



New report urges policymakers to learn from past achievements and mistakes for sustained agrifood systems transformation in Africa

November 4, 2020—Over the past two decades, Africa achieved the highest annual average agricultural growth rate among all world regions, a dramatic recovery from the years of stagnation and decline that preceded this turnaround. In these unprecedented times, as the world wrestles with the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, the [2020 Annual Trends and Outlook Report \(ATOR\)](#) sheds light on the centrality of productive agriculture and robust food supply chains to meet Africa’s development goals.

This year’s ATOR draws attention to a series of comprehensive and complementary policies required to transform African agrifood systems to meet their potential. Launched at the [Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System \(ReSAKSS\) Annual Conference](#), the 2020 ATOR’s major intention is to examine how contemporary policies compare with their historical counterparts and to what degree past mistakes can be avoided as a new generation of policy leaders emerges in Africa.

“Better economic and sector policies are a main driver behind the stronger growth performance and improved development outcomes we have seen across Africa over the last two decades. The recent progress needs to be sustained and broadened if the transformational ambitions of the Agenda 2063 are to be realized. That, in turn, requires continued improvement of strategies and policies to meet the future needs of rapidly modernizing value chains,” says Dr. Ousmane Badiane, AKADEMIYA2063 Executive Chairperson.

The 2020 ATOR begins with an in-depth review of the evolution of agricultural sector policies over the last five decades. The second section offers a systematic analysis of policies addressing the traditional input constraints on agricultural productivity, such as seeds, fertilizer, mechanization, and irrigation. The subsequent chapters turn to policies needed to bolster competitiveness along value chains. Then, the report considers factors that shape the broader enabling environment underlying the prospects for agrifood system transformation.

The overarching theme that emerges from the report is the critical importance of policy and sector governance, not only to sustain the current recovery and adapt to the rapid pace of agricultural transformation, but to anticipate future changes in order to support modernized value chains and facilitate wealth creation across African economies.

The report emphasizes the key role of evidence in informing policy formulation and implementation and the importance of tracking, review and benchmarking to ensure that successful policies are scaled up and unsuccessful policies are adjusted or replaced. The practice of mutual accountability, as called for in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) agenda, ensures that policies are subject to robust scrutiny and allows diverse stakeholder groups the opportunity to contribute their perspectives.

“Good quality policies based on evidence are at the heart of the CAADP agenda. The 2020 ATOR is a timely report with findings that can help trigger the required evidence-based policies and actions to sustain and accelerate Africa’s agricultural transformation agenda envisioned under the Malabo Declaration and Agenda 2063” shares Ambassador Josefa C. Sacko, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

In spite of Africa’s remarkable agricultural and economic growth over the past two decades, the continent continues to experience worryingly high rates of poverty and hunger. The Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the vulnerability of populations and economies to shocks. The continent’s urgent short-term needs, combined with a lack of institutional memory, may raise the appeal of the types of policies which ultimately constrained agricultural growth during previous decades; stronger fiscal positions and more open political systems, while highly positive developments, also increase the pressures on governments to prioritize short-term gains over long-term growth.

The risk of return to the failed policies of the past represents a real threat to achieving the ambitions of the CAADP agenda and of Agenda 2063. As underlined in the report, the quality of policies and governance will determine if the progress achieved over the past 20 years is sustained long enough to bring about more substantial improvements in livelihoods.

The 2020 ATOR reviews evidence on policy approaches to provide guidance to decisionmakers on the impacts of alternative strategies. Across 17 chapters, the report authors examine policy priorities, strategies and interventions in areas including agricultural inputs, skills development, digitalization and information and communication technologies (ICTs), agricultural trade, water management, producer organizations, agricultural processing, and food safety. Given competing demands for public expenditures, the ATOR provides evidence on the range of public investments with the potential to offer the greatest returns.

“Transforming Africa’s agrifood systems is fundamental to achieving many of the continent’s development objectives,” said [Danielle Resnick](#), Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy and Research Institute (IFPRI). “This year’s ATOR highlights priorities for investment—on the farm, across value chains, and for consumers—to guide government strategizing, especially at this time of constrained resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The report also underlines new political economy risks that need to be considered through an agrifood system agenda that spans the mandates of multiple ministries as well as both national and subnational governments. One implication is that coordination mechanisms will need to be created to promote collaboration across a wide range of government and private sector actors. Consequently, it will be imperative to consider viable public sector reforms that will enable the complexities of a transformation agenda to be implemented.

“While good policies may not be the solution to every problem, bad policies are a problem for everything else. We need to always keep this mind,” says Dr. Badiane.

African governments face unprecedented challenges and operate under rapidly changing climatic and economic circumstances, but remain firmly focused on meeting their national and regional development aspirations. By touching on the range of agrifood system issues identified by the African Union as priorities in recent years, the 2020 ATOR aims to provide robust policy guidance to successfully navigate the uncertain period ahead.

The Annual Trends and Outlook Report is a joint initiative between AKADEMIYA2063 and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The ATOR serves as the official monitoring and evaluation report for CAADP. In addition to reviewing the status of CAADP implementation, every ATOR since 2012 has included in-depth examination of a feature topic relevant to Africa’s agricultural development.

Each year, this ATOR is launched at the ReSAKSS Annual Conference, an annual gathering of agricultural sector stakeholders to review progress in CAADP implementation and deliberate on the key findings and recommendations of the ATOR.

This year’s conference was virtual and recorded especially high participation.

ABOUT

The African Union Commission (AUC)’s Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) leads efforts to promote sustainable environmental management and agricultural development by boosting African Union Member States’ rural economic development and agricultural transformation by supporting the adoption of measures, strategies, policies and programs on agriculture. Its mandate includes promoting the implementation of Agenda 2063 Continental Frameworks such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Visit: <https://au.int/en/rea>

AKADEMIYA2063 is an international non-profit organization, headquartered in Kigali, Rwanda with a regional office in Dakar, Senegal. It builds on the rich experience of long-standing support to the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) with data analytics and knowledge products to facilitate evidence-based policy planning and implementation. It plays the role of a major science contributor to the Agenda 2063.

AKADEMIYA2063 is the home of:

The Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS): Established in 2006 under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), ReSAKSS supports efforts to promote evidence- and outcome-based policy planning and implementation. In particular, ReSAKSS provides data and related analytical and knowledge products to facilitate CAADP benchmarking, review, and mutual learning processes.

Visit : www.akademiya2063.org

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) seeks sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty. IFPRI was established in 1975 to identify and analyze alternative national and international strategies and policies

for meeting the food needs of the developing world, with particular emphasis on low-income countries and on the poorer groups in those countries. IFPRI is a partner of AKADEMIYA2063 and a close collaborator on ReSAKSS and AGRODEP activities.

Visit: www.ifpri.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Nabou Tall, Director of Communications and Outreach, AKADEMIYA2063, T+221776443755, Email: ntall@akademiya2063.org