



CONCEPT NOTE

AU Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries & Aquaculture

28 April – 02 May 2014
African Union Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Theme

“Transforming Africa’s Agriculture for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods through Harnessing Opportunities for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development”



1. INTRODUCTION

Crafting vibrant, equitable and sustainable agricultural and rural development in Africa requires strategic investments in agriculture and in social and economic infrastructure to enable rural communities engage in dynamic and rewarding economic activities. To help meet these goals in a coherent and coordinated manner, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with its partners, is organizing an AU Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries & Aquaculture. The Conference is scheduled to take place from 28 April to 02 May 2014 at the AU Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In addition to the Ministers responsible for agriculture, rural development, fisheries & aquaculture, the joint conference is expected to bring together Bureau chairs of AU Ministerial bodies in charge of trade, infrastructure, health, science & technology, gender, economy & finance, industry, environment, water, meteorology as well as, high-level representatives of key stakeholders such as the private sector, civil society organisations, the media, Regional Economic Communities, parliaments, multilateral and bilateral organisations. It facilitates an inclusive and interactive dialogue on the theme of the 2014 Year of Agriculture and Food Security: transforming Africa's agriculture for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods through harnessing opportunities for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

This Concept Note provides the background to the joint Ministerial conference, the issues to be discussed, the objectives, expected outcomes as well as structure of the conference.

2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government decided that 2014 be commemorated as “Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, Marking 10th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) (Decision (Assembly/AU/ Dec.449 (XIX))). Accordingly, the Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa was launched on January 30, 2014 during the 22nd Assembly of the Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme “*Transforming Africa's Agriculture for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods: Harnessing Opportunities for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development*”.

A series of relevant events have been lined up to take place throughout the year targeting a broad spectrum of audience. These events will be used as important platforms for advocacy, communication, fostering partnerships and renewing commitments for actions,



results and for mutual accountability, in advancing agricultural transformation through sustaining the CAADP momentum. At regional level, RECs are encouraged to take lead in organising events on the theme. In addition, forums with representation of stakeholders (women groups, youth groups, farmer organizations, etc.) are encouraged and facilitated to organize events relevant to their respective concerns.

A key milestone will be the planned June 2014 debate at the AU Summit on the theme of the Year, which is expected to adopt a declaration outlining concrete goals, targets and associated commitments for the next decade. The Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries & Aquaculture is one of the key events to be organized by the African Union Commission, that will inform and contribute to the debate at the Summit. The Joint Ministerial Conference will also be attended by Bureau Chairs of the AU Ministerial Conferences on Water (AMCOW), Environment (AMCEN), Meteorology (AMCOMET), Science and Technology (AMCOST), Trade, Infrastructure, Industry, Gender, Finance and Economy. In addition, representatives of key stakeholders such as the RECs, technical and donor partners, the private sector, civil society organisations, the media will be invited to the conference, with a view to facilitating an interactive and constructive dialogue on strategic issues, goals and targets and commitments for a successful agricultural transformation. The outcome of the conference will subsequently be submitted to the AU policy organs for consideration and further guidance.

In order to shape the key events leading to the June 2014 Summit of the African Union, and set forth the salient outcomes of the 10th CAADP PP to be held from 18-23 March 2014, the Joint Ministerial Conference fosters engagements and discussions that will be guided along the broader thematic areas as defined in the CAADP Results Framework, which would later be developed into support programs.

During the last ten years of CAADP existence, there has been significant growth in Africa's largely agrarian economies with a tangible and sustainable impact on improving agricultural production and productivity, contributing to wealth and job creation, as well as enabling the expansion of exports. The performance of Africa's agriculture has been encouraging – with annual agricultural GDP growth having averaged at about 4 *per cent* since 2003 – well above the agricultural GDP growth rates in previous decades. It is absolutely necessary to sustain the momentum of such a positive change and development taking place in Africa well into the next decade.

CAADP has enabled a number of Member States to intervene, not only in areas of improving agricultural production and productivity and sustainable land management, but also significant measures have been undertaken to: i) enhance accessibility to markets; ii)



improving food storage facilities; iii) enabling small holder farmers to access financial facilities, farm inputs and technologies; iv) improving risk management against food insecurity; v) improving resilience of poor populations against shocks; and vi) improving nutritional outcomes. Yet, evidence still suggests that further improvement is critical in all these areas to enable millions of Africans grow out of poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, to a certain level of economic prosperity.

Furthermore, climate change-related events will not only severely impact the productivity of Africa's agriculture, but also has serious consequences on rural infrastructure, market access and general state of the economies and food and nutrition security outcomes. In particular, the changing frequency and intensity of droughts, floods, and heat waves as a result of climate change, will negatively impact rural livelihoods. Improving the resilience to climate change-related shocks and extreme events is a vital part of any effective agricultural investment planning. Therefore, it is critical to invest in rural development, infrastructure and enhanced resilience in order to enhance adaptation to climate changes. A combination of policy adjustments and investments in these services is fundamental.

The theme is structured into the following sub-themes to provide guidance:

- Agricultural Transformation for accelerating growth (production and productivity): Science agenda for agriculture in Africa.
- Harnessing markets and trade opportunities for transformation and shared prosperity.
- Enhancing investment financing in agriculture for transformation and shared prosperity.
- Food Security and Nutrition: towards ending hunger and malnutrition in Africa
- Enhancing Resilience of Africa's agriculture to climate change.

The focus of the theme on transformative change and development is formulated to reflect and contribute to the current deliberations and thinking in respect of the 'African Union Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want'. This will be highlighted in the keynote address and subsequent panel discussion during the interactive session of the Ministerial conference on the Agricultural Future We Want in the Context of the African Union Agenda 2063 –the Africa We Want.



3. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

3.1. Objectives:

The overall objectives of the AU Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries & Aquaculture is to review progress on investing in these sectors, especially efforts impacting on production and productivity, access to markets and competitiveness, innovation, resilience, and investment finance, and their implications on the achievement of the overarching goal of attaining food and nutrition security and poverty reduction on the continent. More specifically, the joint ministerial conference aims to attain the following enabling objectives:

- (i) Facilitate broad-based and inclusive consultation and dialogue among all relevant stakeholders on African agricultural transformation agenda, with special focus on agricultural and economy wide linkages;
- (ii) Review achievements towards the strategic goals as identified by CAADP Pillars, specifically raising competitiveness and seizing opportunities in domestic, regional and international markets, status of investment in rural infrastructure, and development of value chains;
- (iii) Facilitate mutual learning and experience sharing among countries and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different actors responsible for implementing and investing in the different CAADP Pillars with a view to strengthening country engagement and ownership;
- (iv) Identify synergies, linkages and complementarities in on-going agriculture and rural development initiatives and agree on areas of immediate follow up actions at country, regional and continental levels; and
- (v) Agree on coordination mechanisms between the agricultural sector and other relevant sector ministries at Member State level, which are also linked to those at REC level.

3.2. Expected outcomes:

The expected outcomes of the Joint Ministerial Conference are:

- (i) Consensus on strategic goals, targets and set of commitments and strategies for driving agricultural transformation agenda in the next decade.
- (ii) Agreement on common strategies for improved coordination of programmes linking agriculture and rural development and strengthening policy and institutional capacities for advancing agricultural transformation; and
- (iii) Identify flagship initiatives for possible scaling-up of best practices;



The Joint Conference is expected to adopt resolutions outlining specific set of goals, targets, and commitments, which will be submitted to the AU Policy Organs. It will also inform the debate of the June AU Summit on the theme.

4. FORMAT AND STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

The Joint Conference will have Ministerial segment that will be held on 1st and 2nd of May 2014, which will be preceded by a two day meeting of Senior Officials/Experts that will take place on 28th and 29th of April 2014 to examine the various documents and prepares their report to the Ministers.

A Stakeholders' Forum will be organised on 30 April 2014 to facilitate consultations and contribute to interactive Ministerial session that will be held on 1st of May 2014. The 30th of April 2014 will be used to prepare the reports of the Senior Officials/Experts to be submitted for consideration by Ministers. It will also be used for organising a series of key side meetings, events and exhibitions, which are being planned on the margins of the Conference.

4.1. Senior Officials/Experts Meeting:

There will be joint and parallel sessions for Experts/Senior Officials to facilitate deliberations and review of documents, these include:

Parallel Session 1A: The Agriculture and Rural Development Experts Session to review and consider reports – (please see draft agenda and programme of work).

Parallel Session 2: The Fisheries & Aquaculture Experts to review and consider documents and reports on Fisheries and Aquaculture (please see draft agenda and programme of work).

Joint Session of Experts/Senior Officials: to review and consider reports and issues on the theme.

The parallel and joint sessions of experts/senior officials will be conducted on 28-29 April 2014. The Ministerial sessions will follow on 1st and 2nd May 2012.

4.2. The Joint Ministerial Session:

The two days Ministerial session will be conducted in a format that on the one hand facilitates an inclusive and interactive conversations and dialogue among the



ministers as well as between the ministers and key strategic stakeholders, and on the other hand allows the ministers to consider strategic reports and items that warrant their considerations in a closed session. Hence, the 1st day of the conference will be devoted to an open interactive session, while the 2nd and final day will be devoted to a closed session (please see draft agenda and programme of work).

5. LOCATION, MEETING DATE AND ARRANGEMENTS

The joint Ministerial Conference of Ministers is scheduled to take place from 28 April to 02 May 2014 hosted by the African Union Commission at the African Union Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

6. COMMUNICATION PRODUCTS: PRESS, INFORMATION, SIDE EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS

An information desk will be available for the duration of the Conference. This may also allow participants to display and distribute literature and information materials. Participants are invited and highly encouraged to take this opportunity to disseminate relevant information. For organizations intending to share information materials, please contact jilomboc@africa-union.org to reserve a space.

There will be a press conference by Ministers as well as by relevant AUC officials. Appropriate messages will be shared around the main themes and sub-themes of the Year of Agriculture and Food Security. Side events and exhibitions will also be organised by partners willing to showcase on best practices, with special preference to agricultural and rural livelihood development initiatives through infrastructure development.

7. ONLINE REGISTRATION PORTAL AND INQUIRIES

Participants are welcome to register through the AU Commission website: <http://pages.au.int/caadpyoa>. For any additional information about the joint Ministerial Conference, please contact: Dr. Janet Edeme, African Union Commission, Tel.: +251 115 182855; EdemeJ@africa-union.org; and/or Boaz B. Keizire, African Union Commission, Tel.: +251 115 182871 (Office); +251 910 968076 (mobile); KeizireB@africa-union.org



Draft Agenda and Programme of Work

AU Joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries & Aquaculture: April – 02 May 2014; AUCC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

A: Senior Officials/Experts Sessions: Day 1 and 2: 28-29 April 2014

1. Opening session:

- Constitution of the Bureau;
- Adoption of the agenda and programme of work;
- Presentation of the theme: Transforming Africa's Agriculture for Shared Prosperity and Sustainable Development.

Parallel sessions:

Parallel Session I: Senior Officials of Agriculture and Rural Development:

Presentation and Discussion on sub-themes:

- Agricultural Transformation for accelerating growth: Science agenda for agriculture in Africa.
- Harnessing markets and trade opportunities for transformation and shared prosperity.
- Enhancing investment in agriculture for transformation and shared prosperity.
- Food Security and Nutrition
- Enhancing Resilience of Africa's agriculture to climate change.

Parallel Session II: Senior Officials of Fisheries and Aquaculture:

Presentation and Discussion on:

- Progress of implementation of the Decision of CAMFA I.
- Policy Framework and Reform Strategy for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa (African Fisheries Reform Mechanism, Reform of the Aquaculture Network in Africa, Pan African Strategy – data collection and dissemination, Stop illegal fishing, lesson learnt and best practices)
- Advancing fisheries reforms within the CAADP Momentum Results Framework;
- Building the African voice: evidence for change

2. Consideration and adoption of Senior Officials' Reports and recommendations (to be held on Day 3, 30 April 2014)



B: Ministerial Sessions: Day 4&5 - 01-02 April 2014

1. Opening session:

- Welcome Statement – AUC Chairperson
- Remarks - Partners
- Official Opening - Minister from Host Country
- Constitution of the Bureau
- Adoption of agenda and programme of work

2. Interactive Session I:

- Briefing on Africa Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want.
- Keynote Address: The Agriculture Future We Want: Prospects and Outlook on transforming Africa's Agriculture for Accelerated Growth, Shared Prosperity and Sustainable Development in the context of African Union Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want, by AUC Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture
- Panel Discussion: Defining and embracing success: the goals and targets that we can achieve by 2025, and key drivers of change and transformation: what they are and how they work.

3. Interactive Session II:

- Keynote Address: Making it Happen: Realizing Agricultural Transformation for Accelerated Growth, Shared Prosperity and Sustainable Development, by CEO of NPCA
- Panel Discussion
The actions that we must continue deepening to sustain momentum (those actions delivering promising results), and the actions that we should take differently for a successful transformational change.

4. Closed Sessions

- Consideration of Senior Officials' Report – Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries & Aquaculture (from Days 1 & 2)
- Consideration of Recommendations from Interactive Sessions (from Day 4)
- Consideration of proposal to operationalise the AU Decision on Specialized Technical Committees (STCs) – the STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.

5. Closing Session

- Consideration and adoption of Ministerial Resolutions



- Official closing

C. Day 3 (30 April 2014)

- High level roundtable on Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Stakeholders Forum: Stakeholders to be facilitated to hold their consultation sessions.