

Advocacy Agriculture policy and budgeting

Report advocacy on the African Union Summit on Agriculture held on Thursday, 2nd July 2009 at the Pan Afrique Hotel in Nairobi at 3.30 pm

On 26th June 2009, on behalf of ESAFF, I received an invitation from ACORD to join the Panel of Presenters at a Public Dialogue forum that was to be held at a Nairobi hotel. Our role was to talk on 'Small Scale farmers and their role in determining the right to food'. There were other five panelists representing their organizations that were invited along with us.

The organizers of this forum who were from the regional civil society organizations (ACORD, Action Aid, FEMNET, Oxfam and World Vision) came together to broaden societal dialogue on investing in African Agriculture.

Background of the Forum

The 13th AU summit, brought together Heads of state, ministers and government officials from all over Africa to discuss strategies for addressing '*Investing in Agriculture for Economic Growth and Food Security*'. The summit that took place between 24th June and 3rd July in Sirte, Libya that was brought about by the passing of an agreed AU Member states deadline of 10% budgetary allocations to agriculture by 2008. If that target had been attained it would have been a significant increase from the current average of 4-5%. This is seen as the most important Summit in redefining the future of African agriculture after the Maputo Summit of 2003.

The following sub themes were also discussed at the summit:

1. Climate Change: Opportunities for enhanced investments and growth of African Agriculture
2. Regional Agriculture trade and market systems: Issues and challenges for stimulating economic transformation and growth in Africa
3. Investment Financing: Making African Agriculture a viable investment option
4. Stimulating participation of the ultra-poor in rural economic activities.

Africa has the cruel irony of being the region of the world with the highest proportion of chronically hungry people whilst also having the highest proportion of working people engaged in growing food and in other areas of agriculture. Even before the food price shock in 2008, one in three people in sub-Saharan Africa were living with constant hunger. The recent food price and financial crises have sunk an additional 28 million Africans into poverty. Yet agriculture is claimed to be the mainstay for the large majority of the population, employing 60% of the total labor force, of which between 70-80% are women.

Our food systems have excluded the vast majority of those involved in producing food and feeding people from formulating food and agriculture policies - women, smallholder farmers, indigenous people, migrants, artisanal fisherfolk, agricultural and fishery laborers, pastoralists and forest dwellers. It is vital that the people have a voice in determining policies that affect everyone's lives on such a fundamental level as the right to food.

Increased investment in agriculture must include targeted investment in small scale farming, and in particular providing incentives to women small-scale farmers, building the entrepreneurship capacity of women to engage in agribusiness and grow cash crops, and ensuring that State investments in social protection are not sacrificed.

Africa is a continent with immense natural resources yet its people remain hungry. In recognizing

that agriculture can be an engine of growth for the continent, African leaders to the summit can take the first concrete step to ascertaining Africa's food sovereignty and economic growth.

The Rationale and Objectives of the Panel Discussions

African civil society participation and engagement in every summit of the Africa union has seen them maintain significant influence in addressing decision makers on behalf of citizens of the continent. However, unlike previous summits African civil society seeking to participate in Libya has experienced difficulty accessing the summit location and their presence and engagement at the summit is expected to be low.

In order to ensure the active involvement of African citizens in driving the AU agenda, The public discussion involved structured debate as well as collation of views amongst stakeholders in the region on the theme of the AU summit.

In addition, the public discussion sought to build on recent pre-summit civil society forums as well as AU Summit targeted statements addressing concerns surrounding land reform, pro-poor financing of agriculture, rural development and involvement of women and children to ensure improved access to food and agricultural resources.

The objectives of the public discussion include:

- ~ Increasing public interest and engagement around the causes and impacts of the food crises within their contexts
- ~ Creating an understanding of the significant role of small scale farmers in attaining Africa's food sovereignty and specifically determining citizens' right to food
- ~ Providing insight and discussion on the AU land policy expected to be adopted at the Libya Summit
- ~ Providing a platform for stimulating alternative ideas and perspectives for solutions to Africa's Food and Agriculture crises

Proposed Format:

The Public Forum took the format of a panel discussion in plenary aimed to stimulate interactive debate and exchange of ideas. The discussions were aided by brief panel presentations as listed here below.

Time Forum Sessions Speaker

15.30 - 16.00 - Welcome and refreshments

16.00 - 16.30 - Panel introductions

- An overview of the global food crisis, its causes and effects, and the need for citizenship involvement in the decision making process to address it

Chair-Brian Kagoro

John Mungai-CAADP Coordinator, Min of Agriculture

16.30 - 16.50

- The impact of investment in agriculture and the structure of agricultural financing on food sovereignty

Brian Kagoro-Pan Africa Policy Manager, Action Aid International
16.50 - 17.10

- Small-scale farmers and their role in determining the right to food.
- Looking at the issues of female participation and addressing agriculture for child health

Moses Shaha-ESAFF Regional General Secretary
Hellen Yego-Woman farmer in the Rift Valley
17.10 - 17.30

- AU Land Policy - addressing land rights and tenure, and dealing with the land leasing question

Nancy Abisai-Shelter Forum
17.30 - 18.00

- Open floor and question time

Chair-Brian Kagoro

Quick Reads:

- Scriptoria, *Introducing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP)*. CAADP, 2008, p2. Available at www.nepad-caadp.net/pdf/CAADP_brochure1_visual.pdf

At 6.am on the morning of 26th, I attended a brief appearance on the BBC's morning radio Swahili 'good Morning Africa' programme at their studios in Nairobi, where the short interview dwelt on the inclusion of farmers in the budgeting process and the honouring of the Maputo declaration of 2003 by African governments and what has been achieved.

A quick snap with BBC's Eastern Africa Radio Presenters- Ms Dinah Gahamanyi on my right and Ms. Caroline Karobia at their Nairobi studios.

Here below is the full ESAFF Presentation:

Small Scale Farmers and their Role in Determining the Right to Food

As presented during the Public Dialogue Forum on the Africa Union Summit on Agriculture

PAN AFRICA HOTEL, VALLEY ROAD, NAIROBI
2nd July 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you all for coming to this dialogue forum.

I am Moses Shaha, a small scale farmer, farming in Kilifi. I have 26 acres in which I grow maize, legumes, bananas, cashewnuts, coconuts, citrus, tubers, some climbers and crawler plants, all of course when the weather allows.

I am also the founder national chairman of the Kenya Small Scale Farmers Forum-KESSFF and the general secretary of the Eastern and Southern Africa small scale Farmers Forum-ESAFF, based in Morogoro, United Republic of Tanzania.

- ESAFF has a long history since 2002.

ESAFF is a farmer led, farmer owned and farmer managed organization.

After a long 5 year struggle, ESAFF is now registered in Tanzania and is operational in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho, South Africa, Rwanda, Seychelles and Burundi

-This is a historical moment as SSF have gotten a rare opportunity to add their voice to the ongoing AU meeting.

-My presentation today will focus on the;

- (1). Introduction in which I will talk about the status of SSF,
- (2). Our role in determining the right to food in Africa,
- (3). ESAFF's recommendations to the right to food,
- (4). I will conclude by proposing to you as the way forward and lastly
- (5). Our Call.

1. Introduction

1.1 It is estimated that Africa has the highest proportion of chronically hungry people with a big majority of her populations engaged in growing food and in other areas of agriculture. One in three people in sub-Saharan Africa are living with perpetual hunger, an after effect of the recent food price increases that has further aggravated the already hopeless situation. An estimated 28 million Africans have been thrust into a deeper poverty situation. Yet our African governments has bragged over the 5 decades of independence that agriculture remains to be the mainstay for the large majority of the population, employing 60-80% of the total labour force, of which a large majority is women expended labour.

2. Food Sovereignty/Food Security

When speaking of the struggle to attain Food Security and or Food Sovereignty in eastern and southern Africa farmers mean the following;

The right to define their own agricultural practice, fishing, environmental

conservation, seed/food preservation, soil fertility methodologies, preservation of water catchment sources, which are sound ecologically, economically, socially, and culturally appropriate to our unique circumstances.

3. Defining food Security

There are many definition of food security. The food and agriculture organization (FAO) definition was developed during the world food summit in 1996. It stresses on the accessibility of food by people at all the time.

According to the World Food Summit 1996, food security is ensured; **when all people at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and health lifestyle”**

Thus food security entails the following:

- **its availability:** which consists of the sum of domestic food production and food imports both commercial and food aid
- **Food access:** which is all about people's entitlements to food, the amount they can produce and the amount they can purchase or receive.
- **Food use and utilization:** which is both the way of food is preparation and distribution between individuals within the household or family and the individual capacity to absorb and utilize nutrients in the food consumed.

4. What is sound sustainable agriculture?

It is the farming practice that emphasizes the uses of local or internal resources and knowledge rather than being over-reliant on external inputs. It treats agriculture as a managed part of the wider ecology that harnesses natural processes, minimizes environmental degradation, and involves collective learning, decision-making and action.

Sustainable agriculture aims to serve the needs of the farmer and the local community and markets for local food security, for local cultural needs and preferences and for more equitable distribution of assets, income and influence.

2. Our (farmer's) role in Determining the Right to Food

2.1 We small scale farmers in the region demand the following:

- **Participation in policy making regarding small scale farmers and rural development** from grassroot level, district, national and international levels.

- **Improvements of Food Security by increasing support** to smallholder farmers to contribute more meaningfully to food security activities in the region through improved access to the necessary resources, better government policies and sustainable agricultural practices.

- **Trade and marketing** to ensure smallholder farmers to understand access and influence markets of agricultural produces.

We need appropriate and accepted agriculture technologies that will enhance our rights to own seeds and to what we farm (bearing in mind that farming is our culture and our way of life)

- **To ensure that Gender, HIV/AIDS and Youth** issues are mainstreamed in actions of farmers at all levels.

3. ESAFF's recommendations for food security and food sovereignty

Small-scale farmers are Africa's last line of defense for food security and food sovereignty. Therefore:

3.1 small scale farmers should be supported in building strong institutions which are farmers initiated, farmer led, farmer owned and farmer controlled and managed.

3.2 small scale farmers should be supported on issues pertaining to policies on food production, resources allocation, pursuing the type of agriculture practice they favour to be food secure and eventually to be sovereign on food. Trade at local, national and international levels.

3.3 Africa's small scale farmers should be empowered to empower themselves so that they are able to make informed choices and real alternatives that offer meaningful solutions to alleviate hunger and poverty in a socially just and ecologically sustainable ways.

3.4 Small scale farmers should be facilitated with an enabled environment to enable to struggle for sound agricultural and rural development policies, for the improvement of rural infrastructures and social services, education, affordable health services, periodic training and exposure to marketing opportunities.

3.5 Financial institutions, NGOs, the relevant UN agencies, the AU, the relevant regional bodies as well as our ministries of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, finance, environment, trade, research and donor communities should come out to spell their accessibility to their existing tools helpful to small scale farmers.

3.6 African governments should be advised to immediately impose a moratorium on the introduction of transgenic food crops in all its forms. GMOs have no place whatsoever in African agriculture and conditionalities attached.

(4). Way forward on how to increase food security/sovereignty

Input at farming level

(i) Putting in place sound policies on food security and rural development as stipulated in the Maputo Declaration of July 2003 on agriculture and food security that was further adopted by the SADC countries as the Dar es Salaam declaration on agriculture and food security on May 2004 where heads of states and governments further committed themselves to set aside at least 10% of their national budgets for agriculture by 2009.

(ii) Improving rural infrastructure and social services (rural access roads, health services, schools, energy, markets and market information, farmers' access to credit).

(iii) Promoting farmer friendly micro credit schemes and practice irrigation in dry lands of the region.

(iv) Promoting post harvest management and ecological farming (permaculture)

Marketing and trade level

(i) Making trade fair at local/community, national and regional level and between rich and poor countries.

(ii) Protection of internal markets for small farmers against established farmers of the West.

Participation level

(i) Increasing people's participation in formulation, implementing and monitoring of policies.

(ii) Promoting agriculture as a business, setting marketing structures and promoting small scale agro processing, which will indeed need initial protection as seen elsewhere, e.g., in Europe, South East Asia, etc.

(iii) Intensifying demand driven rural training and research as well as range land development and management for the pastoral communities.

(5). Our Call

Governments and the private sector in the region must take concerted efforts and resources to ensure the achievements of sustainable agriculture and rural development. Urgent and increased financial support is needed for farmer led research on crop development, animal husbandry, poultry, beekeeping, fisheries, horticulture, etc.

Improved rural infrastructure and essential services in rural areas such as affordable health care, access to water, energy and education is vital.

The 10% proposed budget increases by African governments should be honoured as committed by our African governments.

But more important, resources should come from within the tax paying citizens, while small scale farmer's opinions should be sought and or involved in policy formulation and monitoring of the utilization of such resources.

Thank You for listening