

Communique

Africa Food Security Leadership Dialogue

August 5, 2019

The Africa Food Security Leadership Dialogue aims to strengthen the coordination of development partners and regional efforts to support countries to accelerate progress towards their collective food and nutrition security goals as envisioned in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). The Dialogue is convened and coordinated through a partnership of the Africa Union (AU) with four multilateral agencies – the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Dialogue is proceeding in a series of meetings to convene senior officials and leaders of key organizations that are supporting major food security programs in Africa. The core participants are high-level decision makers and leading technical subject matter specialists in African and international organizations, such as the AU, UN Agencies, CGIAR, AfDB, World Bank, agricultural science organizations, bilateral development partners, and private sector representatives.

This Communique is intended firstly, to formalize the commitments of the World Bank, FAO, AfDB, and the IFAD to a new way of working jointly to address food and nutrition security and achieve impacts that are much larger than what the individual organizations could offer working separately. This strengthened collaborative partnership will be the core nucleus in support of the wider partnership with the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU Member States, and the regional and international organizations that collaborate with the development partners across Africa. The multi-lateral development partners and the AU will become the core signatories to the Communique, which will then be open for signing by regional and international organizations. AU Member States and the RECs will be invited to endorse or witness the Communique. Endorsement of the Communique would be an affirmation of its principles and commitment to participate in processes for its operationalization.

1. Preamble

We, as development partners and organizations supporting and implementing major food security programs in Africa, have assembled here on 5th of August 2019 for an Africa Food Security Leadership Dialogue (AFSLD) to jointly commit to a new way of working together to support countries that wish to address the urgent food security situation. We recognize that while previous efforts of working together have generated results, we can achieve impacts at scale if we galvanize collective efforts towards critical interventions. We recognize the need to coordinate better at the country and regional levels, and to scale-up the strong forms of coordination that have worked quite well, for example co-financing and parallel-financing of agricultural investment projects and co-creation of knowledge through research.

1.1. Problem statement

Africa is the most food insecure region with about 256 million people facing undernutrition in 2018. The situation is getting worse in many parts of the continent because of the negative effects of climate change on agricultural productivity, natural resources degradation, rapid population growth, increasing fragility and insecurity, and economic stagnation. The number of undernourished people in most sub-regions has been on the rise again since 2014 and if this trend continues the hard-won gains of previous years will be lost.

Children and women tend to be more affected. Undernutrition of children has a profound impact on their ability to grow, learn, and thrive. It leads to poor school performance, low adult wages, lost productivity and increased risk of nutrition-related chronic diseases as adults. Obesity rates are also rapidly increasing. The rising levels of malnutrition can cause enormous loss of human capital, slowing economic development for decades.

The increase of hunger in Africa is linked to the impacts of climate change and conflict. Extreme weather events such as droughts and floods have become more frequent and prolonged, leading to diminished productive capacity of the land and loss of natural capital. In addition to extreme weather effects, farmers face several significant climate risks, especially in rainfed agriculture and pastoral production systems. The net effect is that per-capita food production is declining, at a time when population is rapidly growing, making food less available and accessible to a significant portion of the population.

1.2. What is Needed

All people, at all times, must have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The food security agenda begins with adapting Africa's agriculture and food systems to climate change to sustainably increase productivity, diversify production, enhance resilience, reduce food loss and waste, and improve management of land, soil, water and biodiversity. More nutritious food will become available when productivity is increased sustainably, production is diversified, and food loss and waste is reduced. Food should be accessible to everyone. It must also be handled and utilized properly to provide safe and healthy diets for everybody, especially women of child-bearing age and children's first 1,000 days. The provision of healthy diets requires an integrated approach that also includes sustainable land management practices to maintain healthy soils, investing in seed systems that provide farmers with healthy seeds and planting materials, and enforcement of standards on agro-chemicals to prevent contamination from hazardous elements.

Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) is the key to adapting Africa's agriculture and food systems to climate change. Climate-smart agricultural research must be combined with effective dissemination mechanisms and aim at integrated approaches across sectors, assessing synergies and trade-offs to develop technologies that are resilient to climate change and provide farmers and pastoralists with agroecological practices for sustainable management of soil, land, forest, water and biodiversity. Climate change is increasingly exacerbating conflict and fragility. The development agenda for fragile and conflict-affected areas should prioritize restoring degraded lands, minimizing competition over natural resources, increasing food availability to mitigate conflicts, and building resilient food systems.

1.3. Statement of the overall intent

We remain committed to the CAADP and its goal to eradicate hunger by 2025. We remain committed to all other CAADP goals, the Malabo Declaration, AU Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the specific climate resilience and low-carbon development plans and biodiversity strategies of AU Member States.

1.4. Principles for Joint Action

The AFSLD will be guided by a clear set of principles to inform and guide the collaboration as follows:

1. Ensuring that the AFSLD adds value and does not duplicate or displace existing platforms. Coherence with existing policy frameworks will be a starting point to ensure efforts build on existing platforms and plans in the countries and the region;
2. Work within a food systems framework to adapt Africa's agriculture to climate change and sustainably increase productivity diversify production, enhance resilience, reduce food loss and waste, and improve management of land, soil, water and biodiversity;
3. An understanding that the private sector is paramount in achieving food security and good nutrition at scale. Our efforts cannot succeed without catalyzing and maximizing private sector investments to transform smallholder agriculture and optimize the performance of sustainable agriculture value chains, whether local, national or regional;
4. An understanding that the public sector should provide a conducive policy and regulatory framework for the private sector to invest in climate-smart agriculture, incentivize behavior at industry and household levels to promote food safety and proper utilization of food, and invest in public goods that crowd-in and de-risk private investments;
5. Effective coordination amongst development partners, technical research, and delivery organizations in the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring of programs through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Effective coordination will help reduce the transaction costs to governments in engaging with multiple stakeholders and enable partners to engage in forums with one voice.

2. Call for Action

We, the partners assembled at this Africa Food Security Leadership Dialogue, pledge to build on existing efforts and jointly address the deteriorating food security situation in Africa to generate sustainable impact at scale and achieve results that are beyond the reach of any one agency or organization. Our actions will focus on collaboration at the technical, institutional and policy domains.

A. Technical Level

We aim to achieve three goals. The first is to adapt Africa's agriculture to climate change by supporting sustainable food systems that are resilient to shocks driven by climate change, provide healthy diets for all, reduce food loss and waste, and protect the environment and natural resources. The second goal is to expand farmers access to climate-smart technologies and formal markets for food commodities and products. The third goal is to support investments in agribusiness and build effective food systems that can mitigate hunger and provide inclusive income and livelihood opportunities. Our support in fragile and conflict-affected areas would be tailored to minimize competition over natural resources, increase the capacity of local institutions, and build resilient food systems.

Our specific actions will aim to:

1. Maximize the scale economies in agricultural research by scaling-up investments in regional Climate-Smart Agriculture research programs and collective action to address transboundary challenges and generate climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive technologies, innovations, and management practices;
2. Build robust supply chains and dissemination mechanisms for agricultural inputs, crop varieties, and livestock breeds that are resilient to climate change and enhance ecosystem services from forests, grasslands and aquatic ecosystems to sustainably increase agricultural productivity and reduce food loss and waste;
3. Support co-generation of knowledge between researchers and farmers so that local challenges can be addressed in a demand-driven and knowledge intensive manner, local actors have the power to develop and implement local adaptation solutions, and innovations can be disseminated effectively to improve sustainability of the agriculture and food systems;

4. Build infrastructure, institutions, and technical capacities to remove barriers that prevent smallholder farmers from adopting improved technologies and accessing skills and knowledge;
5. Support robust resilience strategies for the conflict and fragility hotspots, including through adequate buffer stocks to mitigate the effects of shocks and facilitate recovery, and strengthening of linkages with emergency preparedness and early warning and response mechanisms to protect livelihoods with early and appropriate responses to shocks;
6. Embrace science and support the scaling-out of novel scientific discoveries to adapt agriculture to climate change, sustainably increase production, provide safe and nutritious food, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve the logistics, transportability, and storability of food;
7. Support investments to de-risk the food system. At the production level, create incentives for farmers to invest in climate-smart agriculture technologies, innovations, and management practices. In addition, support efforts to introduce innovative risk management solutions to help maximize private-sector investments in agricultural value chains;
8. Address the peculiar structural constraints faced by women and youth in accessing factors of agricultural production and services. In addition, equip the women and youth with skills for them to become competitive entrepreneurs and innovators in the food system, including providing post-harvest management services, value addition, and delivering food to consumers;
9. Harness digital technologies to monitor climate risks and support climate-informed decision making in the food systems. In addition, utilize digital technologies to increase food availability and accessibility by reducing transaction costs, increase efficiency in the use of resources for agricultural production, increase access to finance for value chain actors, reduce price dispersion across markets and connect demand with supply, and increase food safety and utilization by enabling traceability and monitoring hazards;

B. Institutional Level

Our goal is to deepen collaboration with AU, RECs, national governments, the private sector, non-state actors, and the science and knowledge communities. Effective collaboration will help harmonize approaches and outputs, reduce duplication, and increase impact at scale.

Our actions will aim to:

1. Strengthen and operationalize country investment plans to prioritize investments that adapt agriculture to climate change, increase food availability and accessibility, and reduce food loss and waste;
2. Using a common voice, advocate for greater integration, collaboration and alignment to AU, RECs, national governments, the private sector, non-state actors, farmer producers' associations, fishers, forest dependent organizations, and the science and knowledge communities;
3. Facilitate the operationalization of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) to promote movement of agricultural goods and services across national boundaries and enable the regional integration of markets for food commodities, knowledge, and technologies;
4. Establish and strengthen mechanisms to scale-up strong forms of collaboration among the AFSLD partners at the country level and regionally;
5. Develop innovative and inclusive financing instruments with the support of all relevant stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, and the private sector.

C. Policy Level

Our goal is to support AU Member States to domesticate the Malabo Declaration and align national agricultural policies with climate change adaptation targets in their Nationally Determined Contributions

(NDC) and support implementation of climate-smart policies and programs for food and nutrition security.

We will support policies that aim to:

1. Enable the private sector to invest and accelerate the development and dissemination of climate-smart agriculture technologies and management practices, including through recognition of intellectual property rights in seeds and breeds, and harmonization/mutual recognition of protocols for testing and releasing varieties across countries;
2. Provide incentives for smallholder farmers to access and adopt climate smart technologies, innovations and management practices as part of the climate adaptation agenda;
3. Provide adequate buffer stocks to mitigate the effects of climatic, economic, and conflict-related shocks on food security, especially in the conflict and fragility hotspots;
4. Mainstream biodiversity and nature-based solutions in the agriculture sectors to promote adaptation and build the resilience of agriculture and food systems to climate change;
5. Generate evidence to enable evidence-based decision making, improve capacity for policy analysis, and improve monitoring of food security policies and programs;
6. Revitalize education systems to increase investments in skills on climate-smart agriculture and digital transformation of the food system across agricultural education and training institutions;
7. Create incentives for stronger regional integration of markets for agricultural commodities and technologies to enable farmers to access regional markets based on open, transparent and rule-based trade.

3. Agreements

We, the signatories of the AFSLD agree to:

1. Support urgent action to adapt Africa's agriculture to climate change; eradicate hunger and malnutrition; promote resilient, efficient and inclusive food systems; and exploit the potential of food systems to drive poverty reduction and create jobs in agricultural value chains for a rapidly growing youth population. To these ends, we emphasize the need to implement the commitments on agriculture and food security espoused in the Malabo Declaration, the CAADP Results Framework (2015-2025), Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the climate resilience and low-carbon development plans of AU Member States;
2. Leverage science and digital technologies to adapt agriculture and food systems to climate change and create incentives for the private sector to invest in climate-smart agriculture and food systems that meet the dietary needs of the growing populations;
3. Support the existing CAADP mutual accountability framework through regional, sub-regional, and national platforms, including strengthening the Donor Agriculture Sector Working Groups where they exist and facilitating their establishment where they don't exist;
4. Scale-up strong forms of collaboration among partners, including joint planning and programming, co-financing and parallel-financing, joint analytical and advisory activities, and joint communication on AFSLD initiatives to enable partners to speak with one voice;
5. Commit financial and technical support that is commensurate to the size of the food security challenge, use the convening power of AFSLD partners to leverage financing for adaptation of Africa's agriculture and food systems to climate change, and conduct regular joint portfolio reviews to assess progress on the agreed technical, institutional, and policy actions.
6. To ensure the realization of the goals of this Communique, the core participants commit to elaborating a plan of action or platform for engagement.

Done and signed in Kigali, Rwanda on 5th August, 2019



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