

Maximizing agricultural productivity to feed Africa during and beyond the imminent food crisis: Lessons on hand

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2022 Evaluation Week

Vice presidents,

Directors and colleagues,

1. The theme of the 2022 Evaluation Week couldn't have been more appropriate than what the organizers chose, "Maximizing agricultural productivity to feed Africa during and beyond the imminent food crisis: Lessons on hand". The world today faces two major crisis that have impacts on food and nutrition security, namely: COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.
2. 256 million Africans or 20% of the continent's population are undernourished, and 30% are food insecure. The situation has further deteriorated due the COVID-19 pandemics, increasing negative impacts of climate change, rising fragility and conflict, and events such as the locust invasions in East and Southern Africa. While the continent was putting measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine came in to disrupt global supply chains, thereby increasing a greater risk of hunger facing Africa. Africa must now urgently strengthen its food systems as an integral part of efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and to build resilience.
3. At the core of Africa's food security challenge is the level of productivity of the major staple crops. This, in part makes Africa's agriculture uncompetitive and results in around a third of calories consumed in Africa being imported from outside the continent. We need refocused attention and investment in agricultural Research and Development - both public and private, and improved synergies between the two. There is the need to execute bold plan to achieve rapid agricultural transformation across Africa through raising agricultural productivity.
4. Africa has more food production technologies available today than ever before. The missing link is taking these technologies to farmers at scale; at affordable costs. Also missing has been a well-coordinated food production technology delivery platform to help address all the related issues of extension, training services, policy, market, institutional, research & development, and regulatory issues hindering the widespread use of technologies.
5. The largest effort to date to transform Africa's agriculture is from the African Development Bank. The Bank put feeding Africa at the top of its priorities when it launched its Feed Africa

strategy in 2015. The Bank is investing \$ 24 billion in agriculture for Africa over ten years – the largest ever such effort. At the core of the investment strategy is support for the development of policies, markets, infrastructure and institutions that will ensure that agricultural value chains are well developed and that technologies are scaled up to reach several millions of farmers.

6. The African Development Bank's vision for Agricultural Transformation in Africa under its Feed Africa Strategy (2016-2025) takes a commodity value chain development and agro-ecological approach to revamping agriculture on the continent with emphasis on 18 priority value chains to increase productivity by fostering the transfer of proven food technologies, integrated pest and disease management, and post-harvest handling and processing technologies to millions of African farmers across the continent.
7. The implementation of Feed Africa Strategy entail replicating and taking to scale, successful agricultural programs across Africa and beyond in order to fully realize their transformational impact.
8. The expected results of Feed Africa include adding additional 120 million metric tons of food on the continent by 2025 and to raise the incomes of 40 million farmers by US\$600 per capita per year; as well as the development of up to 250,000 SMEs run by young people and women in Africa by 2025. The outcome will be a virtuous cycle of more and better jobs, higher income, better health and nutrition and more inclusive economies across Africa.
9. This bold step of Feeding Africa was supported by an implementation mechanism called Technologies for Africa's Agricultural Transformation (TAAT). TAAT is thus the mechanism for delivery productivity enhancing technologies to millions of farmers across Africa. I will discuss further on this in the ensuing remarks.

Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT)

10. The TAAT program is collaborating with various partners including the CGIAR (11) and the NARES and many international donors. TAAT takes a bold approach to scale up technologies across agro-ecological zones. Across over 30 African countries, TAAT is continuously working with research institutions, seed companies, public and private extension, financial institutions, and many other players, to reach 40 million African farmers with yield-boosting technologies, of whom the majority are young people and women in low-income countries, access to agricultural technologies by 2025.
11. Through the Feed Africa flagships, TAAT has shown that with the right support, Africa's small-scale farmers can increase resilience to climate change and feed themselves and their countries' urban populations. Launched just three years ago, the TAAT platform has delivered

heat tolerant wheat varieties, drought tolerant maize varieties, high yield rice varieties to 11 million farmers and increased crop production by an estimated 25 million tons of additional food.

12. TAAT produced over 150,000MT of certified seed of heat-tolerant wheat varieties and put these high productivity wheat seeds into the hands of millions of smallholder farmers in Ethiopia, Sudan and across other countries where the project is being implemented.
13. In Ethiopia, following the recent successful and nationwide deployment of heat tolerant wheat varieties, irrigated-wheat area rapidly expanded from less than 5,000 ha in 2018/19 to 187,240 ha in 2020/21, to 650,000 ha in 2021/22. Yields of wheat increased on average from 2.0 t/ha to 4 t/ha. Ethiopia wheat production increased by an additional 1.6 million metric tonnes in 2022 and the country achieved self-sufficiency in wheat production. Ethiopia is poised to export wheat for the first time in the coming wheat season.
14. In Sudan, the TAAT achieved transformative impacts in terms of raising productivity, production, and farmers' income, and attaining greater self-sufficiency through massive deployment of climate resilient proven wheat technologies. The national average wheat yield increased by almost 67%, up from 2.1 t/ha in 2014/15 to 3.5 t/ha in 2019/20. Sudan's national wheat production increased by 136%, up from 472,000 MT in 2014/15 to 1.15 million MT in 2019/20; Consequently, Sudan increased its wheat self-sufficiency from less than 20% in 2014/15 to 50% in 2020/21.
15. When drought hit the Southern Africa region in 2019, TAAT came to the rescue. It deployed drought tolerant maize varieties which were cultivated by 5.2 million households on 841,000 ha. As a result, farmers survived the drought, from Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia, allowing maize production to expand by 631,000 metric tons of maize, with a value of \$107 million. Further technologies have been deployed with the drought tolerance trait to combat striga weeds, reduce aflatoxins and to increase Vitamin A content to boost nutrition.
16. TAAT established partnerships with 28 seed companies (4 in Kenya, 4 in Uganda, 6 in Tanzania, 8 in Zambia and 6 in Zimbabwe) and facilitated the establishment of 4,256 demonstration plots, conducted 757 field days, and distributed 84,321 free small pack seeds or 17,340 tons of climate smart maize seeds, produced in partnership with the seed companies. There have been significant successes: average maize yields in Kenya increased by 2.5 tons per hectare from 2018 to 2021. In all 12 countries, there has been considerable progress in the dissemination of new varieties by seed companies for nearly 1 million hectares of cultivated area.

17. TAAT is also boosting rice production. New high yielding rice varieties from TAAT have been cultivated on 1.4 million hectares, impacting 3.2 million households; boosting rice production by 285,000 MT of rice, estimated to be worth \$108 million.
18. The Bank also aims to bring in previously uncultivated land into agricultural production through its Transformation of the African Savannah Initiatives (TAAT-S). The aim is to turn 1.6 million hectares in eight African countries - Ghana, Guinea, DRC, CAR, Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, and Mozambique, under optimum maize, soybean, and livestock production. Learning from the Brazilian Cerrados, TAAT-S will bring the necessary technology, policy reforms, technical partners and financial resources to transform the crop and livestock production of the African Savannah into a competitive and inclusive agribusiness sector.

The African Emergency Food Production Facility (AEFPF)

19. The Bank has considerable experience in responding to food crises. In 2008, for example, the Africa Food Crisis Response (AFCR) represented the Bank's framework for accelerated support to RMCs affected by increased food prices. The overall approvals amount under the 2008 AFCR was UA 496.57 million. Achievements include production and distribution of 8,170 metric tonnes of certified seeds of the New Rice for Africa (NERICA) and the production of 408,500 metric tonnes of rice paddy. Other accomplishments include eight irrigation schemes designed to increase water storage and irrigation capacity by at least 8.5 billion cubic meters over a six-year period.
20. As part of its COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility (CRF), the African Development Bank designed a Feed Africa Response to COVID-19 (FAREC) to address the specific issues faced by the agriculture sector. The Bank approved the restructuring of 39 projects in 21 countries for a total amount of US\$367.6 million. A total of 609,000 persons, from farmer and poultry organizations, benefited from FAREC interventions. Also, through the CRF and the provision of crisis response budget support the Bank was able to help cushion the fiscal impact of the crisis and enable governments to maintain priority expenditures for basic service delivery, while responding to crisis.
21. The Bank has formulated a framework document that outlines the Bank's response to the food crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine and provides an approach for collaboration with multilateral partners and donor organizations to ensure, quick alignment and implementation, higher reach, and impact, and increase the preparedness and responsiveness of technical teams.
22. The response to the looming food crisis, is hinged on experiences with FAREC and TAAT to accelerate increase food production through delivery of new technologies to smallholder farmers and systematic scaling up of a full package of technology and extension services to millions of farmers and measures to increase access to fertilizer and other inputs on a national scale to RMCs. TAAT seeks to build resilience of farmers to the ravages of climate change by

reaching 40 million farmers with climate-smart technologies to double their productivity, produce an additional 100 million tons of food per annum.

23. Interventions include delivery of certified seeds and fertilizer to 20 million farmers via ICT and innovation platforms being promoted by the Bank's Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT), credit guarantees for large scale supply of fertilizer to large wholesalers and aggregators and emergency support to consumers, marginal populations, and farmers at risk of hunger. Other interventions include creating the right enabling environment and policies for increased RMCs preparedness for food security shocks, trade issues.
24. Coordination of seed supply under the emergency food production plans will be at the country level with agriculture and finance ministries, the Bank's Task Manager, TAAT Compacts and the TAAT Clearing House. The Compacts bring together all value chain actors to diagnose challenges and identify solutions leading to joint planning, implementation. Through Compact IPs, marketing of produce, off-take arrangements with aggregators and agro-processors will enable surplus production to reach markets.
25. Expected outputs include the production of an additional 10.74 million metric tons (MT) of wheat, 18.36 million MT of maize, 6 million MT of rice, and 2.5 million metric tons of soybean. A total of 37.6 million metric tons of food is expected to be produced under the Plan. The total value of the additional food to be produced under the Emergency Food Production Plan for Africa (EF-PPA) is estimated at US \$11.5 Billion, for an investment of US \$ 1.5 billion.
26. AEFPPF is a short-term intervention that supports both short-term and medium and long-term result in order to address not just the immediate food crisis, but the long-term sustainability and resilience of Africa's food systems.
27. The medium to long term interventions will include a five-year plan to decouple Africa from wheat and food imports from Russia through massive support to seed, fertilizer and other agro-inputs value chains to reach a total of 40 million farmers. Part of the Bank's medium to long term response to the food crisis is to accelerate the implementation of the Feed Africa Strategy through the Mission 1 to 200 financing facility.
28. In response to a call from African leaders at a virtual High-Level Dialogue on Feeding Africa: Leadership to Scale Up Successful Innovations on 29th -30th April 2021, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the International Fund for Agriculture (IFAD) are designing a new, 5-year financing facility that would scale up climate-resilient infrastructure and proven agricultural technologies. Key components of Mission 1 for 200 include (i) Seed systems support for scaling up of food production technologies; (ii) Large Scale Demonstrations (LSD) and formation of commercially oriented farmer production clusters (with full technology

packages); (iii) Mobilize and de-risk financial institutions for lending for the food production plan; (iv) Irrigation and rural roads infrastructure to double area allocated to lowland wheat and rice production; and (v) Support financing for off-takers, storage, processing, commodity exchanges to assure vibrant marketplace.

29. Through our new Mission 1 For 200 financing facility and TAAT the Bank will address the structural problems that have kept Africa from accessing modern agricultural inputs, mechanization and critical infrastructure. This facility is mobilizing \$1 billion to produce enough food to feed an additional 200 million Africans by 2025. This is how the African Development Bank makes a difference where it matters most: we don't just talk — we walk our talk, roll up our sleeves and act.
30. From the Bank's experience in responding to food crises on the continent, various lessons to maximize agricultural productivity to feed Africa during and beyond the imminent food crisis have been incorporated in the Bank's African Emergency Food Production Facility.
31. Thank you for your attention.