  
- Abeba Allasane,  
NERICA farmer from Togo

### MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

NERICA, whose large-scale diffusion begun only recently driven by farmer participation, has already demonstrated significant impacts on poverty alleviation.

In Benin, for example, increased yields as a result of NERICA adoption have increased women farmers' incomes by \$337 per hectare of NERICA cultivated. The shorter duration of the NERICAs is one of its major attractions for farmers.

### MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

The majority of upland rice farmers in sub-Saharan Africa are women, who account for:

- ▶ 52% labor in land preparation
- ▶ 80% in sowing
- ▶ 88% in weeding
- ▶ 80% in harvesting

NERICA rice was developed mainly to help women farmers, who like its characteristics as weed competitiveness and short duration and high yield.

### MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

A survey conducted by the Africa Rice Center (WARDA) in partnership with the national program of Benin showed that farming families, who had adopted NERICAs, there was:

- ▶ A 6% increase in child school enrollment;
- ▶ A 3% increase in school retention rate;
- ▶ About \$20 increase per child in school expenditure

### MDG 4: Reduce child mortality

A survey conducted by the Africa Rice Center (WARDA) in partnership with the national program of Benin showed that farming families, who had adopted NERICAs, there was:

- ▶ A 2% reduction in frequency of child sickness
- ▶ A 5% increase in attendance at hospital when children fell ill
- ▶ About US\$12 increase in family spending on child health care

Better harvests with more yield put extra cash in NERICA farmers' pockets to fund schooling, medical care and better diet.



#### MDG 5: Improve maternal health

The protein content of some of the NERICAs has been found to be 25% higher (10% protein for NERICA versus 8% protein for Asian rice in the market).

As the NERICAs have higher protein content than other rice varieties and are more nutritious than many of the traditional staples, farmers growing NERICAs have improved their diets. An improved diet leads to better health and there is a greater chance that a healthy mother will give birth to a healthy child than a weakened mother.

#### MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

Benefits from NERICA lie not only in improved food security, better diets and higher incomes for resource-poor farmers, but also through less pressure on the environment.

Since some of the NERICA varieties seem to cope well with less water in drought-prone environments, farmers do not need to resort to slash-and-burn agriculture.

#### MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

As the largest employer in sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture is particularly affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The agricultural sector has a great potential to help mitigate the consequences of HIV/AIDS on farmers. For example, the NERICA varieties give improved yield and are less susceptible to local stresses, so that the labor burden is lessened.

The CGIAR Systemwide initiative on HIV/AIDS and Agriculture is promoting NERICA as part of its program to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on farmers.

#### MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Rice imports are draining more than US\$ 1.5 billion from precious foreign exchange earnings in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Projections by Africa Rice Center (WARDA) show that a 20% increase in NERICA planting in SSA countries could result in a 5% reduction in the rice import bill. A range of partnership models is being explored to accelerate the NERICA dissemination. Today more than 200,000 ha are under upland NERICA production in SSA.

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*"As a start, together with Japan we should give priority to the further expansion of the successful NERICA to other parts of the continent in urgent need."*

Thabo Mbeki,  
Former President of Republic of South Africa

*"The dissemination of New Rice for Africa (NERICA), a hybrid combining the strong characteristics of Asian and African rice is representative of the efforts being undertaken by Japan"*

Junichiro Koizumi  
Former Prime Minister of Japan

*"We thank WARDA for the development of NERICA rice"*

Olusegun Obasanjo  
Former President of Nigeria

Africa Rice Center (WARDA) is an autonomous inter-governmental research association of African member states. It is also one of the 15 international agricultural research Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

The 'New Rice for Africa' (NERICA), which is bringing hope to millions of poor people in Africa, was developed by WARDA and its partners. The success of the NERICAs has helped shape the Center's future direction, extending its horizon beyond West and Central Africa into Eastern and Southern Africa.

The Center hosts the African Rice Initiative (ARI), the Regional Rice Research and Development Network for West and Central Africa (ROCARIZ), and the Inland Valley Consortium (IVC). It also supports the Coordination Unit of the Eastern and Central African Rice Research Network (ECARRN), based in Tanzania.

Since January 2005, the Center has been working from Cotonou, Benin. It has regional research stations near St Louis, Senegal and at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, Nigeria.



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