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Africa making major policy strides in agriculture



26th April 2018, Libreville, Gabon - Over 100 top African agricultural experts met in the Gabonese capital – Libreville, from April 23th, to assess lessons learned and policy implications from the inaugural Biennial Review (BR) Report on the implementation of the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. The report was presented to the AU Heads of State and Government at the AU Summit in January 2018.

Held at the auspices of the 14th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform (PP), the learning event was convened by the African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and other technical partners including AGRA, ReSAKSS and FAO. The two-day meeting heard that the continent is making major policy progress in agriculture, as spelt out in the AU's Malabo Declaration.

One resounding message at the meeting was that the inaugural BR report, the first of its kind in Africa, is a success. Not least because it was the first attempt at collecting data across the continent with 47 Member States out of 55 producing data that informed the reporting.

The report represents a definite success for Africa's agriculture. It captured the continent's agricultural progress based on a pan-African data collection exercise led by the African Union Commission's Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA), NEPAD Agency and Regional Economic Communities in collaboration with technical partners. Countries were assessed on the seven commitments in the Malabo Declaration, across 43 indicators.

“The biennial review report is an important tool for monitoring the progress we are making. It is a ground-breaking development for the continent’s agricultural transformation. That we collected 78 per cent of the data needed is very encouraging and we will build on this in the next reporting cycle,” said Dr. Godfrey Bahigwa, Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture at the AUC.

The report revealed that only 20 of the 47 Member States that reported are on track towards achieving the commitments set out in the Malabo Declaration. Rwanda led the top 10 best performers with a score of 6.1, followed by Mali (5.6), Morocco (5.5), Ethiopia (5.3), Togo (4.9), Malawi (4.9), Kenya (4.8), Mauritania (4.8), Burundi (4.7), and Uganda (4.5). The Africa Agriculture Transformation Scorecard (AATS) of the report sets the benchmark at 3.9 out of 10 as the minimum score for a country to be considered on track towards achieving the Malabo commitments by 2025. Regionally, East Africa performed best with a score of 4.2, followed by Southern Africa with a score of 4.02.

The meeting also considered the changes that should be made prior to the start of the 2020 BR process next May to ensure that the quality of data collected and analysed is enhanced to provide a clearer picture of the transformation state.

The event targeted participants from all the stakeholder constituencies that participated in the inaugural BR process including Directors of Planning in Ministries of Agriculture, CAADP Focal Points, Bureaus of Statistics, Civil Society Organisations with interest in Mutual Accountability, Regional Economic Communities, Technical Institutions including IFPRI, ReSAKSS, AGRA, FAO, Development Partners (BMGF, Africa Lead, USAID, GIZ etc.)

About the Malabo Declaration

The Malabo Declaration was endorsed by the African Union (AU) Heads of State & Government in 2014; for which they agreed to track progress every two years starting in 2018.

The Heads of State and Government adopted a set of concrete agriculture goals to be achieved by 2025. The Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods is a set of goals showing a more targeted approach to achieve the agricultural vision for the continent which is shared prosperity and improved livelihoods. The seven Malabo Commitments were translated into seven thematic areas of performance:

- (i) Re-committing to the Principles and Values of the CAADP Process;
- (ii) Enhancing investment nuance in agriculture;
- (iii) Ending Hunger in Africa by 2025;
- (iv) Reducing poverty by half, by 2025, through inclusive agricultural growth and transformation;
- (v) Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services;
- (vi) Enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and other related risks; and
- (vii) Strengthening mutual accountability to actions and results.

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