



About TrustAfrica

TrustAfrica is an independent foundation that strives to secure the conditions for democracy and equitable development throughout the continent.

Led by Africans, we convene dialogues, catalyze ideas, and provide grants and technical assistance to organizations working to advance these goals.

Our programs focus on:

- Democracy & Civil Society
- Equitable Development
- African Philanthropy

We also award competitive research grants through our:

- Investment Climate & Business Environment
- Research Fund

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Advocating for Agricultural Development

TrustAfrica is working to build a stronger advocacy movement for sustainable and equitable agricultural development in Africa.

During her visit to Kenya in August 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivered a speech highlighting the strategic importance of greater investment in African agriculture. “More and more, the world will look to Africa to be its breadbasket,” she said, “and I hope that when the world looks ... it is Africans and African farmers who will profit from becoming the world’s breadbasket ... We are convinced that investing in agriculture is one of the most high-impact, cost-effective strategies available for reducing poverty and saving and improving lives.”

The most promising African-led initiative in this arena may be the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), an outgrowth of the July 2003 African Union Summit in Maputo, Mozambique, where 53 African governments agreed to make agriculture a top priority in national development. The program aims to help African countries “reach a higher path of economic growth through agriculturally led development, which eliminates hunger, reduces poverty and food insecurity, and enables expansion of exports.”

All parties to the agreement made a commitment to increase public investment in agriculture by at least 10 percent of their national budgets. They also pledged to improve agricultural productivity to reach an average annual growth rate of 6 percent by 2015, while paying close attention to small-scale farmers, especially women. The program explicitly seeks to “develop dynamic agricultural markets within countries and between regions” and to “achieve a more equitable distribution of wealth.”

To reach these targets, the program calls for \$251 billion in investments in four areas — land and water management, market access, food supply and hunger alleviation, and agricultural research — with half the funds coming from African governments. Only a few signatories have complied with the terms of the CAADP agreement by producing and signing a compact — and even they have far to go to achieve equity and sustainability. ▶



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Sustainable and equitable development policies are most likely to emerge when a broad range of stakeholders has 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.

Strategies

With these issues in mind, TrustAfrica has begun working to build an effective advocacy movement for sustainable and equitable agricultural development in Africa. This project focuses on six countries — Ghana, Mali, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Malawi — with a combined population of roughly 160 million. In each of these nations, we are taking steps to:

- Strengthen the capacity of agriculture advocacy organizations and networks. The livelihoods of tens of millions of African farmers can be improved through the work of advocacy organizations that amplify their voices, champion their causes, and help align government policies with their concerns. To build robust networks and coalitions for agriculture advocacy, we will work with our partners in each of the six countries to assess organizational needs and opportunities, provide grants, conduct capacity-building workshops, provide technical assistance, and support peer learning. These activities will yield new outputs and outcomes, including reliable knowledge and baseline evidence about who is doing what where, strategic plans for concerted advocacy to make national policies compliant with CAADP, and a portfolio of grantees that are able to collaborate for greater impact.
- Develop locally appropriate advocacy strategies to ensure that national policies align with the goals of CAADP. The real test of CAADP's relevance as a continental framework lies in the extent to which actors at the national level can mobilize their constituencies and navigate local political dynamics. Through grants and convenings, the project will enable advocacy organizations and other stakeholders in each of the six countries to share ideas, develop and implement locally relevant strategies for raising awareness about the role of agriculture, and explore opportunities for building broad public support through advocacy campaigns. Forging effective connections among key stakeholders (particularly farmers' associations, the private sector, and civil society) will enable them to build alliances and coalitions for sustained advocacy.

Activities

More specifically, the project will advance these goals over the next 30 months by:

- Conducting a scoping study of organizational capacity needs and strengths in each of the six countries;
- Producing a comprehensive electronic database of advocacy organizations involved in the agricultural sector;
- Convening civil society organizations to network and develop strategies for raising awareness of the role of agriculture;
- Awarding small grants;
- Providing technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations working to advance agricultural development;
- Promoting dialogue and partnership building for agricultural development; and
- Supporting efforts to monitor government commitments under CAADP.

By taking these steps to make policy-making processes more participatory, more sustainable, and ultimately more effective, we can break the vicious cycle of poverty, hunger, and marginalization. ■