



**Building an Effective Advocacy Movement for Sustainable and Equitable  
Agricultural Development in Africa**

An Analysis of Smallholder Agriculture, Policy-Making And Advocacy In Ghana

John Baptist D. Jatoe

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## **Introduction**

On October 2009, the Government of Ghana pledged to fulfil the commitments laid out in the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) and Sector Plan agenda in a new Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) compact. Among other things, the compact affirmed Ghana's commitment to increasing public investment in agriculture to at least 10% of her national budget. Another important pledge is to improve agricultural productivity to reach an average annual growth rate of 6% by 2015, while paying close attention to small-scale farmers, especially women. Under the compact, oversight and coordination of the implementation of the above partnerships will actively involve stakeholders such as CSOs, the private sector, trade unions and agricultural bodies/ associations. However, the national context within which participation of smallholders is to be achieved or organised is not clear. In particular, a framework that provides for the participation of smallholders in national policy making is not apparent. In addition, the forms of mobilisation (for example, organisations) responding to the challenges confronting smallholders in Ghana have not been adequately analysed.

An understanding of the country context and the state of policy advocacy will help design interventions to enhance institutional capacity for monitoring and holding government accountable to the people and its partners. Indeed, as Trust Africa points out, sustainable and equitable development policies are most likely to emerge only when a broad range of stakeholders have the capacity to advocate for their needs and aspirations. Yet, in Africa the least influential figures in agricultural development initiatives are the hundreds of millions of poor, small-scale farmers - the majority of them women - who are the lifeblood of most of the continent's economies.

## **An overview of Agriculture in Ghana**

The most recent Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 5) estimates the national population at 22.2 million, with 51.5 % being females. Children under 15 years account for about 40 % of the population, while those aged 65 years and older form 4.7 %. With regard to regional distribution

of the population from the survey, Ashanti, Greater Accra and Eastern regions constitute about 44 % of the estimated total population. The Upper East (1.1 million) and the Upper West (0.8 million) regions recorded the lowest population. The estimated number of households in Ghana is 5.5 million with a higher proportion in the rural areas (3.1 million) than in the urban areas (2.4 million).

The survey data indicates that about 31 % of adults (or a little over 4 million people) have never been to school. A further 17 % attended school but did not obtain Middle School Leaving Certificate or Basic Education Certificate Examination (MSLC/BECE). About 39 % of adults have the MSLC/BECE certificate and only about 14 % obtained secondary or higher level qualification. Thus, about half (6.4 million) of adults in Ghana neither attended school nor completed middle school/junior secondary school. There is also a clear gender gap in education, with almost twice as many females (2.7 million) as males (1.4 million) never attending school. In addition, there are fewer females (0.7 million) than males (1.1 million) with secondary or higher qualification.

The majority of the working population is employed in agricultural activities (55.8%), followed by trading (15.2%) and then manufacturing (10.9%). About 3.4 million households in Ghana own or operate a farm or keep livestock. In terms of type of work engaged in by the currently employed, 55.9 % of those who worked during the reference period are self-employed, with 32.1 % engaged in agricultural activities and 23.8 % in non-agricultural activities. In both rural and urban localities the proportion of female contributing family workers, in both agricultural and non-agricultural activities is much higher (32.3%) than the proportion of male in the same category (17.7%). Out of the estimated 4.7 million children aged seven to fourteen years, an estimated 13% were economically active. An overwhelming majority (97.8%) of the economically active children are contributing family workers. Only 0.4 % of these children are in some form of apprenticeship. A majority (89.3%) of these children are engaged in agriculture, which is also the main industrial sector in the rural areas (Ghana Statistical Service, 2008).

Cassava, plantain and pepper are harvested by the largest number of households in Ghana. Also, the majority of farm households (2.5 million) harvested maize. Other major crops, in terms of number of households involved, are sorghum/millet/guinea corn (848,527), cocoa (725,480), groundnut/peanut (698,905), beans/peas (501,484), and rice (306,153). Maize is the only staple

grain which is grown extensively in all coastal, forest and savannah zones. More than half of households that grow kenef, groundnut/peanut, tobacco, rice, other tree crops (sheanut and cashew nut) and beans/peas, and virtually all the households that grow cotton and sorghum/millet/guinea corn, are located in the savannah ecological zone. Overall, the savannah zone accounts for about half (50 %) of the crops harvested, but less than one third (26 %) of total value of sales; production being mainly for subsistence.

The Ghana Statistical Service (2008) estimates that about 1.8 million households in agriculture hired labour on their farms and about 1.9 million purchased locally made hand tools. In addition, more than half a million of the households that harvested crops purchased seeds, bags, insecticides, containers, herbicides, strings and fertilisers. Among the expenditure items incurred on crop inputs, a substantial amount (43%) was spent on hiring farm labourers, and as much as 19 % of the amount was spent on inorganic fertilisers alone. The majority (at least 70%) of the households purchase their agriculture inputs from the private sector. Out of the total expenditure incurred on livestock, a sizeable amount (42%) is spent on animal feeds including salt. As in crop inputs, more than 80 % of many types of livestock inputs are purchased from the private sector. With regard to fish inputs, about 43 % of the expenditure incurred in this agriculture category is on hiring of labour, and all the inputs are purchased from the private sector.

The three main sources of household income in Ghana are income from agricultural activities (35%), wage income from employment (29%) and income from self employment (25%). Remittances constitute less than 10% of household income. Ghana produces 51% of its cereal needs, 60% of fish requirements, 50% of meat and less than 30% of the raw materials needed for agro-based industries (Government of Ghana, 2007). Production of roots, tubers and vegetables such as tomatoes and onions, the most widely used staple food crops, is rather erratic and fluctuates between scarcity, sufficiency and glut, depending on the vagaries of the weather. Agriculture continues to contribute the largest share to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), even though the share of the sector in national output declined from 44% in 1990 to 37% in 2005 (see Table 1). Since 2000, the contribution of agriculture to total GDP has varied between 35.8% and 37%. Agricultural growth increased from about 4% in 2000 to 6% in 2005, but much of the recent growth has been stimulated by the cocoa industry.

**Table 1: Sectoral Contribution to GDP, 2002 - 2008**

Year	Agriculture	Services	Industry
2002	39.5	33.0	27.5
2003	39.8	32.8	27.4
2004	40.3	32.6	27.2
2005	39.5	32.9	27.6
2006	39.3	32.9	27.8
2007	38.0	33.4	28.6
2008	30.6	31.8	25.9

1993 constant prices (%)

**Source:** Ghana Statistical Service; ISSER, 2009

Agriculture is predominantly practiced on smallholder, family-operated farms using rudimentary technology. These farms produce about 80% of Ghana's total agricultural output (Government of Ghana, 2007). Agricultural activities are mainly concentrated in rural areas or the countryside; about 85 % of rural households are engaged in crop and/ or animal keeping compared to only 28 % of urban households (Ghana Statistical Service, 2008). Also, rural savannah has the highest %age of households in agricultural activities (92%), with rural forest and rural coastal areas reporting 86 % and 73 % of households, respectively. About 38 % of women have direct responsibility for agricultural activities in Ghana.

About 90% of farm holdings are less than 2 hectares in size. Larger scale farms and plantations produce mainly palm oil, rubber and coconut and to a lesser extent, maize, rice and pineapples. Agricultural production is generally dependent on rainfall, although an estimated 6,000 farm enterprises nation-wide were using some means of irrigation in 1999. In 2002, the total area under formal irrigation was estimated at 11,000 hectares whereas the potential area – including

inland valleys – that could be developed for irrigation is estimated at 500,000 ha. As of 2000, the Ghana Irrigation Development Authority (GIDA) identified 32,000 hectares of under-developed inland valleys throughout the country that could benefit from moisture improvement technologies for food production.

In Ghana, like elsewhere, small scale farmers or smallholders are not a homogenous group. They differ by broadly perceived defining characteristics of smallholder agriculture such as low input use, limited land and capital, and low market engagement as well as landholding size (Chamberlin, 2008). Yet, many strategy discussions rarely break down the group beyond basic agro-ecological divisions (e.g., north and south or coast, forest, and savannah). This shortcoming has been identified by Asuming-Brempong *et al.* (2004) who note that failure to differentiate between various livelihood contexts and production objectives has led to current undifferentiated policies that miss a large portion of the smallholder segment. In particular, they argue for the differentiation between poor and non-poor small farmers who are not currently engaged in markets. The poor will not be able to benefit from many of the targeted interventions (such as high-input, high-output technologies). Similar arguments have been made for gender-specific strategy formulation (Coulombe and McKay 2003; Aryeetey and McKay 2004; ISSER 2007).

In order to improve targeting, the recent policy review during the formulation of FASDEP II (the Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA)) identified five categories of farmers in Ghana. These were described as large-scale commercial, small commercial, semi-commercial, non-poor complex diverse risk prone and poor farmers. It was also concluded that the earlier FASDEP failed to recognize the different categories of farmers. Therefore the pursuit of a modernised agriculture under FASDEP II proposes to target different categories of farmers according to their needs. Risk-prone, largely subsistence farmers will be targeted with interventions to reduce their vulnerability and help them improve productivity. Smallholder commercial and semi-commercial farmers will also be supported to improve productivity and to integrate them into markets competitively.

In order to achieve this, on-going efforts to develop Farmer Based Organisations (FBOs) as part of the strategy for improved access of smallholders to services will continue. The aim is to encourage the evolution of FBOs at the grass roots and network them through a hierarchy of local, district and regional groupings to a national apex. It is expected that this will give the

FBOs power to bargain. The needs of the existing commercial farmers (both large and small) will also be addressed by the policy. Support to the commercial sector is particularly relevant because the strategy is to forge links between commercial and smallholder sector for their mutual benefit. This is consistent with government's transformative goals for small farmers such as increased participation in markets and higher productivity, through better access to and use of input and credit markets.

## **Research Methods**

The research leading to this paper combined both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was obtained through desk review of various reports, policy documents and published literature. The study reviewed Ghana's agriculture sector, the policy process, and the current Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) and Sector Plan agenda in a new Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) compact. Primary data was obtained from key informant and focus group discussions with government officials currently engaged in agricultural policy-making and implementation. I also held interactions with various organisations involved in policy advocacy with emphasis on securing better policies for small holder farmers. The data was then synthesized and reported. The study employed an analytic framework that was developed during a 2-day methodology workshop held in Dakar, Senegal. The primary purpose of the analytic framework is to ensure the comparability of the results of the country scoping studies for the six countries involved in this project.

## **Key Issues and Interventions in Smallholder Agriculture**

The Government has applied a number of instruments to address the constraints in the agriculture sector with a view to modernising it. The thrust of the approach has been public-led service delivery, complemented with donor-funded stand-alone projects. However, experience has shown that donor-funded stand alone project activities and impacts are seldom sustained because of inadequate plans for phasing out and mainstreaming project activities with budgetary support from the central government. The current policy proposes a sector-wide approach for multi-donor budget support, in order to improve coordination among donors and consistency of the

latter with sector policies. A brief review of some policy interventions in the agriculture and their effects on access to agricultural input and supply markets follows.

### ***Inputs Supply Systems and Service Delivery***

In the 1990s, Ghana undertook reforms in the research and extension systems with funding from the World Bank. The reforms were geared towards building the capacity to deliver improved extension to agricultural producers through Research Extension Liaison Committees (RELCs). While the institutional arrangements under different projects were maintained, the systems failed to deliver the needed service to farmers through the bottom-up and participatory approaches as envisaged. Later attempts introduced private sector participation in the delivery of veterinary services, and more recently, the piloting of pluralism in extension services (Government of Ghana, 2007). The response of the private sector in providing veterinary services to livestock farmers has been low. In the case of the general extension services, there is lack of awareness about the policy of extension pluralism. Also, the few pilots on the ground show that private sector service providers have their strengths in group development and business related services rather than in the delivery of technical information.

The use of contact farmers for dissemination of extension messages has worked but tends to limit access of poor risk prone farmers to extension services, because extension agents prefer to work with farmers who are outgoing and can demonstrate ability to utilise technologies. Farmer-based organisations (FBOs) are being developed as part of the strategy for improved access of smallholders to services such as extension. However, the pilot projects have devoted their energy towards ensuring that FBOs access the FBO Development Fund for the purchase of equipment, but they have in the process neglected efforts to build the capacity of these formations to demand access to services.

Irrigation is seen as a necessary instrument for the modernisation of agriculture, and in particular, for reducing vulnerability of smallholders to rainfall variability. However, the expansion in irrigation is slow and the productivity of public systems is low due to poor management. Yet, not much attention is given to informal systems largely patronized by smallholders. The use of small, individual water lifting devices has contributed to increased food production in the Upper East Region and can be replicated in other parts of the country. Water Users' Associations can

contribute substantially to the management of irrigation schemes, but governance systems need to improve to include women.

Weak links in commodity value chains limit income growth. Interventions in the cocoa sector have enabled cocoa farmers to use more fertiliser, improved varieties and better agronomic practices, leading to increased productivity in the sector. These, together with price incentives, have contributed to poverty reduction. However, food crop smallholders have had to contend with the high costs of inputs. Most of the smallholders face liquidity challenges and this is exacerbated by the lack of credit facilities. The unavailability of affordable credit for smallholders has dampened their demand for agro-inputs e.g. technologies for sustainable management of land and the environment. For example, in 2005/2006 the share of households that reported using credit from formal and informal sources averaged less than 20% in every zone. Credit is more frequently used in the coast and forest zones than in the north, where the bulk of smallholders operate. Also, liberalisation of input markets has not increased competition substantially but has introduced quality challenges because of insufficient regulation. The government of Ghana has used tax exemptions as an incentive for the private sector to be involved in the sector, but these measures remain inadequate due to other constraints such as the high cost of energy and poor infrastructure.

### ***Producers Organisation***

In post-independence restructuring, especially during the early 1960s, the government of Ghana sponsored producer cooperatives to enhance joint production under the umbrella of the United Ghana Farmers' Cooperative Council (Dadson, 1988). Although the landscape of cooperative organisation continued to experience various changes, succeeding governments maintained a permissive and liberal approach to the development of cooperatives. This was, in part, because public policy tended to view the cooperative form of economic organisation as a tool for rural economic development (Dadson, 1988). In fact, cooperatives and other forms of farmer groups were the channels for obtaining subsidized agricultural credit during different periods until the current period. The ongoing efforts at developing FBOs stem from the government's desire to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of extension service delivery to farmers in Ghana. A good example is the Agricultural Services Sub-sector Investment Project (AgSSIP) where the government set up the FBO Development Fund in an attempt to encourage the formation of

independent grass root organisations of farmers. The government, through its current agricultural sector policy (FASDEP II), recognizes FBOs as partners in agricultural development. The Livestock Development Project and Crop Development Project of the government carried out several activities through FBOs. In addition, the agricultural component of the current Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) specifically targets its credit at FBOs whose membership is made up of small scale producers.

Gender inequality in the agriculture sector has undermined the achievements of sustainable agricultural development because programmes and projects are not systematically formulated around different needs, interests, roles, responsibilities, status and influence in society of women and men. Female representation is very low within the parent ministry. Women are only 16% of the total workforce, and only 9.5% have achieved a high enough status to participate in decision making. Dissemination of new and improved technologies through extension services is highly unbalanced between women and men farmers, with as little as 20% of services reaching women. RELC's do not focus much on gender issues nor on women in agricultural development activities during the period of prioritization. Gender sensitisation and training programmes held for various categories of staff are achieving an impact at an individual level but this is yet to be translated into practice.

The passage of local government Law (Act 462) requires implementation of policies at the district level. However the capacity constraints at local government which include the inadequate flow of funds to the districts, and the lack of adequate attention to the development of coherent local policies and programmes have negatively affected participation of non-state actors. The institutional capacity to implement policies in a decentralised framework is still weak. The project approach has not benefited districts fairly. There is evidence to suggest that even districts that have benefited from a multiplicity of projects have not adequately implemented them for the benefit of the communities due to lack of effective coordination. In addition, the impact of policies and projects has not been well documented as most of the monitoring reports tend to focus on activities and outputs.

### *Liberalisation and Agricultural Exports*

As part of structural adjustment programs in the 1980s, Ghana dismantled various price and non-price measures that pervaded the economy in earlier periods (Oduro and Kwadzo, 2007). The Ghana Food Distribution Corporation (GFDC), initially established to manage buffer stocks in maize, rice, beans, and groundnuts was privatised, just as the Ghana Cotton Development Board (GCDB). Market reforms saw the removal of subsidies (including fertilisers and credit to agriculture) and privatisation of input marketing. State provision of mechanization services to farmers was terminated. Guaranteed minimum prices for maize and rice were phased out. Apart from minimum wage legislation and government setting of the producer price for cocoa, there are no regulations on or support for the production and marketing of agricultural goods within the smallholder sector. Recent experimentation with subsidized tractor services for land clearing, block farming and a fertiliser coupon system were mostly an ad hoc response to the 2008 world food crisis.

The need to diversify exports from traditional commodities was promoted in the mid-1990s under the Medium Term Agricultural Development Programme, but the focus was on creating price incentives and using fiscal instruments to boost trade in non-traditional agricultural exports. However, the incentives were not adequate as structural and capacity problems have been a major drawback. The government has introduced major initiatives to enhance competitiveness of the non-traditional export sub-sector, and the horticulture sector in particular has become the country's focus for agricultural export diversification. Interventions in this area, plus higher price incentives for the cocoa sub-sector, have impacted positively on poverty reduction among the export crop producers.

Recent shocks to the pineapple industry from the introduction of MD2 exposed the country's lack of preparedness to respond to changes in international markets. Market information, market intelligence and continued innovation are necessary for success in international markets. The growing importance of private standards of good agricultural practices (GAP) on the international market is also challenging participation of smallholders in high value commodity chains, especially for export. There is need for skills development within the sector. Product and cluster development, and innovative linkage arrangements between agribusinesses and smallholders are necessary for improving competitiveness in international agricultural trade.

### *Natural Resource Management and Ghana's Agriculture*

Ghana's agriculture is natural resource-based, with extensive crop and livestock production systems, hunting, rain-fed agriculture, and fish from natural water bodies. Traditional practices such as bush burning and the improper use of technologies such as irrigation and agro-chemicals do not engender sustainability of resource use. For example, 69% of the total land surface of Ghana is prone to severe erosion, at a cost of 2% of GDP. Although the problem is in all the agro-ecological zones, the savannah regions are affected the most. Land degradation, desertification and soil erosion hit hardest at the local level and those most affected are the poor who depend on natural resources for their survival. 'Women's work', particularly work performed by poor women, is strongly affected by environmental degradation. Communal ownership of land and absence of demarcated grazing lands result in over-grazing and conflicts between livestock keeping and crop farming. The practice of bush burning for crop production results in loss of fodder for livestock during the critical dry season period.

Unfortunately, most farmers in Ghana are not aware of the linkage between inappropriate tillage and water management practices on one hand, and environmental degradation on the other. With an estimated 64% of the natural wealth of Ghana locked up in crop lands, there is need to address poor agricultural land management. The prudent management of agrochemicals and drainage is crucial to sustaining the natural resource base.

In spite of the existence of rules and regulations on environmental management for agricultural land use activities, major stakeholders are unaware of these and enforcement is weak. Past efforts by the Government and its partners have yielded some positive results. However, attempts at scaling up of these sustainable land management (SLM) practices have faced a number of barriers, including cost and limited access to relevant inputs within an environment of limited credit, and land tenure systems that do not favour investments in improvements to land.

Climatic changes and other natural hazards expose Ghana to various types of natural and man-made hazards, which have occurred with increasing frequency in the last twenty years. Natural phenomena, especially floods and drought, regularly result in disasters that cause severe food insecurity and disruption of livelihoods. These disasters disproportionately impact enterprises of poor smallholders and increase their vulnerability to food insecurity. Furthermore, the land degradation aggravates the impact of these disasters.

Ghana has a national water policy that aims to achieve an efficient and effective management system for the sustainable development of water resources. The policy focuses on water resource management, urban water supply and community water and sanitation. It recognizes the important role of agricultural water management and irrigation in the country. Some of the underlying principles of the policy relevant to agriculture are: a) minimizing activities that have the potential to negatively affect the integrity of water resources; b) coordinating water resource planning with land use planning; and c) ensuring participatory decision-making at the lowest appropriate level.

The issues related to water resource management in agriculture surround farming in catchment areas and along banks of water bodies and discharge of effluents from agro-industries into water bodies. The absence of geo-political demarcation of water resources compounds the problems of common property. FASDEP II recognizes the need for collaboration between relevant agencies for awareness creation, advocacy of development and enforcement of regulations and guidelines for efficient and sustainable exploitation, and utilisation and management of water resource.

### ***Macro-Economic Policies and Development Strategies***

The performance of the agricultural sector is affected by macroeconomic policies, including trade (exchange rates, quotas and tariffs); fiscal (public expenditure management, tax); and monetary (interest rates) policies. Although interest rates are falling, the lending rates for agriculture are still high. The dominant perception among formal financial institutions is that the agricultural sector is a high risk and costly sector for financial services delivery. These attitudes continue to adversely affect credit supply to the sector. Besides, producers in the agricultural sector, with their low productivity, cannot compete with the commercial sector for funds.

Between 2000 and 2004 there was a substantial surge in the importation of staple foods such as rice, poultry products and tomato paste, and the trend has not changed. Government tax policy has been supportive of agriculture where tax holidays of close to 10 years are given, depending on the type of investment. Unfortunately, tax exemptions have not been an effective instrument for supporting agriculture as other constraints such as high cost of energy and poor infrastructure have been inimical to investments in the sector. Currently, the MoFA is proposing a shift in government budget or debt relief funds towards improving the physical environment for

agricultural investments. In addition, it is proposed that the government removes corporate tax for producers and processors in the sector.

Overall, macroeconomic policy management does not appear to have a systematic process in place where effects of exchange rate on key agricultural commodities are factored into the economic policy management. Such a process would help to determine the levels of exchange rate and tariff that provide sufficient incentives to expand exports and reduce imports.

Ghana has developed a medium term Private Sector Development Strategy (PSD) that focuses on using the private sector to deliver quality inputs and products, through operation of markets. The PSD Strategy aims to enhance Ghana's competitiveness by removing physical and regulatory constraints on the operation of markets, complemented in the short-term with direct, targeted state support to specific export industries under the Presidential Special Initiatives (PSI) programme. The strategy is designed to address constraints faced by micro and small enterprises, which encompass most agribusinesses. The agricultural sector is expected to benefit from the broad-based pro-market reforms of the PSD strategy and particularly because the constraints related to agribusiness that the PSD Strategy seeks to address are consistent with those identified in FASDEP II.

The instruments for improving the environment of private sector development are specified in the trade policy. Tariffs and quotas will be used to ensure fairness in pricing, but not to discourage competition. Tariffs will also be used as a short-term measure to counteract unfair trade practices and to encourage domestic production of strategic commodities (GoG, 2005). The tariffs will then be replaced with long-term concessionary investment finance. Fiscal incentives and other forms of direct and indirect support will also be introduced for capital investments in technology upgrades and research and development. The trade policy explicitly recognizes the infrastructure and regulatory needs of agricultural produce exports, including cold chains for perishables and phyto-sanitary inspection services for all produce. However, the policy instruments focus on the commercial or agribusiness sector, thereby bypassing the majority of operators in the sector. The MoFA intends to promote linkages between agri-business and smallholders to enable the latter to benefit from the incentives.

Trade protocols such as ECOWAS limit the use of tariffs to protect domestic producers. However, the extent to which this negatively affects staple crops such as rice and maize has not been adequately established. The Government has announced a new initiative aimed at building the capacity of trade experts at MoFA and other relevant MDAs in trade policy analysis and negotiation skills. As part of its policy monitoring and coordinating role, MoFA will support the establishment of a system that will regularly analyse effects of exchange rate management, taxes and other trade instruments on agriculture, to inform government macro policy decisions. The Private Sector Development Strategy states that in respect of macroeconomic environment, financial sector and infrastructure development, the government will integrate private sector concerns into their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This provision creates the opportunity for MoFA to monitor those aspects of macroeconomic policy that affect the private sector in agriculture. Current policies of the transport sector aim to foster collaboration and facilitate activities of other sectors such as food and agriculture. Under FASDEP II, MoFA will take advantage of the strategies listed below and liaise with the relevant ministries in the transport sector, to ensure that the transport needs of the agricultural operators are met. The policy principles in the table provide a framework guiding thinking within the transport sector and how it can add value to the agricultural and broader development strategy.

Transport planning will be fully integrated with development planning and service provision.

Transport infrastructure investments will be targeted to better serve population, production and tourist centres aiming to reduce overall transport costs to the government and users.

A bulk goods transportation strategy will be developed based on specific user needs, identifying critical investments in the rehabilitation of railways and inland waterways infrastructure.

Other facets of the strategy of relevance to FASDEP II are:

- ✓ Establish consultation mechanisms between transport sector MDAs and other Sector Ministries.
- ✓ Improve accessibility by determining key centres of population, production and tourism, identifying strategic areas of development and necessary expansion.

- ✓ Reinstate labour-based methods of road construction and maintenance to improve rural roads and maximise employment opportunities.
- ✓ Develop, rehabilitate and maintain existing railway infrastructure to ensure services are sustained to move freight and passengers more efficiently.
- ✓ Remove obstacles that impede the free movement of bulk goods in the Volta Lake and provide adequate infrastructure such as landing stages and warehouses for bulk goods transportation on the Lake.

### ***Agricultural Labour: HIV/AIDS and other Communicable Diseases***

An important vulnerable group is HIV/AIDS-infected persons and their caregivers. The impact of the disease includes loss of household labour and high dependency in households. For the infected, their low immune system requires proper and adequate nutrition. The existing policy on HIV/AIDS recognizes the need to train Agricultural Extension staff on HIV/AIDS prevention to enable them to provide basic information to clients, who are mostly in the rural areas. Under FASDEP II, this policy is being broadened to include workplace awareness creation, which would commit the Directorates of MoFA to consider HIV/AIDS issues as an integral part of job functions, and to plan and allocate resources for HIV/AIDS programmes for the staff within the directorates.

Other important ailments that have a debilitating effect on farm households are malaria and guinea worm. Under FASDEP II, MoFA will collaborate with the Ministry of Health to facilitate dissemination of information on the control of these ailments. Considerations for these diseases will be systematically incorporated in food and agriculture interventions, while at the same time incorporating agriculture considerations in AIDS programmes.

### ***Land Policies and Access to Agricultural Land***

Under colonialism, English common law was grafted onto Ghanaian communal societies without taking into account the differences between the early nineteenth century capitalist economic structures and the egalitarian communal institutions of Ghana (Agbosu 2000). That oversight, among other factors, laid the foundation for conflicts between the customary law and practice and the Anglo-American common law, its notions and conceptions of tenure. Consequently, land transactions were beset with conflicts between the customary practices, norms, usages, and jural

postulates governing the indigenous land law, and the Anglo-American conceptions of tenure and its common law notions. While several disparities existed in the internal arrangements for land administration and control in each individual polity in the country, three factors were common to all the systems. These were: (a) an inherent right in the individual member of a land-holding group to benefit from the land regarded as a common asset and resource; (b) the recognition of certain members of the community as having the power of control over how rights to benefit may be exercised; and (c) the lack of individual ownership of the soil itself. The paramount title was accepted by the communities as vested in the groups, such as the stool, the clan, or the family, all of which are corporate juristic entities. Land tenure systems operated on the basis of these common factors and these could be employed to harmonize the systems within the framework of a national land policy and to develop a common law. However, this was not done.

Land tenure in the Ghanaian context (like other African countries) is the relationship (legal and customarily defined) among people as individuals or as groups with respect to land. Customary land tenure systems have been radically affected by conflicting land administration and acquisition practices, emanating mainly from legislative interventions, the introduction of commercial agriculture, population growth in some localities and, urbanisation, among other factors. Currently, Ghana maintains a plural land tenure system. One of the key guiding principles underlying the Government of Ghana's land policy is the fact that land is considered to be a common national or communal property resource, held in trust for the people, which must be used in the long term interest of the people. Changing pressures have made subsistence agricultural land acquire real value with rising land prices and high opportunity costs. Demand appears high and landholders (chiefs, queen mothers, family heads, and individuals) have responded accordingly, sometimes in direct contravention of the statutory requirements and regulations. Physical development has overtaken the formal planning process, with the emergence of flourishing agricultural and housing land markets in almost all the villages that were visited in the preparation of this study. The evidence suggests that land tenure is fast moving away from family and share cropping arrangements to short term rental and hiring – thus increasing insecurity and reducing investment incentives.

Available agricultural land is declining due to population pressure and urbanisation. This is increasingly limiting access to land and causing changes in the spatial distribution of crops. This is evident in the shift in cocoa production from the Ashanti, Eastern and BrongAhafo Regions to the Western Region and replacement of yam by cassava in the transitional zone. Insecurity of tenure is widespread, largely because of customary land tenure systems in which there are no legal titles. Customary rules governing the alienation of communal (e.g. family, clan, skin, stool) lands are governed by the basic principle that for an alienation to a non-member of the group to be valid, the head of the group must act with the consent and concurrence of the accredited members of the group. Some of the major difficulties faced by strangers include identifying those responsible for this administrative function in each case, difficulty in identifying the right authority to mediate disputes and the uncertainty in the operation of the rules on alienation (Kasanga and Kotey, 2001). These, coupled with lack of legal titles make customary land tenure systems in Ghana inherently insecure. In addition, boundaries are unclear and communal ownership invests rights in all but gives responsibility for management to none (Agbosu, 2000). Insecurity of land rights could limit investment and threatens the livelihoods of migrant populations in farming communities and the sustainable use of land through intensification. Discrimination against women in the land allocation processes is widely reported. Fewer women obtain land and when they do they often have smaller and less fertile pieces of land, which they tend to hold on less secure terms than those of men. Less than one third (31%) of households headed by women own land (Government of Ghana, 2007; ISSER, 2007). The situation is further complicated by the fact that there are geographical variations in women's access to land, with more restrictions on women's access to land in the northern regions of Ghana than in the south. The co-existence of many systems of law regulating land in Ghana presents special difficulties, particularly for the more vulnerable sections of society, including women and the rural and urban poor. One of the reasons for this gender inequality in access to land is that an estimated 80% of the land in Ghana is owned and governed by traditional rulers under gender-biased customary practices. The Land Administration Project was initiated as part of government's efforts to create an efficient and effective land administration system that ensures tenure security for all, particularly women. The strategy is intended to enable the LAP to formulate comprehensive development interventions that would mainstream as well as address gender related problems at the traditional and the Land Sector Agency (LSA) level. The strategy is a result of the review of

studies and relevant information from the project and other land related initiatives, an assessment of the aspirations of civil society, consultation, surveys and focus group discussions.

The main objective of the strategy is to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender into the land sector. The strategy seeks to promote a coherent and sustained approach to addressing women and men's concerns for equitable development in relation to land administration through gender sensitive data gathering, participation in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes of the project. The strategy has five (5) strategic thrusts critical for accomplishing the LAP's gender objectives including public education, capacity building, establishing institutional processes, advocacy and collaboration and networking.

## **Key Actors - Analysis of the Institutions Involved in the Policymaking Process<sup>1</sup>**

### ***Agricultural Policy Making in Ghana: An Overview***

At the sub-regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed an ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) to address food security in the sub-region in conformity with existing regional and international commitments. ECOWAP is expected to have a significant impact on the ecological, economic, institutional and social environment. The objectives of the policy include the need for increased food production and income generation, increased inter-country trade, strengthened producers' organisations and greater involvement of women in socio-economic decisions that affect household livelihood opportunities.

Ghana's national vision for the food and agriculture sector is 'a modernised agriculture that delivers a structurally transformed economy, with food security, employment opportunities, as well as reduced poverty' (GoG, 2007). This is inextricably linked to the national vision in the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II), and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The national vision and policy is consistent with various international declarations since 1992, which identified food security as an important underlying and cross-cutting issue that

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<sup>1</sup> This section draws extensively from the current agricultural policy of the Government of Ghana, FASDEP II.

had to be addressed in order to ensure the sustainable reduction of absolute poverty. This realization formed the basis for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The food and agriculture sector has direct impact on at least five of the MDGs, making agricultural development policies crucial to the attainment of these globally agreed to goals.

The current agricultural policy is captured in the new Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II), which has been informed by shortcomings of its predecessor (GoG, 2007). The objectives for agricultural development in Ghana, as outlined in FASDEP II, are:

- ✓ Food security and emergency preparedness
- ✓ Improved growth in incomes
- ✓ Increased competitiveness and enhanced integration into domestic and international markets
- ✓ Sustainable management of land and environment
- ✓ Science and Technology Applied in food and agriculture development
- ✓ Improved Institutional Coordination

According to the medium-term development plan, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II), agriculture is expected to lead the growth and structural transformation of the economy. It is envisaged that such a growth path will enable the country to maximise the benefits of accelerated growth, given the high incidence of poverty in the agriculture sector. Areas earmarked for intervention by modernising agriculture, as specified in the GPRS II are:

- ✓ Reform of land acquisition and property rights
- ✓ Accelerating provision of irrigation infrastructure
- ✓ Enhancing access to credit and inputs for agriculture
- ✓ Promoting selective crop development
- ✓ Improving access to mechanized agriculture
- ✓ Increasing access to extension services
- ✓ Provision of infrastructure for aquaculture
- ✓ Restoration of degraded environment

The specific performance targets for the agriculture sector as presented in FASDEP II are:

- ✓ Agricultural growth rate of 6-8% per annum over the next 4 years

- ✓ Crops and livestock leading the growth at an average annual growth rate of 6%
- ✓ Forestry and logging, and fisheries, each growing at 5% per annum
- ✓ Broad policy principles against which all future activities will be justified, which also serve as a guide for policy implementation are:
- ✓ The Government of Ghana (GoG) shall strive to achieve the Maputo Declaration of allocating at least 10% of annual government expenditure to the agricultural sector
- ✓ There shall be targeting of the poor in appropriate aspects of policy and programmes
- ✓ The Government shall pursue regional balance in agricultural development, building on regional comparative advantage

All policies and programmes will be designed from a gender perspective, enabling the government to work towards gender equality in the agriculture sector. The GoG will also ensure that investments in the sector are scientifically based, environmentally sustainable and considered on the basis of economic feasibility and social viability/sustainability. Furthermore, all the policy and programmes will be implemented within the framework of decentralisation and all agricultural structures of decentralisation will be strengthened and inter-sectoral collaboration will be pursued in the implementation of policies and programmes. The strategy encourages the GoG to partner with private sector and civil society in policy implementation and review. In addition, the GoG commits itself (through the strategy) to foster an enabling environment for the provision of key infrastructure (irrigation, roads, storage, and energy) and information, by the private sector and where necessary provide such infrastructure.

### ***Policy Consultations and Major Actors in Agricultural Policy***

The process of formulating FASDEP II included an extensive review of past interventions in the food and agriculture sector and the preparation of building blocks for the policy. FASDEP I was meant to provide a framework for modernising the agricultural sector, which would in turn act as a catalyst for rural transformation, in line with the goal set for the sector in the prevailing national development plan, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I). As part of the process of formulating FASDEP II, a poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA) of FASDEP I, concluded that the policies would not achieve the desired impact on poverty for a number of reasons, including the following:

The expectation of modernising poor smallholder agriculture was unachievable because of improper targeting of the poor within an environment where the drivers of modernisation, access to credit and technology, good infrastructure and markets are very limited. Problem analysis was weak and did not sufficiently reflect the perspectives of clients or their needs and priorities. It did not specify the process by which the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), the lead implementing authority, was to stimulate response from other ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) for interventions that fell outside its domain.

The current agriculture sector policy (FASDEP II) ensures consistency with national development objectives as specified in the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II). Among other things, the GPRS II aims to achieve accelerated and sustainable shared growth, poverty reduction, gender equity, protection and empowerment of the vulnerable and excluded within a decentralized and democratic environment. FASDEP II, which is more broad-based than its predecessor, seeks to enhance the environment for all categories of farmers, while targeting poor and risk prone and risk-averse producers. This was made possible through an extensive stakeholder consultation process which incorporated lessons learnt from implementation of FASDEP I, and sub-sector policies and strategies dating back to 2002.

The policy review process identified the critical thematic issues that need areas as: (i) human resource development, (ii) technology development and dissemination, (iii) promotion of specific commodities for markets, (iv) improved financial services, (v) infrastructure development, (vi) cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender, land, etc) and (vii) an improved implementation framework.

These thematic areas formed the basis for seven working groups, with members drawn from MoFA, Development Partners (DPs) and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The groups produced initial inputs, which were used to produce a zero draft for discussion within MoFA and comments from DPs. The same draft was also presented to stakeholders at a MoFA performance review meeting.

Stakeholder consultations held in one district in each of the ten regions, sought views on the agriculture sector constraints and how they could better be addressed. In addition, stakeholders in agricultural input supply, based in Accra, were consulted for their inputs. The views from the consultations and comments on the zero draft informed the preparation of the First Draft, which

was again circulated to stakeholders for comment and used for regional consultation workshops. Separate consultations were held with MDAs, the banks and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Agriculture.

### ***Roles of Key Stakeholders under FASDEP II***

The Ministry of Food and Agriculture has the lead responsibility within the context of a coordinated Government Programme. The Mission of MoFA is to promote sustainable agriculture and thriving agribusiness through research and technology development, effective extension and other support services to farmers, processors and traders, for improved livelihood. In line with this mission, the lead ministry is to provide overall coordination of the implementation of the strategy. Under FASDEP, Private Sector and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are expected to participate in policy dialogue to ensure that their interests are reflected. They are also expected, where possible, to invest in productive activities in the sector and ensure that commercialisation is balanced with social responsibility and environmental sustainability. CSOs are also expected to provide training support and skills improvement of the sector's manpower. Development Partners are expected to contribute financial and technical resources to support the achievement of sector objectives within the parameters of the prevailing policy framework. In addition, they are expected to engage constructively in on-going policy dialogue on all policies relevant to agriculture and related sectors. Other MDAs are expected to ensure that their policies and programmes are consistent with FASDEP II (Government of Ghana, 2007).

### **State of Policy Advocacy**

This section discusses the state of policy advocacy in Ghana with particular reference to activities of organisations that emphasise policy issues affecting small holder farmers. The discussion covers such aspects as who is involved, their activities and approaches employed, and analyses selected outcomes of the various approaches and advocacy efforts. In addition, advocacy capacity of actors is assessed and suggestions for strengthening policy advocacy processes are made.

Civil society organisations (CSOs), broadly defined to include all voluntary associations that actively participate, at least periodically, in influencing public policies, have a long history in

Ghana (Abdulai and Quantson, 2009). But the activities and contribution of CSOs have seen marked increases especially since the mid-1990s. The 1990s witnessed the emergence of CSOs of different types and sizes including think tanks, policy centres and research institutes. The participation of CSOs in policy dialogue processes got boosted by the National Economic Forum in 1997, and also during the National Economic Dialogue in 2001 (Abdulai and Quantson, 2009). Several civil society coalitions and networks are now engaged in policy dialogue with government. Ghanaian CSOs also actively participated in the formulation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II).

However, it is not clear whether programming inter-relationships exist amongst civil society organisations as there appears to be a lack of effort to work together. While there have been marked improvements in the involvement of civil society in the past two decades, Ghanaian CSOs remain weak due to their fragmented ranks. They tend to focus so much on their individual goals to the detriment of a singular national goal (Abdulai and Quantson, 2009).

Chances of duplication of efforts may be high because a number of persons serve as executive members of multiple farmer organisations. Evidence of this may already be showing, as all the organisations covered in this chapter tried to lay claim to virtually the same successes. There is currently a multiplicity of organisations, each describing itself as an umbrella group for farmers' associations or advocating for smallholder farmers. These include Farmers Organisation Network in Ghana (FONG), Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition GTLC), Farmers Platform of Ghana (FPG), Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG), Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (ECASARD), General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU), SEND Ghana, Food Security Policy and Advocacy Network (FoodSPAN), Ghana National Association of Farmers and Fishermen (GNAFF), Apex Farmers' Organisation of Ghana (APFOG), Ghana Agricultural Associations Business and Information Centre (GAABIC), and more recently the Ghana Federation of Agricultural Producers (GFAP). As discussed below all these organisations, along with others, try to engage in policy advocacy in the agricultural sector and compete for resources in the process.

These trends suggest nuances of interest group politics by a few with access to information who appear to be jockeying for positions of leverage to access development aid. Generally, Ghanaian CSOs lack a coordinated front to engage with the government effectively. In fact, CSOs seem to

spread themselves thin with outright duplication, while at the same time pursuing the sources of funding in an uncoordinated fashion (Abdulai and Quantson, 2009). Most CSOs lack the capacity for policy analysis and the requisite research abilities needed to proactively engage with the state and her development partners. These deficiencies limit the capacity of CSOs at both national and local levels to effectively mobilise their grass roots for policy dialogue and participation in the policy process.

## **Conclusion**

There seems to be a good number of organisations that are seeking to influence agricultural policies in favour of smallholder farmers. Each of the advocacy organisations seems to be working directly with smallholder farmers. However, the actual act of advocacy is left in the hands of a few organisations whose activities are significantly influenced by the preferences and priorities of funding organisations and this may suggest a weak civil society. Farmer-based advocacy organisations, a key stakeholder in the agriculture sector, do not seem to get the recognition they deserve in the policy making process and hence are not adequately involved in critical formative stages of policies.

Findings from the field indicate that there is need to increase sensitisation and mobilisation of civil society to improve consciousness and stimulate participation. More effort should be devoted towards educating the citizenry on issues on globalization and how various local and international agreements/ protocols affect their lives. It is also important to champion public education on citizens' rights and responsibilities and the implications of government's actions for their livelihood security. Such efforts could be channelled through some of the organisations mentioned above to improve ownership of advocacy issues and the framing of the agenda.

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