

THE 2017 AFRICAN GREEN REVOLUTION FORUM EXPERIENCE



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I was honored to accompany Prof. Ruth Oniang'o to the 2017 African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) that was held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire from 4th-8th September. I was excited at this opportunity and couldn't wait for the day. The day of travel started early. By 3.20 am we were at the airport with our luggage and ready to check in. As we were in the queue, Prof turned to me and asked, "Do you have your passport?" I replied, "I thought you carried it for me". That was when we realized that I did not have my passport with me! Actually, I had left it at home! Here we were in the queue, just about to check in and I have no passport and the other travel documents! I just could not believe it. However, after a few calls here and there, our driver was able to get the documents and thanks to Prof I was able to be checked in.

Our flight touched down in the port city of Abidjan at around 3.00pm. After the usual airport checks, we were cleared and later driven to our hotel, the Sofitel Abidjan Hotel Ivoire.

My experience in Abidjan is one that I will live to remember. First, because we were so many Kenyans there and the unity, togetherness, and support displayed was amazing. Second, attending this forum gave me an opportunity to interact and network with other people, which really is important to a young person like me. I also got to learn from the experiences of others; both their academic and professional journeys. Third, and the best part of it, was the announcement of Prof. Ruth Oniang'o as the 2017 Africa Food Prize winner. I was not aware that I had actually accompanied the laureate! I came to know of it the evening before the announcement. I was so happy and proud walking around with her (and of course the trophy!), being introduced to great people, the people I admire.

I attended various exciting and informative sessions including a session on capacity building where it was emphasized that in order for Africa to realize any development especially in the agriculture sector, the youth and women need to be empowered and supported in terms of capacity. In another session on mechanization, the speakers stressed on the fact that Africa's farmers, just like other farmers around the world, deserve the best technologies (which are not necessarily expensive) in order to increase productivity. One key message was that for increased

productivity to be achieved then mechanization among smallholder farmers must be introduced along the whole agricultural value chain.

The exciting forum came to a close on Friday 8th September. My take-home message was that Africa can feed the world. We do not have to continue seeing pictures of malnourished African children. Most importantly, Africa's youth, through the necessary capacity support are the solution of today's food problems.

I am grateful to Prof for giving me this wonderful, unforgettable opportunity. Prof, I know you will agree with me that we had a wonderful time in Abidjan!

Below are some of the photos from our Abidjan trip.

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L: Prof. Oniang'o and Dr. Lindiwe Majele Sibanda (AGRA VP Country Support, Policy & Delivery)
R: Prof. and a delegate during the Capacity Building Session



L: Announcing the 2017 Africa Food Prize Winners
 R: 2017 Africa Food Prize Winners, Prof Oniang'o and Mme Maïmouna Sidibe Coulibaly (Mali)



Prof Oniang'o speaking in a CIAT side event panel on Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security through Artificial Intelligence



L: Dr. Dennis Kyetere (Executive Director, AATF) speaking during a session on mechanization
 R: Dr. Rebbie Harawa (Head of Soil Fertility and Fertilizer Systems, AGRA) speaking during a UNDP and GEF pre-event on Making Food Value Chains More Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient



