



AGRF 2016 – THE GREAT DEBATE REPORT

Day 4 - Thursday, September 8

16:30pm- 18:00pm

Plenary 2

The Great Debate

SESSION BRIEF

Context: Agricultural Transformation in Africa is the desired destination. Yet, admittedly there are likely to be, depending upon the country, region, or even region in a country, divergent paths that can take us to this end. What do some of Africa and the world's leading thinkers propose in terms of the path that might get us to transformation most efficiently . . . and sustainably. The private sector also may see this question through a different lens than the public sector, what drives these distinctions, and how can we craft a shared vision and develop a methodology to resolve differences expeditiously so that we spend more time, effort and resources on implementation than on simply planning, on-boarding stakeholders and/ or dispute resolution.

Session Objectives: This session brought together selected eminent stakeholders to: 1) Review some of the multitude of paths that can take Africa to agricultural transformation; and 2) offer experienced continental and international stakeholders the opportunity to engage in a debate about what the priorities should be to achieve agricultural transformation in Africa.

Key Issues/ Questions:

- What does agricultural transformation in Africa mean – what should the- end goal be, and it should be achieved by when?
- What is the role of the private sector in driving agricultural transformation in Africa? What is the role of the public sector, and development partners in pursuing this agenda?
- What are the strategic pillars, and order of activity that should be followed to lead to efficiently achieved and sustainable Africa agricultural transformation.

Outcome Desired:

- Gain insight on international models and experiences that have led to agricultural transformation elsewhere - and also learn about current initiatives on the continent that are yielding transformative results in various value chains and communities on the continent.

Organizer(s): AGRF Secretariat



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| Name | Picture | Discussion |
| <p>Mr. Jeff Koinange, Award Winning TV Personality</p> <p>Role: Co - Moderator</p> |  | <p>In his role as Co-Moderator of the “Great Debate”, Kenyan television personality Jeff Koinange opened the afternoon session by reiterating the fact that we are seeing an increasing degree of importance placed on agriculture in Africa as a critical economic driver on the continent. He added to this that implicit in this evolution, we are calling upon Africa’s farmers (including small holder farmers) to approach farming as a business. No longer is farming a tool simply for poverty alleviation through subsistence agricultural activity, it should be viewed as a wealth creation tool with aspiration toward commercial farming that incorporates mechanization, irrigation, and the use of inputs and other modern farming technology.</p> |
| <p>Ms. Lerato Mbele, BBC TV Personality</p> <p>Role: Co - Moderator</p> |  | <p>Ms. Lerato Mbele, a South African media journalist with the BBC, and Co-moderator for the Great Debate, added that African countries are also increasingly seeking to become food self-sufficient and to reduce the staggering import food bill (more than US \$35 billion per annum) that the continent spends. Also, given the fact that more than 60% of Africa’s population, directly or indirectly, is engaged in the agriculture sector, there is a growing recognition that agricultural development must be a key component of all efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union’s Vision 2063. Thus, the 10 (2015-2025) year sector development targets set out in the Malabo Commitments must be aggressively pursued. To kick off the session, she posed two questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we respect our farmers here in Africa ? • How important is leadership when it comes to transforming African Agriculture ? |



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Speakers

H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, Former President, Tanzania



Former Tanzanian President Kikwete began the Great Debate by stating that “[w]e need to address the constraints that impede agriculture – from our over use of traditional seeds to our often ineffective crop marketing systems”.

As we have this conversation we need to ask ourselves, where are the young people? Young people have preferences and as a starting point, we need to mechanize agriculture in order to attract young people. The agriculture value chain has many opportunities and young people can find their place in the value chain i.e. through selling and/or marketing, provision of ICT solutions, and the offering transportation services, among others.

In regard to “leadership”, leadership is absolutely critical in realizing agricultural transformation. Government leadership is central in regard to agriculture mainly through the development of sound policies, strategies and plans to implement the policies. More so, African governments need to move from rhetoric to action.

Sound leadership from governments means that our governments will provide adequate budgetary resources for development of agricultural infrastructure and transport. He gave as an example his experience visiting Vietnam where there is very little arable land, yet they are able to produce large quantities of rice. In Vietnam’s case, he continued, reforms started in 1986 and a decade later they were major producers of rice. They achieved this mainly by investing in water and irrigation – and storage and processing facilities to reduce post-harvest losses.

What Africa must do to achieve our green revolution is to intensify our capacity for production - by reducing our post-harvest losses, by making significant infrastructural investment in the agriculture sector (processing facilities, post-harvest handling technology, storage facilities, cold chain development, and roads and rail transport).



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| | <p>We need to comprehensively address the constraints that affect the development of African Agriculture. These constraints include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low use of Irrigation; • Lack of proper policies on agriculture; • Lack of infrastructure; • Lack of distribution of good fertilizer, seed and other inputs; • Lack of business training for the farmers; • Inefficient crop marketing systems; • Low use of information communications technology; • Lack of mechanization; • Dysfunctional value chains and poor access to markets. <p>He also cautioned that although commercial farming is important, this should not be pursued at the expense of, or in lieu of the provision of support to, small holder farmers.</p> <p>In reflecting on the state of agricultural development in his native Tanzania, he added . . ."Indeed you cannot talk about development in Africa, and Tanzania for that matter, without addressing the issue of agriculture".</p> <p>The experience of Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First) where constraints in Tanzania’s agriculture development strategy were identified and an effort to address them led to a revised agriculture policy and a new Agriculture Sector Development Program.</p> <p>This Program was premised on the mobilization of all Tanzanian’s to promote agriculture first. The government realized that it needed to support purchasing from farmers, and to promote value addition by getting the private sector involved in agriculture as large scale producers. These interventions were meant to ensure inclusive growth for smallholder farmers and under the Kilimo Kwanza initiative, increased extension services were offered and better inputs were provided.</p> |
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| | | <p>In his closing initial remarks, Former President Kikwete added that the success of agriculture is greatly tied to the involvement of the private sector. He adds that partnership with government though is also important, and governments needs to provide funding for research and for the development of new more resilient crops.</p> |
| <p>Dr. Martin Kropff, Director General, CIMMYT</p> |  | <p>Dr. Kropff began his input by introducing his organization, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) and he pointed out that CIMMYT is leading a major, one-year push to provide drought-hit maize and wheat farmers in Ethiopia with urgently needed seed to save their next harvest.</p> <p>High yielding, resilient wheat varieties from CIMMYT and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), along with supportive government policies and better cropping practices, have helped Ethiopia's wheat production to more than double in just over a decade.</p> <p>He further implored that to achieve a green revolution in Africa, there is need for strong research and development. We need very strong research in Africa which means that we need very strong National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs). This will ensure the development of better varieties of seeds and the promotion of mechanization - which will attract young people. Evidence shows that in projects where mechanization has been adopted, more young people get involved. African research institutes reach farmers, but we should bring together natural scientists and social scientists to organize and measure impact of the technologies developed.</p> <p>As agriculture can kick start African economies and help the economies become resilient even in times of crisis. We should encourage adoption of conservation agriculture as well to prepare we are as fortified as possible against the threats of climate change.</p> |



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| | | <p>Other key issues that we need to address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote innovation in our agri-food systems; • Focus on the use of integrated approaches in addressing agriculture by taking a collaborative approach between social science and natural science; • Encouraging greater involvement by the private sector in agriculture; and • Supporting mechanisation and the use of technology for increased production. |
| <p>Mr. Svein Tore Holsether, President and CEO, YARA</p> |  | <p>Mr. Holsether, CEO of one of the global leaders in fertilizer production, Yara, joined the discussion by noting that farmers in Africa play a key role in meeting the current and future food demands of a growing and increasingly rich and urbanized population - but we need to accelerate our efforts to move from subsistence farming to commercial farming. This will ensure greater food sustainability and improve Africa’s capacity to meet its food security needs and, potentially, to also support global food demands.</p> <p>Yara, he added, has a long history of doing business in Africa and engaging with African agro-dealers, farmers and policymakers. We are also steadily increasing our investment into Africa, because we believe in the potential of African agriculture.</p> |
| <p>Dr. Joseph DeVries, Chief, Agriculture Transformation, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)</p> |  | <p>Dr. DeVries added to the dialogue his view that the biggest game changer for African agriculture is simply the use of quality seeds and blended fertilizers.</p> <p>He noted that the areas of the world that have experienced true green revolutions, achieved success by using improved seeds and appropriate fertilizers that met identified soil deficiencies.</p> <p>The need to create viable economic opportunities to engage rural youth is urgent, hence there is need to identify and enable more young agricultural entrepreneurs.</p> |



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| | | <p>African agriculture entrepreneurship will improve incomes in the continent’s agricultural communities. In the end, the success of African agriculture still will lie with small holder farmers, so we also most strengthen their capacity to grow and expand.</p> <p>Creating linkages with value chains is another necessity for the achievement of inclusive agricultural transformation. With the help of modern farming technology and local public-private partnerships there will be more development in African Agriculture.</p> <p>He went on to say that since inception AGRA has invested US \$150 million in research, but there is a need for more funding especially from national governments. .</p> <p>African smallholder farmers should therefore be helped through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of improved seeds; • Helping narrow the information gaps of farmers in regard to market information, weather information, information about access to technical and financial resources; and • The provision of finance at cheaper rates of interest and for longer terms.. |
| <p>Ms. Sheila Sisulu, Former Deputy Director, WFP and Africa Food Prize Committee Member</p> |  | <p>Ms. Sisulu, who was acknowledged by the moderators, as bringing not only her competence to the discussion, but a bit of gender balance, began her remarks by noting that in Africa the cycle of poverty and hunger can be overcome by harnessing the power of regional institutions and forming partnerships between regional and national institutions and by showing united political will.</p> <p>As a self-proclaimed advocate for the inclusion of more young people in agriculture, she stated that “[w]e are smoking if we think young people are going to save agriculture and get involved in it the way that it is currently organized . . . and perceived”. She continued that much</p> |



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| | | <p>more needs to be done to make Agriculture in Africa more attractive to young people.</p> <p>We should also distinguish between agriculture and farming, as there are so many opportunities along the agricultural value chain that offer job and entrepreneurship possibilities for young people, beyond solely farming.</p> <p>These opportunities include ICT services, value addition, transportation, and marketing, among others. Young people have ignored agriculture because we have not demonstrated that these other opportunities within the agricultural value chain exist. African governments need to rethink how to make it attractive for young people to stay in the rural areas and to get involved in agriculture.</p> <p>African governments also need to embrace long-term hunger reduction solutions as part of their social and economic development strategies and move away from the notion that ensuring food security for the extremely poor is an expense, but rather understand that it's an expense that can be turned into an investment (through the provision of a market(s) for small holder farmers who could produce food reserves) and ploughed back into the economy.</p> <p>She also stated that African governments, in her view, needed to reduce the continent's food import bill as spending US\$35 billion plus on imports – as all of the attributes for a robust food industry existed on the continent. Fueling other country's food industries and helping them grow their economies and employment on our food spend [is crazy]!</p> <p>Key issues such as access to land, land tenure, access to good seed and quality fertilizer, mechanization, and correcting market inefficiencies also must be addressed, she concluded.</p> <p>She ended with the thought that food security should be a national security issue!</p> |
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Summary

Key Conclusions/ Take -Aways from the Great Debate included:

- More land and financing is needed to support those who are interested in farming;
- There needs to be a mindset change to see agriculture as offering more opportunities than just farming opportunities
- Governments must embark upon deliberate efforts to incentivize agriculture and to encourage youth to explore opportunities throughout the value chain
- We need to encourage greater leadership in support of agriculture – improved policies, increased funding for agriculture
- We need to increase spending on research and on rural infrastructure and focus more on post-harvest loss
- We must promote regional integration and the expansion of our internal continental markets and offer increased marketing opportunities for African farmers, particularly smallholder farmers