

AFRICAN UNION
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Ministers of Agriculture
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Report of the Experts Meeting

Report of the Experts' Meeting

1. Background

The African Union recognizes the importance of agriculture and the need for Africa to utilize its full potential to increase its food and agricultural production so as to guarantee sustainable food security and ensure economic prosperity for its peoples. It is in this context that African Heads of State and Government adopted numerous decisions and initiatives to address the situation.

A number of important Decisions by the Heads of State and Government called upon the African Union Commission to follow up and report to the Assembly. These include: (i) the preparation of the "Status of Food Security Report" that would be presented to the Assembly every July; (ii) the integration of the Implementation of the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water with the Comprehensive Africa's Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) to be reported to the 9th Executive Council in July 2006; (iii) the request to define, in collaboration with Member States and the NEPAD Secretariat, the core areas of agriculture and rural development relevant to the 10 percent budget allocation and report regularly.

The convening of the current Conference of the AU Ministers of Agriculture from 31 January to 1 February 2006 in Bamako, Mali, is to consider and discuss the reports that have been prepared by the African Union Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat in accordance with the request of the Assembly.

2. Participation

The Following 38 Member States of the African Union participated in the Conference: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Congo Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, , Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In addition, the following agencies, organizations and institutions also participated in the Conference: NEPAD, COMESA, ECCAS, ECOWAS, SADC, UMA, CILLS, UEMOA, FARA, FAO, IFAD, IFDC, IFPRI, UNECA, WFP.

3. Opening Session

The opening session was chaired by Mr. Zana Sanogo, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture in Mali.

The Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture Department of the African Union Commission began his address by reiterating the AUC's strong commitment to build an integrated Africa despite the continent's many challenges. In spite of statistics from UN

Agencies showing that millions of Africans were undernourished between 1992 to 2002, a situation that cannot be justified, the Director reiterated that, there are “creative, inspiring and bold initiatives that offer real possibilities” to meet the challenges, one of which is the development of the agriculture sector.

The Director recalled the important decisions taken by the African Heads of State and Government at their Second Ordinary Assembly in Maputo in July 2003 to overhaul the agriculture sector, in addition to the Extra-Ordinary Summit they held in February 2004 in Sirte, Libya, whose sole aim was to address the issue of “The Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development on Agriculture and Water in Africa.” At that meeting the Heads of State and Government called on the AUC and NEPAD to implement the decisions and declarations on the agriculture sector and prepare a report on the status of implementation. It was in that context that the following reports are being presented: (i) Status of Food Security in Africa; (ii) the CAADP-Sirte Implementation plan; and (iii) and the Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System.

The Director concluded his address by recapitulating that the approach of the AUC and NEPAD in the implementation of the decisions is to work with all stakeholders and it was through this process that the reports were prepared. The Director reiterated that although the problems were pressing and new challenges would arise in the future, the way forward was better policies, better institutions, better regulatory frameworks and more investments to address them. No one could do a better job of persuading Member State governments about these needs than the participants from their respective countries.

4. Election of Bureau

The Chair for the opening session called on the bureau as constituted in the recent AU summit in Khartoum to preside over the meeting.

Chair:	Republic of Congo
1 st Vice Chair:	Sudan
2 nd Vice Chair:	Egypt
3 rd Vice Chair:	Namibia
Rapporteur:	Mali

5. Adoption of Agenda/Programme and Organization of Work

The Experts’ meeting adopted its agenda and programme of work as presented

6. Presentations

Following the presentations and discussions the experts made the following recommendations.

6.1 Status of Food Security in Africa

Considering that although the percentage of undernourished people in Africa decreased by two percent (from 29 to 27 percent), the absolute increased by 20 percent (from 176 to 210 million people) while North Africa has the lowest rate of undernourished people at 4 percent with the highest rate being in Central Africa at 55 percent; and

Noting the serious challenges posed to food security by factors such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, natural and man-made disasters especially conflicts and civil unrest; and

Recalling the World Food Summit and MDG objectives of reducing hunger and malnutrition by half by the year 2015; and

Further noting that currently Kenya, Ethiopia Somalia, and Sudan are facing severe food shortages while many households in Niger are still vulnerable from the effects of the drought in 2005;

Recognizing that there are some strategic initiatives being undertaken at different levels to increase food production including use of irrigation, fertilizer, research and extension, developing market infrastructure and trade; improving agricultural financing;

Further recognizing the importance of coordinating and aligning food security initiatives and effective responses factors affecting food security;

The experts' meeting recommends that;

The AU Commission establish a High Panel of Eminent Personalities on Food Security in Africa while calling upon the AU to develop the modalities for the operation of the Panel to ensure that while ensuring that it adds value to the already existing mechanisms and institutions for food security.

The following could be considered as a possible mandate of the Panel.

- Serve as a forum and platform for advocacy on to the coordination of responses to continental food security issues;
- Provide advice to promote strategies for the development of agricultural production as well as mobilizing resources for the implementation of accompanying measures for eradicating poverty and food insecurity;
- Promote and defend Africa's interests by serving as a link between the continental and global levels.
- Facilitate the exchange of data between sub-regions and countries.

Encourage Member States and RECs to develop intra and inter-regional trade in food products particularly from food surplus to deficit zones.

Call upon Member States, RECs, AU/NEPAD and partners to strengthen/establish where they do not exist early warning systems for food security.

6.2 CAADP - Sirte Implementation

Cognizant of the urgent need to respond to Africa's critical problems of hunger, poverty and disease by employing innovative complementary and comprehensive approaches aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and growth.

Noting that the African Heads of State and Government adopted the Comprehensive Africa's Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of AU/NEPAD in Maputo in 2003, as a framework for the restoration of agriculture sector development in Africa;

Further noting that the Sirte Declaration on *the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa* reaffirms the Maputo Declaration on *Agriculture and Food Security in Africa* and complements the CAADP framework;

Concerned by the duplication of efforts inconsistencies and limited synergies in implementing the CAADP and the Sirte Declaration by the NEPAD Secretariat and AU Commission respectively;

Recognizing the progress made by many Member States in the development of National Medium-Term Investment (NMTIPs) and Bankable Investment Project Profiles within the framework of CAADP;

The Experts meeting:

1. **Recommend** the adoption of the integrated implementation plan of CAADP and Sirte Declaration to spearhead the overall African agricultural agenda;
2. **urge** the AU Commission to play the leadership role to coordinate the implementation of CAADP-Sirte and support the NEPAD Secretariat and RECs to plan, assess and monitor the progress at continental, regional and national level;
3. **Request** the African Union Commission, NEPAD and the RECs to assist Member States in advocating and mobilizing resources for implementing the national programmes as well as monitoring the progress.

6.3 Progress Report on CAADP Implementation with emphasis on Country Level Activities:

Recognizing the importance of water, land and fisheries resources for food production and income generation;

The Experts' meeting:

Urges Member States with irrigation potential to take advantage of the African Water Facility hosted by the African Development Bank and World Bank;

Further Urges Member States to mobilize matching resources to upscale successful experiences in sustainable land management and other natural resources within the TerrAfrica initiative;

Encourages Member States to utilize the 60 million USD resources under the AU/NEPAD/World Bank large marine ecosystems initiative managed by the GEF and to support the establishment of a similar fund for inland fisheries including aquaculture.;

Acknowledging the fragile food security and poor nutrition in the continent; and

Recognizing the importance of agribusiness and infrastructure in the promotion of food security and income generation;

The Experts' meeting **urges** Member States to:

Implement policies and programs that support small scale farmers and the expansion of agribusiness activities, including contract farming for smallholder farmers.

Give special attention to the national and regional infrastructure development to facilitate marketing of agricultural products and the expansion of trade in food markets ;

Develop and strengthen the existing food reserve systems, including market information systems, weather based production insurance schemes etc.

Scale up and replicate nutrition security initiatives such as Home Grown School Feeding targeting vulnerable populations and develop national food fortification programs and promising technologies such as NERICA, cassava, orange flesh sweet potato, maize, oil seeds, animal and fishery products, etc.;

Recognizing the importance of agricultural research, technology dissemination and transfer;

The Experts' meeting;

Urges regional economic communities and Member States to realign their regional and national research priorities to the Framework for Africa Agricultural Productivity (FAAP) within the broader CAADP framework with the support and collaboration of FARA.

6.4 Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System (10% Budget)

Recalling the Maputo Declaration on the commitment of Member States to allocate at least 10% of their budgets to agriculture and rural development

Further recalling the Abuja AU Assembly calling for a definition of the core areas for the 10% budget allocation using an internationally accepted system that allows comparison across countries;

Considering the outcome of the AU/NEPAD experts' consultative workshops held on the Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System;

Aware that approved government budgets are subject to change;

Noting the importance of having a common understanding of the definition of “total government expenditure”, against which the share of agriculture expenditure will be measured;

Concerned that preliminary data from a few countries suggests that most African countries are still significantly below the 10% target;

The Expert’s meeting recommends;

1. The adoption of the Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG) System as describe in the “Guidance Note” developed by the AU/NEPAD for use in Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System.
2. Crop, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry sectors (including Research and Development in these sectors) be the core areas for the allocation of the 10%.
3. Use of expenditure data rather than the budget data for the tracking system.
4. Member States to submit, by December 31 of each year, the duly completed Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System questionnaire to the African Union Commission.

6.5 Information Notes

Preparation of the AU/NEPAD African Fertilizer Summit

Concerned that continuous cropping without replenishment of soil nutrients through fertilizers (organic and inorganic) has led to severe soil nutrient depletion in Africa;

Further concerned that Africa loses soils nutrients worth US \$4 billion every year;

The Experts’ Meeting:

1. **Welcomes** the AU/NEPAD’s call for an African Fertilizer Summit to be hosted in June 2006 by the Government of the Federfal Republic of Nigeria.
2. **Encourages** African Countries to fully participate in this initiative.

Implementation of TerrAfrica Sustainable Land Management Initiative

Noting that Land degradation in Africa is recognized as a threat to the global environment;

Further noting that TerrAfrica is a multi-partner (Countries of SSA, the NEPAD Secretariat, the UNCCD Secretariat and Global Mechanism, multilaterals, regional and sub-regional organizations, bilateral donors, civil society, and scientific organizations) platform to enable African governments and their partners to “*scale-up the mainstreaming and financing of effective and efficient country-driven sustainable land management approaches*”;

Aware that NEPAD and development partners launched TerrAfrica to enhance interventions in support of sustainable land management.;

The Experts' Meeting acknowledges the efforts of the World Bank/Global Environment Facility (GEF) in mobilizing US\$120 million for investment in sustainable

7. Adoption of Experts Report

The experts adopted their report and agreed to submit it to the Ministers for consideration and approval of the recommendations therein contained.

8. Closing of Experts Meeting