



Panafrican farmers' organization
Organisation panafricaine des agriculteurs
المنظمة الإفريقية للفلاحين

AFRICAN FARMERS AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AFCFTA)

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POSITIONING OF AFRICAN FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AFCFTA



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This study report is based on a research that involved looking at the AfCFTA negotiations process and the current status as well as on a number of studies and reports on agriculture and farmers in Africa. Consultations were also carried out through online discussions and engagements with all the five (5) Pan-African Farmers Organization (PAFO) Member Networks in their respective regions. These are: The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF); Plateforme Régionale des organisations paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC); Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA); Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) and Union Maghrébine des Agriculteurs (UMNAGRI).



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This study report is intended only to provide general and preliminary information on PAFO's efforts of helping African farmers through the organization's respective members' networks to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA. It is not intended as a personal recommendation of particular financial or investment decision and thus it does not provide individually tailored investment advice of any kind.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
CNCR	Conseil National de Concertation et de coopération des Ruraux
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
EAFF	Eastern Africa Farmers Federation
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LDC	Least Developed Country
NFOs	National Farmers' Organizations
PAFO	Pan African Farmers Organization
PROPAC	Plateforme Régionale des organisations paysannes d'Afrique Centrale
ROPPA Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest	Reseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
SACAU	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UMNAGRI	Union Maghrébine et Nord-Africaine des Agriculteurs
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement was signed by 44 African Union Member States at the historic summit of the African Union (AU) held in Kigali in March 2018. Thereafter, the number of signatories rapidly increased to 54 of the 55 AU Member States, representing a remarkable degree of consensus across the continent. Since then, ratification by 24 AU Member States resulted in the Agreement entering into force on 30th May 2019 and trading within the 33 AU Member States (As per December 2020) that had ratified the Agreement started officially on the 1st January 2021. It is believed that the arrangement will create a single African market of more than a billion consumers with a combined GDP of U\$2.5 trillion. The AfCFTA creates a continental free trade area building on the relevant progress already achieved in various regions of Africa. Article 8 of the agreement states that the Member States that belong to other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) which have already attained higher levels of elimination of customs duties and trade barriers shall maintain, and where possible improve upon, the higher level of trade liberalization among themselves.

In regard to agriculture, intra-African agricultural trade is particularly underexploited owing to high import tariffs, other non-tariff barriers (such as health and safety standards), low productivity, and a lack of rural connectivity. So, the AfCFTA is expected to among other solutions rectify this and encourage intra-African agricultural trade for food products and for inputs as raw materials in agro-industries. In this light, this study commissioned by the Panafrican Farmers Organization (PAFO) articulates on how best to position African Farmers Organizations (FOs) networks in the context of the AfCFTA. The focus of the study is to assess the extent of involvement by the African FOs in the negotiations process and how best to build the capacities to fully participate in the implementation of the AfCFTA for the benefit of the African farmers in particular.

Agriculture forms a significant portion of the economies of all African countries and as a sector it contributes towards major continental priorities, such as eradicating poverty and hunger, boosting intra-Africa trade and investments, rapid industrialization and economic diversification, sustainable resource and environmental management, creating jobs, human security and shared prosperity. In many African countries, agriculture is the predominant sector of the economy, accounting on average for 25% of SSA's GDP and well above this level for many countries. Given the important role of agriculture in SSA's economies and its position as the largest employer, it is and should indeed be central to the transformation it deserves. The AfCFTA has the potential to contribute towards agricultural transformation through increased interactions of African farmers, wider market for both farm inputs and agricultural products and unified efforts to improve value chains across the continent.

The role of African Farmers Organizations (FOs) is and will continue to be critical in supporting farmers in the context of the AfCFTA. As the whole African continent works towards ensuring that the single African market created by the AfCFTA truly works for all Africans, the African FOs have the mandate to support African farmers and thus have to be positioned rightly to play their role. Though most farmers are not in the business of 'trading' but rather in the business of 'producing', their products 'agricultural produce' are the essential products for agri-business trade thus they need to be supported to be part of the "value/supply chains".

This requires sensitization campaigns to increase the level of awareness, training (capacity building) to ensure appropriate level of understanding, advocacy for removal of any barriers and mobilizing all the needed support.

It is important to note that, though the AfCFTA is a trade agreement in general terms, there are some specific provisions that will directly affect agriculture. Agricultural products is part of intra-African trade that will among others be directly affected by the AfCFTA implementation through the elimination or reduction of tariffs, duties and other financial charges. The African Union (AU) has even noted that an important potential benefit of the CFTA is increased food security through the reduction of barriers to trade in agricultural products among African countries. Clearly, the CFTA is likely to affect patterns of agriculture production and trade within Africa. This is because intra-African agricultural trade tends to experience higher levels of protection than trade for other sectors. In this light, the AfCFTA specific provisions that will directly agricultural and agribusiness in Africa include the following;

- i) Elimination or reduction of quantitative restrictions
- ii) Rules on non-tariff barriers (NTBs)
- iii) Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs)
- iv) Inbuilt measures to offset adverse impacts of liberalization (Exclusion lists, Trade remedies and safeguards and Trade facilitation)

In regard to the perceptions by Regional Farmers Organizations' (RFOs), the knowledge is more at the top levels than the lower levels. Across the continent, it is widely recognized that the knowledge and awareness on the AfCFTA is more accessed by the high level representatives of the African farmers in their respective organizations but not by the farmers themselves and thus the need to ensure the awareness reaches even the grassroots level farmers and relevant players. According to the representatives of PAFO's members' network in all the five (5) regions of the continent, the awareness is more at the top and much more needs to be done to take it to the grassroots level as well.

All in all, the general perception by the RFOs is pessimistic with an appreciation that the AfCFTA presents opportunities for all Africans including African farmers. They are also quick to add that for the farmers to fully benefit from related opportunities, there is a need to increase awareness and even go beyond to facilitate deeper understanding which facilitates the farmers to go beyond their traditional role of just producing to participating in the agribusiness eco system and positioning themselves the supply/ value chains. This requires intensive and extensive awareness, training and capacity building programs.

Given the significant contribution of the agricultural sector to the African economy and the important role played by the farmers on the continent, there is a need to mobilize support for the African Farmers for the full participation in the AfCFTA by implementing the following recommendations;

- i. Implementing the recommendations of African RFOs
- ii. Continued advocacy on key policy issues
- iii. Strengthening farmer's organizations across the African continent
- iv. Designing a specific support program
- v. Targeted/ specific support to PAFO

- vi. Linking family farmers to markets and relevant value chains
- vii. Engaging and coordinating relevant partners and stakeholders
- viii. Strengthening the PAFO-AUC partnership
- ix. Utilizing the AfCFTA to promote food security and enhance agribusiness

In an effort to implement the proposed recommendations, the following five (5) Strategic Interventions will be considered to facilitate the delivery of the relevant support to the African farmers through their respective FOs for effective participation and to benefit in the context of the AfCFTA, namely:

- i) Enhancing research on key relevant issues to ensure evidence based advocacy on relevant matters affecting farmers on the African Continent.
- ii) Strengthening the institutional capacities of African FOs at various levels.
- iii) Strengthening partnership between the African Union Commission (AUC) and PAFO.
- iv) Building more partnerships and alliances with various organizations across the continent with relevant missions.
- v) Supporting African FOs to be involved in the AfCFTA process through awareness campaigns and capacity building programs.



1. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL BACKGROUND

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents the continent with a unique opportunity to unleash its social economic potential for inclusive growth and sustainable development. It is believed that the arrangement will create a single African market of more than a billion consumers with a combined GDP of U\$2.5 trillion. It is expected to boost the potential of key economic sectors across the African continent. Indeed, the prospect of the AfCFTA has stimulated a lot of trade potential in Africa that could see the continent significantly improving its intra-trade levels, thereby boosting the economic welfare of Africans. Among others, it aims to promote agricultural transformation and growth in Africa and contribute to food security, as well as improve competitiveness through regional agricultural value chains development and incentivize critical investments in production and marketing infrastructure. For farmers the anticipation is all about utilizing the AfCFTA to promote farming and farm products on the African market as well as improving the lives of African farmers.

In regard to agriculture, intra-African agricultural trade is particularly underexploited owing to high import tariffs, other non-tariff barriers (such as health and safety standards), low productivity, and a lack of rural connectivity. So, the AfCFTA should among other solutions rectify this and encourage intra-African agricultural trade for food products and for inputs as raw materials in agro-industries. Indeed, as the continent embarks on the implementation of the historic free trade Agreement that is expected to boost Africa's economic potential, the African farmers and key players in the agricultural sector need to be given their rightful place in the arrangement.

In light of the above, this study commissioned by the Panafrican Farmers Organization (PAFO) articulates on how best to position African Farmers Organizations (FOs) networks in the context of the African continental free trade area (AfCFTA). The focus of the study is to assess the extent of involvement by the African Farmers in the negotiations process as well as the readiness and capacity to fully participate in the implementation of the AfCFTA for the benefit of all Africans in general and the African farmers in particular.

The assessment by the study is done on the basis of PAFO's members' network represented in all the five (5) regions of the African continent. The Panafrican Farmers' Organization (PAFO) is composed of the following five (5) regional umbrella bodies (networks) of farmers in their respective regions on the African Continent: The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) covering the eastern region; Plateforme Régionale des organisations paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC) covering the central region; Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA) covering the western region; Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) covering the southern region; and Union Maghrébine et Nord Africaine des Agriculteurs (UMNAGRI) covering the northern region.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The need to have a study that articulates the involvement of African farmers through their respective national and regional organizations in the AfCFTA is very important. It is widely agreed that AfCFTA will have to be supported with accompanying measures and policies. For many countries, improving productive capacities and promoting investment for value addition are prerequisite for taking advantage of the single market created by AfCFTA. For example, complementary policies are needed in the area of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS), technical barriers to trade (TBT) and trade facilitation mechanisms, including compliance with International Standard Setting Bodies requirements (e.g. Codex Alimentarius Commission) and introducing a simplified and harmonized trade regime, especially for cross-border agricultural trade. Furthermore, some challenges need to be addressed, including post-harvest losses, increased competitive pressure, adverse working conditions and job losses, tariff escalation, youth and gender gaps in access and use of productive inputs and services, and environmental damage from unregulated growth.

In light of the above therefore, the overarching objective of this study is to assess the involvement of the African farmers so far and how best to be even more involved in the AfCFTA implementation process. The specific objectives are the following;

- i) Supporting PAFO's efforts of ensuring effective implementation through helping the organization's respective members' networks to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA.
- ii) Complementing the implementation of various agricultural related policies and strategies at the continental level.
- iii) Facilitating the identification of key value addition and trade opportunities as well as constraints that need to be addressed specially in the area of agriculture.
- iv) Supplementing on measures including policy interventions and capacities required for African farmers to take full advantage of regional and continental markets within the context of the AfCFTA.
- v) Mapping out actions including those related to institutional arrangements and mechanisms to ensure full coordination of AfCFTA implementation in a way that involves farmers' participation at the continental level.
- vi) Identifying capacity gaps to be addressed and recommending appropriate actions;
- vii) Proposing for more consultations, sensitization, awareness and advocacy to ensure participatory involvement by African farmers.
- viii) Based on the study findings, preparing a common position paper that will be discussed and validated by the PAFO Board for purposes of advocacy and implementing the provided recommendations.



1.3. THE APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The study report is based on assessments and reviews of various relevant studies, strategies and reports on agriculture and farming related dynamics on the African continent as well as consultations with PAFO member networks and follow up interviews (based on questionnaires) to obtain clear and updated information in the respective regions on the African continent. On this basis and in accordance with the Terms of References (ToRs), the following methodology was applied;

- i) Assessing and reviewing relevant studies, strategies and reports.
- ii) Engaging PAFO secretariat and liaising with PAFO member networks (representatives) for further required information (through a questionnaire).
- iii) Consolidating all the gathered information.
- iv) Drafting and finalizing the study report including recommendations.

1.4. OVERVIEW OF THE AFCFTA

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement was signed by 44 African Union Member States at the historic summit of the African Union (AU) held in Kigali in March 2018. Thereafter, the number of signatories rapidly increased to 54 of the 55 AU Member States, representing a remarkable degree of consensus across the continent. Since then, ratification by 24 AU Member States resulted in the Agreement entering into force on 30th May 2019 and trading within the 33 AU Member States (As per December 2020) that had ratified the Agreement started officially on the 1st January 2021.

The AfCFTA creates a continental free trade area building on the relevant progress already achieved in various regions of Africa. Article 8 of the agreement states that the Member States that belong to other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) which have already attained higher levels of elimination of customs duties and trade barriers shall maintain, and where possible improve upon, the higher level of trade liberalization among themselves. It is also crucial that the Partner States of Africa's four Customs Unions (CEMAC, EAC, ECOWAS, and SACU) reach a consensus on ratification and implementation together [1]. Negotiations were programed to be in two phases. The phase 1 of the negotiations which is sufficient to operationalize the Agreement covers the following: Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); the Protocol on Trade in Goods; the Protocol on Trade in Services; the Protocol on Rules and Procedures on the Settlement of Disputes; Schedules for Tariff Concessions; Schedules of Specific Commitments for Trade in Services; and Protocol on the Rules of Origin. Phase 2 negotiations shall cover the following issues: investment; intellectual property; and competition.

[1] United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) Office for Eastern; "The African Continental Free Trade Area: Impact Assessment for Rwanda" (2019)



AfCFTA objectives and scope : "The overarching goal of the AfCFTA is to create a liberalized continental market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons with a view to better integrate African economies, in support of the continent's development Agendas. Its general and specific objectives are provided in table 1".



Table 1 : General and Specific Objectives of the AfCFTA

General Objectives	
1	Create a single market for goods, services, facilitated by movement of persons in order to deepen economic integration
2	Create a liberalized market for goods and services through successive rounds of negotiations
3	Contribute to the movement of capital and natural persons and facilitate investments building on the initiatives and developments in the State Parties and RECs
4	Lay the foundation for the establishment of a Continental Customs Union at a later stage
5	Promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socioeconomic development, gender equality and structural transformation of state parties
6	Enhance competitiveness of the economies of State Parties within the continent
7	Promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, agricultural development and food security
8	Resolve the challenges of multiple and overlapping membership and expedite the regional and continental integration process
Specific Objectives	
1	Progressively eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods
2	Progressively liberalize trade in services
3	Cooperate on investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy
4	Cooperate on all trade related policies
5	Cooperate on customs matters and the implementation of trade facilitation measures
6	Establish a mechanism for the settlement of disputes concerning their rights and obligations
7	Establish and maintain an institutional framework for the implementation and administration of the AfCFTA

Source: AfCFTA Agreement, Article 3 and Article 4

The modalities of tariffs liberalization under the AfCFTA require that 90% of tariff lines will be fully liberalized over a 10-year period for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and over a 5-year period for non-LDCs. Up to 7% of tariff lines ascribed to sensitive products will be fully liberalized over a 13-year period for LDCs and over a 10-year period for non-LDCs. The remaining 3% of tariff lines not accounting for more than 10% of total trade - can be excluded from tariff liberalization.

Table 2: AfCFTA Architecture and Key Features

<p>Framework of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area</p>	<p>Protocol on Trade Goods</p>	<p>Annex 1: Schedules of Tariff Concessions Annex 2: Rules of Origin Annex 3: Customs Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance Annex 4: Trade Facilitation Annex 5: Non-Tariff Barriers Annex 6: technical Barriers to Trade Annex 7: Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Annex 8: Transit Annex 9: Trade Remedies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of duties and quantitative restrictions on imports • Imports shall be treated no less favourably than domestic products • Elimination of non-tariff barriers • Cooperation of customs authorities • Trade facilitation and transit • Trade remedies, protections for infant industries and general exceptions • Cooperation over product standards and regulations • Technical assistance, capacity-building and cooperation
	<p>Protocol on Trade Services</p>	<p>Schedules of Specific Commitments MFN Exemption Annex on Air Transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency of service regulations • Mutual recognition of standards, licensing and certification of services suppliers • Progressive liberalization of services sectors • Service suppliers shall be treated no less favourably than domestic suppliers in liberalized sectors • Provision for general and security exceptions
	<p>Protocol on Dispute Settlement</p>	<p>Annex 1: Working Procedures of the Panel Annex 2: Expert Review Groups Annex 3: Code of conduct for Arbitrators and Panelists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule-based avenue for the resolution of any disputes that may arise between State Parties in the application of the AfCFTA Agreement
	<p>Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)</p>		<p>To be concluded in 2021</p>
	<p>Protocol on Competition Policy</p>		
<p>Protocol on Investment</p>			
<p>Protocol on e-commerce</p>			

Source : ATPC

Operational instruments of the AfCFTA : The operational phase of the AfCFTA will be governed by five operational instruments detailed in table 4[2] : Rules of origin (RoO); Online Tariff Negotiation Portal; Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) mechanism; Pan-African Payment and Settlement platform (PAPSS); and the African Trade Observatory.



[2] Voir <https://au.int/en/articles/operational-phase-african-continental-free-trade-area-launched>

2. AGRICULTURE AND FARMING DYNAMICS IN AFRICA

2.1. IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

Agriculture forms a significant portion of the economies of all African countries and as a sector it contributes towards major continental priorities, such as eradicating poverty and hunger, boosting intra-Africa trade and investments, rapid industrialization and economic diversification, sustainable resource and environmental management, creating jobs, human security and shared prosperity. It provides employment for about two-thirds of the continent's working population and for each country contributes an average of 30 to 60 percent of gross domestic product and about 30 percent of the value of exports. It is also important to note that the social-economic impact of agriculture on the African continent is so huge because the incomes earners from the sector have many dependents they support that have to be taken into account as well. So, the African farmers behind the agriculture sector in Africa needed to be taken serious and given due support in all possible ways even in the context of the AfCFTA. The AfCFTA is already being hailed as an important continental achievement that will improve the lives of African and so should ensure that the farmers on continent who are responsible for and important sector (Agriculture) are fully part of the process.

Indeed, agriculture holds the key to broad-based economic growth, poverty reduction and food security in Africa. This is due to the importance of the sector on the continent, where as an example, for Sub-Saharan African (SSA) economies, the extent of rural poverty and the dependence of 50 million small farms on agricultural incomes. It is well documented that growth generated by agriculture in SSA is several times more effective in reducing poverty than GDP growth in other sectors. In many African countries, agriculture is the predominant sector of the economy, accounting on average for 25% of SSA's GDP and well above this level for many countries[3].

Given that agriculture creates jobs, generates income, produces food and contributes to social stability, the sector is essential to SSA's development. Expanding it judiciously can pave the way to a future where Africa can feed itself and feed the world. In an effort to encourage countries to increase food security, reduce poverty, promote economic growth and create wealth through agricultural growth, there is a need to consider a prominent place within the context of the AfCFTA for agriculture and food security in Africa.



[3]Claire Schaffnit-Chatterjee; Agricultural value chains in Sub-Saharan Africa: From a development challenge to a business opportunity

Africa's agricultural potential and possibilities

Some realities related to agriculture in Africa

1. Smallholder farming accounts for 80% of all farms and most of the land cultivated in SSA.
2. 63% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is rural and lives largely off agriculture
3. 50 million small farms produce the majority of agricultural goods and contribute in some countries to 90% of production.
4. More than 75% of agricultural outputs in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda are produced by smallholder farmers.
5. Some countries, such as Zambia, Mozambique, Kenya, Rwanda and Nigeria, have a relatively large number of commercial farms with some very large corporate farms in addition to a majority of small farm.
6. Mostly farms are very small, on average, in most of SSA.

Agricultural transformation is possible in Africa: important to note;

1. Most of the world's uncultivated arable land is in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).
2. The reality presents a strong case for investments in SSA's food value chain.
3. On top of new productive land and large yield gaps, SSA offers fast-growing consumer markets.
4. Based on its current agricultural productivity rates (projections), SSA would meet 25% of its food needs by 2030.



2.2. AFRICAN FAMILY BASED FARMING

More so than in other continents, Africa is dominated by family farming, which relies mainly on family labor. Africa has 33 million farms of less than 2 hectares, accounting for 80% of all farms. While the agricultural labor force is comprised mostly of women, rules governing ownership and transfer of land rights are less favorable to women than in Asia and Latin America. Over the last 10 years, large-scale investment contracts in Africa have covered 20 million hectares, which represents more than the arable area of South Africa and Zimbabwe combined. Indeed, Africa's natural potential is under threat. Many farming systems are struggling to replenish soil fertility due to the lack of investment capacity and secure land tenure. Won over by the idea of industrial farming, decision-makers are sometimes inclined to make it easy for overseas groups to acquire land, not always with the greatest transparency. Yet family farming is best placed to optimize labor use and to enable greater land use, while reducing the risk of breaching local rules governing resources. Moreover, it has the greatest potential for increasing broad-based growth and sustainable wealth creation.



Family farms comprise a diverse range of relatively small-sized socio-economic structures that use limited landholdings to pursue diverse agricultural, pastoral and natural resource management activities. Unlike other categories of farmers, they are largely managed by and rely mainly on the labor of family members, using their production for both self-consumption and sale. While there is no official or legal definition of family farming used in SSA, the terms 'small-scale farming' or 'smallholder farming' are commonly used by governments, civil society and scholars. Conceptually, small-scale farms are indeed small scale family farms that mainly depend on family labor and produce a significant share of their own food.

In addition to their significance in food production, they play a key role in social protection. Furthermore, family farming communities are a critical electoral constituency, which shapes political organization in SSA [4]. Consequently, the state of human development in SSA (e.g. poverty, food security and gender relations) largely reflects the socio-economic (mis)fortunes of family farms, even if their socio-political importance is not reflected in public policy priorities.

[4] Sam Moyo; Working Paper No. 150: Family farming in sub-Saharan Africa: its contribution to agriculture, food security and rural development (International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth 2016 (IPC-IG))

2.3. COMMERCIAL FARMING IN AFRICA

Commercial farming in Africa tends to be approached with various models and is often viewed from different perspectives. For example, colonialism brought large-scale farming to Africa, promising modernization and jobs – but often dispossessing people and exploiting workers. Now, after several decades of independence, and with investor interest growing, African governments are once again promoting large plantations and estates [5] (commercial farming). However, in some places, the new corporate interest in African agriculture has been criticized as a “land grab” that disfavors small farmers who are mostly poor with no other sources of livelihoods. Small-scale farmers, on family land, are still the mainstay of African farming, producing much of its food. Their future is increasingly uncertain as the large-scale “colonial model” returns. To make way for big farms, local people have lost their land and yet promises of jobs and other benefits have been slow to materialize, if at all.

In most African countries, the efforts continue to focus on the search for alternatives to big plantations and estates that can bring in private investment without dispossessing local people – and preferably also support people’s livelihoods by creating jobs and strengthening local economies. In this light, two alternative models are commonly mentioned, namely; contract farming and middle farmers. Contract farming is often touted as an “inclusive business model” that links smallholders into commercial value chains. In these arrangements, smallholder farmers produce cash crops on their own land, as ‘out-growers’, on contract to agro-processing companies. For middle farmers, these are often educated business people and civil servants who are investing money earned elsewhere into medium-scale commercial farms which they own and operate themselves.

2.4. TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

Given the important role of agriculture in SSA’s economies and its position as the largest employer, it is and should indeed be central to the transformation it deserves. According to the World Bank, Agriculture and agribusiness together are projected to be a US\$ 1 trillion industry in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by 2030 (compared to US\$ 313 billion in 2010), and they should be at the top of the agenda for economic transformation and development[6] . Agribusiness can play a critical role in jump-starting economic transformation through the development of agro-based industries that bring much needed jobs and incomes.

Successful agribusiness investments in turn stimulate agricultural growth through the provision of new markets and the development of a vibrant input supply sector. The transformation of agriculture in Africa is an urgent need. Agricultural transformation is needed on the African continent all along the agricultural value chain. For instance, once agricultural production has reached high levels of reliability and quality, value addition can be gained through the processing of agricultural commodities. This is very important because, developing the broad agricultural sector is also key to Sub-Saharan Africa’s future – generating jobs, increasing incomes and ensuring food security. The AfCFTA has the potential to contribute towards agricultural transformation through increased interactions of African farmers, wider market for both farm inputs and agricultural products and unified efforts to improve value chains across the continent.

[5] Article: The pros and cons of commercial farming models in Africa by the Conversation at <https://theconversation.com/the-pros-and-cons-of-commercial-farming-models-in-africa-76355>

[6] World Bank Report; Growing Africa: Unlocking the Potential of Agribusiness

Key challenges to overcome and needed interventions

Key challenges to overcome;

1. Erratic policies in agricultural output and input markets and trade.
 - Limited access to land and respect for community land rights.
 - Poor infrastructure and high transportation costs.
 - Difficulties for smallholders and small firms to access technologies, information, skills, and finance.
2. Lack of tailor made support for small scale farmers (who are the majority in Africa).
3. Undeveloped rural infrastructure making connectivity complicated.
4. In some cases, the environmental related costs can be very high.
5. Growing foreign interest (often unchecked) in the untapped potential of Africa's fertile land (and water availability).

The needed interventions;

1. Clearly defining and enforcing rights to land and natural resources.
2. Screening investments for responsible practices, in order to maximize opportunities and minimize risks (economic, social and environmental).
3. Arrangements with existing land users, to enhance their productivity without transfer of land.
4. Enhancing investment in agriculture and agribusiness to ensure efficient and sustainable agricultural production.
5. Investing in R&D activities to enhance Africa's agricultural innovation.
6. Increasing investments in agriculture and agri-business from both the public sector and private sector.
7. At the continental level, implementing relevant commitments (Maputo Declaration, Malabo Declaration, CAADP, etc).
8. Incorporating ICT and availing easily portable digital devices that can provide access to content through a mobile connection can potentially be a tool for young farmers to increase their capacity[7] .
9. Strengthening agricultural value chains across the continent under the facilitation of the AfCFTA.



[1] Alemayehu Konde Koira – Working Paper (MasterCard Foundation); Agribusiness in Sub-Saharan Africa: Pathways for developing innovative programs for youth and the rural poor

3. KEY POLICIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

3.1. RELEVANT CONTINENTAL POLICIES

There are several continental policies, strategies and frameworks that have been developed to address the development of Agriculture in Africa. Key ones include: The Maputo Declaration; The Malabo Declaration; The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP); The Agenda 2063; and The UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 (Global Action Plan).

The Maputo Declaration : The Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security (The Maputo Declaration) aims to increase annual national budgetary allocations for agriculture to at least 10% and to ensure a growth of the agricultural output of at least 6 % annually. It was endorsed at the Second Ordinary Assembly of the African Union in July 2003 in Maputo, African Heads of State and Government as the “Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa” (Assembly/AU/Decl. 7(II)). The Declaration contained several important decisions regarding agriculture, but prominent among them was the “commitment to the allocation of at least 10 percent of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development policy implementation within five years”.

Malabo Declaration : The Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods (the Malabo Declaration) was adopted by the African Union (AU) member states in 2014. This Declaration provides direction to transform the agricultural sector in Africa for the period 2015-2025 within the wider framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). It is an essential document that assists AU member states to achieve agriculture-led growth, and end poverty and hunger. It also commits to ending hunger by 2025 and to achieve this they further resolved to halve the current levels of post-harvest losses by the year 2025.

The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) : The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) is a continental agricultural framework through which all African Union (AU) Member States are encouraged to stimulate higher agri-food production to ensure food security for her increasing populations. Furthermore, the CAADP calls for African agricultural research institutions, farmers’ associations, African governments and the private sector to collectively develop, heighten investment, and stimulate agricultural production and growth.

The Agenda 2063 : The AU initiative commonly known as Agenda 2063 seeks to deliver on a set of Seven Aspirations each with its own set of goals which if achieved will move Africa closer to achieving its vision for the year 2063. Aspiration 1 is about “A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development” and Goal 5 of aspiration 1 is about “Modern agriculture for increased proactivity and production” and the focus is on radically transforming African agriculture to enable the continent to feed itself and be a major player as a net food exporter.

The UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 (Global Action Plan) : On 29 May 2019, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) launched the United Nations' Decade of Family Farming and a Global Action Plan to boost support for family farmers, particularly those in developing countries. Despite being a global plan, it is more relevant to the African continent given the issues it highlights and the targets that need to be achieved.

The continental policies are yet to deliver : It is important to note that despite the relevant policies and frameworks in place, Africa is still experiencing challenges related to food insecurity. According to the article “Is Africa Addressing The Food Security Dilemma Through Modern Agriculture Technologies?” published in 2020 on the website of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA/NEPAD), Africa is still facing food security challenges because of increasing population, urbanization, and limited agri-food productivity[8] . The World Vision has reported that approximately 257 million people across the continent, representing approximately 20% of the African population, are facing hunger threats.

According to various reports, most of the relevant policies have not been adequately implemented. Inefficient implementation of policy frameworks that address adequate food distribution mechanisms that can improve food accessibility within Africa’s increasing population growth, and address both poverty and inequality, remain a challenge for the continent. Consequently, there is limited access to food sources for numerous Africans, more especially those situated in remote and rural areas. There is also an increasingly fragmented agricultural infrastructure that hinders farmers from achieving increased productivity. Fortunately, despite these challenges, some African countries have observed rapid socio-economic growth in the past few decades. In addition, intra-African trade under the AfCFTA is expected to increase incentives for various traders and producers including all those in agribusiness and farmers across the continent.

3.2. THE ROLE OF AFRICAN FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS

As the whole African continent works towards ensuring that the single African market created by the AfCFTA truly works for all Africans, various institutions and organizations are at the forefront to support “their constituents” to access related opportunities. In this light, the African Farmers Organizations have the mandate to support African farmers and thus have to be positioned rightly to play their role. Though most farmers are not in the business of ‘trading’ but rather in the business of ‘producing’, their products ‘agricultural produce’ are the essential products for agri-business trade thus they need to be supported to be part of the “value/ supply chains” and this is the main role of the Farmers Organizations (FOs) on the continent.

Traditionally and in general terms, the main role of Farmers Organization in Africa aims to promote the development of farming and supporting farmers’ activities by providing to farmers the much needed technical assistance, market information, intermediary services between farmers and buyers, and so on. In addition, the FOs an important role of providing an effective communication bridge between the government and farmers in their respective areas. So, as the African continent embarks on implementing the AfCFTA, the African FOs are expected to build on their traditional roles and their mandate of supporting African farmers to ensure that all related opportunities are taken advantage of and risks are mitigated. This will require sensitization campaigns to increase the level of awareness, training (capacity building) to ensure at least some appropriate level of understanding, advocacy for removal of any barriers and mobilizing all the needed support.

Indeed, the African Farmers Organization (FOs) have been and continue to be instrumental in contributing to the development of the agriculture sector and wellbeing of farmers on the African continent. For over the past two decades, there has been an unprecedented development of farmers’ and rural producers’ organizations (FOs) throughout Africa [9] .

[8] Article: “Is Africa Addressing The Food Security Dilemma Through Modern Agriculture Technologies?” at <https://www.nepad.org/blog/africa-addressing-food-security-dilemma-through-modern-agriculture-technologies>

[9] Support to Farmers’ Organizations in Africa Program (SFOAP) – Main Phase (2013-2017): A partnership to strengthen the capacity of African farmers’ organizations for the benefit of African producers

Indeed, FOs enjoy growing recognition as the representatives of the farming community at the national, regional and continental level. In various ways and at different levels FOs in Africa continue to play the invaluable role in shaping policies for agriculture and sustainable development, providing services to smallholders, generating employment and social integration, reducing poverty and enhancing food security. This is mainly done through, trainings and capacity building programs, advocacy, sensitization and outreach programs, business advisory and empowerment programs as well as extension services among others.

Today, there are tens of thousands of grass-roots FOs across the African continent. According to their mandates and main focus, most of them play a dual role: as producers' groups or cooperatives they provide services to their members and they represent their members' interests with other stakeholders, including agricultural policymakers, business partners and development projects. In regard to their structural formations, many are formed starting from the grass-roots and then on to setup local unions and federations that are then joined to national umbrella organizations. The national organizations also established five regional networks in Africa: Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF); Plateforme Sous-Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC); Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA); Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU); and Union Maghrébine des Agriculteurs (UMAGRI). In an effort to enhance their influence across Africa while operating in their respective regions, the five regional networks came together and formed the Pan-African Farmers' Organization (PAFO) to serve as the continental farmers' organization that advances their interests at the continental level. On this basis, PAFO has a huge task ahead in regard to supporting the African farmers to fully participate and benefit from the AfCFTA. In this regard, PAFO will work closely with its members' networks by supporting to also support their members 'the national farmers organizations' who will also support their members 'the individual farmers and cooperatives' in their respective areas.



3.3. EXPECTED AfCFTA IMPACT ON THE AFRICAN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

From the outset, there are high expectations among various stakeholders across the continent that the AfCFTA will increase intra-Africa trade in agricultural products. According to the World Bank, Agriculture and agribusiness together are projected to be a US\$ 1 trillion industry in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by 2030 (compared to US\$ 313 billion in 2010), and they should be at the top of the agenda for economic transformation and development[10]. Agribusiness can play a critical role in jump-starting economic transformation through the development of agro-based industries that bring much needed jobs and incomes. Successful agribusiness investments in turn stimulate agricultural growth through the provision of new markets and the development of a vibrant input supply sector. Agribusiness is already important for many African countries and the removal of tariffs and other barriers under the AfCFTA will further boost the potential.

African agricultural exports go mainly to Europe and the Americas. The successful implementation of the AfCFTA is expected to change this scenario in a way that may encourage more African countries to import agricultural products from within the continent. Currently, the main importers of African agri-food products are South Africa, Libya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho, and Mauritius. Over time, it has emphasized that tariffs are but one barrier to trade. While, for most industrial products, worldwide border tariffs have been significantly reduced, they remain stubbornly high for agricultural products. This is the case for Africa, and crucially there are potentially important trade and consequently welfare gains from their elimination across the continent for import duties from fellow African exports[11]. Most analysts and observers have also pointed to the potential positive effects of the AfCFTA on food security, arguing that the Trade Area could help facilitate access to a larger supply of cheaper, higher-quality food products[12]. However, they have also stressed the need to ensure that national food production first satisfies the domestic market before countries engage in export. This is meant to avoid food scarcity where for example, in Senegal, a country rich in fishery resources but where international trade has led to a scarcity of fish in the domestic market. Another issue is related to market supply and demand as it relates to the fact that most African countries have been experiencing agricultural deficits for several decades, while increased trade presupposes surpluses that can then be traded.

Furthermore, in addition to increasing agribusiness in Africa, the AfCFTA is expected to boost Agricultural Value Chains (VCs). This of course will require appropriate infrastructure and proper information. Infrastructures are one of the major blocking points in developing trade, whether regionally, continentally, or internationally. For example, road infrastructure, energy, and water supply are common constraints to producers and processors; tackling these issues at the national, regional, and continental levels will incrementally help the addition of value in agricultural Value Chains[13]. Also, information is power. Almost all the actors of the agricultural VCs in Africa lack adequate access to information, that is, either farmers, with prices or weather information; the processors, with export information; the professional associations; or the policy-makers. It should be a priority to develop or strengthen and generalize information systems. Some Market Information Systems exist but should be given attention and adequate resources (funding, staff, etc.). Alternative systems (by mobile phone, radio, etc.) should be expanded. Considering these issues at the regional or continental levels could allow economies of scale and enhanced coherence.

[10] World Bank Report: Growing Africa: Unlocking the Potential of Agribusiness

[11] Ron Sandrey, Willemien Viljoen, Thandeka Ntshangase, et al. "Agriculture and the African Continental Free Trade Area" at <https://www.tralac.org/publications/article/13449-agriculture-and-the-african-continental-free-trade-area.html>

[12] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Report, 2020: "The African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement and agricultural development: challenges and prospects"

[13] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, New York and Geneva, 2016): AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA: Developing and strengthening regional value chains in agricultural commodities and processed food products

3.4. THE AfCFTA PROVISIONS LIKELY TO AFFECT AGRICULTURE

Agricultural products is part of intra-African trade that will among others be directly affected by the AfCFTA implementation through the elimination or reduction of tariffs, duties, and other financial charges. The African Union (AU) has noted that an important potential benefit of the AfCFTA is increased food security through the reduction of barriers to trade in agricultural products among African countries. Clearly, the AfCFTA is likely to affect patterns of agriculture production and trade within Africa. Intra-African agricultural trade tends to experience higher levels of protection than trade for other sectors. At the same time, African countries tend to apply lower tariffs or charges to imports from other African countries than for imports from other parts of the world (12.4 percent versus 19.8 percent respectively [14]).

The AfCFTA specific provisions that will directly affect agricultural products and agribusiness in Africa include the following:

- **Tariff Concessions:** As per the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA, each State Party shall apply preferential tariffs to imports from other State Parties in accordance with its Schedule of Tariff Concessions contained in Annex 1 to the Protocol on Trade in Goods and in conformity with the adopted tariff modalities. It is on this basis that the relevant customs duties are eliminated (removed). In this regard, the agricultural products shall benefit from the special treatment provided by the Agreement in accordance with their categorization in the Schedule of Tariff Concessions.
- **Elimination or reduction of quantitative restrictions:** The AfCFTA Agreement obligates the State Parties to not impose quantitative restrictions on imports from or exports to other State. This applies to most key products traded within Africa including agricultural products and thus will contribute to increased agribusiness. It is important because quantitative restrictions, most commonly import quotas and export bans, are applied to control the amount of a product sold on domestic markets. The AfCFTA will address related inconsistencies by allowing more agricultural products to move more among the member countries. This will further have an impact on farmers through increased sales of agricultural products on the wider continental market as well as improved prices with the potential to directly benefit the farmers.
- **Rules of Origin:** The Rules of Origin (RoO) for the AfCFTA are contained in Annex 2 of the Protocol on Trade in Goods. Rules of origin are used to determine a product's eligibility for preferential tariffs under a free trade agreement and have major implications for the extent of trade under the agreement and the growth of regional value chains. Rules of origin are used to define where a product was made, and thus whether it is eligible for preferential tariffs under a free trade agreement. To qualify as originating, products may either be wholly obtained or substantially transformed within a member country. Wholly obtained products—generally primary commodities—are those which have been entirely grown, harvested, or extracted from the territory of a member country, or have been manufactured exclusively from those products. In this light, all raw agricultural produce/ products are eligible as well as most agro-products that have undergone a simple transformation in the respective member countries.
- **Rules on non-tariff barriers (NTBs):** The Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), which include a wide range of measures such as discriminative measures, government procurement, and unnecessary customs processes, are a significant obstacle to intra-African trade. The CFTA agreement includes a commitment by the Member States to remove existing NTBs and refrain from imposing any new NTBs. This will facilitate and encourage increased movements of agricultural products on the African continental market which will, in turn, have a direct impact on the farmers who are the real producers.

[14] UNECA Report; The Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) in Africa – A Human Rights Perspective

- **v. Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs):** The AfCFTA agreement also includes a chapter on technical barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS), which is expected to require Member States to cooperate in the harmonization and implementation of TBT and SPS measures and related standards. This will very much have a direct impact on Agricultural products, especially agro-processed products in regard to compliance with the required standards on the continental market.

The AfCFTA also includes measures to offset adverse impacts of liberalization. These include:

- **Exclusion lists:** The AfCFTA includes lists of products that can be excluded from liberalization. These will have various functions, for example, protection of food insecure populations and small industries, or reducing the revenue shock for African countries heavily reliant on tariff revenue from intra-African trade.
- **Trade remedies and safeguards:** Trade remedies are tools that allow governments to take remedial action against imports that are causing material injury to a specific sector within a country. They can be divided broadly into anti-dumping measures (countervailing measures) and safeguards. The purpose of trade remedies and safeguards is twofold: i) It is to counter any business conduct that leads to trade malpractices; ii) It is to provide temporary protection to infant industries that so qualify under the set legal parameters whenever necessary. In this light, these provisions are relevant to agribusiness especially in regard to agro-processing.
- **Trade facilitation:** It is expected that the AfCFTA will emphasize trade facilitation and customs cooperation. Trade facilitation aims to harmonize and simplify trade documentation and procedures to expedite the movement of goods across borders. This will help to reduce transaction costs, as well as find common, African solutions to trade problems. For agricultural products, this is very important in terms of simplification of cross-border trade and facilitating those involved in agribusiness through relevant mechanisms such as Simplified Trade Regimes (STRs). STRs are very important to enhance cross-border trade even for informal traders who are mostly women and youth.

3.5. PERCEPTIONS DES ORGANISATIONS PAYSANNES RÉGIONALES (OPR)

Across the continent, it is widely recognized that the knowledge and awareness on the AfCFTA is more accessed by the high level representatives of the African farmers in their respective organizations but not by the farmers themselves and thus the need to ensure the awareness reaches even the grassroots level farmers and relevant players. According to the representatives of PAFO's members' network represented in all the five (5) regions of the continent, that is, the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF); the Plateforme Régionale des organisations paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC); the Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et des Producteurs Agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA); the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU); and the Union Maghrébine et Nord Africaine des Agriculteurs (UMNAGRI), the awareness is more at the top and much more needs to be done to take it to the grassroots level as well. While contributing to this study report, the RFOs representatives across the continent highlighted the current reality in regard to awareness, the challenges limiting the involvement and proposed the needed interventions for consideration.

In a nutshell, the general perception by the RFOs is pessimistic with an appreciation that the AfCFTA presents opportunities for all Africans including African farmers. They are also quick to add that for the farmers to fully benefit from related opportunities, there is a need to increase awareness and even go beyond to facilitate deeper understanding which facilitate the farmers to go beyond their traditional role of just producing to participating in the agribusiness eco system and positioning themselves the supply/ value chains. This would require intensive and extensive awareness, training and capacity building programs.

The following is a summary of the RFOs perception on the AfCFTA;

Awareness and involvement of African Farmers in the AfCFTA process

No	Main issue	Current reality/ African RFOs perception
1.	Extent of awareness of AfCFTA	<p>The RFOs are aware of the AfCFTA and related processes at the rate of 80 – 90% at the institutional level (Secretariat staff and board members).</p> <p>The National Farmers Organizations (NFOs) who are the actual members of RFOs are aware at the rate of 50 – 75% at the institutional level.</p> <p>The individual farmers are not aware at all.</p> <p>Note: awareness is different from knowledge (for opportunities to be accessed, knowledge is needed).</p>
2.	Involvement in the AfCFTA negotiations (participation or submitting positions and papers)	No (no involvement at all in whatever form).
3.	Challenges/ reasons limiting involvement in negotiations	<p>The challenges/ reasons include the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations fall in the mandate of State Parties • Limited time • Lack of capacity and resources (human and financial resources) • Limited interest (most farmers are not traders – just producers) • Structural issues that allow middlemen to make more profits in agribusiness than the farmers • Lack of motivation and pessimism (similar arrangements that have not worked effectively) • Other competing issues (WTO negotiations, Climate change, etc)

No	Main issue	Current reality/ African RFOs perception
4.	Sources of information on AfCFTA for African RFOs	Common sources include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media (mainstream media, social media, etc) • Workshops • Publications/ communiques from regional organizations
5.	Participation in related events (meetings, consultations, workshops on AfCFTA)	Very minimal
6.	Best ways to facilitate participation of African FOs in the AfCFTA process	The following should be considered to facilitate participation; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring equity, fairness and transparency in distribution • Ensuring trade that benefits the producers “farmers” • Organizing awareness workshops • Organize training sessions for capacity building • Organizing farmers to go beyond just production by getting involved in the value chains, local cooperatives, insurance schemes, etc • Conducting assessment studies on the opportunities and risks that require mitigation for African farmers • Working with relevant Regional Economic Communities (RECs) building on existing relationships and connections in some regions • Mobilizing the required financial resources • Mobilizing the required technical assistance (in the areas of policy analysis, advocacy, communication, etc)
7.	Special training and capacity building	Trade negotiations and related policy analysis for effective advocacy tend to be technical and the required capacity building very expensive. In this case, NFOs and their members needed to be supported in capacity building programs by RFOs, PAFO and other relevant partners.

4. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Given the significant contribution of the agricultural sector to the African economy and the important role played by the farmers on the continent, there is a need to mobilize support for the African Framers for the full participation in the AfCFTA. In this light, the following recommendations deserve due consideration and follow up for implementation :

1. Implementing the recommendations of African RFOs : Based on the perceptions of the African Regional Farmers' Organizations (RFOs) in regard to their involvement in the AfCFTA process, realities were shared in terms of related challenges as well as appropriate recommendations were provided for implementation. Some of the key recommendations include, enhanced awareness campaigns, special training, and targeted capacity building programs for African farmers and their respective Organizations to have sufficient information and knowledge that can enable them to fully participate in the AfCFTA process and take advantage of related opportunities. In this light, these recommendations should be implemented at all levels across the continent. The RFOs are on the ground with a clear perspective on the challenges and needs of the individual farmers that are represents and thus their recommendations are based on understanding and relevant context. So, follow up on the implementation of their recommendation is a logically good consideration.

2. Continued advocacy on key policy issues : Currently, there are a number of good policies at the continental level with clear objectives to promote agriculture and support African farmers. These continental policies, include among key ones, the following: The Maputo Declaration; The Malabo Declaration; The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP); The Agenda 2063; and The UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 (Global Action Plan). However, though these policies have been adopted and their potential is very much appreciated, the implementation has been slow or missing out. In response to this reality, relevant players on the continent, especially FOs have been advocating for implementation of these policies and there is a need to continue these advocacy efforts.

3. Strengthening farmer's organizations across the African continent : From the grassroots level, national level, regional level to continental level, farmers' organizations play a critical role in providing needed support and relevant services that are crucial in helping the individual farmers and to overall boost agricultural output on the African continent. Unfortunately, at all levels throughout the continent, the relevant work is done with insufficient financial resources and limited technical capabilities. The efforts to strengthen African FOs should include mobilization of financial resources and providing technical assistance that will ensure sustainable support to farmers through evidence based advocacy, skills development, providing market information and building meaningful partnerships. This is very important because the African FOs at all levels (continental, regional and national) need corporate capacity to be able to support and effectively represent the individual African farmers.

4. Designing a specific support program : The efforts to support and strengthen African FOs cannot be talked about and discussed in a vacuum but rather requires a well-designed program that articulates the best approach to provide the support through PAFO at the continental level and to direct it to regional and national levels respectively. On this is basis, a targeted and focused program should be designed and adopted for implementation. The goal of the program should be to boost the potential of agriculture in Africa, strengthen farmers' organization on the continent as well as improve the livelihoods and food security of smallholder farmers and rural producers in Africa.

No	Component of the program (area of focus)	Key activities
1.	Institutional and organizational strengthening	1) Developing constitutional texts and procedure manuals 2) Developing management systems or tools 3) Designing training materials (tools & kits) 4) Training farmers' organization leaders, staff and members
2.	Policy engagement and advocacy	1) Conducting policy studies 2) Conducting policy consultations among farmers' organizations at various levels 3) Facilitating lobbying/ advocacy events organized to advance farmers' organization 4) 1) Developing policy positions papers briefs 5) Facilitating the participation in relevant events (at national, regional and continental levels)
3.	Provision of economic services	1) Support in writing/ developing project proposals and business plans 2) Training farmers 3) Conducting national and regional learning visits 4) Supporting the implementation of viable projects
4.	Coordination of stakeholders	1) Strengthening communication channels and tools 2) Organizing various events (meetings and workshops)
5.	Research and training	1) Conducting regular research on how best to support farmers 2) Training FOs members with needed skills

5. Targeted/ specific support to PAFO : The Panafrican Farmers Organization has a huge mandate to represent and support African farmers through the respective regional members' networks. For PAFO to sustainably deliver on its mandate, there is a need for targeted (specific) support. Indeed, specific financial and technical support is needed to strengthen PAFO institutionally to enable it to actively participate in policy dialogue at pan-African and international levels and to reach out to the regional farmers' organization and helping them to in turn help national farmers' organizations.

6. Linking family farmers to markets and relevant value chains : According to FAO, family farms feed and employ two-thirds of the African population and work 62 percent of the land. Family farmers can be found along the whole spectrum of food producers in Africa – from livestock to crop production and from staple food to cash crop producers, and they produce for both subsistence and local markets. Among the challenges faced by family farmers is the issue of “middlemen/ distributors” who stand between them and the market. To address this challenge, there is a need to link family farmers to the markets and to incorporate them in the relevant value chains in a transparent manner to at least get fair prices for their produce even under the AfCFTA trade regime.

7. Engaging and coordinating relevant partners and stakeholders : There are a number of organizations with interests in agriculture or willing to work with farmers in Africa. There is a need to identify these organizations and engage them as partners or stakeholder. These should include public and private organizations especially those that have traditionally worked with farmers while exploring those with potential interests.

8. Strengthening the PAFO-AUC partnership : Given PAFO's mandate as a continental panafican farmer's organization, there is a need to further enhance and strengthen the current relationship/ partnership between PAFO and the African Union Commission (AUC). This should be done through a relevant MoU and appointing focal points in the respective organization. An enhanced partnership between PAFO and the AUC (through the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment) would facilitate relevant efforts targeted at supporting farmers and their organization in Africa, most especially in the context of the AfCFTA.

9. Utilizing the AfCFTA to promote food security and enhance agribusiness : The implementation of the AfCFTA in regard to the agricultural sector should be done with a view to promote food security while enhancing agribusiness. For this to happen, the following should be taken into account:

Ensuring that the AfCFTA promotes food security and enhances agricultural development/ agribusiness		
No	Key issue	Main focus
1.	Cross-border trade of agricultural products	Encouraging informal cross-border trade of agro-products plays a crucial role in contributing to food security
2.	Market access for MSMEs in agribusiness	Supporting MSMEs through Simplified Trade Regimes (STR) and tested digital IT solutions that address some related challenges.
3.	Addressing SPS/TBT related issues	SPS/TBT measures have a legitimate role to play in ensuring food safety
4.	Avoiding overdependence of food imports by Africa	Keeping trade channels open and minimizing impacts on food supply chains on the African continent



5. STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS TO INVOLVE FOS IN THE AfCFTA

Based on the importance of the agriculture sector in Africa and the important role played by the farmers on the continent as well as by the Farmers Organizations (FOs) across the continent, there is a need to take into consideration some strategic interventions to move beyond the status quo in boosting the potential of African farmers and more especially in the context of the AfCFTA. The main goal of the herein proposed interventions is to achieve sustainable and inclusive involvement and contribution of the African farmers and their respective organizations through the Pan-African Farmers Organization (PAFO). This will in turn the potential of the Agricultural sector in contributing to food security, agribusiness, increased related investments, improved production, creation of decent jobs and incomes, reduced poverty, and high standards of living for the African people.

The specific goals of the strategic interventions are the following:

1. Strengthening the networks of the African Farmers Organizations at the national, regional, and continental levels for enhanced collaboration in effective advocacy and mutual support to effectively participate in the AfCFTA process.
2. Increasing the support provided to the African Farmers Organizations especially in the area of the much-needed capacity building for them.
3. Strengthening strategic partnerships between PAFO and relevant partners with an interest in supporting African farmers to benefit from the AfCFTA.

Note: The matrix below is a set of actions and expected outputs with each action having a responsible party to follow up the implementation. The matrix takes into account the importance of agriculture on the African continent and also builds on a number of existing relevant aspirations that have been endorsed at the continent level, such as; the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth, among others.

The strategic interventions

There are five (5) Strategic Interventions. The five Strategic Interventions have been identified to facilitate the delivery of the relevant support to the African farmers through their respective FOs for effective participation and to benefit in the context of the AfCFTA, namely:

- **Strategic Intervention 1:** Enhancing research on key relevant issues to ensure evidence-based advocacy on relevant matters affecting farmers on the African Continent.
- **Strategic Intervention 2:** Strengthening the institutional capacities of African FOs at various levels.
- **Strategic Intervention 3:** Strengthening the partnership between the African Union Commission (AUC) and PAFO.
- **Strategic Intervention 4:** Building more partnerships and alliances with various organizations across the continent with relevant missions.
- **Strategic Intervention 5:** Supporting African FOs to be involved in the AfCFTA process through awareness campaigns and capacity-building programs.

MATRIX ON THE PROPOSED STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

STRATEGIC INTERVENTION 1: ENHANCING RESEARCH ON KEY RELEVANT ISSUES TO ENSURE EVIDENCE BASED ADVOCACY ON RELEVANT MATTERS AFFECTING AGRICULTURE ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT			
No	Proposed intervention	Expected outputs/ strategic measures	Responsible Party
1.	<p>Conducting/ carrying out evidence based research on the following topics;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Key agricultural products produced on the African continent -Agricultural value chains in Africa -Barriers of trading African agricultural products on the continent -Identifying and addressing challenges faced by African Farmers -Strengthening African FOs 	<p>Producing and publishing analysis studies, research papers and articles on farming and agricultural related issues on the African Continent</p> <p>Sharing relevant information with various stakeholders and partners</p> <p>Using the findings for advocacy purposes</p> <p>Building a database and information bank that can help in various ways including formulation of appropriate policies</p>	<p>PAFO</p> <p>Regional Farmers Organizations (RFOs)</p> <p>National Farmers Organizations (NFOs)</p>
2.	Establishing partnerships with research centers and institutions in Africa	Improved quality research	PAFO
3.	Strengthening relations with relevant national, regional and continental institutions	Improved advocacy	PAFO

STRATEGIC INTERVENTION 2: STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF AFRICAN FOs AT VARIOUS LEVELS			
No	Proposed intervention	Expected outputs/ strategic measures	Responsible Party
1.	Building capacities of NFOs	<p>Supporting respective secretariats (training staff, instituting constitutional statutes, providing office equipment and basic facilities, etc)</p> <p>Training members of respective NFOs</p>	NFOs

No	Proposed intervention	Expected outputs/ strategic measures	Responsible Party
		Holding regular meetings to sustain the strength of local networks	
2.	Building capacities of RFOs	Supporting respective secretariats (training staff and mobilizing short and long term technical assistance in areas of research, economic analysis, communication, etc) Holding regular meetings with respective members to sustain the strength of networks among the NFOs	RFOs
3.	Building the capacity of PAFO	Supporting the PAFO secretariat (regular staff training, regular consultancy support services, access to a pool of advisory services, etc) Holding regular meetings with respective network members (RFOs)	PAFO

STRATEGIC INTERVENTION 3: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION (AUC) AND PAFO

No	Proposed intervention	Expected outputs/ strategic measures	Responsible Party
1.	Having in place a signed MoU of partnership between PAFO and AUC to support farmers in Africa	Engaging the AUC on the MoU	PAFO
2.	Appointing focal points at PAFO and AUC in the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment respectively to follow up the implementation of the MoU between the two organizations	Appointing the focal point for PAFO Engaging the AUC through the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment to appoint their focal point	PAFO

No	Proposed intervention	Expected outputs/ strategic measures	Responsible Party
3.	Ensuring regular communication to share relevant information and involving each other in relevant programs and events	Sharing relevant documents and extending invitations in relevant events	PAFO

STRATEGIC INTERVENTION 4: BUILDING MORE PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES WITH VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE CONTINENT WITH RELEVANT MISSIONS

No	Proposed intervention	Expected outputs/ strategic measures	Responsible Party
1.	Identifying organizations with relevant missions for potential partnerships (e.g. RECs, International NGOs, research institutions/ centers and Private Corporate Entities)	Mobilizing support for African farmers	PAFO & RFOs
2.	Identifying private sector entities (targeting big corporations/ multinationals) with investments in African agricultural for potential joint projects	Compiling profiles and contacting interested corporations for practical engagements on relevant projects	PAFO

STRATEGIC INTERVENTION 5: SUPPORTING AFRICAN FOS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE AFCFTA PROCESS THROUGH AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS

No	Proposed intervention	Expected outputs/ strategic measures	Responsible Party
1.	Mobilizing financial resources to support FOs	Identifying, engaging and working with partners and organizations with similar missions to mobilize financial resources for supporting FOs at continental, regional and national levels	PAFO
2.	Conducting awareness campaigns and training for African FOs on the AfCFTA and related dynamics (opportunities and risks)	Ensuring rich and wide awareness and knowledge of the AfCFTA among African farmers through their respective FOs	PAFO & RFOs

No	Proposed intervention	Expected outputs/ strategic measures	Responsible Party
3.	Working with development partners to mobilize the needed resources	Designing and presenting programs to development partners for consideration to provide financial resources. Mobilizing enough resources to cover needs and related activities	PAFO & RFOs
4.	Sensitizing and supporting African farmers to be part of the continental agribusiness value chains	Ensuring direct and fair benefits for farmers	PAFO & RFOs



ANNEX 1: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

REPORTS, STUDIES, POLICIES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

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4. The Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security (Assembly/AU/Decl.)
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6. The Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP)
7. Article; "Is Africa Addressing The Food Security Dilemma Through Modern Agriculture Technologies?" (AUDA/ NEPAD)
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13. World Bank Report; Growing Africa: Unlocking the Potential of Agribusiness
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20. Ron Sandrey, Willemien Viljoen, ThandekaNtshangase, et al. "Agriculture and the African Continental Free Trade Area" at <https://www.tralac.org/publications/article/13449-agriculture-and-the-african-continental-free-trade-area.html>
21. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Report, 2020; "The African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement and agricultural development: challenges and prospects"