

2017 African Caucus

Economic Transformation and Job Creation: A focus on Agriculture

Technologies for Agricultural Development and Climate Smart Agriculture

Concept Note

August 3, 2017

For the sustainable development and economic transformation that Africa envisages under Agenda 2063, Africa must harness its vast arable land, renewable fresh water resources, and the weather systems and seasons, to realize its agricultural potential. It must improve productivity, mitigate the risks of climate change, and manage natural resources including water and land for posterity. Efforts should be geared to ensuring food security for Africans, i.e. people having easy access to abundant, affordable, nutritious, and safe food for active and healthy lives; raising incomes and reducing poverty especially in the rural areas where the majority of the farmers and poor people live; and contributing to poverty reduction and economic development.

Investment in agriculture technology, including irrigation to ensure stability of water resources, mechanization of activities and farming methods, and high yield seeds and animal breeds, as well as the application of fertilizers will be critical to increase yields and productivity of African agriculture. Similarly, prudent management of the natural resources including water and land would contribute to sustained high quality and quantity output, but also to the reduction of the effects of climate change, and conservation of and prevention of further degradation of the environment. In some communities, it would be important to address land tenure systems, rights to water sources, and soil fertility. Care must also be taken to ensure that increased irrigation does not deplete the water sources, especially in light of continued population growth and fast urbanization, declining groundwater supplies and water quality issues, and the implication for climate change.

Agriculture is a major part of the climate change challenge, contributing to the greenhouse emissions, but suffering from its effects. This underscores the urgent need to adopt and mainstream climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices in Africa into the government policy, expenditure, and planning frameworks. CSA addresses the interlinked challenges of food security and climate change, with the view to increase agricultural productivity and raise incomes, enhance the resilience of farmers' lives and livelihoods, and reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs). CSA, therefore, focuses on production systems and institutions that would best respond to climate change challenges, and to enhanced food security, in a sustainable manner.

The panelists may consider addressing the following:

1. General
 - a. What is the role for private sector investment? Is there scope for public private partnerships?

- b. What is the ideal institutional framework? Where is Africa compared to the ideal?
 - c. How can Africa leapfrog given the urgent need for solutions? What are some of the low hanging fruits that Africa can harvest? What actions should be taken in the short, medium, and long term?
 - d. How can the international community support capacity building for research and development?
2. Climate Smart Agriculture
- a. How can the international community support Africa to adapt CSA practices?
 - b. What policies should Governments put in place to incentivize the adoption of CSA in Africa?
3. Technology
- a. How would Africa balance the high unemployment rates and agriculture dependent population with the increased use of technology?
 - b. How can Africa step up mechanization in Africa? What are the challenges? How affordable is it?
 - c. In the context of South-South cooperation and learning, which experiences and technologies can be shared with Africa?