

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme:

Stewarding an African-Owned Green Revolution



By Richard Mkwandawire

For five decades an agricultural green revolution has eluded Africa. Our continent – one endowed with so much agricultural potential – remained an island of poverty in a sea of global prosperity. That all began to change in 2003, when African leaders signed the Maputo Declaration and endorsed

creation of the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a blueprint for addressing widespread policy and capacity constraints limiting the effectiveness of development assistance aimed at increasing agricultural growth and food security.

Ten years later, CAADP's vision of a homegrown African green revolution is alive and well. Governments remain committed to the goal of allocating 10% of their national budgets to agriculture, and to achieving at least 6% annual growth in the sector, a prerequisite for the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger across the continent.

CAADP is still considered the most ambitious and comprehensive agricultural reform initiative ever undertaken in Africa.

The Emergence of a New Spirit of Partnership

In the last decade, CAADP has pioneered a new way of doing business. African governments, civil society, development partners, and other major stakeholders increasingly work together, under African leadership, to grow Africa's agricultural sector. This profoundly different model of country-led development has significantly influenced how bilateral and multilateral donors provide support to African agriculture, and the approach is increasingly seen as a potential model for providing assistance to other sectors.

A new spirit of partnership is emerging, one that is embodied in regular and open dialogue, learning, and knowledge sharing, as well as increased accountability and transparency among donors, African governments, and a range of development organizations. This new spirit is now an important factor in fostering new agricultural development partnerships for the continent.

There has also been increased response by development partners to African voices and priorities as embodied in CAADP. Development



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partners and donors are speaking of the need to respond to African-led, and country-driven development priorities under the CAADP banner. The vision that was put forth 10 years ago, that growth would come from within, is materializing – development must be driven by Africa, and CAADP has provided the framework for an African-owned green revolution.

Over the past ten years, a number of countries have signed official CAADP Compacts, the first in 2007 (signed by Rwanda). Since then, 40 CAADP Compacts have been signed across Africa. The Compacts have been followed by the preparation of National CAADP Investment Plans and financing. There are now 28 Investment Plans in place, 10 are nearing completion, and 2 are pending development.

As of 2014, 15 countries have received funding from the World Bank-administered Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a multilateral trust fund that coordinates donor support for country-led agricultural and food security investments. This funding is in direct response to the country's completing their CAADP Investment Plans. Allocations to Africa constitute 62% of total GAFSP funds disbursed so far.

Building on Strong Foundations

CAADP has built solid foundations in the African agricultural space. Attention should now be on recruiting a wider constituency to drive change. Public institutions, including national governments, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordination Agency, and the African Union have played an important role in stewarding the development of CAADP country Compacts. However, if CAADP is to remain the "game changer" it has been in driving an African green revolution, these public institutions need to rededicate themselves to the vision and goals established in the 2003 Maputo Declaration.

Having said this, public institutions alone cannot be expected to catalyze the significant changes that are so badly needed in the agricultural sector. Private sector investment is needed for the longer-term success and sustainability of agricultural transformation in Africa.

Over the next decade, CAADP will need to seek ways to increase the availability of affordable financing for the agricultural sector. There is a growing appetite for access to cheaper sources of financing for agribusiness development, and commercial banks have not so far been able to provide tailored financial support to smallholder farmers at the scale needed.

Governments need to explore new innovative financing mechanisms in support of agriculture value chain development. This financing, however, has to be couched within the context of CAADP's commitment of addressing fundamental barriers to creating country-specific enabling environments. Institutional reforms should focus on private sector-led agricultural growth, fostering inter- and intra-regional trade, land administration and tenure, and on fostering private sector participation in needed research and extension services.

The private sector needs to take center stage. Only by gearing up to effectively engage with and draw on the strength of relevant private companies will CAADP be able to encourage the reforms in regional and national policies needed to stimulate sustainable agricultural growth and food security. Non-state actors, working with CAADP, have an essential role to play in driving reforms.

The Year of Agriculture and Food Security

In part as recognition of CAADP's 10th anniversary, the African Union has declared 2014 to be "The Year of Agriculture and Food Security". CAADP has laid the groundwork for the development of a strong, robust, agriculture-led growth agenda for Africa. Wheels need to be put in motion; governments, development partners, NGOs, private sector organizations, and regional communities all need to do their part. To accomplish CAADP's vision of reducing extreme poverty in Africa, stakeholders need to join together, bringing their specific strengths to bear on different constraints to growth.

For example, the African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP) is working with private sector partners to accelerate growth in the agricultural sector by increasing the capacity of private entrepreneurs (including commercial and smallholder farmers) to meet the increasingly complex quality and logistic requirements of markets.

AFAP acknowledges the need for taking a holistic approach to the provision of all agri-input supplies, improving output markets, and creating pro-market policies and regulations. The development of viable fertilizer markets will unquestionably need to be given special attention. In many parts of Africa, increased fertilizer use and usage is constrained by poorly functioning input and output markets. The disappointing performance of input markets is due to many different factors that manifest themselves in the form of weak demand for inputs and the irregular and costly supply of them.

If CAADP is to continue to wave its well-earned flag as an African-owned and driven platform for transforming African agriculture, it must continue to advocate for greater investment in agriculture by African governments – even as it pushes for greater participation and investment from private sector actors. Governments need to develop and implement innovative mechanisms to finance the growth of agriculture. It is time realize that the African agricultural sector has the potential not only to feed Africa, but to help feed a growing global population.

CAADP has emerged as a distinctly effective model for facilitating country-led development. It is influencing how bilateral and multilateral donors provide assistance for African agriculture, and is now perceived as a potential model for providing assistance to other sectors. As CAADP embarks on its next decade, it should pay special attention to ensuring that initiatives on the ground continue to be conceived and driven by and for Africa.