Strategic Priorities for Agricultural Development in Eastern and Central Africa

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Foreword

In countries that are heavily dependent on agriculture for employment and income, underperformance is not only untenable but also potentially explosive. This is the case in the countries of eastern and central Africa—Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda—where tens of millions of people face ongoing poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. This report, the result of a two-year collaboration between the International Food Policy Research Institute and the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa, identifies how eastern and central African countries can stimulate agricultural growth to address these dire circumstances.

The findings suggest that improved agricultural performance will require investments that foster productivity growth, strengthen markets, improve rural linkages between the agricultural and nonagricultural sectors, and promote regional cooperation. Of particular interest is the identification of the most performance-enhancing commodity subsectors, in an economy-wide setting, and the “agricultural development domain” singled out as most promising for targeted investment.

These results and their implications are being widely discussed and debated in the countries of eastern and central Africa, in many cases shaping policy and investment strategies. We hope that the findings, made available through this report, will elicit similar responses in other regions.

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