

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### Inaugural dialogue “Cultivate Africa”

#### ***“Galvanizing Partnerships for Promoting Resilient Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa in the Shadow of the Covid-19 Pandemic”***

#### INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA

**WHAT:** Inaugural dialogue “Cultivate Africa”

**WHEN:** 17 – 18 November 2020

**TIME:** *Day One:* 06:00-12:30 GMT | *Day Two:* 06:00-12:30 GMT

**WHERE:** Virtual platform SpotMe.

Register in advance for this meeting at <https://www.cultivate-africa.org/>

**WHO:** The African Union Commission (AUC), in partnership with Hallpax, are preparing to host “Cultivate-Africa Partnership Dialog” under the theme ***“Galvanizing Partnership for Promoting Resilient Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa in the Shadow of the COVID-19 Pandemic”***, on **November 17 &18, 2020**.

Organized via a virtual platform, the event will bring together high-level participants, including current and former Heads of State and Government, heads of international and regional organizations, private sector/business leaders, farmer associations, farmers, civil society organizations, academic and research institutions, international financial institutions and foundations, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), ministers and accomplished technical experts. Technical discussions will be themed along eight (8) tracks as follows:

- Government and Policy Track
- Social Protection Track
- Domestic Market Track
- Intra-Africa Trade Track
- Supply Chain Track
- Technology and Innovation Track
- Women and Agriculture Track
- Agribusiness and Finance Track

### Background

On April 16, 2020 Ministers of Agriculture of the African Union Member States met virtually in the wake of the growing challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on health, food and nutrition security and broad socio-economic conditions in Africa. They noted that COVID-19 could negatively impact agricultural development, food

supply and nutrition in the region. Needless to mention, agriculture is highly labor intensive in Africa; the restriction of people's movement may create a shortage of workers. It was also noted that trade in agricultural commodities and services could be affected due to restriction of movement and movement of transportation. In particular, distribution, market access and trade in perishable horticulture products and meat and dairy products could also become a significant challenge.

In addition to local production and distribution issues, urban areas, landlocked countries, developing islands and countries that depend on food import become more vulnerable. International and regional trade logistics, coupled with global production shortage, could result in sharply reduced supply of commodities and rises in food price. According to COVID-19 in Africa: Protecting Lives and Economies, a report published by United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in April 2020, the ripple effect will affect millions of smallholder farmers. A downward trend in demand pressure has already reduced prices for coffee, tea and cocoa. Small scale farmers are the backbones of coffee and tea production in major coffee producing countries, making the ripple effect significant on small scale farmers. The horticulture and fresh cut flowers sector is severely hit by COVID-19, leading to losses in export revenues and layoffs. The crisis is also affecting the finance sector due to outstanding loans, advanced to companies operating in the horticulture sector. It is in this regard that a well-structured dialog has been conceived in order to address the interconnected challenges with a view of providing effective solutions to the threats of COVID-19 pandemic on the Agriculture Industry in Africa.

A cross-sectoral dialog will strengthen understanding and reinforce efforts for tackling immediate and long-term challenges facing agriculture and food systems in Africa, and in identifying sustainable development plans. The Cultivate-Africa Dialog will feature eight main thematic areas: Government & Policy, Social Protection, Domestic Market, Intra-Africa Trade, Supply Chain, Technology & Innovation, Women & Agriculture, and Agribusiness & Finance. The planned dialog will be the first in a series starting with the Eastern and Southern African regions. This will be followed by another one which will cover the West African, Central Africa and Northern Africa Regions if resources permit.

## **Purpose and Objectives**

The main objective of the Cultivate-Africa Dialog is to unlock a concerted multi-stakeholder partnership toward a sustained and effective response leading to averting potential adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition and food systems (production, distribution, trading and market access of agricultural commodities and services). The enabling objectives of the dialog will be three folds:

1. To take stock and document lessons learnt from sharing of experiences and good practices among partners and stakeholders on effective approaches that helped governments overcome or control the challenges arising from major crises and epidemics;
2. To discuss and agree on common strategies and realistic instruments for bringing different partners and stakeholders together and for consolidating their efforts in support and complementing governments in the Eastern and Southern Africa

regions so as to effectively address the potential effects of the pandemic; and

3. To enhance the visibility of the different stakeholders and effectiveness of the roles they play in complementing and assisting Member States governments to respond well in averting the potential effects of the pandemic.

## **6. Expected Value-Addition and Opportunities**

Cultivate-Africa Dialog is expected to add value by resulting in the following outcomes:

1. A set of innovative approaches for consolidating regional and in-country partnerships among stakeholders to play visible and effective roles in the fight against effects of the pandemic on agriculture and food systems in Africa.
2. A set of strategies established to be effective and successful which can be advocated to governments of Member States to prioritize in their contingency plans for responding to the pandemic.
3. An agreement on creation and operationalization of regional (REC-level) platforms for sharing action plans, reports, updates and relevant information on activities and developments across AU Member States, to provide continuous knowledge and experience sharing and garnering consensus on new solutions to emerging challenges.

## **Expected Opportunities**

- Analysis of current strategies and systems and to what extent they have contributed in effectively addressing challenges of the Agriculture Industry
- Analysis of current and potential role of different stakeholders in response to the COVID-19 crisis
- Assessment of opportunities and challenges in achieving an effective response to the COVID-19 crisis
- Exchange of experience and lessons learned from effective response to COVID-19
- Opportunity for stakeholder engagement ---- governments, farmers, aid agencies, financial institutions, technology experts
- Opportunity to promote new regional partnerships and response effort

## **This event is supported by:**

- CGIAR, Gender Platform
- AfricaRe
- Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations
- African Development Bank Group
- UNCDF
- Mercy Corps
- FANRPAN

- Digital Green

***For More Information on the event:***

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- **Dr. Simplicie Nualala**, Head of Agriculture and Food Security , Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission
- **Dr. Laila Lokosang**, CAADP Pillar III Adviser, Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission
- **Madysen Gurley**, Event Officer at Hallpax
- **Mahider Tadesse**, Founder of Hallpax

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