

The 2020 Africa Agriculture Status Report (AASR) Unveiled at the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF)

Kigali, Rwanda - September 8, 2020: The 2020 Africa Agriculture Status Report (AASR) was launched today at the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) virtual summit in Kigali, Rwanda.

This year's AASR focuses on *Feeding Africa's Cities* by assessing the opportunities, challenges and policies required to enable African farmers and agribusinesses serve the rapidly growing urban food markets. The report seeks to find ways for smallholder farmers to drive food security, rural prosperity, and inclusive economic growth.

"This report highlights the opportunity for all agriculture industry stakeholders to bring together viewpoints that define the transformation agenda, while outlining the practical next steps to an agricultural revolution," said Dr. Agnes Kalibata, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

The report begins by outlining the opportunities provided by Africa's urban food markets to the continent's 60 million farms. It indicates that cities shape Africa's agribusiness environment by affecting patterns of agricultural production and inducing the rapid expansion of food processing and distribution plans.

"This year's AASR shows that as the center of gravity in Africa's agri-food systems shifts increasingly towards urban areas, a cohort of new, non-traditional actors – including city planners, mayors, district councils, trader organizations and public health professionals – are becoming key players in the implementation of agricultural policy," said Andrew Cox, AGRA's Chief of Staff and Strategy.

Subsequent chapters touch on the opportunities in Africa's growing urban food markets while recognizing that the effective governance of urban food systems requires inclusive models that coordinate and harmonize the actions of the many diverse players now shaping African agri-food systems.

"Traditional markets and small-format shops currently account for 80 - 90% of urban food retailing in African cities. Supermarket shares, though currently small, seem likely to increase in the coming decades. Small farmers reach urban food markets primarily via traditional wholesale markets and the efficient operation of these markets, therefore, becomes key to small farmer access and competitiveness," reads the report, in part.

While recognizing the debilitating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its role in exacerbating existing economic and social inequalities, the report defines five focus areas in a bid to overcome the problem of urban under-nutrition and accelerate the urgency of urban food system planning. These focus areas are:

improved urban food system governance; efficient urban wholesale markets; food safety regulation and enforcement; regional free trade and agricultural policy harmonization; and agricultural research focused on high-growth, high-value food commodities.

Domestic food distribution systems, intra-African trade and food safety are the other themes of the report leading to the conclusion that improved urban food system governance and performance can create new opportunities for Africa to transform its agricultural endeavors into thriving businesses.

The report was launched at the 10th edition of the AGRF, an annual gathering that has this year brought together 4,000 delegates including heads of state and government, agriculture ministers, members of the civil society, private sector leaders, scientists and farmers in discussions to find ways of feeding Africa's increasing urban populations.

This is the first time in history that the AGRF is held virtually, in line with COVID-19 containment measures. The theme of the Forum is *Feed the Cities, Grow the Continent: Leveraging Urban Food Markets to Achieve Sustainable Food Systems in Africa*, a call to action to rethink Africa's food systems in the delivery of resilient, better nourished, and more prosperous outcomes for all.

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About the AASR

The Africa Agriculture Status Report (AASR) is an annual publication that is published by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) since 2013. The annual publication has become a reference point for emerging topics on agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Staple Crops (2013), Climate Change (2014), Youth in Agriculture (2015), Agricultural Transformation (2016), Smallholder Agriculture (2017), Government Capacity (2018) and The Hidden Middle (2019). The report has grown to be an important handbook for Africa's leaders in their plans to transform the continent's agricultural prospects. Among the trends observed in past reports include increased public private partnership, adoption of technology, use of improved agricultural inputs, a greater focus on capacity development and an expanded focus on extension services.

About AGRA

AGRA is a farmer-centered, African-led, partnerships-driven institution that is working to transforming smallholder farming from a solitary struggle to survive to a business that thrives. In collaboration with its partners—including African governments, researchers, development partners, the private sector and civil society— AGRA's work primarily focuses on smallholder farmers - men and women who typically cultivate staple crops on two hectares or less. AGRA has learned a lot from efforts during its first decade and is now recognized across the continent as a strong voice for African rural development, a prosperous agricultural economy, and for supporting thousands of small African businesses and millions of African families to improve agriculture as a way to ensure food security and improve their livelihoods.

About the AGRF

The African Green Revolution Forum was first held in 2006 as the African Green Revolution Conference (AGRC), hosted by Yara International ASA in Norway. The conference moved to Africa in 2010 with the championing of former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, who oversaw its transition to an African identity. The Forum now consists of an annual event combined with thematic platforms and activities throughout the year to ensure continuous progress over time. Rwanda is the second country, after Ghana, to host the event twice, having successfully hosted the 2018 edition. Afterwards, Rwanda will host the event in alternate years, having been named the home of the AGRF seat. Other AGRF member countries will host the Forum in the years between. In its current format, the AGRF is organised by the AGRF Partners Group, a coalition of institutions that care about Africa's agriculture transformation.

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For more information on the AGRF agenda and partners visit www.agrf.org.