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

Agricultural Policy-Making in Kenya

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Introduction

Agriculture in Kenya remains a dominant sector in the economy accounting for 25% of GDP and 60% of export earnings. The sector also indirectly contributes another 27% to the GDP through linkages with manufacturing, distribution and service related sectors and accounts for 60% of total national employment. Out of the total labour force, women contribute 75% of the labour force (Republic of Kenya, 2004a). The majority of Kenya's population (80%) lives in rural areas and derives its livelihood from agriculture. Approximately 51% of the population is also food insecure (ibid.). Agriculture growth is thus critical for economic development and alleviation of poverty. A comprehensive understanding of the historical and current national agricultural development issues is a critical initial step in identifying the combination of policies that may contribute towards turning around smallholder agriculture.

The centrality of the agricultural sector to national development is exemplified by policy documents that have been produced since the 1960s. The purpose of these policy documents has been to engender meaningful development through the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease. Indeed, the core policy document, *Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965* on 'African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya', broadly spelt out the developmental contours that the post-independence nationalist regime would take. The document envisaged a form of unbalanced development biased towards the high potential agro-ecological areas in Kenya in Central and parts of the Rift Valley provinces. These two provinces are inhabited by the core ethnic political constituencies of the post-independence government. These communities constituted the most politically and economically mobilised communities who, through the ideological debates between the political parties KANU and KADU, were able to impose pressure on the incumbent government to fulfill the nationalist promises of land and freedom.[1]

In specific terms, ethnic communities supporting both political parties were predominantly made up of smallholder farmers; those with landholdings between 5 to 7 acres, which were resettled in the former "white highlands" in the Rift Valley and Central province. The government's resettlement policy had brought in a wave of largely Kikuyu peasants into what were previously white owned farms. This policy was undergirded by the ethnically selective provision of

[1] In particular, Kikuyu and Luo formed the core political constituency of KANU, which fronted for a centralized system of government. The minority Coastal communities, Luhya and Kalenjin, supported the KADU, which argued for a quasi-federalist system of government.

government support services. However, Kenya's 'golden age' (from the time of independence in 1963 up until the late 1970s)– the basis of its international reputation for so-called successful development - of capitalist economic growth was short-lived. By the late 1970s/early 1980s, a host of internal and external factors converged to reverse the modest gains in welfare that had been achieved (see Lofchie, 1989).

The smallholder sector continues to face a myriad of challenges related not only to colonial and post-colonial state policies, but also misguided development theories and models (see Cohen, 1988). Agriculture in Kenya has undergone major changes over the past decades since the implementation of structural adjustment beginning in 1988 and other sectoral reforms. The effects of these policies and programs on agricultural productivity continue to be debated. Donor-supported evaluations present evidence of a broad economic turnaround in Africa based on increased agricultural productivity growth. Macro-economic and agricultural sectoral reforms are identified as major factors explaining the rise in productivity growth (see USAID, 1993; Block, 1994; Sahn and Sarris, 1991; World Bank, 1994). However, in contrast, analyses supported by UNICEF and FAO have strongly questioned the effects of structural adjustment and/or food sector reform on agricultural productivity growth and household food security (see Cornia, Jolly, and Stewart 1987; Mosley 1994).

This study examines the historical and current performance of the smallholder sector in Kenya. It analyses some of the strategies smallholders and their allies have forged to respond to the diminishing government budgetary allocations to the sector since the 1980s. It addresses several questions. What policy and other factors currently work against the sustainable development of smallholder agriculture in Kenya? How have the smallholders responded to these challenges? Section one examines the national profile of smallholder agriculture in Kenya. Section two describes the methodology used for data collection and analysis. This is followed by a discussion of key issues in smallholder agriculture and the nature of government interventions in the sector. Section four analyses the nature of agricultural policy making in Kenya. Section five deals with the state of contemporary policy advocacy, it does so by looking at the responses of farmer organisations to the changing fortunes of agricultural development in Kenya. The final section constitutes recommendations and concluding remarks.

Smallholder Agriculture in Kenya

The post-independence agricultural policies about the smallholder sector in Kenya trace their roots to the colonial period (see Alila, 1977). Colonial policies favored mainly the White owned, large scale commercial farm sector. Kenyan agriculture had a dual structure under which British colonial agricultural policy emphasised separate development of European settlement areas. The core purpose of the dual policy of agricultural development was the creation of an agrarian capitalist economy, geared towards repaying loans earlier provided by the British Treasury to build the Mombasa-Kampala railway, a key valve for British imperial resource extraction (see Leys, 1975). A key pillar of this strategy entailed the massive dislocation of indigenous communities and their 'containerization' in native reserves, which provided a constant source of cheap labour for colonial capital. In total, 11 million acres was carved up for the development of a white settler enclave which straddles the present day Central and Rift Valley provinces (see Sorrenson, 1968).

Over time, increasing population pressure in the reserves led to technological stagnation, underdevelopment and low food production. These contradictions crystallized into the Mau Mau radical rebellion for land and freedom which accelerated the process of decolonization. A core political constituency of this rebellion was a closely forged alliance between squatters residing in the Rift Valley, who bore the disproportionate brunt of colonial dislocation and social deprivation and the emergent petite bourgeoisie, both in Nairobi and in the farms in the Rift Valley, who gave coherence to the movement (Furedi, 1989; Kanogo, 1987).

Colonial response to the agrarian rebellion was the Swynnerton Plan, which instituted reforms in land tenure (titling) and rural economy in Central Province. In a bid to stem the Mau Mau rebellion, the colonial state instituted a rapid land titling programme whose purpose was to isolate the radicals while cultivating a conservative smallholder class. This set the basis of post-independence agrarian conflicts. Land titling was aimed at rewarding loyalists while isolating the radicals, through the creation of a politically conservative Kikuyu agrarian class that could act as the counterpoise against any future militant nationalists among the Kikuyu (Leys, 1975; Hearbeson, 1973). The net impact of this programme was thus to incorporate the emerging smallholder class into the global export commodity markets, through the simultaneous introduction of cash crops (coffee, tea) and improved farming techniques, in the context of an accelerated land titling programme. Land was therefore critical, not only to processes of class formation, but also informed the critical issues around which the Lancaster House independence talks revolved (see Wasserman, 1976; Harbeson, 1973).

To be sure, ethnic communities in Kenya were integrated differentially into the colonial agrarian capitalist economy. The subsequent emergence of cooperatives, new farming techniques and cash crops in the post-colonial period, largely placed the Kikuyu at the forefront in the struggle for control over post-independence national resource distribution. The colonial agrarian economy deliberately generated ethnic-based inequalities, thus polarizing relations between Central province (where the Kikuyu predominantly reside) and the rest of Kenya (Ngunyi, 1996). These ethnic-based inequalities created the basis on which future ethnicisisation of political processes would advance. Coming to terms with the partial success of post-independence smallholder agriculture in Kenya therefore requires an examination of the role of smallholders as a critical political constituency of the nationalist government.

There are very rich debates on the peasantry in Kenya. These debates revolved around the nature of the peasantry and its dynamics (see Kenya: the Agrarian Question, *Review of African Political Economy* 1981, No. 20). Colin Leys (1975) *et al*. pioneered studies on the relation between land and class formation and consolidation. MukaruNg'ang'a (1981) asserted that the colonial state's land titling programme isolated radicals and created a conservative smallholder class which led to post-independence agrarian conflicts. After he examined what was happening at that time to the peasantry, he concluded that, the expansion of the peasantry seemed to take place in tandem with the interests of foreign capital. Thus, while local capitalist interests may have sought to destroy peasant production, foreign finance capital seemed to struggle to preserve the peasant commodity production. Yet, the general assumption of the peasantry as a class in itself betrayed the multi-occupational nature of the emerging rural social structure. Moreover, the weak generalization of this study stems from its focus on Central province alone. The responses of peasantries in other parts of the country are not known.

This is also true of Nyong'o's (1981) analysis. According to him, while foreign finance capital was actively encouraging capitalist development in Central, the tendency in Nyanza was toward the stagnation and/or destruction of the middle peasantry. Indeed, rather than capital accumulation, an alliance of merchant capital and peasants fought against the land titling programme in Nyanza. The net consequence was the propagation of increased migration of wage labor to other parts of the country, especially urban centers, due to the limited capitalist development in Nyanza. This partially explains the differential political and economic performance of the peasantry in terms of its limited resource mobilisation capacity to pressure the state to implement pro-peasant agricultural policies.

On the contrary, while the logic of polarization is apparent in capitalist development everywhere, Leys (1971) saw the expansion of the peasantry in the Kenyan context as an obstacle to capital accumulation. Instead of consolidating capitalism, a frozen peasantry merely served to solidify the emergent patron-client relations characteristic of the Kenyan political economy. Despite expanded peasantisation processes, Kenya's uni-modal model of development registered an annual agricultural growth rate of 4.9 and 3.8 % between 1964-1974 and 1975-1978 respectively.[2] By 1977 smallholders were producing approximately 30% of Kenya's coffee and tea.

By the late 1980s, there was what is commonly referred to as the end of the coffee boom, external oil shocks, declining internal production and rising indebtedness; the state increasingly faced fiscal problems. This led to the imposition of paternalistic structural adjustment programmes emphasising budget rationalisation and administrative decentralisations. The need to fill the vacuum left by the inability of the state to provide social services witnessed the rise of a vibrant peasant-based self-help movement – *Harambee* – which was geared toward provision of rural social services. The small and middle peasants who constituted the bulk of the self-help movement in Kenya seemed to force the Kenyan state to be minimally accountable to the public in the realm of social services (See Barkan and Holmquist 1989, p.361).

[2] The unimodal model of development is known in policy debates as a model under which smallholdings are comparatively more productive than large farms. The concomitant assumption holds that a small %age increase in productivity from many millions of small farmers would significantly enhance food security more than large farms, which would require a larger increase in output to bridge the same gap. Channeling scarce resources to the small farm sector is likely to prove more beneficial for overall production. In addition, the model pointed out that large farms were becoming less productive, reducing the smallholders' proportion of land and resulting in increased rural-urban migration, unemployment and lower productivity of large farms. Thus, the main thrust of this model is equitable distribution of resources to the poorest elements in the population mainly the smallholders through central government control of land and regulated distribution of agricultural inputs, infrastructure development, and farm credit provision (see Cohen, 1988).

Yet Widner (1994) seems to dispute this hypothesis. Her findings indicate that with regard to their capacity to support broad national policies favorable to agriculture, most "semi-competitive systems are alike (p.128)". A semi-competitive political system generates such policies for reasons that have little to do with the character of the regime (ibid). In this instance, higher producer prices and pressure against overvaluation of the currency derived from the personal interests of senior officials of the Agriculture ministry and elites in both the Kenyatta and Moi regimes. During this period, producers and smallholders boasted receipts of over 90% of the world market price for coffee and tea. However, this is only indirectly related to the nature of electoral rules which delineate the space for public contestation of policies.

Indeed, with the change from Kenyatta to Moi, changes in electoral rules had far reaching effects on the "voice" of smallholder farmers. This transition coincided with the disintegration of the nationalist coalition and the consolidation of presidential authoritarianism (Nyongo'o 1989). Characterised by de-institutionalisation of the agricultural parastatal sector and the "looting" of erstwhile Kikuyu capital, Moi sought to build his Kalenjin political base in close alliance with Asian capital and a galaxy of ethno-regional patrons in order to consolidate control of the state. Hence, the concomitant development of Nyayo tea zones was biased toward the tea sector farmed largely by Kalenjin smallholders, leading to the gradual neglect of the coffee sector (a Kikuyu mainstay). The net consequence over time was the de-mobilisation of smallholder organisations and their re-orientation toward "service delivery" at the behest of the state. Furthermore, increasing global competitiveness through liberalisation and deregulation of the agricultural sector left the smallholder sector unprepared to respond to the surge in imports and lessened state protectionism.

Methodology

This study combined secondary and primary data collection methods. Secondary socio-economic data was obtained from Government Agricultural Annual reports, statistical abstracts, Welfare Monitoring Surveys, and Economic Surveys. Archival research and compilation of statistical data were used to support the qualitative data whenever possible. Information from these publications was used to map the national profile of the smallholder agricultural sector and to provide the background on which the dynamics of farmer advocacy can be understood.

This was followed by fieldwork which utilised a semi-structured questionnaire. Interviews with individuals and focus groups were done using the questionnaire. Fieldwork was conducted across a sample of sites with substantial smallholder agriculture and advocacy movements. Interviews were held with key informants including leaders of advocacy organisations and senior civil servants. Questions focused on marginalisation of smallholder farmers and/or their differential treatment by the state vis-a-vis the lavish state support of large scale- farming, especially in Rift Valley and Central.[3] This disproportionate treatment of farmers primarily highlights problems of land tenure and related policies. These are clearly mentioned in the AU CAADP document, specifically the Pillars of Smallholder Production, and easily fit within the problematique of agricultural policy in Kenya. The adoption of AU/CAADP framework points to the need to look at land and water management, labour and inputs and technology and market access.

Key Issues in Smallholder Agriculture

Consistent growth in agricultural productivity in Kenya is constrained by a number of factors. Key among these factors is inequality in landholdings and inefficient land use patterns; inefficient marketing systems characterised by poor roads, limited storage capacity and poor access to markets; low and inappropriate use of improved inputs such as fertilisers and certified seeds due to high costs; and low investment in agricultural research and development. In addition, low levels of value addition to agricultural products make key agricultural exports less competitive on the global market.

Nevertheless, a desire for a commercially oriented and internationally competitive agricultural sector continues to inform current government agricultural development objectives of poverty reduction and meeting the first MDG goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (The African Executive, 21-28, May 2008). Current initiatives undertaken by the Agriculture ministry are geared toward addressing the challenges and constraints affecting smallholder farmers through increased commercialisation. Prominent among these policies is the review and harmonisation of the legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks, in order to create an enabling environment for production and marketing. In addition, privatisation of non-core

[3] This is in line with the Sessional Paper No.10 (1965) which favoured the investment of state resources in the so-called high potential areas. Broadly, these areas fell in Rift Valley and Central province. Fieldwork was carried out in selected areas within these provinces.

functions of the parastatals and ministries is being undertaken to bring about efficiency, accountability and effectiveness in administrative operations and to increase access to quality farm inputs and financial services (ibid.). In this context, key issues in the smallholder sector can be understood along the four NEPAD/CAADP priority pillars for comprehensive agricultural development in Africa: land and water management, rural infrastructure and market access, food supply and hunger reduction and agricultural research and development.

Land and Water Management

Kenya's agricultural production patterns are based on a dual land ownership structure, characterised by a well-resourced large farm sector specialising in export crops (coffee, tea, wheat, etc.) and poorly resourced "communal" areas with high land pressure, poor infrastructure and persistent food insecurity. Indeed, the large farm sector dominates the less than 20% of land in Kenya categorised as high-medium potential arable land with average annual rainfall of 1,200 mm. The long rains in these areas extend from March to June while the short rains occur from October to December. These skewed land distribution patterns are further segmented along class, ethnic, gender and generational terms.

In Kenya, farmers are conventionally categorised into large, medium and small farmers**.** Large farmers are those with holdings of 20 hectares or more; medium farmers' holdings range from eight to twenty (8-20 ha) while small farmers are categorized as those with holdings of eight hectares or less. In the mid-1970s, the three categories accounted for 20,000, 270,000 and 10,340,000 farmers respectively (see World Bank 1984). Recent estimates show that 59.5% of the population operates small farms between 0.01-3.0 hectares, 11.4% operate over 3 hectares and 22.7% hold tiny plots of land (see Welfare Monitoring Survey II 1994). Indeed, landlessness is estimated to hover above 30 % of the total population. While small farmers are found all over the country, large farms are largely a phenomenon of the Rift Valley especially in UasinGishu and Trans Nzoia districts. Large farms in these districts mainly grow maize and wheat although there are significant medium farms that grow the same crops. With minimal variations, current statistics indicate that small farms continue to account for over 70% of total crop production while the rest is shared between medium and large farms (see Welfare Monitoring Survey, II 1994; Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey, 2005).

The bulk of production and consumption of total crops is accounted for by holdings of less than 3 hectares. Most of the crops produced are consumed within the areas of production. Apart from cash crops, fruits also account for a very low proportion of sales and consumption. Explicit government policy support in the 1970s and 1980s encouraged small-scale producers to adopt and expand the production of selected export cash and food crops. The government thus expanded crop buying and processing capacity to service new areas in production. It also provided credit and extension support to producers, and maintained a relatively extensive network of collection depots for encouraging smallholder marketing of cereals. Acreages under these crops have slowed down considerably since the early 1990s. Indeed, no crop has registered a higher rate of growth in the 1990s than in the 1980s except French beans and, marginally, pyrethrum (see Nyoro and Jayne 1999, p.).[4].

Limited expansion has generally occurred since 1990 in the low potential arid and semi-arid areas because of population pressure in the high potential areas and the resulting shortage of additional fertile land. This implies that future production growth in Kenya will rely on increasing production strategies comprising intensive use of productivity enhancing inputs and/or shifting to higher-valued crops.

Currently, Kenya's total irrigated area is about 80 000 hectares (ha). Public and private small-scale irrigation is still less than 50 000 ha. The bulk of water management practices by smallholders revolve around the use of rainwater harvesting, bucket irrigation, gravity fed sprinklers, pedal pumps, motorized pumps, and small earthen dams. These practices depend on the availability of adequate water volumes of rivers and consistent rainfall patterns. However, droughts, erratic rainfall patterns, competition for water resources by both industry and agriculture, and human-wildlife conflicts hamper adequate access to water.

The need for pro-active policies for soil and water conservation is underscored by the recent eviction of peasants from the Mau Forest – Kenya’s largest water catchment area - which is crossed by major rivers. The water from Mau forests serves more than 4 million people inhabiting more than 578 locations in Kenya and several locations in Northern Tanzania. In addition, the Mau Complex provides continuous river flow and favourable micro-climate conditions which are essential to crop production as well as biological diversity. The government adopted the new National Land Policy (2009) and entrenched the land as a constitutional category in the new constitution (August, 2010). Both moves seek to provide a framework for comprehensive land reforms as part of the overall constitutional review process. In the course of implementation of the *National Environment Action Plan* (NEAP) and Environment Management and Coordination Act (1999), the government established the *National Environmental Management Authority* (NEMA), responsible for setting and enforcing environmental standards. These standards were fully operational by 2005, in tandem with a natural resource inventory and valuation process.

Rural Infrastructure and Market Access

The importance of rural infrastructure in lowering production costs and easing market access is crucial for promoting agricultural productivity. Improved access to markets is facilitated by the construction of rural access roads and harmonization of taxes, improving the delivery of government research extension and formulating food security policies and programs. These policies are predicated on the government's commitment to gradually increase budgetary support to the agricultural sector to at least 10 % of the National budget, in line with the Maputo Declaration.

Inadequate rural infrastructure has made agricultural and industrial goods in Kenya uncompetitive in the region and internationally. For instance, only 4.6% of rural households have access to electricity compared to about half in urban areas (SID Report, 2004, p.28). Indeed, energy costs constitute over 40% of total manufacturing costs. Hence, agricultural produce in Kenya is marketed in different ways. Farmers sell directly to consumers in local markets through cooperatives, middlemen, and export sub-contracting. However, export sub-contracting is still not well-established due to the high costs involved with meeting technical (sanitary and phytosanitary) and financial standards for entry. Furthermore, market information is lacking so that farmers who transport their produce to distant urban and rural markets often lose out when prices are not favorable. Mismanaged marketing cooperative societies and unions rarely pay farmers promptly. As a result, farmers are exploited by middlemen who pay farmers low prices when traditional buyers are no longer available.

The government's focus is on reducing transport costs by improving rural roads and reducing fuel taxes, bringing down the cost of electricity to reduce irrigation and factory operating costs, and strengthening communications to improve access to market information. Reforms are being undertaken to improve competition in inputs distribution and marketing and to resolve governance issues in the inputs market. These include enforcing the law against fraudulent practices by suppliers and marketing agents. Revitalisation of cotton and rice production will be supported by means of rehabilitation and development of irrigation systems and introduction of new high yielding seed varieties (see Daily Nation, August 23 2009).

The Kenyan smallholder farmers have been left out of extension and marketing services and access to cheap credit for a long time. However, new initiatives by government are reversing these trends. Recently, the GoK's refurbished Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) entered into an agricultural financing agreement with a private sector bank where the former provides guarantee for loans. Farmers' groups can now access credit for buying inputs. For example, the recent *Kilimo-Biashara* ("agri-business") initiative between the Government and the private sector, where farmers access credit at affordable rates from a commercial bank credit facility of Ksh.3.2 billion. The purpose of this initiative is to enhance food security.[5] Tentative data indicate that the initiative has issued credit to approximately 180,000 farmers surpassing the initial target of 35,000 farmers. Those borrowing less than Ksh.50, 000 are categorized as smallholders. This initiative has contributed towards an increased production and has in the short term mitigated the effects of drought.[6]

Furthermore, the GoK's Ministry of Agriculture has recently introduced 1,500 rural based information desks providing extension and advisory services to farmers. The service is complemented by radio programmes in local languages which are instrumental in disseminating topical issues affecting smallholders in their production and marketing process. Government

[5] The credit facility of Ksh.3.2 billion was solely offered by Equity Bank but was guaranteed by the government. Loans were offered in kind consisting of inputs – fertiliser (top dressing) and seeds. Beneficiaries – small and large farmers obtain a quotation from any local stockist of these inputs and then forward the same to the bank for approval.

[6] Interview with senior Agriculture ministry official.

extension services also focus on marketing and value addition to enable farmers to access wider markets and realise higher returns.

However, issues of graft still negatively affect the proper implementation of government policy. The National Cereal and Produce Board – the national body charged with managing the country's strategic grain reserve – is charged with stabilising the producer prices and encouraging further production. In order to stabilise fertiliser prices, in May 2009 the government authorised the relevant state corporations to procure 35,000 metric tonnes of fertilisers. The institution has been rocked by corruption scandals over irregular sale of maize stocks at a time of ravaging droughts. Its perennial incapacity to offer better prices to farmers remains a problem.

Agricultural Research and Development

The knowledge and capacity for technology development and application in Kenya is still inadequate. Limited skills and poor local leadership have been cited as the most important barriers to effective information flow to farmers, whereas government and NGO based extension service providers stress lack of resources to mobilise communities and poor communications with researchers leading to information distortion (see Rees et. al. 2000). Furthermore, due to the inadequate capacity of the leading state research institutions, farmers continue to complain about lack of information on technical details of farming. Such information includes details on chemical application rates, how to manage late blight in potatoes, where to get certified seed, the most appropriate varieties for a given location, housing and management of livestock (ibid).

Government policies and financing have generally tended to favour the development of a private sector that depends on expensive equipment imported from abroad. While there is a growing development of production of low-cost equipment by small-scale entrepreneurs/artisans such as low-pressure butterfly sprinklers and pedal pumps, this industry is handicapped by lack of access to credit and poor distribution systems. Overall, there remains little national awareness of innovative, lower-cost technologies and their possibilities. The pump importers are also severely handicapped by strict borrowing conditions, high import duties and costs of input materials, and restrictive import licensing (FAO, 1997). Marketing, distribution and servicing of equipment is very poor. Pump breakdowns are a major problem; farmers are not trained to maintain pumps and do not generally have spare parts. Overall, while the government has put a lot of effort into crop and livestock research, much less effort has gone into support for agricultural engineering.

Moreover, the costs of technological equipment, especially motorized pumps, are still high. Such equipment presupposes a substantial cash outlay. Yet farmers do not have collateral to secure adequate loans either from the agricultural finance corporation (AFC) or from commercial banks.

A host of donor-government collaborations have also seen the establishment of projects and programs geared towards building smallholder farmers' capacity. In recent years, NGOs have provided small loans to groups whose collateral is peer pressure, but these do not have sufficient capital to expand and probably cannot administer such loans profitably on a commercial basis (ibid). Other donor and NGO related programs make use of group approaches to achieve economies of scale in extension services, input procurement and sale of farm produce. For instance the National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Program (NAPEL); Kenya Agricultural Productivity Program (KAPP) and National Acceleration Agricultural Input Access Programme (NAAIAP). The latter programme also seeks to address farmers' capacity by facilitating access to farm inputs in order to engender productivity. Initiated in July 2007, the program targets an outreach of approximately 2.5 million smallholder farmers throughout the country. So far, it has granted 36,000 resource poor farmers with both planting and top dressing fertilisers and seeds adequate for one acre of maize per beneficiary

Long-term processes of agricultural research and development revolve around linking farmers' demands, extension provision and the direction of research. Hence, the process of rationalising the network of all agricultural research institutes by consolidating operations into the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI). Efforts are also underway to evolve a regulatory framework to guide the cultivation of biotech crops, following the signing into law of the Biosafety Bill in 2009. Increased acknowledgement and support is also sought to develop new options for greater private sector participation in biotechnology and extension services. Ultimately, the effectiveness of government policy interventions will depend on the balance of socio-political forces in the policy making process in Kenya.

Evolution of Agricultural Policy Making in Kenya

The politics of agricultural policy and, indeed, most sectors of the Kenyan economy are characterised by the partisan exercise of presidential powers, linkage between ethnicity and agricultural production systems, the quest for rent extraction and patronage by favoured groups/individuals. This partially explains the recent trends towards the disregard of evidence-based policy formulation, and the gleeful expectation of access to donor funding (Ng'ethe and Musambayi 2004). Such informal practices can be traced way back to the Kenyatta and Moi regimes and has assumed greater proportions in the present Kibaki regime, evidenced by mega corruption in the sugar industry and fertiliser trade (The Standard, 26 June 2003; The Standard, 12 February 2007; East African Standard, Wed 28th October 2009; The Standard, 05/04/2009; East African Standard, Wed 19th May 2010; The Standard, 10/02/2010).

However, some authors (Bates, 1989) question the tendency to view the political elite as homogenous. Understanding the complexity of policy making process in Kenya entails the disaggregation of the elite in order to expose the differential leverages brought to bear on the policy process by different factions (see Alila 2006). The nature of policy making in Kenya revolves around the influence of ethnic political constituencies inhabiting high to medium potential agro-ecological zones which have, since the colonial period, dominated the bulk of the cash crop economy in Kenya. Kikuyu peasant movements since the post-colonial period have been instrumental in shaping the content of agricultural policy making through their electoral support for nationalist parties and movements. Indeed, the agricultural smallholder sector formed the backbone of nationalist parties and accounted for the high economic growth rates during the 1960s and 1970s.

In the Kenyatta regime, the patron-client framework embraced the "commanding heights of the economy including parastatals, financial institutions, the provincial administration and governmental departments which were manned by members of the Kikuyu ethnic community" (Ng'ethe and Musambayi 2004). To consolidate post-independence land tenure reforms, the Kenyan government undertook policy interventions that encompassed land re-distribution and resettlement, the provision of agricultural extension services and the opening up of new land frontiers through irrigation, among others. Economic growth engendered by land tenure reforms was also maintained by high levels of political repression.

The Kenyatta regime's development trajectory was guided by the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 which was geared toward the development of smallholder farming, especially cash crops through the purchase of land, provision of support services like research, extension, animal health and credit. This development strategy was embedded within a uni-modal approach to development, which centered on the assumption that smallholdings are comparatively more productive than large farms. In addition, a small %age increase in productivity from many millions of small farmers would significantly enhance food security more than large farms, which would require a larger increase in output to bridge the same gap. This model of development launched Kenya on a trajectory of average growth rate of 6% per annum in the 1960s and 1970s, with agriculture alone growing at an average rate of 4.9% and 3.8% per annum in the 1960s and 1970s respectively.

Following in the footsteps of the Kenyatta regime, the Moi regime sought to cultivate his own ethno-regional base of support, albeit among Kalenjin and an alliance with Asian capital, by literally "looting" from Kikuyu capital. To cement his political base, ethno-regional barons seen as enjoying the support of their ethnic constituencies were often welcomed into the clique around the presidency. And whenever they lost their ethnic support bases they were summarily pushed out into political oblivion. While Kenyatta ruled at a time of economic prosperity, Moi was elected within a context of deteriorating economic circumstances. Consequently, political repression, the pillar of order under Kenyatta deepened in many ways under the Moi regime.

Agricultural policy formulation and implementation was characterised by the cartelised and/or populist determination of producer prices and outputs of mainly coffee, tea, horticulture, sugar, and pastoralism. Directives from 'above' often had to be fitted within thin budgetary allocations with negative consequences for projects for which the funds were earmarked. In any case, the policy of expending resources in high potential areas seems to have engendered ethnic inequalities, with respect to the development of the cash crop economy. This has resulted in wide regional differences in access to infrastructure and certain agricultural services (see SID 2004; Readings on Inequality in Kenya, 2007; UNDP 2002). Without any significant change in the structures of presidential authoritarianism, successive changes of political leadership have led to continuity rather than significant change in the agricultural policy. The net impact is that smallholder "voice" and pro-poor policies have been neglected.

This tradition of policy making has been reinforced under the Kibaki regime. Indeed, Kibaki's tenure has been understood as the opportunity for the re-grouping of corruption networks. Hence the mega-scandals related to the sugar industry and fertiliser prices. It is notable that prior to his election in 2002 as Kenya's third president, Mwai Kibaki had been associated with the ruling class in Kenya for over fifty years. Policy making in Kenya thus takes the form of selective granting of trade licenses, import/export restrictions undergirded by a heavy regulatory framework involving government in all areas of agricultural legislation. This framework has provided a ready source of rent for political patrons and clients alike.

Western donors have played a significant role in the marginalisation of smallholder voices since the 1980s. The onset of the crisis of the African states in the late 1970s into the early 1980s characterised by declining agricultural production, forced a re-think of the early postcolonial growth model. While the latter was based on active state intervention in the economy, the 1980s witnessed state withdrawal from the economy through liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation policies that favoured the active involvement of the private sector. In Kenya, this meant the erosion of the material basis of the earlier smallholder sector. Hence the stagnation, increased indebtedness, poverty and inequality that characterise the smallholder in Kenya today.

By the 1980s, internal (government) policy reviews, academic studies and external donor reports converged around the notion that the institutional edifice undergirding the uni-modal model had developed strong vested interests. Vested interests were cited as interfering with public policy formulation and implementation and consequently the inefficient utilisation of scarce resources through skewed allocations toward clientelist networks.[7] Unequal inter-industry terms of trade manifested in lower urban food prices. Higher urban consumer good prices was actually siphoning surplus from the rural areas where the majority derived their livelihoods, resulting in the deepening of rural poverty. Prescriptions to this dilemma entailed market liberalisation and removal of price controls which were however short-term in orientation. One argument suggests that the lack of local stakeholder consultation during these processes created mistrust and

[7] Note that this period (70s/80s) also saw considerable donor -driven interventions such as district focus for rural development program (DFRD), akin to the current devolved funds, established in 1983 was preceded by considerable donor investment in Integrated Rural Development programmes. Donors also invested substantially in rural infrastructure, like rural access roads, storage facilities, production and marketing facilities like sugar and coffee.

misunderstanding between the government and donors and represents the area where the gap between policy formulation and implementation was widest. This is largely because implementation of reforms in the agricultural sector was largely tied to the release of donor aid (O'Brien and Ryan (2001) cited in Alila 2009).

In retrospect, in the context of a colonially-inherited ethnic social division of labour and 'rigged' agricultural development strategies, neo-liberalisation policies have deepened horizontal inequalities. Such inequalities are manifested in emerging land uses and economic activities in parts of Central and Rift Valley regions, through the accelerated uptake of high value horticultural farming. Yet, all-round positive effects on agricultural productivity results from credit provision, extension advice and public provision of social amenities to smallholders (Bigsten and Ndung'u 1992). Thus, despite improvements to agricultural pricing policy in Kenya during the 1970/80s period, there were still large administrative problems in the marketing of agricultural produce, supply of inputs, and provision of credit. Delays in payments to smallholders, with strong disincentive effects arising from uncertainty, are legend. Hence the cycle of gluts and deficits that characterises the agricultural sector.

Policy reform in the 1990s was therefore re-focused on smallholder agricultural development to achieve poverty reduction targets and boost agricultural productivity. The new donor onslaught was marked by the abolition of price controls in 1994 and the promulgation of private sector-led Agriculture Sector Investment Programs (ASIPs), to improve the effectiveness of donor assistance by moving beyond project-based approaches to include broader forms of public expenditure support. Donor concerns about mismanagement of funds have, however, on occasion slowed down reform processes. Despite this, numerous attempts have been made to revive agricultural development through publication of various policy statements. An example is the Kenya Rural Development Strategy[8] (KRDS) (Republic of Kenya, 2002a) developed by government in November 2002 and embedded within the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

[8] KRDS was intended to serve as a roadmap to assist government, private sector, religious groups, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), local communities, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), and the development partners in defining interventions to improve the well being of the rural people (Republic of Kenya, 2002b).

(PRSP) (Republic of Kenya, 2001).[9] In 2004, the Government also adopted the Strategy for Revitalising Agriculture (SRA) that constitutes the reference framework for the development of agricultural sector for the following ten years, 2004-2014. SRA was the response from agriculture-related ministries (Republic of Kenya, 2004a).[10] The SRA is integrated in the national Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS) policy document, developed by the Kibaki regime in December 2002 (Republic of Kenya, 2003).

However, the introduction of the CAADP/AU framework for rejuvenation of African agricultural development has continued to generate tensions with the Agriculture Ministry. First, it is seen as competing with the Donor-financed SRA which is managed by the Ministry. Secondly, adequate budgetary allocations in the ministry do not reflect commitment to CAADP. Agriculture ministry bureaucrats argue that SRA has already captured most of the issues addressed in the CAADP priority pillars for investment. Moreover, neither the director of policy at the Agriculture ministry nor the secretariat personnel seem to be motivated since their new responsibilities in the process are not adequately remunerated.

Modest achievements of the CAADP process include increased resource allocation to the agricultural sector from a low of 4% in year 2001/02 to 6.8% in 2007/08. Though it is difficult to ascertain increased budgetary allocations to CAADP awareness, the increased awareness and discussion about increased funding for the sector have had a role in this. Yet, it is also worth noting that allocation to agriculture in the 2009/2010 financial year dropped to less than 4% again. The process has also partially increased the need for evidence-based policy making advocacy. The stocktaking report undertaken for CAADP shows the policy, programmatic and

[9] With the experience from the reforms period, the government saw the need to emphasise the use of participatory methodologies in policy making and implementation. The PRSP was prepared through a consultative process involving public and private sectors and civil society as was required by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The PRSP process was another form of external influence on the local policies. The government committed itself to priority actions in two broad areas – creating opportunities for rural communities and the private sector to effectively carry out their activities in an increasingly competitive global environment, and accelerating policy and institutional reforms, particularly the large backlog of legislative and regulatory reforms.

[10] Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development (MOLFD) and Ministry of Cooperatives Development and Marketing (MOCDM).

institutional interventions that will need to be implemented in order to achieve CAADP and MDG1 targets.

By and large, the budgetary process offers the only guarantee that the government will implement programs and projects proposed by various ministries. For the agricultural and related ministries, this entails presenting priority areas for funding in order to meet the objectives of the sector. This is because the budget contains a priori determined resource allocations, according to the revenue proportions set aside for the development budget in general. However, in certain cases political considerations may derail ministerial development plans due to the re-organisations of spending priorities done by the finance ministry without consulting the relevant technocrats at the agriculture ministry. In view of such problems, the government adopted the medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) which allocates resources according to a three-year rolling budget so as to align program and projects to the allocated funds.

State of Policy Advocacy

This section examines the actors, strategies and outcomes of some farmer organisations engaged in agricultural policy advocacy in Kenya. Small-scale, resource-poor farmers in Kenya have attempted to engage in representational activities to influence agricultural policies under colonially-constructed export enclave policy conditions that are less than optimal for representational politics (Ngethe and Odero 1994). The changing policy context engendered by economic liberalisation has led to the redefinition of the roles of various actors and processes that have hitherto informed agricultural policy making in Kenya.

The main actors in the current policy making process comprise government, parliamentary caucuses, farmer-dominated civil society organisations and donors. Understanding the state of policy advocacy in Kenya is illustrated by Alila and Atieno's (2004) five categorisations of forms of policy making in Kenya. These are bureaucratic initiatives both requiring and not requiring cabinet approval, executive directives, budget policy decisions, other domestic policy initiatives, and external policy initiatives.

Briefly, policy making immediately after independence until the late 1980s was dominated by the policy inputs of state bureaucrats, through a process in which technical program and project proposals were prepared and handed over for cabinet approval. Policy making therefore revolved around the level of directorates and permanent secretaries and their technical personnel. Policy making during this time lacked broad-based consultations. Hence, there were high rates of failure whenever it came to implementation processes. Local communities simply saw government interventions as mere predations on their lifestyles.

However, consistent with patrimonial authoritarianism, dominant bureaucratic involvement in policy making has been emasculated by the persistence of executive assertiveness in determining policy input-output balance. Furthermore, within the executive, policy making has increasingly been dominated by a small closely coordinated clique between the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Kenya (O'Brien and Ryan, 2001.). There has also been an enhanced involvement of technical assistance experts. While the latter have been instrumental in training policy advisers, they often weaken local ownership of development processes due to the conflicting objectives of donor countries and organisations and the host government.

In recent years, voices of new actors in the policy making process have been recognised. Comprised of parliamentary caucuses, civil society organisations and smallholders, their voices and tactics to pressurise their representatives have led to a more systematic and inclusive process. Indeed, the PRSP and the ERS-WEC were relatively consultative compared to previous policy documents. Central to the pluralisation of the policy making arena has been the reconstitution of parliamentary committees[11] on the one hand and the formation of parliamentary caucuses[12] on the other. These are supported by the existence, albeit at a low level of mobilisation, by farmer-dominated civil society organisations like SUCAM (Sugar Campaign for Change in Western Kenya), NGOMA ("Ng'ombenaMahindi" to cover maize and dairy farmers in the North Rift), SAWA ("SautiyaWafugaji" – North Eastern pastoralists) and MAMBO ("MatundanaMboga") for horticulture in Eastern province.

However, the structure of agricultural interest representation has witnessed change and continuity in the actors involved, the nature of their activities, modes of policy engagement and

[11] For example the Agriculture, land and Natural Resources Committee tasked to process legislation from all six Agriculture related ministries.

[12] Since 1999 MPs representing constituencies that grow coffee, tea, sugarcane and keep livestock have increasingly sought to voice concerns raised by commodity associations, e.g., Sugar Parliamentary Group, Coffee and Tea Parliamentary Group.

success in influencing policy outcomes. These varied outcomes reflect variation in the institutional capacities of farmer organisations at various levels of representation. Unfortunately, intervening between farmer organisations and policy outcomes is a pervasive neo-patrimonial culture that continues to determine the direction and content of agricultural policy. The little political space for maneuver has been legally delineated through the Cooperative Societies Act (2004) which spells out strict criteria from the establishment of a farmer organisation at the lowest level (a primary cooperative society) to the apex organisation representing all the member cooperative societies (a union). As a result, farmer organisations in Kenya are organised on a commodity basis at various levels of representation ranging from the national to the district levels. Indeed, due to the political basis of agricultural policies in Kenya[13] (Bates, 1981), some farmer organisations have come to be more influential than others when it comes to the representation of farmer interests in public policy.

In Kenya, the demand side of policy formulation has mainly been dominated by three key farmer organisations: Kenya National Federation of Cooperatives (KNFC), Kenyan Planters' Co-operative Union (KPCU) and Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers (KENFAP).

The Kenya National Federation of Cooperatives (KNFC)

The umbrella KNFC was formed on 28th April, 1964 as the Apex co-operative organisation of the Kenya cooperative Movement.[14] This umbrella body represents eight (8) institutions with specific functions.[15] At the middle level are countrywide District co-operative unions categorised as secondary co-operative societies. The lowest level comprises over 12,000 registered primary co-operative societies. The mandate of the KNFC – the body representing small and large cooperative farmers nationally and internationally - is to advocate for favourable policy and legal reform for all cooperatives. The body is governed by a National Governing Council made up of seven regional/provincial representatives.

[13] See Bates, Robert. 1981. *Markets and states in tropical Africa: The political basis of agricultural policies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

[14] The structure of cooperative organisations in Kenya has four tiers. At the apex, is a Union that represents all cooperative societies formed along commodity lines at the district levels. These are known as secondary cooperatives. Then the divisional cooperatives and others, called primary cooperatives.

[15] Kenya Planters Co-operative Union Ltd (KPCU; the Co-operative Bank of Kenya; New Kenya Co-operative Creameries Ltd (New KCC); Kenya Rural SACCO Society Union Ltd (KERUSSU); National Housing Co-operative Union Ltd (NACHU);Co-operative Insurance Company of Kenya (CIC); Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Co-operatives Ltd (KUSCCO);Co-operative College of Kenya.

Recent notable achievements include successfully lobbying the Government on the passage and signing into law of the SACCO Bill (November, 14, 2008). The Bill opposed the retrenchment of employees as that would have affected the membership of SACCOs which are considered a critical source of credit by smallholders. Three new projects valued at $83,668 were also inaugurated after successfully lobbying for the inclusion of Kenya's cooperative movement in the 2008 ILO/COOP Africa Programme. Each project is implemented by the Kenya National Federation of Co-operatives, Co-operative Insurance Company of Kenya, and Urara Farmers Co-operative Society.[16] New income generating projects have been founded under the Japanese funded "One Village One Product" (OVOP) initiative that emphasises value addition to and market access for agricultural produce. The KNFC has also successfully lobbied for change in the co-operative leaders elections procedures to avert succession crises in its leadership. A major resource is its close collaboration with the Cooperative Ministry which has organised capacity building workshops for training, corporate governance and financial policies.

However, an institutional culture of poor management, corruption, nepotism and conflicts of interest, in which its individual employees compete for consultancy services with the organisation, has over the years weakened the capacity of the organisation to effectively represent the cooperative movement in Kenya (Gamba at al.1999, p.4). For instance, it failed to renew its membership with ICA. It therefore lost opportunities for projecting an international voice for farmers. Indeed, the leadership vacuum has been contested by other national organisations and cooperative unions which have become vocal advocates for their members' interests.[17]

Attempts at KNFC's revitalisation were preceded by nationwide provincial co-operative leaders meetings in which new ideas were sought from farmers to legitimise the emerging governance structure – through elections of new leaders - and new mandates. The organisation was then re-launched on 30th November, 2007. The national co-operative leaders' conference then resolved to evolve a new financing and governance structure. At the core of this process was the revision of its bylaws in consultation with the Ministry of Co-operative Development & Marketing and

[16] Located in Southern parts of Nyanza province, this union was Registered in 2005 and initiated soybean production to counter the effects of malnutrition and HIV/AIDS caused by environmental and health effects of tobacco and sugarcane farming in the area.
[17] An interesting development in this regard is the role KUSCCO has played in enhancing the demands of the SACCOs; NACHU has also become an active representative of housing cooperatives in the country.

other cooperative unions. Remaining challenges include: the lack of effective leadership, poor member contributions, and accumulated financial liabilities, low staff morale and staff salary arrears.

The Kenya Planters Cooperative Union (KPCU)

During the colonial period the KPCU[18] served as the marketing vehicle for White coffee farmers. Its core mandate has since revolved around negotiating with the government for higher producer prices and improved services for coffee farmers. The Kenya Planters' Cooperative Union (KPCU) was the largest national coffee farmers' cooperative union representing both small farmers and large scale coffee growers. Indeed, at the peak of its performance in the 1960s and 1970s, the KPCU enjoyed the patronage of political elites from the Central province, a major coffee growing region. However, by the time of its collapse it was owed a whopping Ksh.3.4 billion by politically influential people. A pervasive neo-patrimonial institutional culture has weakened its organisational ability to represent farmers over time, although the union currently still represents over 700,000 farmers and boasts a large infrastructural network which covers a number of collection points in several key agricultural provincial towns including Nakuru, Bungoma, Nandi Hills and Kisii.

Two typical incidents suggest a hard road ahead for the proper functioning of KPCU. First, the Cooperatives Minister, according to recent moves, seems to favour the new parallel marketing agency – Kenya Co-operative Coffee Exporters Ltd (KCCE) - and indeed was reported to be negotiating to take over the "Kahawa House" warehouses belonging to KPCU. The KCCE is an initiative by the smallholder coffee farmers. It was formed to maximise returns on coffee sales by engaging directly in coffee marketing rather than going through the auction system. Barely eight months since its inception, over 110 coffee societies have signed marketing agreements with the state-backed marketer to earn better prices for their produce. Second, the Agriculture Minister in Kibaki's government, in violation of the Coffee Act, replaced the incumbent directors in the Coffee Board of Kenya with political appointees with no background in coffee marketing. The

[18] At the time of this research study KPCU was in serious financial and political doldrums that obtaining information on its current activities was difficult. It had effectively collapsed. It has been included here to illustrate the politics of agricultural institutions in Kenya. Other large farmer unions that have collapsed under the weight of liberalisation and patronage politics include Kilifi Cashew nuts factory in the Coast Province. Proposal to revive it have however been forwarded to the Ministry of Cooperatives; Kenya Farmers Association; and Kenya Grain Growers Cooperative Union.

Act requires that members of the board must include representatives of coffee traders and exporters. Similar incidents have also emerged around the irregular seizure of milling licenses for local cooperatives and awarded to what are perceived to be “politically correct” coffee millers (Daily Nation, Tuesday, December 8, 2009; The standard, September 22, 2009).

Leadership wrangles, corruption, court cases and mismanagement have adversely affected its financial and organisational stability. These issues have frequently caused major disagreements between the Board of Directors and the management staff. In 2005, the then minister for Cooperative Development and Marketing, Mr. NjeruNdwiga, in a statement to parliament, listed the debtors who had borrowed money from KPCU ranging from 30 – 600 million Kenya shillings. The list includes prominent personalities associated with past and present regimes (see-www.http://investmentnewskenya.com/pages/stories/kenya-planters-cooperative-union.php).

A dispute resulted in all members of the management team resigning in September 2008. Kenya has thus been unable to match the previous volumes of coffee exports to China in the last two years due to wrangles at the Union (The Standard, August 8, 2009). Prior to 2008 revenues from coffee exported to China averaged KSh1.4 billion. The same problems have seen KPCU fail to pay farmers promptly for their produce. Out of frustration, some farmers in the Rift Valley and Western provinces have uprooted their coffee trees and smuggled hundreds of thousands of tonnes of Kenyan coffee for sale in the Ugandan market, leading to a serious deficit in the local market.

Delayed payments to farmers have forced cooperatives affiliated with the union to market their coffee through private agents, thereby adversely impacting on KPCU’s financial income base. Other coffee cooperatives are reacting to this situation by revitalising their secondary cooperative unions, so that the unions can provide the services that KPCU used to render. Indeed, an emerging trend is that the majority of the farmers from Central and Eastern provinces, key coffee growing areas, are defying their management committees and deciding on a miller and marketer of their produce, alleging corruption and years of intimidation. To illustrate; in Central province a Mugama Farmers Cooperative Union has already acquired a license to directly mill and market coffee to the international market without going through KPCU. The construction of its coffee milling plant at Maragua is almost complete. Meru Central Coffee Farmers Union has also leased KPCU facilities to enable it to mill its coffee. The two unions have acquired trading licenses to enable them to market their coffee directly (The standard, January 10, 2010).Whether the lowering of charges for milling, handling and quality analysis will reignite confidence in the union and invite an increased inflow of coffee from farmers is not yet clear.

The Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers

The Kenya National Federation of Agricultural Producers was founded in 1946 as the Kenya National Farmers Union (KNFU) to serve the interests of the large-scale White settler farmers. After independence in 1963, it changed its constitution in 1973 to accommodate small farmers. Thus during the 1960s and into the 70s, the union was a vocal representative of small farmer interests, through the demands for price control and equitable distribution of land. While new policy issue areas have since emerged, it still remains one of the largest small farmers' organisations to date.

The liberalisation of the economy since the 1980s has dealt a heavy blow to its institutional capacity and smallholder base. Consistent with liberalisation pressures, the union allowed individual and corporate membership. Corporate membership saw the absorption of commodity associations, other cooperatives, and firms into the new Union. Its membership thus currently comprises 42,000 individuals, 2500 groups with 30-50 members, 16 commodity associations, and corporates (SACCOs & cooperatives).

In June 2006, KENFAP commissioned a study through the support of GTZ/PSDA.[19] The recommendations of the report suggested the re-orientation of its traditional advocacy mandate to a more service-oriented organisation providing capacity building (e.g. training and facility provision, produce processing, consultancy) and lobbying for constituency development funds, inputs and better prices. Indeed, the need to rejuvenate its core activities since 2002 stemmed from the weak financial capacity of the organisation which required a business orientation entailing diversification into other income generating projects. Core to this process were

[19] Promotion of Private Sector Development in Agriculture (PSDA) is a bilateral technical assistance programme jointly implemented by the German Agency for International Development (GIZ) and the Ministry of Agriculture on behalf of the Government of Kenya through collaboration with other agricultural sector Ministries, mainly with the Ministry of Livestock Development, Ministry of Fisheries Development and Ministry of Cooperative Development and Marketing.

grassroots recruitment drives and attempts by the leadership to network with both local and international partners.

The federation's new vision is to realise "empowered Kenyan farmers with a strong voice" through the effective representation, provision of professional consultancy services as an income generating activity of the organisation at subsidised/ concessionary rates for the members and at commercial rates for the non-members; conduct research and promote intra- and inter- sectoral co-operation. Key challenges that continue to hamper its activities are the lingering political associations with political elites, a thin resource base, lack of competent and motivated staff and credit facilities.

One significant finding is that cooperative unions in the agricultural sector are not as active in the policy advocacy space as non-agricultural cooperative unions such as KUSCCO and NACHU. Furthermore, they do not have the same capacity to effectively voice the concerns of their core constituencies. The recurrent theme is that the advocacy capacity of the farmer organisation has been weakened considerably due to neo-patrimonial institutional culture, inadequate technical personnel, thin financial base and general mismanagement. Capacity building programmes are critical in this regard. Historically, farmer organisations served as incubators for politically ambitious union leaders and as patronage machines for politicians seeking to shore up their political support bases. Especially in Kenya, where ethnic mobilisation is a very significant feature of politics, state resources have most often been channelled to areas perceived to be friendly to the incumbent regimes. This is true of the *harambee* movement as well as farmer organisations. As Barkan and Holmquist (1997) argue,

> "members and would-be members of local district councils establish reputations for community service by raising funds for self-help projects in the private sector and by lobbying appropriate state agencies to assist projects located in their areas. Members of Parliament and aspiring members likewise seek to "deliver the goods" on self-help; by so doing, they draw local self-help organisations and grass-roots political leaders into their personal political machines, and, in turn, attach their machines to the countrywide clientelist structures that dominate Kenyan politics and control patronage at the center of the Kenyan system (p. 360)."

While policy advocacy is dominated by cooperatives and farmer unions in Kenya, non-governmental organisations have increasingly emerged as vocal actors in the policy arena. These CSOs largely represent small farmers and engage in cross-cutting issues ranging from land rights, water and sanitation, food security and the provision of agricultural inputs.[20] However, due to variations in mobilisation capacity, some CSOs have assumed more visibility in the policy arena than others.

The following sub- section l describes in more detail the work of CSOs engaged in policy advocacy work on behalf of smallholders by focusing on two organisations – the Kenya Land Alliance (KLA) and Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE).

Kenya Land Alliance

Kenya Land Alliance, a not-for-profit and non-partisan umbrella network of 95 civil society organisations and individuals, was founded in 1999 and registered as a Trust in 2001. Its core commitments revolve around policy advocacy for the reform of outmoded land policies and laws in Kenya. Its activities are national in scope and are largely funded from foreign donor sources.[21] Key administrative functions are currently managed by a staff of eight people headed by the national coordinator. The main activities of the organisation are geared toward representing the marginalised rural and urban poor by advocating for and supporting pro-poor land policies that further social justice and enhance the security of tenure.

The organisation was formed from the realisation that the postcolonial government land policy, legal and institutional framework created in the colonial period (beginning 1950s) was meant to meet the imperatives of political order and; enforced development of African areas. This framework had become out-dated and was no longer serving the needs for postcolonial social transformation. Long-term internal and external political, economic and socio-cultural changes in Kenya have necessitated the overhaul of these land policies. Increased demographic and environmental pressures have led to intense resource competition, especially over land, which continues to evolve into widespread violence. One recent notable outcome of the KLA's advocacy in the context of land reforms is the adoption and publication of the findings of a new

[20] Some NGOS in the food security, inputs provision and water and sanitation programmes are included in the database for this study.
[21] The donors include Actionaid, Dfid, Development Corporation of Ireland, Ford Foundation, Heinrich Boll Foundation, Freidrich Ebert Foundation, Ms-Kenya and Oxfam-GB.

National Land Policy. This has recently been published and critical sections dealing with the shift of radical title from the state to a proposed National Land Commission have been incorporated in the proposed new Constitution. Land is now a constitutional category in the proposed new Constitution. To be sure, a basis for these reforms had been set with the findings of a Presidential Commission of Inquiry into the Land Law System of Kenya (the Njonjo Commission, 1999) and the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (also known as the Ghai Commission[22]). The creative co-ordination of information gathering, sharing and networking among KLA's member organisations has made the organisation a major focal point for land reform advocacy.

Efforts to pressure government to modernise its land administration and management system saw the appointment of its national coordinator as one of the commissioners in the Presidential Commission on Public Inquiry into Illegal land Irregular allocation of Public Land (Ndung'u Commission).[23] However, implementation of its findings has been a bone of contention, given the fact that beneficiaries of illegal allocations are powerful people in senior government positions. Recently, there have been moves by the Lands Ministry to revoke irregularly acquired title deeds, although this has mainly focused on land within the urban centers (The Standard, 27 May 2010). Similar outcomes by the KLA also include documenting cases of environmental degradation. Notable in this regard are the encroachments on the Mau Forest water towers where President Moi and his cronies acquired large tracts of land. As a consequence, illegal occupants foisted their land on unsuspecting peasants to gain political support. In the latest attempts by the government to evict peasants from the forest, debates have emerged over whether these people should be compensated or not. In the course of these debates, reports emerged of government intentions to compensate even those who illegally obtained land in the forest (The Standard, 06/05/2010; The Standard, 26/04/2010; The Standard, 07/05/2010; The Standard, 28/07/2009).

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[22] The Constitution of Kenya Review Commission popularly known as the Ghai Commission was chaired by constitutional law scholar Prof. Yash Pal Gahi and was chaged with writing a modern constitution for Kenya from 2000 to 2004.

[23] This particular commission documented for the first time the extent to which the grabbing of public land had been perpetuated by politically connected people in the previous and current regimes. Some of these people are still hold powerful positions within the Kibaki regime.

These findings by the KLA have served as a point for mobilising pressure on the government to reform the land administration system.[24] The organisation's advocacy objectives have been realised from a knowledgeable perspective which incorporates the use of publications such as the Land Updates, Policy papers, posters and the print and electronic media. Through networking with similar orientated CSOs such as Action Aid, RECONCILE, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Kituo cha Sheria, Shelter Forum, Kenya Human Rights Commission, Hakijamii Trust and Forest Action Network, the Alliance has also increased awareness of Land policy issues among affected communities. Through capacity building programmes, the organisation has appreciated the importance of linking community struggles with national reforms. This originates from the realisation that top-down approaches characteristic of traditional CSO practices tend to be ineffective in dealing with land and natural resource issues among the poor and marginalised. The KLA activities are therefore strongly motivated by the plight of the fisher folk, women, marginalised ethnic minorities and small farmers.

However, the activities of KLA are hampered by uneasy relations with fractions of the political elite and their sympathisers in "civil society."[25] Uneasy state-CSO relations have the potential of creating incentives for the government to block the organisation's involvement in seeking information and participating in reform processes. The likelihood of the state relapsing into the traditional methods of either intimidation, threats or outright bans could hamper future advocacy programmes. The organisation also faces logistical, information acquisition and dissemination problems due to insufficient institutional capacity.

The Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE)

RECONCILE[26] is an East African regional policy research and advocacy NGO registered in Kenya. The Institute conducts policy and legal research and education on environmental and natural resources. It also advocates for policies, laws and practices that empower resource

[24] While the cabinet adopted the document what has emerged are only pronouncements of the intent to implement the findings.

[25] A notable voice against the proposed National Land Policy is the Kenya Landowners Association, an organisation representing local and foreign large land owners.

[26] RECONCILE hosted the Secretariat of KLA for in 1999 until 2000 and helped set up its institutional framework. It is also a founding member of LandNet East Africa, a Kampala-based regional network of land policy stakeholders from government, research institutions, and civil society organisations in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda.

dependent communities to influence policy processes and institutions that impact their access to natural resources and management of natural resource conflicts. On completion of training, such communities are expected to resolve environmental and resource conflicts; to effectively participate in policy, legislative and institutional processes for sustainable management of the environment and natural resources; and, to peacefully resolve other associated conflicts. Indeed, advocacy for pastoral land rights constitutes a significant focus for the organisation's activities.

The public has also been sensitised on critical resource issues through the stimulation of public debates through organised public fora. For instance, from 2003 to 2006, RECONCILE collaborated with the Dry lands Programme of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED),[27] on a programme focused on capacity development for pastoral groups in East Africa advocating for policy frameworks that are supportive of pastoralism as a livelihood and land use system. Networking with other organisations like the KLA saw both of them pushing for a review of the provisions of the Draft National Land Policy on customary land tenure and common property resources.

The organisation is also involved in capacity building of community based organisations to engage effectively in sustained land rights advocacy by providing technical assistance in research and information acquisition. This is necessary for informed policy advocacy, thus linking local advocacy work to the wider policy environment and to organisations that have expertise and competence in relevant policy areas. Another instance is the collaborative advocacy work between RECONCILE and Waso Trust Land Project and OSILIGI – two pastoralist organisations in Isiolo and Lakipia in northern Kenya. The urgency of pastoralist rights issues should be understood in the context of recent announcements of the possibility of discovering commercial oil and gas deposits by several foreign companies[28] in northern Kenya, home to the largest populations of pastoralists. RECONCILE and other human rights groups have embarked on advocacy work that seeks to raise awareness on the possibilities of doom or economic boom vi-a-vis pastoralist land rights and livelihoods.

[27] An independent, non-profit organisation promoting sustainable patterns of world development through collaborative research, policy studies, networking and advocacy.
[28] China National Offshore Oil Corporation, Africa Oil, Lion Energy, China Petroleum Corporation

Conclusion and Recommendations

Independent Kenya inherited a dual agrarian structure created during the colonial period to benefit white settlers. It was characterised by large land holdings enjoying disproportionate supplies of highly fertile land, better infrastructure, extension services and credit outlays while smallholder agricultural systems practiced largely by indigenous ethnic communities were plagued by land shortages, limited access to credit and infrastructure. The brief post-independence interlude (1963 – ca.1970) witnessed timid state-driven land tenure reforms which undergirded high economic growth rates. By the 1970s, the practical limits on the private property frontiers revealed the limits of this mode of agricultural development. Indeed, its effects are still present. They include high land pressure, pervasive land sub-divisions, extensive landlessness and poor water utilisation practices. Others include low agricultural productivity, malnutrition, expansive urban and rural slums, and high under- and un-employment rates.

The attempts of cooperative societies and farmer unions to amplify the concerns of both large and small farmers have received differential treatment. While large farmers extracted disproportionate benefits through the control of the state bureaucracy, self-help and smallholder organisations were co-opted and re-oriented to the service of politically ambitious leaders and politicians. This is still the case to date. Farmer organisations are characterised by mismanagement and institutional weaknesses which hinder effective representation of farmers. Due to the challenges brought on by liberalisation of the sector, the current policy advocacy arena is less vibrant relative to the immediate post-independence period when farmer organisations were influential in the public policy process. There is, however, a recent resurgence of CSOs which have begun to actively articulate the concerns of smallholder famers. In this regard, several key policy recommendations are proffered:

- The initiation of comprehensive land and land tenure reform by supporting the newly adopted National Land Policy. This should be geared toward establishing small family farms due to their relative efficiency as compared to large farms;
- Investment and repair of rural infrastructure to enable ease of transportation and storage and also to improve irrigation systems within smallholder areas;
- Development of policies and regulations that encourage local irrigation equipment manufacture and/or joint agricultural engineering arrangements;

- Government facilitation for the access to cheap credit by small farmers;
- Provision and strengthening of extension services and other technical support services, like training in soil and water conservation and animal husbandry;
- Increased financial allocations to research and innovation grants to universities and agricultural research institutes should stimulate interest in improved production and distribution technologies;
- The government should embark on the modernisation and/or establishment of agricultural technology demonstration centers to facilitate the dissemination and adoption of new appropriate technologies;
- The government should facilitate the access to market information through farmer networks within farmer organisations by encouraging investment in ICTs and other media.

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