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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Renewed Push to Boost Agriculture Investments in Kenya

Kenya takes stock of agriculture progress to date, and outlines way forward to improve economic growth, reduce food imports, and boost nutrition

December 8, 2016 (Nairobi, Kenya)— The Kenyan Government launched a critical phase of its ambitious agriculture development strategy yesterday as influential public and private sector partners joined senior officials from the African Union Commission (AUC) and major development partners to agree on a roadmap for making crop and livestock production a powerful engine for economic growth in Kenya.

The focus of the three-day meeting—organized in partnership with the AUC and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Agency— is to evaluate and refine Kenya’s National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP), the core blueprint for revitalizing crop, livestock and fisheries production in Kenya. Agriculture employs 75 percent of Kenyans but has yet to reach its potential to boost food security, nutrition and incomes—particularly for the country’s poorest people.

“The NAIP remains a central tool for the [Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme \(CAADP\)](#) implementation as it translates the continental and country aspirations into an evidence based plan with clear targets, budgets and mutual accountability,” said AUC’s Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E Tumusiime Rhoda Peace. “It’s inspiring to see such a diverse group come together to determine exactly how Kenya is going to generate the investments required to energize a sector that embodies the hope for a better future for all Kenyans.”

She added that the NAIP process was in line with the aspirations of Africa’s Agenda 2063; *a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.*

The gathering is one of a series of meetings being held over the next year across Africa to revamp national agriculture investment plans linked to the CAADP process. The CAADP was endorsed by African Leaders in 2003 and then reaffirmed and expanded at the 2014 AU Heads of State and Government Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. CAADP is an African led and owned framework that commits African countries to increase public sector spending on agriculture to at least 10 percent of national budgets, among others, while embracing reforms that will attract more investments from the private sector.

Leading the assessment of Kenya's agriculture investment plan is the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, Hon. Willy Bett. Ministry officials were joined at the meeting by senior colleagues from other ministries that have a significant stake in spurring progress in Kenyan agriculture.

Other participants included representatives from key development partners, donor governments, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank, and the African Development Bank. Also in attendance were county government officials from across Kenya and representatives from agriculture businesses and civil society groups that work in Kenya, including the Nairobi-based Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Africa Lead, Grow Africa and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

"It's a major achievement to assemble such a broad group of investors and allies who all understand that there is an impressive array of agriculture opportunities in Kenya," said CS Bett. "It sends a signal to our farmers and to all of the citizens of Kenya that the Government is moving aggressively to generate investments that will bring rapid progress in fields, pastures, fisheries and food markets across the country."

Informing the discussion of the investment strategy is a soon to be released assessment of Kenya's progress to date that finds increased spending in agriculture is clearly boosting production and profits. But the analysis also finds that public sector investments in Kenya are still short of the commitment by CAADP signatories to allocate 10 percent of national budgets to agriculture. And it shows that while the annual growth in agricultural productivity has reached 4.8 percent in Kenya, that's still below the 6 percent CAADP target. Meanwhile, the analysis indicates that most of the economic growth in Kenya in recent years has been driven by sectors other than agriculture, evidence that agriculture has yet to reach its potential to deliver benefits across the economy, particularly for the poorest workers.

(According to the FAO, in sub-Saharan Africa, [growth driven by agriculture is up to 11 times more effective at reducing poverty](#) than growth generated by other sectors.)

The report also notes that the most valuable food crops in Kenya today are maize, potatoes, bananas, tea and mangoes. It also finds that though Kenya has made significant progress in reducing malnutrition, iron and vitamin A deficiency remain a major problem, especially for very young children. Yet at the same time, obesity is on the rise in Kenya.

Organizers of this week's investment strategy meeting expect to emerge with a more detailed roadmap that will include consensus on priorities as well as a detailed multi-year spending plan tied to a performance scorecard that can be used to publicly monitor progress.

"It's particularly important that we have a strategy that can drive greater investments from the private sector," Hon. Bett said. "Government commitments are crucial, but creating a more prosperous, food-secure future for Kenya requires a more entrepreneurial approach across the sector—in production, processing, inputs and marketing. That means attracting support for small and medium sized enterprises that can generate income and employment in rural communities."

About CAADP

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) was endorsed at the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit in July 2003. The overall goal of CAADP is to “Help African countries reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculture-led development, which eliminates hunger, reduces poverty and food insecurity, and enables expansion of exports.” CAADP is a growth-oriented agricultural development agenda, aimed at increasing agriculture growth rates to six percent per year to create the wealth needed for rural communities and households in Africa to prosper.

In June 2014, African leaders recommitted to the CAADP principles through the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods that was adopted by African Union Heads of State and Government at the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly. It commits leaders to a set of actions that will accelerate agricultural growth and transformation across Africa. In implementing CAADP, the AUC and the NEPAD Agency, work with RECs and AU Member States, African institutions, civil society and development partners to strengthen the agricultural sector, rural economies and the environment in order to improve the livelihoods of people in Africa to ensure food security and sound environmental management.