



A Multi-stakeholder Convening on:

**Strengthening Smallholder Agriculture in Africa:
*Prospects for Mobilisation and Advocacy***

**Report on the Agriculture Advocacy Convening held 24-26 November, 2014 in
Johannesburg, South Africa.**

Introduction

The reports summarizes the proceedings of a multinational convening organized under Trust Africa's "Building an Advocacy Movement for Equitable and Sustainable Agriculture in Africa" project held on 24 to 26 November 2014 under the theme "*Strengthening smallholder agriculture in Africa: Prospects for mobilization and advocacy*". The convening brought together stakeholders, partners, and researchers, program staff from TrustAfrica and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The convening provided a timely platform to reinvigorate discussions on how to sustain the agenda for a more inclusive and sustainable agriculture amongst a broad base of non-state actors with government actors. The convening was also used to launch the discussion on the second phase of TrustAfrica's advocacy actions and movement building for sustainable agriculture project. The convening took the approach of setting the broader context and understanding the characteristic challenges and gaps of smallholder agriculture.

Setting the Broad Context: Where We Are Now.

The keynote address by Thokoza Didiza, Former Minister of Agriculture in South Africa, provided an overview of the key issues in sustaining the focus on smallholder agriculture. Noting that smallholder agriculture was reaffirmed in the Malabo Declaration of June 2014, by the AU and the Heads of State, the keynote highlighted that:

- Although the goal of CAADP had not been reached, governments and civil society organisations were indeed asking the right questions and the mobilization of smallholder farmers was the way forward in continuous engagement and sustaining advocacy efforts to ensure that smallholder agriculture becomes a reality.
- Gender issues continue to be central to mobilization and advancing smallholder agriculture advocacy, and women should be part of the constituency for mobilization. The mobilization of local governance structures such as traditional leaders was important to including women and girls in the mobilization strategy.

Researchers involved in smallholder agriculture policy analysis presented papers on the broad context of smallholder agriculture in national economies and in rural livelihoods. In linking smallholder agriculture with broader economic and national development goals, the presentations noted that there was still an inadequate appreciation of smallholder agriculture in achieving development due to:

- Limited information on small-holder agriculture and measurement of its contributions to national economies and society.

- Overemphasis on models of development based on creating economies of scales, intensifying production towards a particular industrial model and increasing exports. As such, large scale agriculture receives more attention and support in Africa at the expense of small-holder farming.
- Inadequate attention to how land tenure reform and the specific mode of property rights has promoted investments beneficial to smallholder agriculture.
- The inadequacy and nature of markets that developed in the last 30 years around commercial agriculture that do not factor smallholder agriculture's contribution to development. There are limited linkages between existing markets and smallholder farmers.
- An insufficient account of land and water resources and reproductive labour in promoting small holder agriculture within the broader context of rural livelihoods.
- Rural livelihoods remained technologically challenged and unable to take advantage of new technologies. As a response to urban crises and lack of urban employment and new opportunities, some have returned to agrarian livelihood activities e.g. Zimbabwe.

Progress with CAADP Budget Allocations and Agricultural Transformation:

The convening also provided an opportunity for participants to engage with the CAADP process through a presentation from the CAADP coordinating unit and locate their advocacy efforts within continent-wide processes running under this framework. The recently renewed commitment to CAADP in the June 2014 AU Malabo Declaration, recognises that a significant proportion of our population still remains vulnerable to the challenges of economic marginalization, hunger and malnutrition. There is also renewed commitments to improve nutrition and end hunger by 2025. Secondly, contributors to the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals framework are calling for a responsive and effective governance process of equal participation in a more open policy space.

There is recognition that the 10 years pre Malabo enabled countries to address the key transformational issues in agricultural development and indeed lessons have been learnt in what needs to be done. In the next 10 years, there is a growing demand for information on the quality of actions and investment required to deliver the desired results and impacts to ensure appropriate transformation in African agriculture. As such, countries are tasked with identifying what type and quality of investment that is representative of the 10% investment e.g. rural infrastructure development. Essentially CAADP supports country initiatives and policy implementation direction by providing a framework for action.

It was noted that the private sector was a very important and significant contributor to the investment in agriculture discussion and needs to be mobilised to support smallholder agriculture and CAADP goals where the public sector has created the enabling environment.

Cases of best practices highlighted that some countries had made significant progress such as in the case of Rwanda where 90% of agriculture is sustained by smallholder farming. In Ethiopia, the transformation process has trickled down to the smallholder level. Civil society organisations are tracking the impact on the smallholder sector and this is disaggregated along the lines of pre and post CAADP. A Kenyan network active in the East Africa region has succeeded in promoting a Climate Change Bill in the country. The core of their action has been enhancing its relationship with the government and working with them.

Building an Effective Movement for Equitable Agriculture

TrustAfrica provided an overview of the project framework and its interest in bringing the different visions together and encouraging dialogue towards a better Africa that is inclusive and has shared growth. TrustAfrica's interest was to bring citizens to policy spaces and encourage participation and connecting different actors for joint advocacy actions. In this instance, the convening enabled citizens to deliberate how to improve the participation of smallholder farmers in building and effective movement for sustainable agriculture.

Critical Questions and Challenges

A session posing critical challenges and questions that should be considered in developing effective advocacy actions:

- Consultation and bringing civil society to the table to contribute to discussions on small holder agriculture investment has been problematic and fragmented.
- Inadequate capacity and organization of civil society to engage in policy advocacy actions and analysis. As a result smallholders do not know what is in the investment plans, national budgets etc.
- Africa's youth who constitute approximately 60% of constituents in the rural areas are not adequately represented in investment discussions that affect their livelihoods and employability.
- Insufficient definition of smallholder types and representation leading to inadequate description of what the different groups need.
- How accountable are the CSO's to their constituents in delivering results of advocacy actions?
- Sustaining advocacy actions and involvement in the transformation agenda requires funding; however the funding paradigm is a challenge and limits engagement in advocacy issues.

The Advocacy Agenda for the next 5 years: Enhancing pro-poor smallholder agriculture across Agriculture.

The next session was dedicated to developing the advocacy agenda for the next 5 years. This was preceded by a review of the progress made by some of Trust Africa's partners involved in the first round of the project. They provided progress reports that feed into scoping potential advocacy issues for the second phase. In Ghana, Malawi and Uganda, national partners have been at the centre of advocacy processes, providing technical support to governments and monitoring the effectiveness of measures such as extension policy in Uganda and input subsidies in Malawi.

Additionally, the day was dedicated to discussing and scoping critical issues, gaps in smallholder agriculture policies and opportunities for engagement with on-going CAADP country and regional activities. Two main questions guided the development of advocacy actions. Outputs of the group brainstorming sessions were clustered into 3 broad areas according to the type of issue being addressed:

1. What are the critical issues for advocacy for smallholder agriculture? Critical issues to be considered are:
 - Developing a conducive environment for smallholders to participate in the agricultural markets and value chains and mainstream economy.
 - Invigorating the rural economy, inclusive business and the value chain that take smallholders into account.
 - Development of the agro-industry/business

- Seeds - legislation is outdated and does not take into consideration smallholder farmers' needs.
 - Improved support and participation of women and youth in agriculture
 - Youth and women empowerment
 - Improved allocation of resources to women in agriculture
 - Improved budget allocations for smallholder agricultural development:
 - Challenges of climate change and adoption of climate-smart agriculture policies
 - Land rights and land security policies
 - Need to address national/ household food requirements (food security)
 - Mutual accountability in implementing agriculture-related protocols and agreements
 - Advocating for the use of the CAADP results framework to guide planning and program implementation.
2. What kind of advocacy actions are needed to follow up on Malabo Declaration at the country level?
- Policy analysis –
 - assessment of policies and laws at national and regional levels and generate knowledge on existing legislations, that can be used to inform CAADP at country level
 - Engage in budget analysis and tracking to determine allocations to smallholder agriculture
 - Alliance building / Networking
 - Build the capacity of national institutions and advocates platforms on advocacy, trade, budget, joint sector reviews and technical issues around policy analysis.
 - Build/ strengthen alliances, coalitions and networks at national and regional levels
 - Engagement with policy makers through policy briefs
 - Engagement with media to facilitate advocacy campaigns, information sharing
 - Share best practices and create an information hub to guide advocacy actions.
 - Research
 - Define research agenda and map research issues to identify gaps and opportunities in policies.

Trust Africa's Theory of Change and Strategies for Building an Effective Advocacy Movement

Dr Murisa reiterated Trust Africa's commitment to facilitate the advocacy and movement building actions of civil society organisations for improving smallholder agriculture.

The first phase of the project was about learning the terrain and helping to establish advocacy focused networks and leveraging resources for potentially transformative initiatives and influencing policy processes. The countries TrustAfrica has been active in cover West, East and Southern Africa and provide a basis for tracking trends in transforming agriculture, regionally and also in illuminating similar issues that African smallholder farmers and their governments face. TrustAfrica has also gained important insights on the extent to which non state actors such as farmers' unions/associations, social movements, intermediary NGOs and coalitions of like-minded NGOs are engaged in the agricultural reform policy processes and their actual capacity to invigorate the smallholder sector.

In the next phase of the project, TrustAfrica will continue to focus on contributing to a stronger community of advocates for smallholder agriculture in Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi. In the second phase the partnership will also include Burkina Faso. The next steps of the project will include:

- Using the outputs of the convening's group working sessions on advocacy issues, gaps and advocacy actions to refine the scope of priority country specific advocacy actions that will be used to call for proposals from partner organisations.
- The tools of technical assistance, training in policy analysis and advocacy, convenings and grant making to build the capacity of partners to engage in policy advocacy actions and hold their governments accountable.
- Existing and new partners will be invited to submit proposals addressing the identified priority advocacy issues. TrustAfrica will provide a limited number of grants for projects to be implemented within 18 months to strengthen national advocacy focused networks in the selected countries and provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of national coalitions working towards the realization of pro-poor agricultural policies and strategies.
- Ultimately it is hoped that the interventions will contribute towards the establishment of a vibrant community of practice and sharing.