

POLICY BRIEF

CAADP Success in Rwanda: But More is Needed

By

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1. Introduction

Rwanda is a success story in terms of progress towards the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). It was the first country to sign the compact in 2007; it adopted the Investment Plan in 2009; and established the Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems (SAKSS) node in 2010. The current share of the country's national budget for the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MINAGRI) stands at 13% of the overall budget and the estimated agricultural sector growth stands at 6%. Other aggressive government initiatives have also backstopped the policy's successes and indeed Rwanda is on the right track.

Despite these commendable steps, a number of Rwandese households still experience difficulty with access to food, and according to the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis and Nutrition Survey (CFSVA), 43% of Rwandese children between six months and five years face chronic malnutrition. While the government is already developing multi-sectoral strategies to neutralize this situation, more agricultural policy innovation and further institutional reforms are needed in order to escalate CADDP aspirations into a greater record of more concrete results.

The objective of this briefing paper is to summarise what CAADP entails, highlight the progress of implementation by Rwanda, outline the country's impediments to the full realization of CAADP's goals and propose solutions to the existing challenges.

2. CAADP in Perspective

CAADP's overall aim is to help African countries reach higher economic growth status through agriculture-led development (NEPAD 2012). The explicit goal of CAADP is to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty in Africa by agriculture development. In pursuit of this aim, African governments committed to achieve several results including two specific targets. The first is to achieve 6% annual growth in agricultural productivity by 2015. The second is to increase the allocation of national budgets directed to the agricultural sector to at least 10%. The CAADP framework is based on four pillars: 1) Extending the area under sustainable land and water management; 2) Improving rural infrastructure and trade related capacities for market access; 3) Increasing food supply, and reducing hunger; and 4) Agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption.

For African countries, implementation of CAADP remains one of the most well thought out strategies of combating poverty: Agriculture supports the livelihoods of 80% of the African population and provides employment for about 60% of the economically active population (AfDB, 2010). In Rwanda, agriculture's importance in employment and generation of export revenue can not be over emphasised. The sector employs 91% of the Rwandese population, especially women, and contributes to 70% of the country's export revenue, mainly through coffee and tea.

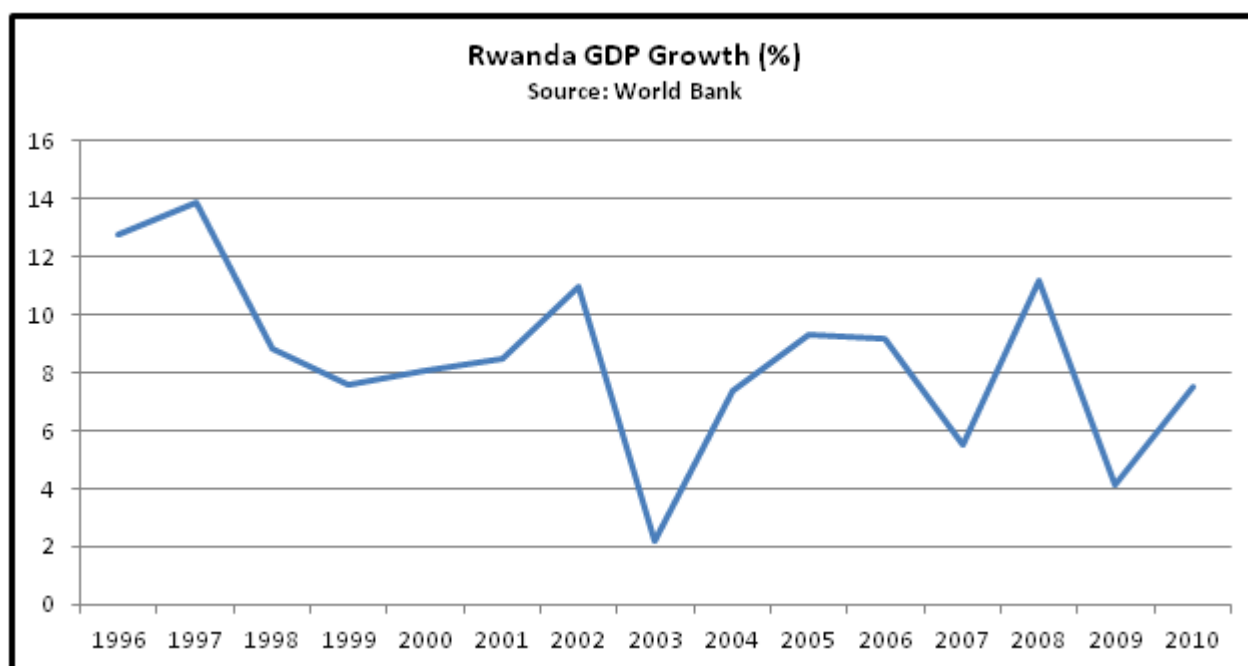


Full domestication and implementation of the framework's provisions is a timely measure which if sustained will eventually push Rwanda's economy to the desired highs and enable the quest to eradicate poverty to be realised.

3. Progress in Rwanda

Apart from its economic discipline, Rwanda is also known for its dedication to the implementation of decisions of international institutions that it is a member of. Its commitment to the African Union initiatives is not any different. Of the forty two (42) AU instruments¹, Rwanda has ratified thirty one (31) – CAADP included. As indicated in figure 1 below, the country has been ranked among the world's ten (10) fastest growing and dynamic economies at the rate of 7% (Chuhan-Pole, 2013). With its dependence on rain fed agriculture, there is consensus that the Rwanda government has deliberately injected its national resources into leveraging agriculture to boost its growth and improve the livelihood of its citizenry.

Figure 1.



Source: (Duncan, 2012)

Complementing CAADP implementation are other government initiatives at improving agriculture. These include Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS); Strategic Plans for Transformation of Rwandan Agriculture (PSTA I & II); Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme; One Cow Per Poor Family Programme, among others. In its implementation of the CAADP framework, Rwanda has achieved some of the instrument's major targets. The country has consistently allocated the 10% minimum of the national budget to agriculture since 2006 (with the exception of 2007), with the sector growing at an estimated rate of 6% since 2011.

¹ These include AU treaties, conventions, protocols, and charters

Other positive outcomes associated with CAADP implementation include; increased investment on land husbandry, water harvesting, and hillside irrigation in thirty two catchment areas via a \$50 Million Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme support. The complementary initiatives also resulted in increased financing for crop intensification (to the tune of RwF13 Billion for purchase of fertilizers and seeds) programmes to increase land productivity; increased land consolidation to facilitate provision of extension services; and increased livestock development through enhanced veterinary services and increased number of milk collection centres.

While such achievements and initiatives are expected to have positive impact on the populace, the challenge of food insecurity impedes the full realization of CAADP's overall goal.

4. Why Food Insecurity?

Food insecurity is the lack of consistent access to adequate food supplies. Currently, intermittent food shortages and malnutrition remain the key manifestations of food insecurity in Rwanda. 17% of the population is facing acute food shortages and 14% facing chronic food shortages (Ngarukiye, 2013). Also, there is the challenge of malnutrition whereby 12% of children between six months and five years are facing acute malnutrition and 43% are chronic cases. It is evident that insufficient access to nutritious food supplies needs to be urgently dealt with as part of Rwanda's priorities.

A couple of reasons may be attributed to the discordance between Rwanda's agricultural policy inputs and outcomes.

First, some 60% of farming households in Rwanda – especially in the Western Province - cultivate plots smaller than 0.5 hectares on steep slopes with poor soil fertility (caused by soil exhaustion), leading to soil degradation and hence poor access to food.

Second, the country suffers from the problem of vulnerability to weather related shocks. This is caused by lack of sufficient irrigation, especially on the hillsides - and weak meteorological capacity (IPAR, 2009). It is especially important to recognise that the high costs of such irrigation could be inhibitive to employing this technology.

Third, in Rwanda's investment plans of late 1990s, priority in agriculture was given more to food crops than cash crops. For a country that was just emerging out of the socio-economic and political crisis in 1994, this was a realistic move. But even then, this was not supported by comprehensive land extension policies and adequate agricultural incentives to support consistent food production. However, Rwanda has made concerted efforts to balance its approach to utilization of agricultural endowments to fully realize CAADP's objectives. This has been informed by the need to assure food security while also improving economic growth and competitiveness.



5. Actions Rwanda needs to consider going forward

To better realize the fruits of agriculture-led economic growth in the 21st century and better contribute to CAADP's commitment to end hunger in the continent by 2025, Rwanda will need to do the following.

One, for Rwandan farmers to better benefit both from quality and economies of scale, the government will need to:

- Develop research-based policies that encourage and facilitate a balance between subsistence and commercial agriculture, while also maximizing the yields of the current subsistence system through investment in more fertilizers and seeds
- Increase *catalytic* public investment in areas such as hard infrastructure for farmers to have reliable access to new markets
- Develop internal interventions like facilitation of access to credit lines and intelligent price regulation and stabilization.
- Take advantage of its membership in the East African Community (EAC) to negotiate for tariff rates with member states with sea ports – Kenya and Tanzania – to reduce the high export barriers.

Two, the challenge of soil exhaustion and extensive partitioning of agricultural land can be reversed by:

- Extensive research – This will generate new and context specific knowledge on the technologies that can be employed to improve agriculture in Rwanda. Attention to components like dynamic topography-friendly technologies and integration of natural manure in subsistence and commercial agriculture will be of great benefit.
- Targeting of rural farmers with proper land demarcation that will maximize the benefit of tilling land for agricultural purposes - The 2014 AU Agriculture Ministerial Summit endorsed the guiding principles on Large Scale Land Based Investments (LSLBI)² (AU, 2014). This will help Rwanda generate optimum benefits from agricultural land investments.

Three, the government should consider investing in water management and irrigation infrastructure to facilitate a stable and predictable water supply system as well as affordable and reliable renewable energy for agricultural production. Rwanda should consider:

- Approaching the African Development Bank (AfDB), or look to its internal resources for technical and financial assistance.

² LSLBI addresses issues related to human rights of communities, responsible governance, food security, respect of land rights of women focusing on the role of small holder farmers

- Instituting national irrigation flagship projects will be a good starting point.

Four, there is need for improved policy coordination between and among MINAGRI agencies which will be critical in connecting CAADP's aspirations and results. Such an effort will have to include:

- Proper adoption and institution of the CAADP Results Framework as key tool for tracking, monitoring and reporting progress and accountability for actions and results. This will help in identifying gaps that require policy and infrastructural attention while also making implementation a goal oriented and time consistent process.

Five, Rwanda should invest more in adequate staff training and capacity building in the agriculture sector and improve coordination between and among Ministries by learning from best practice elsewhere. This would improve internal systems to track and disseminate information about public agriculture spending and to collect and disseminate detailed and disaggregated data.

6. Conclusion

Overall, Rwanda has had good results in implementing CAADP. Though not an easy process, it has remained committed to the task. While it has achieved the two major objectives of CAADP, food shortages and malnutrition still remain major challenges. To complement its national agricultural policy initiatives, Rwanda should ensure targeted infrastructural investment, and national and regional market interventions to beef up food security while also deriving economic gains from it.

Proper land policies, financing of national irrigation, extensive research and continuous training of Rwandese agricultural staff, as well as full adoption of the CAADP Results Framework will go a long way in boosting agricultural development - and realizing CAADP's aspirations. Rwanda's experience should be a learning case for other African countries on the essence of compliance to AU instruments. Immediate successes are evident and indeed full implementation of CAADP will eventually leverage Africa's economic independence and agricultural self sufficiency.



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