

## SLARI DG Urges More PhDs for Young SLARI Scientists

Vol: 4 No: 07

12<sup>th</sup> November 2015

During the last field visits of representatives of the World Bank and the Government of Sierra Leone of activities implemented by the Rokupr and Njala Agricultural Research Centres under the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), its Director General (DG) Dr. Joseph M. Kargbo emphasized and urged young scientists to pursue and bring for the benefit of SLARI the PhD Degree as early as convenient.



“We are facing the dire situation where our working scientists with PhDs are aging and a strong demand on the Institute to have more PhD Degrees to perform and justify the making of our Research Centres, Centres of Excellence in the sub region”, he said. He cited the Rokupr Agricultural Research Station now known as Rokupr Agricultural Research Centre (RARC) as a sterling example in the past in meaningfully contributing to mangrove rice production to the benefit of not only our country but the sub region. He affirmed that though sometimes useful to refer to such achievements, it does not make sense to again and again live on past glories but the need for our young ones to get out of their cocoons and face the reality in sustaining the good work by working hard to meet the mission of the Institute.

SLARI DG Dr. Kargbo in this vein commended the hard work and commitment of the leadership of the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP) in Sierra Leone Suleiman Sesay. “Despite the daunting challenges, he has ensured that WAAPP has delivered on the objectives of capacitating my Institute by providing the enabling working environment to generate and help disseminate relevant technologies in the areas of rice and cassava for adoption”, he said. These, he said included the provision of scholarships for SLARI scientists to pursue post graduate studies, needed infrastructure such as staff quarters and laboratories as well as transport facilities.

While WAAPP Sierra Leone Coordinator Suleiman Sesay expressed gratification over the returning of many of WAAPP sponsored students following the successful completion of their studies outside the country, he underscored the huge potential of the agricultural sector especially as being the engine for socio-economic growth and development of the country as well as the sub region and the rest of Africa. He therefore urged them to work hard to justify the investment.

The World Bank representative explained the purpose of the mission. “It is to take stock of what the Project has accomplished during its first five year phase and what has not been done including the areas of procurements, contracts awarded, management of finances, environmental safeguards and research activities”, he told his audience. Other speakers beefed up what was said and expressed the hope of seeing the good work that was done during the first five year phase of the project that may lead to the second phase.

Presentations on research conducted on rice and cassava during WAAPP first phase were done at the Rokupr and Njala Centres that directly benefited from the project. Rice and cassava technologies generated by the two Centres during the period were discussed with pertinent suggestions made for inclusion. The technologies will be show cased at the upcoming WAAPP Wrap Up meeting in Senegal. WAAPP infrastructural facilities provided during the course of the Project were inspected with deliberations on procurements, contracts awarded, management of finances and other relevant issues in a separate meeting following the field visits.

