

**ASSURING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN AFRICA BY 2020:
Prioritizing Action, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships**
April 1–3, 2004, Kampala, Uganda

SUMMARY NOTE

Plenary Panel: **Improving Implementation: What Can Lessons from Successes and Failures Teach Us?**

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Very often discussions related to food and nutrition security in developing countries and particularly about the Sub-Saharan Africa tend to predict doom and total failure in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and World Food Summit recommendations on food security. Considering lessons from successes and failures may generate a ray of hope in improving implementation of various policies.

The successes now known in Africa have been derived mainly from adoption of recommended technologies in terms of improved seeds, stock, planting materials, husbandry practices, soil, and water conservation. Underlying any sustainable success among small farmers is the accessibility to the market that motivates them to invest in improved technologies. Successes have been recorded among small farmers in respect of the introduction of improved varieties of rice, maize, **dairy**, cotton, cassava, and adoption of soil and water conservation and many isolated cases in different parts of the Africa. Many of them may be easily scaled up.

The failure for some countries to attain sustainable feeding of their population, is generally related to drought, low adoption of technologies, poor extension services poor rural infrastructure, degradation of natural resources, conflicts and failure to create enabling atmosphere facilitating increased productivity in terms of policies and institutions.

Improving implementation would need both policy and institutional reforms creating enabling atmosphere in capacity building, empowering the rural population in respect of:

- Availability and accessibility of affordable, cost-effective technologies (research and dissemination);
- An effective and efficient delivery mechanism of agricultural advisory services (extension);
- Agricultural education in enhancing their farming knowledge at all level;
- Access to and sustainable utilization of natural resources;
- Rural infrastructure such as roads, market infrastructure, and rural electrification;
- Rural financing; and
- Promoting agro processing and unlimited access to markets.

The implementation is generally complicated due to the multisectoral nature of the farmers' problems. This, therefore, calls for a sector-wide approach. Improving implementation needs policies and institutions that facilitate full participation of all stakeholders. This needs institutions that facilitate grass-root planning whereby constraints are identified, opportunities are exploited and priorities set. The challenge is to put in place suitable policy and institutional reforms and effective monitoring mechanism to keep pace with the development paradigm shift.

In this respect the private sector is envisaged to play an increasing role in the whole process of production. Recognition of civil society and NGOs development partners in improving implementation. In such scenario what is seen as a private sector domain may be taken up as a public good to undertake strategic investment where the private sector may be weak. In this respect public expenditure on agriculture must be increased.

To achieve increased expenditure would need political will and commitment to agricultural development as a priority. This was however realized by Heads of States and Governments through the Maputo declaration to spend at least 10 percent of the budget on Agriculture and rural development. We have, however, to set priorities and suitable policies in the context of each country. Differences in the nature and socioeconomic development, institutional and policy environment, dictate different solutions. It is necessary to ensure that countries develop home grown policies, institutional framework and development plans facilitate implementation.

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