

Think20 Side Event at the Hamburg Sustainability Conference 2024

Moving from production to value addition in Africa's agribusiness sector

October 8, 2024, 9:00 – 11:00 CEST

Co-organizers: AKADEMIYA2063 (The Malabo Montpellier Panel); Center for Development Research, (ZEF)/University of Bonn; Welthungerhilfe and Global Solutions Initiative

Summary report

Key Recommendations

- Strengthen Agrifood Value Chains:** Enhance local processing capacities, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve supply-chain efficiency to add value and boost Africa's competitiveness in global markets.
- Encourage Policy and Financial Support:** Lower credit costs, improve infrastructure, and provide subsidies to create a sustainable, inclusive agrifood sector.
- Promote Inclusivity and Support for Women and Youth:** Provide access to land, finance, and skills training to foster opportunities for women and young agripreneurs.
- Advance Sustainable Development and Nutrition:** Focus on affordable, nutritious food production to address malnutrition and support SDGs related to poverty, employment, and hunger.
- Foster Regional and Global Integration:** Support the African Union's strategic frameworks to align with CAADP and international goals, enabling sustainable, long-term growth in Africa's agrifood sectors.

This session underscored the need for comprehensive investments and policy actions to transform Africa's agrifood sectors, addressing SDGs 1, 2, and 8, and achieving the 2030 Agenda, CAADP, and UNFSS goals. This summary report consolidates the core discussions and recommendations to inform policy advocacy efforts and support Africa's agrifood sector transformation within the G20 and broader global frameworks.

Summary of discussion

Welcome Remarks

Presented by Ms. Agnes Eschment, Managing Director, GSI

Agnes Eschment opened the seminar, highlighting GSI's long-standing advisory role in G20 and G7 processes and its commitment to providing policy solutions for an inclusive agrifood system. Within the G20 context, she emphasized Brazil's leadership, particularly with initiatives like the upcoming Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty, and the anticipated role of South Africa and the African Union in 2025. Eschment stated that recommendations from this seminar would contribute to the Think20 task force agenda on inequality, poverty, and hunger.

Presented by Prof. Sheryl Hendriks, Director, Natural Resources Institute, Faculty of Engineering and Science, University of Greenwich

Sheryl Hendriks discussed the African Union CAADP's role in shaping food system policies across Africa, stressing the growing focus on nutrition and sustainable food production in light of rising population needs. She outlined the importance of advancing local food processing to add value, reduce post-harvest losses, and enhance supply chain efficiency—all essential for producing affordable, nutritious food products and tapping the potential of underutilized opportunity crops. She also highlighted intra-African trade as a driver of economic growth, poverty reduction, and shared prosperity, all aligned with SDGs 1, 2, and 8.

Keynote

Presented by Prof. Matin Qaim, Director, Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn

Matin Qaim highlighted agroprocessing's crucial role in delivering affordable processed yet nutritious foods to address the triple burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and rising obesity rates) in Africa. He identified several challenges that impact food quality, including affordability, climate change, and the growing prevalence of ultra-processed foods. Addressing these requires policy intervention to promote higher-value, micronutrient-rich diets. He also called for stronger social safety nets and job creation within the agrifood sector, particularly to support smallholders and low-income populations, ensuring inclusive growth as envisioned in CAADP and the SDGs.

Panel Discussion Highlights

Mr. Stephen Muchiri, CEO, Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF)

Stephen Muchiri discussed structural issues in African agrifood systems, such as fragmented value chains and limited investment in agroprocessing, which contribute to high post-harvest

losses and inefficiencies. He recommended strengthening farmer organizations, encouraging business consolidation to boost productivity, and facilitating greater access to finance and infrastructure. Muchiri called for increased local production to reduce Africa's reliance on imported staples and noted the importance of collective action to enhance food supply chain competitiveness in both local and global markets.

Ms. Ebun Feludu, Founder and CEO, Kokari Coconuts & Company, Nigeria

Ebun Feludu advocated for transforming Africa's agrifood sector by creating consumer-oriented products, integrating traditional knowledge with scientific methods, and employing intercropping to expand market opportunities for farmers. She highlighted the need for local processing facilities and better regulation of credit to support smallholders and reduce costs. She also underscored the unyielding tenacity agripreneurs need as they should be prepared to be the solution providers to all the challenges they face (e.g. being ready to set up their own electricity supply infrastructure to run their production facilities). Feludu supported joining farmer associations for better resource access and knowledge sharing, aligning with goals for inclusive growth in food systems as outlined in CAADP and the SDGs.

Dr. Godfrey Bahiigwa, Director, Agriculture and Rural Development, DARBE, African Union Commission

Godfrey Bahiigwa highlighted CAADP–Africa's policy framework for agrifood system transformation and the post-Malabo Agenda, focusing on resource access, infrastructure, and financing for SMEs. He emphasized the importance of enhancing food supply chains and supporting value-added production through training, infrastructure development, and access to energy. The African Union's ongoing policy initiatives aim to build an inclusive agrifood ecosystem that aligns with SDGs, CAADP, and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. He also underlined the responsibility of national governments in ensuring the necessary framework conditions are in place for processing businesses to succeed and underscored the need for international alignment to improve regulations, inclusivity for women and youth, and market access through enhanced regional connectivity.

Closing Remarks

Presented by Mr. Mathias Mogge, CEO, Welthungerhilfe

Mathias Mogge concluded the session by reiterating the need to strengthen Africa's agrifood systems beyond raw material cultivation to encompass higher-value, nutritious, and affordable food production. He highlighted the benefits of promoting agroprocessing, clean energy, digital connectivity, and technological innovation to improve trade, create jobs, and reduce poverty. Mogge called on policymakers to prioritize investments and policies that address real needs within the agrifood value chain, particularly by expanding access to land and financing for women agripreneurs. He also reiterated that LDCs and their needs must be included in the discussion around processing, pointing to the post-Malabo agenda as a strategic opportunity to support the African Union's vision and global development goals.