



10 Joint Policy Recommendations:

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



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 agriculture¹. Only eight out of 54 countries in Africa have consistently reached the 10 per cent target². 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 hunger.

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”**.

African farmers, other small-scale producers³, alongside civil society, call on governments to ensure the following as they discuss agriculture and food security in 2014:



1. Increase quantity of agriculture spending



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, and to commit significant domestic resources to achieve this aim.

2. Improve quality of agriculture spending



Not all agriculture spending is sensitive to the diversity of small-scale producers, agro-ecological conditions, local needs and production systems. 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.

3. Improve policy making under CAADP to be more effective, mutually accountable, and participatory



CAADP has severely lacked the constructive involvement of the non-state actors (e.g. farmers, businesses, civil society and other non-state actors) in key decision making processes. The second generation of CAADP must have at its centre a reaffirmation of the founding CAADP principle of ‘inclusive participation’.

4. Improve transparency of agriculture spending



Ministries in the agriculture sector should be more accountable for results, including on poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, rather than outputs. Governments should invest more in adequate staff training and capacity building in the agriculture sector and invest in improving internal systems to track and disseminate information about public agriculture spending that is detailed and disaggregated.

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 Ibid.

³ In this document the term small-scale producers refers to farmers, pastoralists, fisher folk and forest-dwelling people.

5. Eliminate the gender and youth gap in agriculture



This wide gender gap in agriculture affects women's incomes, their children's opportunities, and the availability of food in their wider communities. Existing agricultural policies should be better attuned to the issues important to female farmers, and new policies should strengthen women's land rights, provide community-based child care, and promote the productivity of crops grown by women, among others. Governments should make agriculture more attractive to younger generations and offer specific funding and initiatives designed to attract young people.

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'



Small-scale producers need security over the land they use. 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.

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



Leaders should commit at least 4% of agriculture budgets to R&D. Advisory and training (or 'extension') services can be vital in providing and sharing information on ways to improve farm productivity. Agricultural research should be reoriented to ensure they are driven by the imperative to increase food and nutrition security and improve livelihoods, are relevant for women producers, and ensure the broad participation of small-scale producers in research design and implementation.

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



Governments should make investments in hard infrastructure, essential knowledge, and information services that increase the competitiveness of small scale producers, processors, and private sector companies to create entrepreneurship and employment opportunities as well as access to new markets. They should recognise and support local and informal markets, and strengthen and expand regional trade agreements.

9. Integrate sustainability and climate resilience into national agriculture plans



Governments should incorporate sustainability, climate resilience and agro-ecology into their agriculture sector strategies. They should increase investments in sustainable agriculture and develop a national strategy for encouraging more farmers to practice agro-ecological farming approaches that reduce dependence on chemical inputs where appropriate and increase biodiversity, while ensuring sustainable returns.

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



Governments must implement effective early warning systems to monitor the vulnerability of people in order to anticipate food crises and to put in place adapted responses, as well as effective social protection schemes and food reserves. They should also better integrate nutrition goals into agriculture sector plans and begin measuring progress through increased collaboration with the Ministries of Health and other relevant ministries around nutrition goals.