USING THE IAASTD REPORTS

How Civil Society Organisations can use the IAASTD reports to support their work.
Outcome of the IAASTD workshop, Planet Diversity, Bonn, 13 May 2008.

On Tuesday the 13th of May, a workshop on the IAASTD (International Agricultural Assessment of Science and Technology for Development) took place at Planet Diversity in Bonn. The aim of the workshop was to discuss ways in which Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working in the field of sustainable agriculture could use the IAASTD reports to support their work.

The workshop was broken into two halves, the first providing an introduction to the IAASTD, and the second looking at ways for CSOs to use the reports of the IAASTD. Four speakers, all actors in the IAASTD process, spoke on the process, content and specific themes within the content of the reports.

During the second half, participants split into regional groups where an author of the report discussed with them ways that the report could be used to support their work. These opportunities were later shared with the whole workshop and strategies for issues that arose were discussed.

It is these strategies that are outlined below as possible ways to take the report forward.

Raising awareness

This was seen as the most crucial way to use the report. Participants felt that there are many regional governmental blocs, governments, organisations and individuals who would benefit greatly from being able to use the reports to lend strength to their lobbying and arguments. Regional meetings and radio are seen as the best way to get the report to organisations and individuals, while universities and churches are two examples of organisations that could help in awareness raising.

Summarising and Simplifying

Making the reports more accessible to people was also seen as crucial. This would need to involve summarising parts of the report and in doing so, simplifying the language. While the reports are already translated into some languages, these also need to be summarised.

Comparison

The IAASTD report should be compared to other reports to highlight the different development paths they are outlining, but also showing how the reports were written, who is supporting them and their respective funders. The IAASTD reports also show an alternative to the “Second Green Revolution” and should be used for this.

Funding

The reports can also be used to address funding organisation and their policies. When applying for funding, organisations should be able to reference the reports, showing how their work seeks to achieve the goals of the report. Aid and funding

should also be monitored according to the reports, and organisations questioned on their policies where they differ from those of the report.

Approaching the Stakeholder group

The stakeholder group in the IAASTD, i.e. those that identified the problems that the reports addressed, should be approached for their view on the way the reports should be used.

The UN

All UN bodies need to be aware of the report. We need to lobby them in order for them to implement the reports recommendations in their work.

Highlight Collaboration

The fact that the report was a result of a collaboration between different groups needs to be emphasised in all of our strategies, and any work with the report.

Challenging the Dominant Paradigm

The report is also an opportunity to begin a conversation to challenge the dominant paradigm. It should be used as a tool to enable voices that are ignored to be heard.