

10 Joint Policy Recommendations:

**From Rhetoric to Action: Towards a Transformed
Agriculture and Food Secure Africa**





Maria (right) is 43 years old and has five children and four grandchildren. She is a Tanzanian sweet potato farmer.



Background

In 2003, the Maputo Declaration of the African Union stated that, within five years, 10 per cent of budgets of member states would be dedicated to agriculture. Ten years on, despite spending increases by some countries African governments still allocate an average of only 4 per cent of their national budgets to agriculture. Only eight out of 54 countries under the African Union have consistently reached the 10 per cent target. This failing is largely contributing to the low development in the food production sector and food insecurity in Africa, where 223 million people (a quarter of the population) live in hunger¹.

African Heads of State and Government have designated 2014 as a Year of Agriculture and Food Security.

Yet, like the Maputo Declaration, this will remain an empty phrase unless governments move “From Rhetoric to Action”. In the face of the current situation, African farmers, other small-scale producers², alongside civil society, call on governments to ensure the following during the 2014 Year of Agriculture and Food Security:

1. Quantity of agriculture spending: Effective agriculture investments through transparent and accountable budgets



10%

The African Union and all Regional Economic Communities (RECs) should adopt a target-based timeline and mechanism for monitoring progress towards reaching the 10% budget commitment to agriculture. Governments that have not yet reached the 10% budget target should set timelines for doing so, and all governments need to identify mechanisms, including budget readjustments and reallocations, to mobilise the extra domestic resources needed for agriculture. Possibilities include reducing military spending, ending illegal capital flight and tax evasion, and increasing prudence in current spending to avoid unnecessary wastage. In the long-term export revenues should be increased by moving towards value-added products and services. Taxes on imported agricultural products could also both raise revenue and strengthen African local and regional markets.

2. Quality of agriculture spending



Public spending also needs to take into account the diversity of small-scale producers, agro-ecological conditions, local needs and production systems. In particular, priority should be given to investments in effective services and public goods tailored to small-scale producers, especially women, and these groups should be involved in the management of these services. Examples should include: extension services, knowledge generation and R&D (including on ecological agriculture), small-scale water harvesting and irrigation, veterinary services, road and shipping networks, processing facilities, telecommunications, farmer-to-farmer training and farmer field schools, water storage, storage facilities, community seed banks, and inputs. Furthermore, governments should ensure support to small-scale producers by ensuring that the sourcing of public procurement is from small-scale producers, with particular emphasis on those practising ecological farming. CAADP should also be aligned to and integrate the AU's Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa, to ensure the specific needs of pastoralist communities are met through appropriate investments and services.

African governments should also consider introducing specific small-scale producer tailored financial products and improving government-backed credit subsidy schemes to ensure that: large numbers of farmers have access to small loans at low interest rates; that farmers have guaranteed returns on production in case of losses; that the schemes have sufficient capital; and that they are transparently and efficiently managed. In addition financial literacy programs should be introduced as part of public agricultural extension services.

3. Effective, mutually accountable and participatory agricultural policy making under CAADP



The next 10 years of CAADP should be underlined by a clear commitment to inclusivity and multi-stakeholder ownership. Leaders should deepen their commitment to engaging farmers, businesses, civil society and other non-state actors in the design, implementation and monitoring of agriculture plans, with particular emphasis on women. The last 10 years has severely lacked the constructive involvement of the non-state actors in key decision making steps and levels in the CAADP process. The second generation of CAADP must have at its centre a reaffirmation of the founding CAADP principle of 'inclusive participation', which should be achieved through a clear and institutionalized framework of engagement. Through increased participation, governments can better serve their populations, improve results, and make the sector more dynamic and sustainable.

This will mean official acknowledgement of these stakeholders as equal partners in the agricultural policy-making process. Farmers organisations should receive special emphasis in this regard, and be recognised as legitimate representatives of farmers on the continent. Effective mechanisms for participation need to exist at national, regional and continental level.

4. Transparency of agriculture spending



Ministries in the agriculture sector, and related ministries, should be more accountable for results, including on poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, rather than outputs. Ministries should demonstrate how they will address current internal inefficiencies that prevent governments from spending their budgetary allocations. Governments should invest more in adequate staff training and capacity building in the agriculture sector and improve coordination between and among Ministries by learning from best practice elsewhere, including the knowledge of farmers themselves. Also governments should invest in improving internal systems to track and disseminate information about public agriculture spending and to collect and disseminate detailed and disaggregated data. Furthermore, African leaders are encouraged to strengthen implementation through the adoption of the Results Framework and the creation of a CAADP ‘food security and agriculture index’, or a similar mechanism to measure and monitor all the development finance from all sources inputted into agriculture, the implementation of these programs, the services delivered and the outcomes achieved by the enhanced Maputo framework at the national and subnational level.

5. Eliminate the gender and youth gap in agriculture



“It is estimated that even if women simply had the same access to productive resources such as land and seed as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 25–30%. This would raise agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 % and reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17%”³

This wide and pervasive gender gap in agriculture affects women’s incomes, their children’s opportunities, and the availability of food in their wider communities. Existing agricultural policies need to become better attuned to the issues important to female farmers, and new policies and programmes must be designed and implemented to address their needs.

They should include such measures as strengthening women’s land rights, providing community-based child care, promoting the productivity

of crops grown by women, investing more in labour-saving devices and to involve women in research design and dissemination. Credit schemes need to be reformed to target larger numbers of women farmers. Input subsidy programmes, where these are appropriate, need to have better targeting to ensure that women have at least equal access. Extension services need to be better attuned to women's particular schedules and needs. Gender goals for each CAADP pillar and gender-disaggregated data needs to be produced or enhanced to support women and to monitor the effectiveness of policies. In order to implement these measures, agriculture spending and policy should focus on women farmers by dedicating specific budget lines to them. Greater steps should be taken to ensure that women are treated equally under the law and in practice, especially on secure land access, control and ownership.

African leaders must promote an integrated approach that recognises the multiple roles of women smallholder farmers: productive, reproductive and community management, and must thus prioritise public investments that will go towards reducing women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work⁴. This includes improving access to water, energy and energy saving devices for cooking and child care facilities for women farmers and ensuring agricultural interventions do not unduly burden women.

CAADP must also confront the reality that rapid urbanisation in Africa is leading to a rapidly ageing agricultural community. It must thus recognise that with the right support agriculture can provide sustainable and prosperous livelihoods for young people in Africa. This will mean developing specific programmes that make agriculture more attractive to younger generations and specific funding and initiatives should be designed to attract young people into primary production as well as participation along specific product value chains.

6. Strengthen small-scale producers land rights through improved resources for land governance and adoption and implementation of the AU 'Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa'



There is need to ensure that small-scale producers are enabled to increase security over the land they use. National leaders and policy makers must therefore improve tenure security over communal lands and individual plots, particularly for the poor and vulnerable. The worrying trend of "land grabs" needs to be curbed through mandatory adoption and implementation of the AU Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa and the Committee on World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure. This should ensure that land investments are negotiated in a transparent way and protect the rights of smallholders and stop large scale land-grabbing. Implementation of these policies should include significant investment in building the knowledge, capacity of and legal support for communities on the issue of land tenure.

7. Increase investment in inclusive agriculture research, development and extension advisory services



African leaders must prioritise research and development (R&D) and advisory services, committing at least 4% of agriculture budgets to R&D. Farming advisory and training (or 'extension') services can be vital in providing and sharing information on ways to improve farm productivity. There is need to reorient agricultural research services to ensure these are driven by the imperative to increase food and nutrition security and improve livelihoods and are relevant for women producers. Particular attention should be given to addressing the loss of biodiversity, soil degradation, water pollution and climate change associated with intensified agriculture by prioritising agro-ecological approaches which privilege traditional knowledge.

Significant investments should be made in training extension agents, including women, to ensure that advice and training is provided on the issues that matter to small-scale producers. Top-down approaches to R&D must cease and governments should develop mechanisms to ensure the broad participation of farmers' groups in research design and implementation and to ensure they are based on the real needs of farmers. Research institutions must have measurable targets established by local- and country-level needs assessments. They must support research partnerships involving collaboration among poor farming communities, extension services, and agricultural scientists.

Research can develop improved seed varieties, promote ecological agricultural practices to increase resilience and yields, promote staple crops or develop equipment to save labour time. For every one per cent increase in yields resulting from investments in agricultural research in Africa, two million Africans can be lifted out of poverty. A starting point should be CAADP mandating governments to review the needs of small-scale producers in labour-saving technologies, agro-ecological approaches, and staple crops.

8. Foster access to markets for small-scale farmers, investment in small-scale farming, and responsible private sector investments



Creating incentives for small-scale farmers and processors as well as other private sector companies to invest in African agri-food markets can create well-paying entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for youth and women as well as access to new markets for farmers to sell their crops. In order to realise the benefits of increased coordination and activity along the value chain, public investment must be made in areas such as hard infrastructure and essential knowledge and information services. Farmers need reliable access to new markets,

meaning investment in the support services that will increase their competitiveness. Thus African leaders must ensure that public investment is directed towards important public goods beyond the Ministry of Agriculture budget, such as rural road network improvement, power generation, water-harvesting and irrigation schemes that reach small-scale farmers.

Governments should recognise and strengthen the local and informal markets which small-scale producers depend upon, including through better local storage facilities, infrastructure tailored to local markets, and localised processing facilities, allowing smallholders to take advantage of better market prices. Governments should also recognise and support the development of cooperatives and farming networks to improve small-scale producers negotiating power, as well as the clustering of smallholder farmers to facilitate economies of scale in input purchase, value-addition, marketing and information sharing within the small-scale farming sector. Strengthening and expanding regional or African bilateral trade agreements could harness the substantial activity of local and regional markets. Domestic agricultural markets in Africa are valued at \$50 billion per year compared to \$16.6 billion for traditional agricultural export markets. It is vital that CAADP prioritises and incentivises the implementation of regional and continental trade agreements, with particular emphasis on how they will target and benefit small-scale producers.

A comprehensive approach to improving agricultural productivity and increasing the food supply in Africa must take into account the dramatic waste that accrues across the entire food chain. Post-harvest losses of grains alone account for 10-20% of waste. Given the complexity and diversity of post-harvest loss having relevant, standardized data available for policymaking is paramount. Advances in information and communication technology can be leveraged to collect this data. Skills training and better storage facilities for small-scale farmers harvests are also crucial, as are better access to processing centres.



9. Integrate sustainability and climate resilience into national agriculture plans

African governments should incorporate sustainability, climate resilience and agro-ecology into their agriculture sector strategies and develop recommendations for achieving this. Governments need to step up investments in sustainable agriculture and develop a national strategy for encouraging larger number of farmers to practice agro-ecological farming approaches, where appropriate, that reduce dependence on chemical inputs and increase biodiversity, while ensuring sustainable returns.

Sustainability plans should describe the kind of agriculture and food systems that benefit communities, small-scale food producers, the environment and emphasize a range of approaches, including the development of drought and flood-tolerant crops, robust extension services, weather information and early warning systems, intercropping, on-farm compost production,

mixed farming systems (livestock, crops and trees), on-farm quality seed production, agroforestry, improved crop diversity, rainwater harvesting, integrated soil fertility management, and conservation agriculture. Agro-ecology is one important, reliable set of practices, among others, to protect yields in the face of climate change and should be supported significantly. The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), contains some of the most complete and authoritative sets of policy options to strengthen the productivity and resilience of the world's food and agriculture systems, while prioritizing social equity and sustainability. We call upon the AU to endorse the recommendations of the IAASTD.

Farmers' knowledge of agro-ecosystems, seed management and resilience are critical to identifying challenges and building appropriate local to continental responses and must be supported by appropriate climate change related policies. Robust and strategic measures to address climate change should be mainstreamed and integrated into CAADP policy reform agenda and this should include views of smallholder farmers. The AU, national governments and the RECs should also put in place effective mechanisms to ensure that farmers organisations are effectively engaged in decision-making processes over climate change policy, positions in climate change negotiations and climate change financing. Climate change financing must be aimed at strengthening and capitalising upon the knowledge and initiatives of farmers themselves, and be available directly to these groups.

10. Put in place mechanisms for preventing and managing the recurrent food and nutrition crisis



Over the past decades the livelihoods of millions of people in Africa have been deteriorating due to recurrent and severe food crises. Malnutrition has been affecting millions of children with rates close to emergency thresholds. African governments must implement effective mechanisms for better management and prevention. These mechanisms should integrate effective early warning systems to monitor the vulnerability of people in order to anticipate food crisis and to put in place adapted responses. Given the difficult access to food for vulnerable people African governments have to develop and put in place adequate food reserves and social protection schemes integrated into agriculture policies and programmes.

African governments should better integrate nutrition goals into agriculture sector plans and begin measuring progress. This can be accomplished through increased collaboration with the Ministries of Health and other relevant ministries around nutrition goals. Countries should also support rigorous impact evaluations and studies to build a richer evidence base of what works with nutrition-sensitive approaches in agriculture. CAADP can then identify and disseminate guiding principles for implementing and scaling up these practices within CAADP countries, including through nutrition sensitive goals. Particular attention should be given to high nutritional impact of the dietary diversity provided by agro-ecological approaches.



¹ S. Benin and B. Yu. 2013, "Complying with the Maputo Declaration Target: Trends in public agricultural expenditures and implications for pursuit of optimal allocation of public agricultural spending. ReSAKSS Annual Trends and Outlook Report 2012". IFPRI. Washington, DC.

² In this document the term small-scale producers refers to farmers, pastoralists, fisher folk and forest-dwelling people

³ (FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11*).

⁴ Unpaid care work includes all those activities that go towards caring for a household such as cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, and caring for the ill, elderly and children when these activities are done by family members for no pay. Unpaid care work also includes voluntary community work. UN Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2000: UNIFEM Biennial Report*

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 ActionAid Rwanda
 ActionAid Uganda
 ActionAid Kenya
 ActionAid Ethiopia
 ActionAid Ghana
 Action Dev – Mauritania
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 AFE – Mauritania
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