

Preamble

1. The Eighth African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) was held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 5 to 8 September, 2018. It matured into the premiere platform for leaders from across Africa and around the world to advance concrete action plans and share knowledge to tap the enormous potential of agriculture in driving equitable and sustainable economic growth across the continent. The Forum was hosted by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda and 2018 Chairperson of the African Union. Also present and presiding over different events were H.E. the First Lady of Rwanda, Jeannette Kagame, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Edouard Ngirente, the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources, Dr. Gerardine Mukeshimana, and several other key cabinet members. Their commitment to agricultural development and the Malabo framework for implementing and tracking progress across the sector has helped drive historic progress in reducing poverty in Rwanda and serves as an example for others to emulate. Other co-hosts were the 17 members of the AGRF Partners Group (under the Chairmanship of Mr. Strive Masiyiwa, Chairman of Econet Group), which includes the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) as the AGRF Secretariat. Additional resources and technical support were provided by another 23 partners and sponsors who supported the cost of the Forum and contributed to the programmatic content.
2. The Forum was attended by as many as 2,800 delegates from 79 countries and high level dignitaries including H.E. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, of the Republic of Ghana, H.E. Deputy President William Ruto of the Republic of Kenya, Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Emmanuel Issoze-Ngondet, of the Republic of Gabon, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of Nigeria, Rt. Hon. Hailemariam Desalegn, Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Rt. Honorable Lionel Zinsou, Former Prime Minister of Benin, and Rt. Hon. Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The Forum was also attended by heads of international agencies and CEOs of global, regional and national business companies within and outside Africa. Also in attendance were ministers of agriculture from across Africa, ministers and senior officials from Australia, Canada, China, EU, Germany, India, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as influential business leaders and representatives from financial institutions, agribusiness firms, farmer associations, NGOs, media, scientists, development and technical partners, and the growing ranks of young agriculture entrepreneurs and leaders.
3. The Forum also paid tribute on several occasions to a foremost leader who was unable to be present, H.E. Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General, who sadly passed away in the month leading up to AGRF 2018. It was Mr. Annan's call for a uniquely African Green Revolution that resulted in the formation of AGRF and its secretariat, AGRA. He was remembered for his leadership in tributes throughout the Forum, with decisive pledges that the community will continue working to see his vision become a reality.
4. The theme of this year's AGRF was Lead, Measure, Grow: Enabling New Pathways to Turn Smallholders into Sustainable Agribusinesses. This theme recognised that Africa is on the move with many nations pushing to achieve middle-income status and a few others aspiring for high-income status, but that achieving these aspirations requires innovative and evidence-based leadership across the agricultural sector. The 2018 AGRF animated its ambitious theme with more than 46 sessions and 350 speakers. Over four days they engaged in a clear-eyed assessment of existing government capabilities, identified leaders—including African youth—who can drive Africa's agriculture transformation in the coming decades, and worked diligently to lock-in a new level of public and private policy and financial commitments. And that included creating a space at the Forum for emerging entrepreneurs to solicit seed capital for new agribusinesses. The assortment of lively discussions at the Forum highlighted the technology, innovations, policies and institutions that can lead to an economically and environmentally sustainable African agriculture transformation. Delegates discussed how to equip farmers with what they need to succeed and connect them to stable food systems that can translate their abundant harvests into a wider assortment of affordable, nutritious food for African consumers.
5. The conference was officially opened by the Rt. Hon Prime Minister of Rwanda, Edouard Ngirente, who also witnessed the launch of the 2018 Africa Agriculture Status Report (AASR) "Catalysing State Capacity to Drive Agriculture Transformation." The official opening remarks and report, which was authored in line with the Forum theme, placed a central focus on state capability in achieving desired outcomes from agriculture, and set the tone for the week in terms of driving evidence-based leadership for sustainable growth and transformation.
6. The Forum closely examined how governments, businesses and other partners are delivering on a range of political, policy and financial commitments. They include US \$30 billion in investments pledged at AGRF 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya and a range of other promising initiatives that emerged from AGRF 2017 in Abidjan that have added billions of additional dollars. They also examined progress over the past several years as detailed in the inaugural Biennial Review Report from the African Union on the implementation of the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.

Assessing Progress

7. In recent years the Forum has matured to become a powerful and effective platform for leaders to define ambitious, tangible commitments and demonstrate their ability to follow through and achieve real results.
 - 7.1. In the wake of the 2017 Abidjan Communiqué, the European Union used the Forum as an opportunity to show how it is following through on its External Investment Plan, which is designed to promote investment in Africa and

other regions to create jobs and enable economies to grow, including specifically through agriculture. Also, officials from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) noted progress and continued commitment to African agriculture through priorities such as their ambitious One World No Hunger initiative and Compact with Africa.

7.2 Leaders applauded the launch in January of the Inaugural Biennial Review Report and African Agriculture Transformation Scorecard (AATS), which the African Union presented as coming through on commitments it has made to Heads of State and the sector. It is the first such report on the implementation of the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agriculture Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. The report revealed that 20 of 47 African Union Member States are on track to achieve commitments made in the 2014 AU Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. Leaders commended the willingness of all 47 countries to provide a thorough and transparent accounting of areas where they are progressing and areas that still need attention so that they can learn from each other and continuously improve.

- 8.** Leaders at AGRF noted that current progress, while noteworthy in certain areas, is still insufficient to achieve the vision forged in the Malabo Declaration. They sought out fresh approaches and commitments that can supercharge the agriculture sector and unleash the full potential of “Africa’s 80%,” the millions of Africans whose farms and agribusinesses supply 80% of the region’s food and other agricultural products.
- 9.** Several major outcomes and action agendas were embraced during the AGRF 2018 and noted by Heads of State and the large and active assemblage of delegates present. Specifically, the Forum endorsed significant commitments around securing new agribusiness investments, engaging new development partners, increasing regional trade in agriculture commodities, and embracing evidence-based leadership.

Accelerating Billions in Agribusiness Investment to Create Jobs and Economic Growth

- 10.** A crucial goal for AGRF 2018 was to secure greater investments for agriculture, from venture capital for youth agripreneurs to major commitments to national and multi-country initiatives. The community was quick to respond. At a networking event for Rwanda agribusinesses, leaders from the Rwandan public and private sector laid out plans to increase agriculture export revenue by US \$150 million annually and create 300,000 additional jobs over the next five to six years. The Pitch AgriHack competition, organised by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), African Development Bank (AfDB) and Suguba matched young entrepreneurs with venture capitalists to pitch ideas like remote farm management systems in Kenya and new approaches to providing farmer legal services in Uganda. The AGRF Deal Room, a new feature of the Forum, hosted 16 African companies, drawn from a pool of over 400 applications. A total of 60 bilateral investment meetings were held with a dozen investors in this focused deal room alone, achieving investment agreements that averaged around US \$2 million. This is the first of its kind and is expected to grow as a key feature of the AGRF in future years. In addition, 6 African Investment Promotion Centre’s presented investment opportunities to a select group of stakeholders and investors. The AGRF is actively seeking partners to strengthen the pipeline of public and private investment opportunities to be hosted at the next AGRF.
- 11.** Meanwhile, delegates laid plans for an ambitious series of initiatives to attract commercial investments from farm to fork. For example:

11.1. A coalition of partners that included the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the European Union (EU), the Government of Luxembourg, and AGRA laid plans for an alliance that has the potential to consolidate tens of millions of dollars in new investments for commercial agriculture ventures in Africa. A report detailing their strategy is expected in the fall of 2018. IFAD officials also noted that in the coming years, half of a planned US \$3.5 billion investment in agriculture will target work in Africa.

11.2. There was a clear call to action around financing for women farmers and women-owned agribusiness, with donors promising increased investments to address gender disparities across the sector, particularly around financial inclusion. In particular, officials from the African Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF) detailed the launch of the US \$50 million Investing in Women Fund that has already secured a \$6.42 million dollar commitment from the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DfID).

Engaging New, Emerging Development Partners and Greater South-South Cooperation

- 12.** AGRF served as fertile ground for broadening and deepening agriculture development partnerships with countries that have achieved significant economic progress by investing in agriculture, and they are now implementing agriculture innovations that represent the future of farming. What once were new faces from places like Brazil, China, and Israel are now becoming familiar friends, and they are launching a new era of mutually beneficial exchanges with African governments, farmers and agribusinesses.

12.1. AGRF 2018 occurred right on the heels of the historic 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). At this year’s FOCAC, Chinese leaders committed to an unprecedented package of agriculture investments and technical assistance programs that will reach partners across Africa. Speaking at AGRF Presidential Summit, Hon. Wu Hongyao of the CPC Leading Group of China’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs confirmed the new partnerships, noting that they will include major initiatives with ten agriculture universities in Africa and the construction of new agriculture demonstration centers and agriculture-focused industrial parks.

12.2. Israel emerged as an increasingly active leader in the Forum, engaging in various partnerships and discussions to share models and lessons of benefit to African agriculture. At the Forum, a new letter of intent (LOI) was signed between AGRA and Israel’s Volcani International Partnerships to pursue a number of initiatives, including an Israeli-Africa Agriculture Innovation Center to be hosted jointly by Volcani and Israel’s Agriculture Research Organisation. There were also representatives from Israel’s “Start-up Nation Central” on hand to lend their expertise to Africa’s growing number of agriculture-related start-ups.

12.3. Officials from India indicated a desire to intensify agriculture partnerships in Africa. Speaking to a Ministerial Roundtable, Hon. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of State of Agriculture, for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India said “India and Africa are starting on a new journey with India bringing its experience in transforming from a food-deficit to food-surplus country.”

12.4. Brazil signaled intentions to develop new partnerships around agriculture development in Africa. Speaking at the AGRF Presidential Summit, Prof. Joao Bosco Monte, President of the Brazil Africa Institute observed that “people like to say Atlantic Ocean divides our two regions. I say it connects us.”

Move to Triple Intra-regional Trade by 2025

13. The recent establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), the largest free trade pact since the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, animated discussions for how trade in agriculture commodities and food products between and among African countries can deliver a dramatic increase in opportunities for African farmers and agribusinesses. A continent that has marked major progress in boosting business cooperation around services and transportation now appears poised to liberalise trade in agriculture, with significant promise for delivering both food security and economic development. Dr. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), advised delegates that “trade is a driver of growth, and we know that when we trade in agriculture, it drives growth from the bottom up.”

13.1. The Forum featured the launch of the African Agricultural Trade Status Monitor, a collaborative endeavour between the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA). It found that despite recent growth in agricultural trade deficits, there are promising signs of export diversification, both in commodities traded and trade partners, as well as increasing intra-African trade in agricultural commodities. Intra-regional trade in Africa is increasing rapidly the report notes, but is still low compared with other regions such as Europe and Asia. The Monitor will be produced on an annual basis for the next several years to monitor progress in African agricultural trade and focus on key data and evidence to inform areas for improvement.

13.2. The Forum also featured new initiatives designed to expand market opportunities for African farmers and food producers by addressing barriers at the border that significantly impede the flow of agriculture commodities between African countries. For example, an official with Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development described a new tool called the Agricultural Policy Advisory Fund that will support African policy makers and guide them to policies that have a proven capacity to deliver more commercial opportunities to farmers by removing barriers to trade in agricultural commodities.

Embrace Evidence-Based Leadership

14. Delegates rallied behind a campaign and commitment to embrace evidence-based leadership to achieve the continental priorities laid out by Heads of State and Government in the Malabo Declaration, and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

14.1. The 2018 African Agriculture Status Report (AASR) “Catalyzing State Capacity to Drive Agriculture Transformation,” provided the Forum with the most comprehensive assessment to date of the role of state capacity and political will in achieving that “transformation.” The exhaustive analysis found agriculture is delivering strong economic growth and sharply reducing poverty in countries where there is steadfast political support for agriculture—and it’s paired with compelling visions, strategies and institutional capacity.

14.2. During a High Level Ministerial Roundtable, Ministers of Agriculture renewed their key policy and institutional reform commitments, including the commitment to create data systems as part of strengthening the CAADP Biennial Review, the Africa Agriculture Transformation Scorecard (AATS) and Dashboard.

14.3 Ministers committed to advance evidence-based leadership in their shared agricultural agenda, driving results and impact in national, regional, and continental agricultural systems through the CAADP Biennial Review process. In particular, they committed to utilising the results of the Biennial Review Report and the AATS and Dashboard to trigger evidence-based planning and informed implementation of Malabo-compliant National Agriculture Investment Plans. Recognising several of the central challenges emerging from the current Biennial Review – access to affordable credit, access to improved technologies, access to improved seeds and other inputs, strengthening of extension services, increased use of mechanisation, and empowerment of youth and women – they committed to improve evidence-based and informed policy and decision-making leading to Agriculture transformation in their countries.

14.4. The community called for an increased attention to and investment in data quality and data systems for agriculture at the national and regional level. At a Ministerial Roundtable, quality data was deemed especially important for developing the “smart farming” systems that will attract young entrepreneurs to agriculture.

14.5. The community launched a campaign titled “How Will You Lead”, featuring leadership from actors across the sector that are driving current progress, and also highlighting the need for even greater leadership at all levels of the sector in order to achieve the progress needed to meet the shared aspirations for African agriculture.

Outcomes Advancing the Continent Agriculture Agenda

15. AGRF 2018 also delivered several other significant outcomes to advance the continental agenda.

16. The announcement of the 2018 Africa Food Prize Laureate, which was awarded to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the first institution to receive the prestigious award. The independent Africa Food Prize Committee, chaired by H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, selected IITA for its leadership in generating agricultural research and technologies that have improved food security, nutrition, and incomes for millions of people across Africa, and for its consistent innovation to find new solutions to the continent’s most pressing challenges of youth unemployment, climate change, and pests and diseases.

17. A Kigali Declaration on Farmer-led Irrigation for Smallholder Farming Enterprises. A side event organized by the World Bank, IFC, AfDB, Chicago Council on Global Affairs and AGRA pulled together ministers, private sector leaders, implementing partners, financial institutions, farmer groups, and beyond. Following the meeting, the community called for a renewed focus and commitment to drive farmer-led irrigation. The Declaration particularly calls for political leadership and a policy environment to make farmer-led irrigation the norm in Africa, enhanced measurement and data systems that will drive the sector, and promotion of programs that will rally support for technologies, public investment, commercial financing, and capacity building that enable individual smallholders, as individuals or cooperatives, to afford, own, operate and benefit from irrigation systems.

18. The launch of the new Fall Armyworm Research for Development (R4D) International Consortium that brings together 35 public and private sector institutions to create a coordinated strategy and consolidate millions of dollars in new support to fight an invasive plant-eating insect that could cause US \$6 billion in damage to maize, sorghum and other African food staples.

Next Steps

19. The AGRF 2018 closed under the leadership of H.E. President Paul Kagame. In his remarks, President Kagame emphasised that “the knowledge, experience and goodwill in evidence at this Forum shows that we have everything we need to succeed. It is up to us working together to drive the necessary change in our respective communities and organisations.” The focus is now on evidence-based leadership to deliver on this possibility. H.E. President Kagame added that, “We must sustain the continental commitment to measuring progress and results using the African Agricultural Transformation Scorecard, which was successfully championed by former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn ... This is an invaluable tool because it keeps up the pressure to deliver to citizens.”
20. Following the leadership call from the Heads of State present and the Forum theme, the AGRF Partners Group committed that it will continue to track the progress against the collective action agendas laid out in the course of the Forum, as well as institutional commitments. The Forum will build on the momentum of the AGRF 2018 by continuing to insist on and feature progress against these agendas during important moments and Forums of the African agricultural community in the year ahead.
21. All partners thanked the Government of Rwanda for its leadership of the continental Forum, and the partners noted that a location for the next AGRF will be chosen before the end of the year through discussions with governments that step forward as the next leaders.

For More Information Contact: agrf@agrif.org or +254 203675000

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