

Session title:	Agricultural Transformation for Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems
Session number:	26
Type of session:	Live Streamed
Day:	Monday, 6 September 2021
Time:	16:30-18:15 EAT
No. of participants:	118 (as of 09/07/2021)
Session Organizers:	BIFAD, USAID, AAP, ReNAPRI, World Bank, and the African Development Bank
Moderator:	Richard Mkandawire, Alliance for African Partnership
Rapporteur:	Clara Cohen, BIFAD Executive Director and Mary Beggs, Gage Smith, and Carmen Benson- BIFAD Support Contract Team at Tetra Tech International Development
Objectives:	<p>Convening leaders from diverse stakeholders including BIFAD, USAID, AfDB, World Bank, ReNAPRI, and Alliance for African Partnership, this event aimed to elevate voices from the agricultural community in Africa and working in Africa around issues related to agricultural transformation and resilience. Through presentation of key evidence from case studies and recent reports, including recent work commissioned by USAID’s advisory committee, the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD), a recent World Bank publication, and an AfDB report on the linkages between agricultural productivity, economic transformation, and resilience, this discussion sought to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the conditions and properties of resilient and sustainable food systems. • Propose the policies and programs that can be taken by African government, global development partners, and the research and civil society organization (CSO) community to help achieve resilient and sustainable food systems. • Considering the varying conditions across Africa, explore how strategies for resilient and sustainable food systems differ across countries dependent on market systems, with particular consideration for

fragile and resource-rich states.

Speakers:

(*Name, Title, Organization)

1. Dr. Rob Bertram, Chief Scientist, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, U.S Agency for International Development (USAID)
2. Dr. Richard Mkandawire, Africa Director of the Alliance for African Partnership (AAP), and Chairperson, Malawi Planning Commission
3. Dr. Keith Fuglie, Senior Economist, US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service
4. Dr. Tilahun Amede, Head, Resilience, Climate & Soil Fertility, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
5. Dr. Kevin Chika Urama, Senior Director of the African Development Institute (ADI), African Development Bank (AfDB)
6. Ms. Lulama Ndibongo Traub, Chair of the Technical Committee, Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI)
7. Dr. John Olwande, Research Fellow, Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and development, Egerton University
8. Dr. Clara Cohen, Executive Director, Board for International Food and Agricultural Development, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, U.S Agency for International Development (USAID)

Main highlights:

(*For Insights and newsletter. To be based on the theme of the day. Fill in in bullet form)

KEY CHALLENGES

- **Need for a shift from resource-led to agricultural productivity-led growth:** Agricultural production growth has been a major driver of remarkable economic progress and positive outcomes in poverty reduction and nutrition seen in many countries in the African region in the last two decades. However, this growth is not uniform across countries, and the growth path will not be environmentally sustainable because it has been achieved mainly through land expansion.
- **Minimal government commitment to policy reform to drive sustainable economic growth:** While other developing countries are making a transition to productivity-led growth, most countries in Africa continue to lag in this transition. Only a small number of country governments are instituting productivity-enhancing investments and policies, such as investments in agricultural R&D and extension, rural infrastructure and roads, and market liberalization.
- **Limitations of institutional capacity among local institutes of agricultural policy research:** Governments often turn to outside groups for advice because



of concerns about independence, credibility, neutrality, quality, relevance, timeliness, and reliability among local institutes.

INNOVATIONS PROPOSED

- Though specific agricultural innovations were not the emphasis of this particular session, panelists did discuss briefly a few technologies or innovations and highlighted novel ideas for policy innovations, including:
 - o Invest in improved water-harvesting infrastructure to support agricultural productivity in rain-fed areas
 - o Expand small-scale mechanization to improve agricultural efficiency and productivity and reduce drudgery
 - o Develop systems for gathering high-quality data and supporting policymaker decisions
 - o Invest in digitization technologies for agriculture
 - o Invest in farming system-specific, sustainable intensification innovations
 - o Create a dedicated donor fund to strengthen capacity of policy advisory structures
 - o Establish an agricultural science, technology, and innovation fund for Africa—to develop institutional capacity for African youth, women, and others.

RECOMMENDATIONS/ NEXT STEPS

- **Increase country investments in innovation and technology dissemination (especially agricultural research, development, and extension) and implement policy reforms to accelerate productivity-led agricultural growth and private sector investment:** Following the lead of Ghana and Ethiopia, country governments should increase investment R&D and extension to accelerate productivity-led agricultural growth, attaining the target of 1% investment of agricultural GDP in agricultural R&D and extension. Country governments should also invest in policies that enable innovation and technology dissemination, including market access and infrastructure, stable macroeconomic policies, finance, insurance, land tenure security, and education.
- **Increase regional approaches to innovation, investment, and leadership:** Countries should work with regional economic communities and with regional

value chains to achieve synergies and to leverage and share international and home-grown, locally adapted knowledge and technologies.

- **Crowd in new and powerful voices in evidence-based decision making and advocacy:** Panelists recommended continuing engagement with policy research institutes but also more broadly mainstreaming engagement of non-state actors and civil society organizations—including the media, youth groups, women's and farmer groups—and strengthening their skills to use evidence-based approaches, to develop relationships with decision makers

- **Strengthen the capacity and credibility of local policy-advisory institutes:** Governments often turn to outside groups for advice because of concerns about independence, credibility, neutrality, quality, and reliability of local institutes. Local institutes should work to strengthen their capacity, diversity funding sources; ensure that their recommendations to government are evidence-based, timely, fiscally feasible, and relevant to country priorities; assure the quality of their research methodologies; and communicate clear, consistent evidence and messages in plain, jargon-free language. The greater local relevance and greater adaptability of local institutes can be framed as an incentive to governments to use recommendations from country-led institutes. Partnership between local institutes and global institutes—based on an equal footing in which both partners are involved in the design, implementation and analysis phase of joint projects—will be a critical approach to strengthening the capacity of local institutes.

- **Promote supportive culture of learning and information exchange among government agencies that work across the food system:** We should promote knowledge sharing and document and learn from optimally performing agencies and positive country case studies, perhaps through use of the African Peer Review Mechanism to monitor progress. We need to support and maintain adequate systems for data gathering to inform government planning and decision making. We need to relieve the pressure on governments by de-risking financing schemes and finding resources to increase access to capital and decrease the cost of capital to African-led institutions. We need to support locally defined and generated national development plans.

Session Summary:

(*To go in the final report. Max 300 words. Fill in prose)

Convening leaders from diverse stakeholders, panelists identified conditions and properties of resilient, sustainable food systems and proposed policies and programs for African governments to achieve them. Discussion drew from recent evidence, including work commissioned by the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD), a World Bank publication, and an African Development Bank (AfDB) report, on

linkages between agricultural productivity, economic transformation, and resilience.

Evidence presented indicates a need for a shift to agricultural productivity-led growth. Panelists posed the following calls to action for African governments, global development partners, and the research and civil society organization (CSO) community:

- Increase country investments in innovation and technology dissemination (especially agricultural research, development, and extension) and implement policy reforms to accelerate productivity-led agricultural growth and private sector investment
- Increase regional approaches to innovation, investment, and leadership
- Crowd in new and powerful voices in evidence-based decision making and advocacy
- Strengthen the capacity and credibility of local policy-advisory institutes
- Promote supportive culture of learning and information exchange among government agencies that work across the food system.

This session was moderated by Dr. Richard Mkandawire, of the Alliance for African Partnership (AAP), with keynote addresses from Dr. Rob Bertram, Chief Scientist, USAID; and Keith Fuglie, Senior Economist, USDA. Panelists included: Dr. Tilahun Amede, AGRA's Head of Resilience, Climate & Soil Fertility; Dr. Kevin Chika Urama, Senior Director of the African Development Institute (ADI) at AfDB, Ms. Lulama Ndibongo Traub, Chair of the Technical Committee, ReNAPRI; and Dr. John Olwande, Research Fellow at Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy, Egerton University. Dr. Clara Cohen, Executive Director of BIFAD in USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security provided concluding remarks, summarizing the action items put forward during the session.

Tweetable quotes with timestamp:

(*For podcast and to go to AGRF Communication for social media. Minimum 3 per session)

Dr. Robert Bertram, Chief Scientist, USAID

Option 1: “[This event] is a great opportunity to see the convergence of thinking emanating from Africa that is really driving attitudes, decisions and aspirations in places like the United States, the World Bank and elsewhere, all of whom are development partners in this overall effort...” *Minute 1*

Option 2. “To talk about sustainability and resilience, we need to focus on those key drivers of growth and investment, and how those can deliver on food security, on poverty reduction, on improvements in nutrition, in ways that...strengthen and grow the food system....” *Minute 10*

Option 3. “A fundamental



to a vibrant food system is investment that drives productivity and innovation that drives productivity growth.” *Minute 2*

Option 4. “Nothing is more persuasive to development partners than country leadership and commitment. This idea that our partner countries themselves are showing the way, are guiding all their partners both public and private sector, globally and locally, in coming together around a vision for strengthened food systems, more resilient food systems, productive food systems and sustainable food systems that deliver on human outcomes like the reduction of poverty and malnutrition.” *Minute 2 (NOT TO BE CUT DOWN – CAN BE LINKED IN OR FACEBOOK)*

Option 4 – for Twitter – “Nothing is more persuasive to development partners than country leadership and commitment. This idea that our partner countries themselves are showing the way, are guiding all their partners both public and private sector... around a vision for strengthened food systems”

Option 5.. “We are seeing a vision for redoubling African leadership in these next ten years as we race towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” *Minute 4*

- Option 6.. “The opportunity for economic gains in Africa is the greatest of any region in the world!” *Minute 6*

Dr. Richard Mkandawire Africa Director, Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) & Chairperson, Malawi’s National Planning Commission

Option 1. “We need to... [use] the more powerful voices that have emerged recently... youth voices or women’s voices..., that are central to agricultural transformation... but if these are not sufficiently armed with information., it is difficult for them to convince governments.” *Minute 6*

Option 2. “We truly believe that we need a coalition of the willing, from both the global north and the global south, and particularly in Africa to address these challenges in transforming agriculture for resilient food systems in Africa.” *Minute 8*

Ms. Lulama Ndibongo Traub, Chair, Technical Committee for the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI)

Option 1. “Going forward, as a continent, it is critical that we transition from a resource dependent to productivity led agricultural growth. The status quo is not sustainable... But to do this effectively, means we need to develop locally

adaptive technology and innovations.” *Minute 25*

Option 2. “Africa has made tremendous economic progress over the past two decades; we should celebrate what leaders and governments are getting right.”
Minute 43

Option 3. “I would like to challenge our leaders to really achieve the target of 1% of agricultural GDP being invested in Agricultural Research, Development, and Extension. This will amplify our African voices.” *Minute 44*

How has the session contributed to the AGRF outcomes?

*(For the end of AGRF communique/ Press release. List 3 - 5 top outcomes)

- This side event created a forum for discourse around issues central to achieving a unified African voice related to necessary policy investments for African countries to achieve more resilient agricultural and food systems, bringing together leaders from African policy research institutes and universities and regional and global development partners.
- Contributing to AGRF’s tie-in to the United Nations Food Systems Summit, this session identified immediate actions and steps that need to be taken to accelerate inclusive agricultural transformation, with the expert panel converging on six calls to action for African government, global development partners, and the research and civil society organization (CSO) community.
- The co-hosting organizations of this #AGRF2021 side event, BIFAD, USAID, AfDB, World Bank, ReNAPRI, and Alliance for African Partnership, called for a “Coalition of the Willing” to continue and elevate this dialogue to inform transformative action.

COMMITMENTS

- The co-hosting organizations of this #AGRF2021 side event, BIFAD, USAID, AfDB, World Bank, ReNAPRI, and Alliance for African Partnership, called for a “Coalition of the Willing” to continue and elevate this dialogue to inform transformative action.