

COMMUNIQUE

OF THE 14TH AFRICA DAY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION
SECURITY (ADFNS) COMMEMORATION AND 19TH
COMPREHENSIVE AFRICA AGRICULTURE
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CAADP) PARTNERSHIP
PLATFORM

*“Accelerating the implementation of the African
Continental Free Trade Area Agreement in the context of
CAADP Commitments for Safer and Healthier Diets”*

30 October – 02 November 2023
Mulungushi International Conference Centre
Lusaka, Zambia



1. The 14th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) Commemoration and the 19th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Partnership Platform convened from October 30th to November 2nd, 2023, in Lusaka, Zambia. The event was structured under the theme, ***“Accelerating the Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement in the Context of CAADP Commitments for Safer and Healthier Diets.”*** This vital assembly sought to explore the strategic synergy between implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and fostering healthier, safer diets through the prism of CAADP commitments.
2. The Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS), commemorated every 31st of October, was declared on July 2010 by the African Union Heads of State and Government at the 15th Ordinary Session of the AU Summit in Kampala, Uganda. CAADP PP is the African Union’s main platform for policy dialogue, lessons sharing and accountability among the CAADP Stakeholders to advance the CAADP Agenda.
3. These events were jointly organized by the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ). The event welcomed a diverse spectrum of

stakeholders, including AU Member State Governments, Regional Economic Communities, NGOs, national Parliamentarians, Farmers' Organizations, Civil Society groups, women and youth organizations, Youth Forums, Financial and Development Institutions, Research Organizations, Non-State Actors, the Private Sector, Media, and Development Partners. This diversity in participation catalyzed inclusive discussions, promoting a collective commitment toward enhancing food security, agricultural development, and nutrition across the continent. The varied representation facilitated the exchange of valuable insights, best practices, and the formulation of collaborative solutions to address the food and nutrition security challenges effectively.

4. The meeting served as a rallying point to underscore how the CAADP agenda, and increased intra-African trade in agricultural products and services can accelerate the achievement of food and nutritional security through safer and healthier diets across Africa.
5. The meeting was historic as it witnessed, for the first time, the joint hosting of the commemoration of the ADFNS and the CAADP PP. This was unprecedented; it presented the opportunity for collaborative synergies and engagements among experts in agri-food trade, food and nutrition security as well as agricultural development related and inter-dependent disciplines to advance the broad objectives of the AU Agenda 2063.
6. By fusing these two influential initiatives, the event provided a platform for a more comprehensive exchange of ideas, experiences, and actionable strategies, fostering an environment conducive to exploring, understanding, and addressing the complex interplay between agricultural trade, food security, nutrition, agricultural development, and socio-economic well-being across the African continent.
7. The collaboration elevated the dialogue, encouraging cross-pollination of perspectives and best practices that, in turn, widened the scope for innovative approaches to accelerate the implementation of strategies within the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement, ensuring safer and healthier diets for the continent's population. This historic joint event opened new avenues for holistic discourse and action, serving as a catalyst for a more integrated and collaborative effort towards achieving common objectives and commitments.
8. Structured under several key themes, the hybrid event, attended by one thousand four hundred participants, featured strategic plenary and parallel sessions. Topics discussed were success stories and policy lessons learnt in Food Security and Trade, the intersection of Nutrition, Food Security, and Trade, and the examination

of the CAADP's progress. With a detailed structure comprising five (5) thematic areas and multiple parallel sessions, the event addressed systemic capacity strengthening, intra-African agricultural trade, and partnerships' role in achieving sustainable food systems.

9. Participants passionately voiced a unified plea at the event for immediate concrete actions, not just rhetoric. From the welcome remarks to the keynotes, the urgent need to implement concrete actions for governments and stakeholders to walk the talk and turn words into actions was emphasized and re-emphasized. The gathering observed that though all wasn't gloom and doom in the past two decades of implementing the CAADP/Malabo frameworks, significant weaknesses remained in the sector, and more efforts are needed to eliminate hunger among the 250 million Africans (one of every five Africans).
10. Representing the African Union Commission (AUC), Her Excellency Amb. Josefa Sacko, the AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, and H.E. Minata Samaté Cessouma, the AU Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development presented welcome remarks. Other speakers included Mr Stanlake Samkange, the outgoing Chair of the CAADP Development Partners Coordination Group; Dr. Abebe Haile, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, FAO; H.E. Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, AUC Special Envoy on Food Systems, as well as Ms. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, Director, Agriculture, Food Security and Environmental Sustainability, AUDA-NEPAD, on behalf of Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas CEO, AUDA-NEPAD.
11. Other notable dignitaries that spoke at the event included Her Honour the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, Mrs W. K. Mutale-Nalumango (MP) Hon. Reuben Mtolo, MP, Minister of Agriculture, Government of Zambia, and Hon. Makozo Chikote, MP, Minister of Livestock and Fisheries, Government of Zambia. Dr Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) made a keynote plenary presentation on Reaping the dividend of two decades of policy reforms for food and nutrition security in Africa; and Dr Ousmane Badiane, Founder and Executive Chairperson of AKADEMIYA2063, presented plenary keynote on Where we stand and what could be the target and pathways of the next CAADP cycle.
12. In her keynote address, her Honour the Vice President of the Republic of Zambia, Mrs. W. K. Mutale-Nalumango, outlined critical points regarding food and nutrition security in Africa. Her Honour's speech emphasized the necessity for a paradigm shift, stressing the need for political will and financial commitments to address the challenges. Her Honour re-emphasised on the need for a change in the negative narratives and appalling statistics that have long characterized African

agricultural development. The Vice President of the Republic of Zambia commended the alignment of the event with the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and emphasized the importance of science, innovation, and research in achieving food security. Furthermore, Her Honour advocated for collaborations, increased financial allocation, and commitment to programmes like the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme to address malnutrition and contribute to the Africa Agenda 2063. The Vice President of the Republic of Zambia underlined the urgency of addressing the challenges and the importance of collective efforts, innovative solutions, and partnerships to achieve food security and improved nutrition in Africa.

- 13.** Her Excellency, Amb. Minata Samaté Cessouma, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, during her remarks highlighted the importance of Agenda 2063's aspiration 1: "*A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development*" and the commitment to eradicate hunger and malnutrition as well as ensure a food secure continent as a key priority. She reminded all participants of the importance of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which is a game changer for the continent, aimed to offer an opportunity to promote economic growth, strengthen intra-African trade as well as improve food security and nutrition, but also stressed the importance of member states to ratify the free movement of Persons Protocol, a catalyst for free trade. She also welcomed the participation of the African parliamentarians to the event and made reference to the high-level dialogue on nutrition financing that was held early in 2023, and was led by the African Union Champion, His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho, where national elected parliamentarians pledged to advocate for an increase in investment in food security and nutrition in their respective parliaments. She, therefore, called on the parliamentarians in attendance, to support the mobilisation of political will and resources to meet the challenges on malnutrition and drive the CAADP commitments, particularly that of 10 percent national budget allocation towards agricultural development.
- 14.** In her welcome address, Her Excellency Amb. Josefa Sacko, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment emphasized the imperative of getting the post-Malabo agenda right to sustain the progress recorded in the last two decades. She noted the need to build a resilient African food system to mitigate the multiple shocks associated with climate change, crisis and conflicts. She emphasized the interdependence of increased intra-African trade and improved food and nutritional security in actualizing the vision of Agenda 2063. She concluded by expressing the African Union's desire and readiness to work hand-in-hand with stakeholders and partners in eliminating hunger and all forms of malnutrition on the continent.

- 15.** His Excellency Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, AUC Special Envoy on Food Systems, emphasized the importance of the CAADP as a means for reducing poverty but also pointed out that Africa must adapt to climate change, globalization, technology change, population growth and other accelerators of food insecurity if Africa's food systems are to be resilient. In that respect, Dr Mayaki noted that Africa must orient its policies to focus more on smallholder farmers.
- 16.** Dr. Abebe Haile, the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa at FAO, addressed the critical nutritional challenges facing Africa during the 14th Africa Day on Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS). He highlighted the urgency to meet Malabo commitments and Sustainable Development Goals, citing grave statistics revealing widespread malnutrition affecting millions in Africa. He celebrated achievements on the adoption of a model law by the Pan African Parliament, emphasized the importance of diversified, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and called for robust partnerships and collaboration to ensure better production, nutrition, and environmental sustainability. Dr. Abebe also invited deeper cooperation among organizations to combat malnutrition and hunger, advocating for concerted efforts to address these pressing challenges in Africa.
- 17.** Mr. Stanlake Samkange, the outgoing Chair of the CAADP Development Partners Coordination Group, emphasized the importance of better linkages in development partners support from the Headquarters and their country offices, as well as the need for strong linkages between African Union processes and those at the AUC Member States in respect of the CAADP.
- 18.** The opening remarks of Ms. Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong, on behalf of Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO, AUDA-NEPAD, underscored that the 2023 AU Theme of the Year challenges everyone to think beyond traditional boundaries and calls for closer collaboration between governments, regional bodies and the private sector to create a seamless environment for trade and ensure healthier diets for our people. Moreover, she pointed out that the event theme reminded everyone that food and nutrition security are intrinsically linked to economic development and the well-being of our communities.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. The event featured compelling keynote speeches delivered by influential personalities and dignitaries, stressing the urgent need for Food and Nutrition Security advancements.
2. The Africa Youth Food Expo launched the AUDA NEPAD Youth4Nutrition Initiative which involved young Chefs across the region, that demonstrated the culinary skills to promote healthy diets, and underscored the growing engagement and involvement of the continent's youth in nutrition.
3. The high-level panel discussion of the African Food Systems Parliamentarian Network (AFSPaN) members, playing a role at national level, advocating for more resources and political will within their parliaments on efforts related to CAADP commitments.
4. A high-level panel discussion also brought together leaders from top organizations in the fight against hunger and malnutrition, fostering valuable dialogues.
5. A pivotal moment was the launch of the Consortium of Youth in Agriculture and Climate Change (CAYACC), signalling a significant step in involving youth in agricultural sustainability and climate resilience efforts.



KEY MESSAGES FROM THE CONFERENCE

- 1. Boosting Intra-African Trade in Agricultural Commodities and Services:** The imperative of enhancing intra-African trade in agricultural goods and services was a focal point. Discussions centred on creating frameworks that promote trade, overcoming barriers, and leveraging technology to facilitate smoother exchanges across African nations. Presenters stressed the need for collaborative trade policies to foster economic growth in the agriculture sector.
- 2. Ending Hunger and Halving Poverty by 2025 - A Moral and Economic Imperative:** Addressing hunger and poverty emerged as both a moral responsibility and an economic necessity. Speakers highlighted the urgency of achieving these goals, underlining the impact on human welfare and the correlation with economic development. It was underscored that a concerted effort is crucial, calling for a combined approach from governments, international organizations, private sector and local communities.
- 3. Reflections on CAADP @20, Priorities for the Remaining 2 Years, and Future Directions:** In commemorating the 20th anniversary of CAADP, participants reflected on its journey, achievements, and areas needing attention in the final two years of its programme cycle. Key discussions revolved around aligning future strategies with contemporary challenges, underlining the need for continued investment in agriculture, bolstering policy support, and setting a new direction for the post-2025 agenda.
- 4. The Role of Parliamentarians in Food Systems:** The African Food Systems Parliamentarians (AFSPaN), a community of willing country-elected parliamentarians working, alongside legislative structure, to amplify food systems action, drive change at country level and get the right evidence to policymakers. The Parliamentarian role aims to provide legislative pathways for accountability at country level, and amplify the CAADP Biennial Review from a “reporting mechanism” into a “learning and accountability mechanism”.
- 5. The Role of Women in Agricultural Development in Africa:** Women’s indispensable role in agriculture was emphasized, highlighting the need for their empowerment, access to resources, and involvement in decision-making. The discussions called for gender-inclusive policies, fair land rights, education, and financial support to elevate the status of women in agriculture.
- 6. The Role of Youth in Shaping Africa’s Social and Economic Development:** The youth’s importance in driving Africa’s social and economic advancement was a significant subject. Conversations revolved around creating platforms for youth engagement, education, and entrepreneurship in agriculture. Emphasis was

placed on integrating young voices in policy-making and enabling their participation in agricultural innovation.

- 7. Embracing Research to Propel Africa Forward:** The need to prioritize research in agriculture was underlined, highlighting its role in driving innovation, sustainable farming practices, and informed policy-making. Calls were made for increased investment in agricultural research to address challenges and advance Africa's agricultural landscape.
- 8. Embracing Technology, Including Artificial Intelligence, for Africa's Transformation Agenda:** Discussions highlighted the pivotal role of technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), in Africa's transformation. Participants stressed the need to adopt and harness technological advancements to revolutionize farming practices, increase productivity, and bolster the continent's competitive edge in global markets.
- 9. Linking Africa's Production Systems to Value Addition through the Development of inclusive agricultural value chains:** Delegates underscored the importance of value addition in African agriculture to raise income and employment. The need to promote the development of agricultural value chains that are not only sustainable but also inclusive was emphasized. Developing both price- and quality-competitive agricultural products was indicated as a viable pathway to boost intra-African trade, eliminate hunger and malnutrition, and increase employment and wealth creation on the continent. The discussions advocated for enabling policy environment and provision of hard and soft infrastructure, which are key enablers to agricultural value chain development to enhance the continent's economic development.
- 10. Intertwining Good Nutrition with Food Systems and Agriculture Productivity:** A focal point was the inseparable relationship between good nutrition, food systems, and agricultural productivity. Speakers advocated comprehensive food systems prioritizing nutritious, diverse, and safe food production. Recognizing the synergy between agriculture productivity and better nutrition, there were calls for strategies integrating nutrition-sensitive approaches into agricultural practices.
- 11. The Impact of Good Nutrition on Social and Economic Development:** The wide-ranging impact of good nutrition on social and economic development was underscored. Discussions highlighted the significance of nutrition in shaping healthy populations, fostering human capital, reducing healthcare costs, and enhancing workforce productivity. It was emphasized that adequate nutrition is foundational for economic development, poverty reduction, and the overall well-being of African societies.

12. Importance of strengthening Mutual Accountability to Results and Actions:

The meeting participants emphasized the need to continue building strong data systems to ensure that policy formulation and implementation are evidence-based. There were calls to ensure that the Biennial Review process continues in the post-Malabo period and that many review processes supporting the CAADP should be strengthened. The need to strengthen MS's data systems was emphasized to ensure that progress can be tracked and optimal evidence-based solutions are offered. To the extent that the National Agriculture Investment Plans are a vehicle for policy and aspirations that countries have, their design should, to a greater extent, be guided by experts who understand the Malabo and CAADP dictates.

13. Development and Adoption of Standards: The conference showcased the pivotal role of standards set forth by The African Organization for Standardization (ARSO). These standards, fostering increased intra-trade in agricultural goods and services, were highlighted as essential tools for Africa's economic advancement. It was emphasized that adopting these standards by African governments, farmers, and other relevant stakeholders could profoundly impact trade, economic growth, and regional cooperation by minimizing commodity rejection rates. Delegates advocated for the proactive utilization of these standards to enhance trade practices and the overall economic landscape, stressing the transformative potential of standardized regulations in bolstering Africa's progress and development.

14. Strengthening Institutional Capacities and Knowledge Management: Enhancing Pathways for Trade and Nutrition Progress: Valuable insights emerged during the dedicated session, highlighting the crucial areas for achieving the Malabo Commitments. It was evident that bolstering current institutional structures is vital to support CAADP implementation effectively. Participants emphasized the significance of fostering effective partnerships and collaborative platforms to expedite advancements in trade, food security, and nutrition. Noteworthy lessons and promising practices highlighted the pivotal role of robust knowledge management systems, strategies, and tools in fostering collaboration, facilitating learning, and translating insights into actionable measures. Key discussions emphasized the necessity of refining and strengthening knowledge management practices to ensure their effectiveness in realizing trade and nutrition objectives in alignment with the Malabo Commitments.

In the culmination of this gathering, the 14th ADFNS Commemoration and 19th CAADP Partnership Platform delivered a resounding call to action for African nations and stakeholders in the global development sphere. The meeting not only reaffirmed the urgency of addressing critical issues such as food and nutrition security, trade, youth and women empowerment, and the utilization of technology and research but also

emphasized the indispensable role of food and nutrition in Africa’s overall development narrative.

As we navigate the complex challenges and opportunities ahead, the resolute consensus from this assembly emphasizes the need for concerted efforts, collaborative partnerships, and innovative strategies to drive Africa’s transformation agenda. Pursuing these priorities demands a shared commitment, where governments, organizations, including private sector and communities must act collaboratively to forge a path toward a sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive future for the continent.

“Through unified dedication and joint actions, we will propel Africa towards a future marked by resilience, progress, and shared prosperity”.



