

The Abidjan Communiqué
*Decisions and Commitments from the
2017 African Green Revolution Forum
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire*

AGRF 2017

AFRICAN
GREEN
REVOLUTION
FORUM 2017

PREAMBLE

1. The Seventh African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 4 to 8 September, 2017 as a premier platform for global and African leaders to develop actionable plans to move African agriculture forward. The forum was hosted by H.E. President Alassane Ouattara, a continental champion of inclusive agricultural transformation, and his team of senior government officials, including Vice President *Daniel Kablan Duncan*, Prime Minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mamadou Sangafowa Coulibaly, and several other key cabinet members. The other co-hosts were the African Development Bank, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), and the 15 members of the AGRF Partners Group. Additional resource and technical partnership was provided to the forum by another 10 partners who supported the cost of the forum and its sessions and content.
2. The Forum was attended by as many as 1300 delegates and high level dignitaries, including H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, H.E. Komi Selom Klassou, Prime Minister of Togo and Representative of H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, President of Togo, H.E. John Kufuor, Former President of Ghana, H.E. President Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of Nigeria, and H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, Former President of Tanzania. Other dignitaries included the President of ECOWAS, the African Union Commissioner for the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, eight ministers of agriculture and finance, business leaders, financial institutions, private agribusiness firms, farmers, NGOs, civil society, media, scientists, development partners, technical partners, and the next generation of African agripreneurs and leaders.
3. The theme of this year's forum was *Accelerating the Path to Prosperity: Growing Inclusive Economies and Jobs through Agriculture*. This served as the guiding framework for a total of 52 sessions and more than 300 speakers around related topics, particularly youth employment, women in agribusiness, strengthening access to inputs, market access, financial inclusion, the enabling policy environment, and

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other critical barriers to value chain development and unlocking private sector investment. The forum was closely aligned with and built heavily upon key global and continental gatherings earlier in the year, including the African Development Bank Annual Meeting, the African Union Summit, the CAADP Partnership Platform Meeting, and the G20 and G7 Summits that have all focused heavily on the creation of jobs for the youth and driving rural development and prosperity through agriculture.

4. The 2017 African Agriculture Status Report (AASR), entitled *The Business of Smallholder Agriculture*, once again served to provide a technical foundation and set of key findings and recommendations for the forum. The report acknowledged the importance of governments working with the free market to drive Africa's economic growth from food production. It emphasised the need to substitute imports with high value food made in Africa for a market forecast to be worth more than US\$1 trillion a year by 2030.
5. The AGRF 2017 looked at how governments, businesses, and other partners are delivering on the political, policy and financial commitments worth over US\$30 billion made at the AGRF 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya and the impact this is having on the lives and incomes of farmers and agribusinesses.
6. The AGRF 2017 benefitted from a series of six thematic working groups driven by the AGRF Partners throughout the year. These considered i) Youth, ii) Women, iii) Inputs, iv) Markets, v) Mechanization, vi) Finance. Results of the year-long engagement included the launch of a toolkit on blended finance released at the forum, strengthened stakeholder communities for the youth and women working groups.

ASSESSING PROGRESS

7. The forum highlighted considerable progress over the last 12 months against the AGRF 2016 multi-year commitments guided by the 9 priority action points contained in the Nairobi communique.
 - The African Union, NEPAD, and countries noted that seven countries have initiated the process of refreshing their investment plans to unlock 10 per cent of public expenditure in agriculture to leverage significant additional resources from the private sector and development partners.
 - Private sector partners made investments, including OCP's US\$2.4 billion fertilizer plant in Ethiopia, with further plants planned in Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria. KCB working with the MasterCard Foundation launched a US\$30 million partnership to promote financial inclusion for at least two million smallholder farmers in Kenya and Rwanda.
 - Partners such as the African Development Bank, the Mastercard

Foundation, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) advanced innovating financing mechanisms to develop SMEs and increase finance for the continents smallholder farmers. This included work on the Smallholder Agriculture Investment and Finance Network, SAFIN.

- Many countries are making progress in developing updated national agricultural strategies and investment plans aligned with expectations under the Malabo declaration. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has provided support to a number of countries in the course of the last year, including Kenya, Ghana and the AGRF host country of Cote d'Ivoire.
- These and other countries are making progress in identifying and unlocking policy and regulatory bottlenecks critical to boosting agriculture sector growth. In Ethiopia, progress has been made on regulatory updates to enable contract farming, in the removal of a cereal export ban, and reduce restrictions around agricultural inputs and machinery. In Ghana, the government moved to strengthen the import distribution and subsidy systems. Malawi launched a fertilizer policy regulating fertilizer distribution. Burkina Faso, Ghana and Nigeria strengthened their legal systems to enable private sector involvement in the seed and fertilizer sectors.
- Significant progress has been made towards the completion of the first CAADP biennial review process, which the African Union and NEPAD are leading with countries and Regional Economic Communities in preparation for the African Union Summit in January 2018. Up to 30 countries have submitted their biennial review reports to date, and the process is on track to deliver the commitment of a one-page scorecard for Heads of State.
- A first ministerial roundtable and dialogue was held at the 2017 Global Open Data for Agriculture & Nutrition (GODAN) meeting hosted by Kenya, where ministers reviewed the progress they are each making in the development of data. The meeting resolved to establish an African intergovernmental network on Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition.

8. Progress was exemplified by stakeholders across the agricultural community, including ongoing leadership by H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and H.E. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, who remain among the key leaders of inclusive agricultural transformation on the continent, and took measures such as allocating US\$32 million to the Uwezo Fund and the Youth and Women Enterprise Fund.

9. Across all of this progress, partners noted that in order to achieve agricultural transformation, new models and new ways of doing business are required.

- a. The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a new partnership of up to US\$280 million to increase incomes and improve the food security of 30 million smallholder households in 11 countries by 2021.
 - b. The Farm to Market Alliance, a partnership of Syngenta Foundation, RaboBank, WFP, AGRA, YARA and Bayer that aims to enhance access for smallholder farmers, expanded to draw in more partners, including Intervalle.
10. The AGRF Partners Group agreed to continue tracking progress against its multi-year action items, as a key instrument for mobilizing additional partners and commitments, and ensuring accountability.

SECURING NEW COMMITMENTS AND RECOGNIZING SUCCESS

11. This year's forum featured new types of partnership agreements providing innovative ways of doing business. A number of new partnerships were established as vehicles for resource mobilization and co-ordination. These were contained in a number of MOUs covering areas such as increasing the productivity of maize smallholder farmers; building export capacity of agricultural enterprises; strengthening post-harvest management and increasing financial inclusion.
12. Most notably, a new MoU was signed between the AGRF host country, Cote d'Ivoire and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) to facilitate the setting up of an AGRA office in the country to support the country and the Francophone West African region attain its agricultural transformation targets.
13. The forum set the narrative for inclusive agricultural transformation that involves millions of smallholder farmers, but which goes beyond the farm to include SMEs and agri-businesses in the entire food value chain.
14. Heads of State and other government leaders present made new commitments to sustain their economic and agricultural transformation drive.

- **H.E. Alassane Ouattara of Cote d'Ivoire** stated his government's commitment to increase its budgetary allocation to agriculture to 10 per cent of GDP, of which US\$200 million has already been provided to cocoa and coffee farmers. He also committed to comply with actions of regional organizations in favor of agricultural development with the aim of feeding its population and becoming, ultimately, a net exporter of food.
- **H.E. Komi Selom Klassou, the Prime Minister of Togo** emphasised the

need to work with other Heads of State to achieve policies that are coherent and that support smallholders in organising into cooperatives for ease of access to finance. He called for stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors to play a key role in the development of Africa's agribusinesses.

- **H.E Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia** stressed the value of working with the private sector to double the yields of rice farmers by improving their access to inputs to enable them to transition to low land irrigated rice production.
- **Hon. Dr. Owusu Afriyie Akoto, Minister of Agriculture, Ghana, who represented H.E Nana Akufo-Addo, President Ghana** expressed his country's renewed support for the 'Planting for food and jobs' programme, with a pilot targeting 200,000 of the country's five million farmers and fisherman in the first year. This five year project will improve productivity through improved seeds, fertilisers, market support and e-agriculture.

15. Other commitments were made by the following institutions representing the private sector and the development partners:

- The European Union has signed a new European Consensus for Development initiative with a value of around US\$1.5 billion. This adds to its existing blended finance facilities for Africa and the neighbouring region with an estimated budget of US\$2.6 billion to leverage more than US\$44 billion of investment in Africa until 2020.
- Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) expressed its commitment to African development with agriculture as a key driver. Under Germany's presidency, the G20 this year launched an initiative on rural youth employment with a focus on job creation for young people. This is contained in the Berlin Charter that has been adopted by civil society, the private sector and science community. It also reaffirmed its commitment to the One World No Hunger initiative with €1.5 billion per year invested in agriculture. Its Marshall Plan with Africa will guide the corporation and development of initiatives between Africa and Germany.
- Yara, the global fertilizer company, has dedicated more that US\$100 million in downstream operations and US\$130 million to develop a mine in Ethiopia. Yara is also part of the Farm to Market Alliance, but noted that investment could increase further with continued improvements in the enabling environment.
- The Rockefeller Foundation committed US\$130 million over seven years to

improve working practices with partners across the private and public sectors, technology manufacturers and financiers

- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has built on its US\$350 million investment in Africa, with US\$250m going to agriculture, through a partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for a new US\$250 million commitment to AGRA as a leading pan-African institution that works with multiple players and governments to increase the incomes and food security of millions of smallholder households.
- The African Union has committed to the creation of a CAADP-Malabo business plan to create a tool to implement the seven goals.

16. Close to US\$6.5 billion worth of investments in palm oil, pulses, potato and rice - mainly in West Africa – over the next eight years, were made.

- The rice value chain received significant boost in investments including a crowd funding facility to support 10,000 farmers and SMEs with loans of \$100 – \$10,000 within the next 18 months, plans to establish the West African Regional Rice Task Force to unlock US\$ 470 million to achieve rice self-sufficiency. A US\$500 million infrastructure investment deal is also under development to improve access to farms and markets.
- Maslaha Seed Limited and Syngenta committed a US\$1 million investment in increased rice seed production while the expansion of the Farm to Market Alliance to include Intervalle will increase rice marketing in West Africa.
- Black Pace Nigeria committed to invest US\$1,03 million in Nigeria and to another US\$ 120 million for potato processing in Rwanda while Kenya's Agricultural Finance Corporation committed to invest \$2 million lending to Potato farmers.
- ITC committed to develop and launch a free palm oil market intelligence and information app
- US\$4 billion will be invested in the palm oil sector by 2025
- Mahindra Agribusiness committed to buy all green grams produced in Africa including the setting up of a processing plant with a crushing capacity of 40,000 metric tons in Ethiopia.

17. A high-level ministerial roundtable agreed on a collaborative deal to accelerate agricultural growth in the continent, adopting a framework to ensure that all countries on the continent grow in unison, and an accountability tool that will track the delivery on the pledges made by participating countries in the current and previous fora. The

ministers committed to:

- a. Strengthen their coordination to ensure accountability against pledges, commitments and plans made, especially within the framework of a continental scorecard.
 - b. Re-orient their relationship with the donors from one of a donor-recipient to that of investment partners that deliver mutual value and benefits, especially to the African smallholder farmers.
 - c. Strengthen their leadership and continue building an environment that attracts private sector investments.
18. Other contributions came from a variety of stakeholders, all focused on how to improve the business of smallholder agriculture to achieve improvements in income and food security and to create of decent jobs. The youth present at the forum underlined their commitment to drive seize the opportunities in agri-businesses.
19. Women in Agriculture featured prominently throughout the forum, including through a dinner that was keynoted by H.E. Daniel Kablan Duncan, Vice President, Cote d'Ivoire during which commitments were made towards ending malnutrition and hunger, as well as creating opportunities for women. During the event, it was unanimously agreed that investments made for projects led by women and youth were critical for the overall attainment of the agriculture development goals.
20. The forum also provided a premier platform to highlight the success of individuals and institutions driving significant progress across the continent for agricultural transformation and food security. Under the leadership of H.E. President Olusegun Obasanjo and the Africa Food Prize Committee – and witnessed by Heads of State and Government present – the 2017 Africa Food Prize was awarded to two individuals who have made outstanding individual contributions to African agriculture and are forging a new era of sustainable food security and economic opportunity that elevates all Africans:
- a. Hon. Professor Ruth Khasaya Oniang'o, for her pioneering leadership in academia, research, and policy to improve food security and nutrition for millions in Africa; and for her groundbreaking work, with farmers' groups and rural communities, that connects agriculture and nutrition both in research and practice.
 - b. Mme. Coulibaly Maimouna Sidibe, for her illustrative business success in producing, packaging, and distributing improved and high-yielding seeds that

have significantly improved the food security and incomes of smallholder farmers throughout Mali and West Africa; and for her inspiring combination of world-class business practices and sound technical skills exemplifying the best of Africa's agri-business sector.

21. Recognizing the importance of youth in driving the future of agriculture across the continent, the forum also recognized the winners of a Pitch Agrihack competition that honours outstanding youth e-agriculture start-ups. Projects from Nigeria and Ghana were announced as winners in the early stage category and youth from Senegal and Ghana feted in the advanced stage category.

NEXT STEPS

22. Following the presentations and discussions at AGRF 2017, key actions were identified for immediate execution, to lead the path to Africa's prosperity through agriculture. Heads of State and regional institutions led by the African Union Commission and NEPAD Agency reaffirmed their commitment to driving the CAADP biennial review process and implementing the scorecard on agricultural transformation for tracking progress in realising the aims of the Malabo Declaration.
23. The Heads of State and Government present further committed to honor all financial, policy and political commitments made during this forum and in other past meetings.
24. The actions taken over the next four months until the January 2018 AU Summit will be critical to delivering on this agenda and contributing to the achievement of the goals laid out in the Malabo Declaration. The AGRF partners intend to build on the momentum established at AGRF 2017 by developing a work plan that will tie together the most important moments and forums of the African agriculture community to secure further support for the biennial review process.
25. The AGRF 2017 closed under the leadership of H.E. Amadou Gon Coulibaly, Prime Minister Cote d'Ivoire and with the participation of the AGRF Partners Group. All partners thanked the Government of Cote d'Ivoire for its leadership of the continental forum, and the partners noted 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.