



## Engaging Smallholders through Investments in Agriculture

2014 is the Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa. This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme](#) (CAADP) and provides an opportunity for communities, state and non-state actors to express their views on what is working, what challenges remain, and what our priorities should be for the next decade.

### **The elimination of hunger and reduction of poverty through agriculture remains our goal.**

We bring to this next decade a clear sense of how far we have come, and also how much we have left to do. We must focus more intently on:

- Advancing implementation of country plans on the ground
- Getting results and measuring our impact
- Supporting inclusive dialogue and broad consultation

Public sector funding - from African governments as well as development partners - remains strong. These funds are enabling the implementation of CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans, including through significant direct support to smallholder farmers. Our reach to smallholders through public sector efforts is expanded, but not replaced, by complementary private investments in the New Alliance.

### **But we can do more.**

We must pursue innovative approaches to achieve our development objectives and reach out to new partners. The [New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition](#) is an example of such a new model.

Positive economic trends in many African countries are bringing new opportunities to smallholder farmers, entrepreneurs and African and international companies. Participating companies agree to partner in the New Alliance *because* they wish to partner with smallholder farmers. As just one example, in Ghana, grain processor Premium Foods provides nucleus farmers financial guarantees that allow them to supply inputs to out-growers on credit. The project has established a more reliable market for farmers through the immediate purchase of harvested grain, has reduced farmers' postharvest losses by 40 percent, and could increase their incomes by up to 80 percent

By working responsibly with these actors, we can expand our reach, sustain our progress, and ultimately achieve our goals to cut hunger and poverty in Africa.

In this Year of Agriculture and throughout the next decade, we must continue to monitor our efforts and measure our progress. The [2013–2014 Progress Report](#) for the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition is an important part of mutual accountability and transparency under CAADP.

*The author is the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Erastus Mwencha. The article is adapted from the foreword of the 2013-2014 New Alliance Progress Report. Download the full report at <http://new-alliance.org>.*