

Webinar Report

Driving Transformational Change in Agri-Food System: A Multi-stakeholder Approach

Webinar Report,
by
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The 45 minute's webinar went live shortly after 3.00 pm EAT in May 29, 2019 from the Central teaching space, The University of Leeds, West Yorkshire, England. It was presented by Sithembile Ndema Mwamakamba (*AFRICAP Regional Policy Officer and University of Leeds, Cheney Fellow @FANRPAN*). The presentation acknowledged the major challenges facing smallholders, mainly stemming from lack of forethought or means to caution against agricultural shocks. The threats of hunger, changing tastes and demand, population, climate change, natural calamities, pests and diseases continue to put more pressure on global food security. The need for transformational change informed world leaders' convention that yielded sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2, 13, and 14 to drive the agenda.

At this point we need to ask ourselves:

“Can agriculture meet unprecedented demand for food in ways that ensure that the use of the natural resource base is sustainable, while containing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change?”

Pathways to sustainable food systems

1. *Technology transfer*: New innovations in agricultural biotechnology, digitization and data analytics
2. *Business collaborations*: Need for decentralized business models at different levels comprising of local, regional and global multi-stakeholder collaborations
3. *Shifting value drivers*: companies increasingly emphasize on “responsible investment” investment that is sensitive about the communities social and economic welfare while conserving the environment

Focusing on multi-stakeholder collaboration;-

There is a growing acknowledgement that complex multi-dimensional issues such as food security and nutrition need cross-sectoral and holistic approaches, pooling together the resources, knowledge and expertise.

Important lessons can be adapted from a report by *The High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE Report 13, June 2013)* on Food Security and Nutrition. The report resulted from a review of over 200 institutions, programs, and multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as the case of FANRPAN

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

FANRPAN was formed in 1994 by the Ministries of Agriculture from eight countries in Eastern and Southern African and registered in Zimbabwe in 2003. This is an autonomous, non-profit, pan-African scientific network. The network involves governments and their agencies, research institutions, civil and farmer organizations, among other actors; both public and private.

In the platform, shared understanding of an issue backed by research, emerging among different stakeholders can initiate policy advocacy at national and/or regional levels.

The network is mandated to co-ordinate policy research and dialogue and recommends strategies for promoting food, agriculture and natural resources sectors in Africa. Their mandate surrounds research and development, dissemination and technical support, policy making, advocacy and dialogue. This is envisioned to a resilient African agriculture and food systems, securing prosperity and health for all.

Opportunities to address Africa's agricultural challenge

Policy leadership must ensure implementation of sound policies achieve three things:- 1) agricultural transformation and sustained growth, 2) capacity development 3) funding and institutional support. For this to be achieved, there must be deliberate multi-stakeholder collaboration and programs.

Professional networks

Professional networks must strategize and align their goals to policy development and advocacy that promote food and nutrition security in a sustainable way while addressing climate change.

FANRPAN developed region specific policy development and advocacy while building capacities for governments. They continue to promote nutrition by improving livestock production and empowering people to invest in nutrition sensitive food systems. The network has also made significant improvement in climate change awareness and sustain resource access. Their strategic objectives are marked at three different levels, namely; technical support, behavioral influence, and financial support. It is evident that such arrangements draws strength from partnerships.

Flagship Programmes: Climate change resilient sustainable food systems in Africa

Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Agricultural and Food-system Resilience: Increasing Capacity and Advising Policy (AFRICAP)

GCRF is a £1.5 billion fund by the UK Government announced in 2015 to support research that addresses the challenges facing developing countries.

The GCRF- AFRICAP project team, includes the University of Leeds, University of Aberdeen, the UK Met Office, the FANRPAN and Chatham House. It encompasses expertise in rural livelihoods, agriculture, ecology, climate, soils, water, land use, post-harvest losses, nutrition and health, and policy and institutional analysis.

GCRF-AFRICAP builds capacities for the identification and implementation of evidence based policy pathways towards SDG-compliant and climate smart agri-food systems. Among other objectives, the program develops baselines, assess knowledge gaps, assess system priorities and explore the long term SDG-compliance of pathways of change.

The flagship programme identifies climate smart agriculture and food systems of priority, develops strategies within existing national policy framework and analyzes

implementation and processes. The program has covered four African countries (Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi and South Africa).

This collaboration model, and its implementation, creates synergies of extensive policy networks and convention power, both at regional level (FANRPAN) and, international (Chatham House). This program teams up with established development initiatives, such as the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture (GACSA), the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS), Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (ACSAA) and the African Union/New Partnership for Africa's Development (AU/NEPAD).