African Parliamentary Support for Agriculture

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Outline of presentation
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Global Situation: A Perfect Storm
- Population growth – 6 to 9 billion by 2050.
- Africa’s population 1 to 2 billion by 2050
- 2009 – urban populations outnumbered rural populations
- By 2030 world will need to produce 50% more food and energy on broadly the same area of land
- Agriculture is reliant on both energy and fresh water
- Agriculture currently uses 70% of fresh water supplies and will require 30% more by 2030, whilst mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Green revolution doubled production of many crops but required a trebling of water consumption.
- A perfect storm!

Neglect of Agriculture
- For years, Development Community and African Governments neglected African agriculture
- Gradually neglect is ending spurred by food shortages / price increases.
- Maputo Agreement: African Governments committed to spend 10% GNP on agriculture
- Development partners increasing amount of development assistance to Agriculture.
- 2014 AU year of agriculture and food security
**Agriculture in Africa: killer facts**

- Nearly a quarter of a billion people in Sub-Saharan Africa go to bed hungry every day.
- 70% of all Africans depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.
- Agriculture accounts for 30% of Africa’s GNP.
- Agriculture accounts for 40% of Africa’s foreign currency earning.
- Investments in agriculture have 4 times economic impact as investments in other economic sectors.
- Development aid to Africa has increased by 250% since the 1980’s but allocation to agriculture halved.

**Agriculture in Africa: killer facts continued**

- Crop yields in Africa have remained at one third those produced by farmers in other developing countries.
- Africa uses less than 3% of global fertilizer production.
- Small farms 2 hectares or less 80% of all farms in Africa.
- Up to 90% of agricultural production in countries in Africa comes from small farms.
- More than one third of the rural population of Sub-Saharan Africa lives five hours from the nearest market town of 5000 people.
- 20 to 40% of crop production in Sub-Saharan Africa is lost because of deterioration after harvest.

**Women in agriculture**

Women:

- Are up to 80% of economically active labour force in agriculture.
- Provide up to 80% of all food produced.
- Often farm for their fathers, husbands or brother.
- But on land to which they have no legal right and with little access to the final crop.

**Malnutrition and stunting**

- Globally a billion people go to bed hungry every night.
- Two million children die of malnutrition every year.
- 40% of all children in Africa and South Asia are stunted.
- Stunting = physical and mental wasting due to under nutrition in first 1000 days of life.
- Children who avoid stunting during first 1000 days perform better throughout life.
- Including at school, better wages at work, more business start-ups, better economy overall.
- Malnourished mothers at greater risk of giving birth to malnourished babies.
Role of agriculture in reducing stunting
- Relationship between agriculture and nutrition is complex and multifaceted
- Efficient agricultural growth can ensure economic, social and political well-being
- Agriculture boosts status of women empowering them to make decisions about themselves and their families
- But direct evidence of investment in agriculture and reduction in stunting is lacking
- Should governments provide nutritional supplements or invest long term in agriculture?

Aspirations for African farmers
- Future for agriculture in Africa is to support poor subsistence farmers to help them become sustainable small scale commercial farmers
- What do these farmer need and how can Parliamentarians help?
- Ask questions, hold inquiries, be well informed
- Apply positive pressure on the executive
- How is this to be done?
- Use of national, regional and international experts to provide information, advice and knowledge

Role of Parliaments in Africa in sustainable agricultural development
- Parliaments hold unique position as catalyst for good governance
- The separation of power between the executive, judiciary and parliament is critical to good government
- Parliaments also have a central role in links with local government, civil society, media, citizens
- Parliaments should have a constitutional mandate to hold government ministries to account
- Despite potential of African parliaments in agriculture policies they are generally under resourced to deal with these increasingly complex issues

Strengthening agricultural committees
- Sufficient investigative capacity to hold inquiries on selected topics
- National agricultural laws and policies can be reviewed, debated and appropriate action taken
- MPs can be better represent needs of small holder farmers and agricultural sector as a whole
- Established links/working relations with national and international independent sources of information
Issues for consideration

Direct Agriculture
• Climate change
• Seeds
• GMOs
• Value chains
• Extension services
• Education
• Research

Policy, financial and social
• Land tenure and ownership
• Land grab
• Credit and finance
• ICTs
• Risk / insurance / credit

Direct Agricultural Issues

Climate change
• 2 degree certain, 4 degree global temperature rise possible
• Result: major climate change / variability
• Most of Africa’s agriculture is rain feed so what will this mean?
• Water management: too little/too much?
• Weather forecasting
• Improved seeds, different crops, new markets
• Managing risk

Seeds
• Agricultural development starts with seeds
• But has become a rather contentious issue
• 60% African farmers use traditional seeds
• "Open pollinated" and "hybrid" seeds
• Seeds improved (breeding) for 1000's years.
• Issues: Farmer selected seeds, seed quality, use of fertilisers, availability of water, etc
• Seeds have potential to include "modern technology" to poor farms. But care!
Genetically Modified Organisms
- Traditional breeding uses cross-pollination of genes from the same plant species
- Breeding by genetic modification involves incorporation of genes from another species.
- FACT: there are no proven problems to human health from GMOs
- Environmental issues: cross contamination of genes
- Analysis of hazard / possibility / risk

Value chains
- Value chain is stages between field and consumer
- If subsistence farmers are to break out of poverty, must grow and sell surpluses
- Not sufficient to focus on yield but also quality and post harvest factors. Post harvest losses.
- Storage, middle men, processing, value addition, markets, marketing
- Linking farmers to markets: feeder road, market infrastructure

Extension services
- How to get messages to farmers
- Government "extension services" largely ineffective
- New innovative methods
  - Mobile phones/Internet
  - Role of private sector
  - Livestock - veterinary medicine
  - Village agents
  - Out grower schemes

Agricultural education
- With the importance of agriculture to Africa, has agricultural education kept up with Africa's needs and development potential?
- From emphasis on yields, biological potential, traditional (mono culture) farming methods
- To farmer first, basket of options, value chains, post harvest qualities, storage needs, consumer preferences
- Under funding of tertiary education
- Linages eg with Universities in North
Agricultural Research

- Research directly relevant to farmers needs is essential if Africa's agriculture is to be the engine of growth out of poverty.
- "Farmer First" "Needs Driven" approaches
- "Linear" versus "iterative" approaches
- National research programmes
- Regional African research programmes
- International research programmes
- Funding and links to extension services

Social Science Research

- Social science research is as essential as natural science research
- Without recognition of policy, financial, social issues/context, technical innovations will fail.
- Very long list of such failures!
- Policy, financial and social research not well recognised/funded in most African Countries
- Better recognised regionally and internationally
- Linkages

Policy, financial and social issues

Land tenure and ownership

- Important and sensitive issues
- Ancient traditions and modern law.
- Farmers must be confident about tenure before they invest in their farm
- Collateral for bank loans
- Local decision but assistance required in eg GIS mapping, land registration systems, negotiations and arbitration.
"Land Grab"
- Over 60 million hectares of African land has been sold, leased or licensed since 2001 by foreign corporations and foreign state interests
- Little public or Parliamentary scrutiny
- May be good or bad but need closer monitoring so do not prove to be to detriment of local people
- Ironic that as Africa’s agricultural potential is realised, this danger will increase
- Need appropriate codes of practices on leases and contracts
- Establish an international fund to support African countries in these negotiations?

Credit and finance
- In developed countries, few farmers could prosper without access to credit and finance
- In Africa, credit from Banks is almost impossible to obtain for small holder farmers
- Bank Interest rates are 20/30 %
- Informal loans / middle men etc
- Nixon Bugo from AGRA will be talking about this
- Essential issue for subsistence/commercial farmer transition.

Information and communication technologies
- Agricultural revolution 8000 years
- Industrial revolution 150 years
- Information and communication technologies revolution 20 years
- Mobile phones, smart phones, internet, etc
- What does this mean for African agriculture?
- Major way of jumping stages in development in Africa?
- Not a magic bullet.
- Need to appreciate underlying complexity, select appropriate ICT solutions and embed in a well-defined development scenario.

Risk / insurance / credit
- Small holder farmers are very risk adverse
- Risks include:
  - Weather: too much/too little rain
  - Pests: locusts, army worm, insects.
  - Storage: moulds, insects, rats, theft
  - Over supply in markets
- Developed countries farmers mitigate risks through insurance, what should Africa do?
- Inventory credit schemes
Sources of information and advice for Parliamentarians

- Develop, cultivate and nurture contacts
- All countries present have their own research institutes, universities, think tanks.
- Farmers groups, private sector organisations, NGOs, banks?
- National, regional, continental and international resources are available

Regional/Continental
- FARA, CORAF, ASARECA, CCARDESA: Research
- RECs: Economic and trade
- NEPAD, FANRPAN: Policy
- RUFORUM: Education and training
- AGRA: Alliance for a green revolution in Africa
- AATF: African Agricultural Technology Foundation

International
- CGIAR: Research
- Universities, Institutes, NRI: Research
- AGRINATURA: European researchers
- Think Tanks: Chatham House, IDS, ODI
- CTA: Information
- CPA: Parliamentary Strengthening
- NGOs: Civil Society
Thank you

Topics for discussion

Experience of committee chairs in working with:
- National/international research institutes (are they properly funded?)
- Local/international universities/think tanks
- Civil society, NGOs (positive/negative?)
- Availability of expertise on economics, social science, etc

Do committees have the funds required to hire researchers, commission research, make visits etc?