2009 FANRPAN Policy Dialogue Issues - The True Contribution of Agriculture to Economic Growth

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Mozambique President: Recipient of the 2009 FANRPAN Food Security Policy Leadership Award

The President of Mozambique, His Excellency, Armando Emílio Guebuza, is the recipient of the 2009 FANRPAN Food Security Policy Leadership Award for spearheading his country’s Green Revolution.

The Award certificate and trophy were presented at a special ceremony by the Chairman of the FANRPAN Board of Governors and Secretary-General of COMESA, Hon. Sindiso Ngwenya, during the FANRPAN 2009 Regional Policy Dialogue held in Mozambique.

The Prime Minister of Mozambique, H.E. Luisa Diogo, accepted the Award on behalf of President Guebuza, noting that it reinforced Mozambique’s resolve to put in practice the Rome Declaration on World Food Security by
‘reaffirming the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food’. This is consistent with the universal right of access to adequate food and the fundamental human right of everyone to be free from hunger.

The FANRPAN Award - whose inaugural winner was the President of Malawi, H.E. Dr Bingu wa Mutharika - recognises individuals or organizations that have made effective and evident contributions towards food security and poverty alleviation in the region. The Award is given annually to an organization, or person demonstrating excellence in promoting food security in Southern Africa through visionary leadership, focused policies and personal initiative.

Mozambique has made huge progress on ensuring the political, social and economic environment to eliminate poverty and hunger. In the last five years, the level of poverty decreased by 15%, testifying to President Guebuza's efforts to address hunger and malnutrition in Mozambique.

In the citation, FANRPAN CEO, Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda highlighted that Southern Africa is neither poor nor incapable of feeding itself, but lacked fresh initiatives which empowered, encouraged and supported efforts to promote food security, policy development and poverty alleviation. As part of the Award, the CEO announced benchmarks against which the Mozambican government would be evaluated.

These include increased: (i) Government budgetary allocation to agriculture in line with CAADP's call for at least 10 percent investment in agriculture, (ii) Land under irrigation, given Mozambique's 3.3 million hectares with potential for irrigation and abundant water resources, (iii) The uptake of fertilizer usage by smallholder farmers and (iv) Uptake of improved seed, and (v) The empowerment of women in agribusiness.

In Mozambique, agriculture is essential for economic growth, poverty reduction and food security. This sector employs more than 80 percent of the labour force and generates 25 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Under the leadership of H.E. President Guebuza, the Government of Mozambique approved the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (ESAN II), which includes food security as a human right. The Government also approved the Action Plan for Food Production which is instrumental in reducing the food deficit of main staple foods in Mozambique from 2008 to 2011.

More than 220 delegates from four continents representing 28 countries attended the 2009 FANRPAN multi-stakeholder regional policy dialogue whose theme was “True Contribution of Agriculture to Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction in Southern African Countries”.

The unclear and undervalued perception of agriculture is in contrast with the high political importance attached to the sector in the developed countries. In these countries, policymakers have a better understanding of the various economic and non-economic roles which a strong agricultural sector can play.

The current agriculture statistics in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries focus on the primary production of crops and livestock only. They do not capture the backward and forward linkages of agriculture with other sectors such as domestic and external trade, industry, transport, tourism, infrastructure, energy, banking and various services.

If those linkages were accounted for, the contribution of agriculture to the economy would be much higher than that currently reflected by the official statistics. This would make it clear that a strong agricultural sector is a powerful leverage for the whole economic and social development. Conversely, the underdevelopment of the agricultural sector in most SADC countries constrains the development of other sectors of the economy. Similarly, it does not allow for the implementation of any meaningful poverty reduction policies either in the rural or in the urban areas.

Dialogue Delegates Call for Increased Investment to Develop Agriculture

Delegates to the 2009 Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) Regional Policy Dialogue endorsed the critical role agriculture plays in Africa's economic development and called for increased government investment in the sector to promote food production.

“By acknowledging agriculture as the key to Africa's development and providing the sector with the necessary enabling policies and resources, governments should position themselves to address priorities for action on the continent’s most pressing issues, such as food insecurity and climate change,” delegates said in
one of 25 recommendations of the multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.

The pronouncement by the scientific community of climate change as the most significant global threat of the 21st century was acknowledged by delegates. Available data indicates that Africa’s economy, environment, livelihoods and agriculture are already under threat. About two-thirds of Africa’s rural poor live in ecologically vulnerable areas.

Of this group, a high proportion lives on dry lands with 250 million already being directly affected by desertification and drought.

Delegates said FANRPAN, through coordinated policies and partnerships with other sectors and institutions, should adopt the Integrated Agriculture for Development (IAR4D) paradigm to enable farmers to gain access to research and extension services, functional and transparent markets for actions on the continent’s most pressing issues such as food security, nutrition security and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Agriculture is the most important source of livelihood throughout Africa, accounting for more than 70% of total employment of which 65% are women farmers. Participants acknowledged the role women farmers played in African agricultural production. Involving women in the development of agricultural policies which impact on them was vital, as well as helping them access realigned markets.

One of the highlights of the regional dialogue was the launch of a three-year FANRPAN pilot project, “Women Accessing Realigned Markets” (WARM). The project funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Agricultural Development Initiative, seeks to strengthen women farmers’ ability to advocate for appropriate agricultural policies and programmes. The goal is for women farmers to have access to the tools that help them farm more successfully, such as access to credit and better seeds, by ensuring that local and national policies and services address their needs using an innovative tool, Theatre for Policy Advocacy.

The dialogue discussed specific problems faced by smallholder farmers in Africa which hindered their productivity. These included limited access to inputs, technology, and credit and market information, as well as insecure rights to land and water. Government initiatives from the region have empowered smallholder farmers by helping them access inputs and outputs from the private sector. Farmers lacked opportunities to share experiences and articulate their needs to policy makers and researchers. It was therefore recommended that FANRPAN should create opportunities for peer learning between farmers in the region.

In addition, delegates called for governments to ensure national budget allocations reflected agriculture’s true contribution, urging FANRPAN to develop measurement tools to enable governments to support agriculture in budget allocations. In particular, participants appreciated the Social Accounting Matrix methodology used in the Caribbean. This methodology showed that when backward and forward linkages are taken into account, the true contribution of agriculture to the GDP increased about seven fold.

While 94% of agriculture in East and Southern Africa was rain fed, delegates noted that with an estimated 596.7 million hectares suitable for irrigation, only 12.6 million hectares, or 2% of the potential total were currently irrigated in the region. Delegates underscored the need for planning processes to take proper cognisance of the risks of water shortage or droughts. For example, in the Limpopo basin study smallholder farmers were noted to be more vulnerable to water shortages than their highly commercialized counterparts.

The efficient management of water resources required substantial investment in infrastructure and relevant technologies which would help farmers better cope with seasonal variations in rainfall and improve the water productivity across the region.
“Climate change adaptation requires immediate and accelerated investment in climate-friendly technologies such as conservation farming,” delegates said in a discussion on climate change adding that, “Africa’s vast forests and agricultural lands offer potential opportunities for carbon sequestration. Global mitigation efforts should recognize Africa’s unexploited potential and incorporate Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and Agriculture, Forestry, and Other sustainable Land Use (AFOLU) in global protocols.”

Partnerships Key to Mozambique’s Green Revolution

Partnerships with key stakeholders can help boost Mozambique’s agricultural revolution, said Prof. Firmino Mucavele, who presented a keynote address on the “True contribution of Agriculture to the Economy in Mozambique” during the 2009 FANRPAN regional Policy Dialogue.

In his address, Prof. Mucavele emphasized the non economic roles of agriculture as well as its true contribution to economic development in Mozambique. Prof. Mucavele argued that agriculture was not receiving the right amount of resources despite the rhetoric on its importance to national development.

Agriculture in Mozambique was dominated by 3.2 million small scale farmers producing mostly for household consumption. They face challenges of limited access to credit due to absence of rural banking infrastructure, limited ability to generate savings and food security, low productivity, post harvest losses due to poor road network, lack of insurance, lack of access to input and output markets and lack of access to modern technology. As a result, farmers in Mozambique were caught in a cycle of poverty which could only be broken through agricultural development.

Agriculture is the largest employer in the country. For example, cashew nut trade alone employed over 20 000 people. Despite the increase of cultivated area from 86/2007, the yields were still low.

Prof. Mucavele said education was essential for all nationals and that the universities had a duty to develop new crops adapted to different environments. He called for increased partnerships between government civil society, farmers and business to ensure food security.

"Innovations in agriculture should move at the pace of the farmers as opposed to imposing them on the farmers. Innovations must also respond to the needs of the farmers”, said Prof. Mucavele.

Speaking on the link between agriculture and poverty reduction, Prof. Mucavele stated that farmers were among the poor. Investment in agriculture would trigger development in other sectors through backward and forward linkages and spill over effects. A comprehensive model incorporating water, policy, capacity building, climate change, research, information, would lead to food security thereby alleviating poverty. There was need to invest in research in particular that related to understanding climate change as well as build capacity for policy analysis and formulation.

Prof. Mucavele outlined the Mozambique government development initiatives and programmes to increase food production. The programmes were linked to poverty reduction in recognition of the fact that agriculture was a key intervention in poverty reduction. Among the initiatives was the sector wide programme on agriculture which included strengthening stakeholder voices, donor coordination, capacity building for operational and research staff and building linkages among the various actors in agriculture and support to farmers with inputs. This was followed by the programme for Eradication of Absolute Poverty (PARPA) in 2000. In 2007 the government adopted the Rural Development Strategy which sought to increase competitiveness and productivity, promote management of natural resources and sustainable development as well as increase human capital in the sector.

Mozambique’s Green-Revolution-approach was using science to improve agricultural productivity. The Green revolution strategy seeks to increase smallholder farmer productivity by improving their access to market information, new technologies, training and financial services.
Madame Celina Cossa Scoops FANRPAN 'Civil Society Policy Movers and Shakers' Award

Ms Cossa was selected for the Award for her innovative, creativeness and leadership in forming the General Union Cooperatives (UCG) which has benefited women farmers in Mozambique. UCG has more than 10 000 members, 95 percent of whom are women who produce food for members and their families with the surplus sold in markets in the capital, Maputo.

FANRPAN CEO, Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda said the Award for Civil Society Policy Movers and Shakers was introduced in 2009 to recognize the contribution of civil society to policy advocacy and efforts in creating a food secure Southern Africa.

"Civil Society are a critical partner in policy advocacy and implementation, hence this award which is being presented for the first time following a resolution by the FANRPAN Board to honour Africa’s policy movers and shakers,” Dr Sibanda said adding that, “Ms Cossa was nominated by her country as a role model and inspiration for rallying women to improve food security from the household level.”

The Award, which included a trophy, a signed certificate and prizes, was presented to Ms Cossa at a special ceremony during the FANRPAN Stakeholders Regional Policy Dialogue held in Maputo from 31 August to 4 September 2009. In accepting, the Award, Ms Cossa paid tribute to the government of Mozambique and to the visionary members of the UGC.

A former school teacher by training, Ms Cossa, had a vision for food security in her country and empowering the poorest people, most of whom are women. She started small cooperative groups of women growing vegetables to supplement family income. Initially some were reluctant to join but soon realised her vision. From a network of six cooperatives around Maputo these soon increased to more than 224. The vegetable farming soon expanded into other commercial enterprises such as poultry production and marketing, credit, insurance, industry, and construction. The ventures were complemented with training programmes to give women accounting, banking and project management skills.

Isabelle Coche, representing Crop Life International, a sponsor of the FANRPAN Civil Society Policy Movers and Shakers Award, said UCG provided an inspirational example of how cooperatives can help women farmers improve their livelihoods. She said women represent up to 70% of farmers in many African countries, and recognizing their role and empowering them is essential for ensuring that development through agriculture is sustainable. CropLife International will sponsor Ms Cossa on a tour during which she will speak about the work of her organisation in empowering women in food security.
FANRPAN Partners Honoured

FANRPAN has honoured four of its partners who have supported it for five years and more presenting them with engraved trophies and signed certificates during a special ceremony at the 2009 regional policy dialogue held in the Mozambican capital, Maputo.

Presenting the tributes, FANRPAN Chairman, Mr Sindiso Ngwenya, acknowledged the support, counsel and encouragement of CTA, SADC, USAID and IFPRI in the work of the network.

“Partnerships are vital for the exchange of ideas, information and above all experiences. This is to say we value our partnership and look forward to many years of fruitful partnerships,” Mr Ngwenya said.

USAID have partnered with FANRPAN since 2001 while the CTA has partnered with FANRPAN and has continued providing technical assistance since 2003. To date, FANRPAN has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with 47 international partners, of which seven were signed in 2009 and these include; Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF); University of Venda, World Vision International, African Network for Agriculture, Agro forestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE); Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); Oxfam America and Coordinating Assembly of NGOs (CANGO). Recognition tokens were awarded to partnerships of over 5 years continuous service. CTA was represented by Jose Fonseca and USAID was represented by Ms Cecilia Khupe.
An Endorsement of FANRPAN’s Programmes

While FANRPAN is working to secure core funding to support the regional and national secretariats, it has welcomed new donors for its programmes.

FANRPAN is at an advanced stage of finalising a three and a half year grant with the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and recently signed an agreement with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for capacitating women farmers under the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM), project launched at the regional policy dialogue.

Chairman of the FANRPAN Board of Governors, Hon. Sindiso Ngwenya, told the 2009 Annual General Meeting of stakeholders that the Norwegian Government had provided a grant for the network to carry the message on the inclusion of agriculture in climate change text to Copenhagen.

“The Norwegians are funding FANRPAN through COMESA and I hope we can facilitate the same arrangements with other partners such as DFID, CIDA and other development agents,” Hon. Ngwenya said. “I am proud to say as secretary general of COMESA I wish to leave an indelible mark as being a champion of advocating for strengthening the capacity of sub-regional bodies such as FANRPAN, SACAU, EAAF, ASARECA and RUFORUM to serve regional economic communities.”

In 2009, FANRPAN was involved in over 40 engagements. These consisted of 17 engagements at regional level, including meetings with the President of Malawi, H.E Bingu wa Mutharika and the Malawi ministry of agriculture officials; attending project and partner meetings, including the RUFORUM Ministerial meeting and partner activities. The secretariat attended 15 continental engagements and these included the World Bank/NEPAD Work Programme of the UN Secretary-General’s High Level Task Force on Food Security, the Post Poznan ACCID feedback and Training Workshop, various COMESA Climate workshops, the AGRA Regional Markets Conference, the CAADP Partnership Platform Meeting, the Regional Conservation Agriculture Tour, AMCEN, and the 13th AU Summit, 18th Ordinary Session.

Media, a Key Partner in Policy Advocacy

In an important development for FANRPAN, for the first time a strong media delegation attended the 2009 regional policy dialogue following a partnership between FANRPAN and the Inter Press Service (IPS). A total of 15 journalists from 12 countries were trained in covering food, agriculture and natural resources two weeks before the policy dialogue and during the course of the dialogue they produced stories for publication in their home countries, as well as on the FANRPAN and IPS websites. Following this success, the FANRPAN delegation to Copenhagen included a contingent of five journalists.

On a global scale, the FANRPAN regional secretariat staff attended and contributed to policy discourse during the United Kingdom Media Tour on “Farming First” principles, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (17th CSD), the High Level Meeting on Food Security for All, the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development International Organisation, the AU Summit in Libya, the UNCSD Inter-governmental Preparatory Meeting and various climate change conferences leading up to COP 15 in December 2009.

FANRPAN, in collaboration with COMESA, successfully launched the African Climate Solution initiative at Poznan, Poland in December 2008. The African Climate Solution was endorsed by President Bharrat Jagdeo of Guyana, The Honourable Vincent Karega, Minister of Natural Resources from Rwanda, The Honourable Catherine Namugala, MP, Minister of Tourism, Environment, Natural Resources of Zambia, The Honourable Rejoice Mabudafhasi, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs, South Africa, Mr Agus Purnomo, Head of Indonesia’s National Council on Climate Change, The Honourable Ligia de Doens, Minister of Environment for Panama, The Honourable Ambassador Blake of Antigua and Barbuda on representing G77+China.

Africa Urged to Invest in Local Research to Support Policy Advocacy

Africa should invest in home-grown research to generate evidence that will support the development of agriculture and food security.

“As long as Africans do not collect their own data to tell the African story we will not be able to benchmark ourselves against development targets and most importantly, we will plan using wrong data,” FANRPAN Chairman and Common Market for Southern and Eastern Africa (COMESA) Secretary-General, Hon. Sindiso Ngwenya, told delegates at the 2009 Regional Policy Dialogue in Maputo, Mozambique.
The Annual Regional Food Security Policy Dialogue organised by the Food Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy Advocacy Network (FANRPAN) attracted 226 delegates from 4 continents representing 28 countries in Africa, Belgium, Trinidad & Tobago and United Kingdom. The Dialogue discussed strategies to support agriculture with the right policies and resources to improve livelihoods and ensure food security in Southern Africa.

Hon. Ngwenya said Africa was not driving its development agenda because of poor investments in research and limited use of research evidence to inform policy development on agriculture. He lamented that for too long Africa has relied on external researchers, externally-generated data and externally driven research agenda that did not effectively address food issues in the continent.

In its 2008 report, the World Bank said agriculture continued to be the fundamental instrument for sustainable development and poverty reduction, adding that most developing countries attached little importance to the sector. This apathy has led to a decline in agricultural production and the low contribution of agriculture to GDP due to combination of lack of resources and under investment in agriculture.

Rice scientist, Monty Jones -- the first African to win the World Food Prize -- recently said Africa needed US$4.4 billion annually for agricultural research and development. Africa’s entire research and development budget is estimated at US$2.2 billion annually with nearly US$500 million provided by regional bodies such as NEPAD, the African Union and Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa.

Reduced productivity has meant that the continent spent millions of dollars importing food when it should be producing and adding value to its produce. The 19 COMESA member states alone spend approximately $19 billion on food imports.

Endowed with human capital, natural resources and a conducive climate, Africa can and should feed itself.

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About FANRPAN
The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is an autonomous regional stakeholder driven policy research, analysis and implementation network that was formally established in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in 1997. FANRPAN was borne out of the need by SADC governments who felt that comprehensive policies and strategies were required to resuscitate agriculture. FANRPAN is mandated to work in all SADC countries and currently has activities in 13 Southern African countries namely Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.