

AU-EU Investing in a Food Secure Future

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CHAIR'S COMMUNIQUÉ



The African Union and the European Union have long-standing traditions in agricultural and rural development policies. Agriculture is a cornerstone for economic development and sustainable growth in both regions. Recognizing the challenges, both regions need to step up their efforts to transform agriculture in a sustainable way in order to achieve food security, improved nutrition and rural growth. Strengthening and deepening of the cooperation between these regions is clearly needed.

The world today faces one of the biggest challenge of the 21st century: how to feed 9 billion people in 2050. African population is expected to double in the same period of time. Current patterns of consumption and production will only increase pressure on already scarce natural resources. Climate change represents an additional threat, already undermining agriculture and food systems in many regions, making it more difficult to achieve food security and nutrition goals and reduce poverty.

The Conference was built around a two-day Experts' segment followed by a High Level Ministerial segment on the third day, giving political orientations to improve AU-EU agricultural cooperation and build on previous international efforts and existing structures.

It focused on the following five themes:

1. Climate-Smart Agriculture;
2. Reducing Food Losses and Waste;
3. Improving Market Access, regionally and internationally;
4. Increasing Responsible Private Investment in Sustainable Agriculture;
5. Science & Innovation for Development.

The Conference put forward partnerships on the main themes of AU-EU cooperation, in order to accelerate the implementation of relevant agreements and actions as well as to strengthen the cooperation with private sector, especially through public private partnerships. This will be a rolling agenda for the AU-EU cooperation the coming years.

I. Climate smart agriculture

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is an approach that helps to guide actions needed to transform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in a changing climate. CSA aims to tackle three main objectives: sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; adapting and building resilience to climate change; and reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible. Key actions areas identified:

1. **Galvanizing political commitment to CSA** as a transformative way of agricultural development in a changing climate;
2. **Innovations, knowledge and technology**, with private sector involved as key actors. Improving existing and develop new area specific CSA technologies incl. harnessing indigenous knowledge;
3. **Access to financing to catalyze private sector investments**, by creating guarantees to loans and agricultural insurance by governments;

4. **Establish a Climate Smart Agriculture Programme** connecting both regions for sharing innovations, technologies and information, and expanding Agri-business mentorship.

To this end partners committed themselves to the following:

- Rockefeller Foundation made a pledge to host country based Resilience Academies in any African countries that requests;
- The AU and EU agreed to collaborate on better clarifying, communicating and informing farmers, policy makers and others on the CSA approach;
- The AU and EU agree to jointly explore how to better engage the Green Climate Fund, to support enough support to CSA programs and strengthen capacity to win proposals;
- Nigeria committed to set up a large irrigation program to be less dependent on rain fed agriculture which can then be replicated in other countries;
- Germany will integrate water as a crucial issue within CSA in the upcoming G-20 and GFFA context.

II. Reducing Food Losses and Waste

Currently around one third of the food produced is being lost or wasted. Reducing food loss and waste (FLW) can be a “triple win” opportunity: it saves money for farmers, companies, and households; wasting less means helping feed more; alleviates pressure on climate, water, and land resources. Key action areas identified:

1. **Measure to Manage** - Establish technical collaboration —involving countries, companies, and other institutions —on quantifying FLW at national level to empower countries to set baselines and monitor progress over time.
2. **The FLW Innovation Challenge** - Launch a “Food Loss and Waste Innovation Challenge” wherein funders/financiers offer financing to farmers, entrepreneurs, small/medium-sized enterprises, or others in both AU and EU on a competitive basis for the most promising innovative proposals for FLW reduction.
3. **FLW Technology Incubator** - Roll out the use of transportable units enabling on-site, rapid, experimental testing of FLW-reduction technologies and approaches for perishable foods. Containing small cold-storage facilities and basic research.
4. **Private Sector “Anchor Buyers”** - Develop a scaled-up “anchor buyer” initiative wherein companies active in food supply chains contract to purchase foodstuffs from farmers agreeing to implement practices or technologies that reduce FLW.
5. **Global Community of Practice on Food Waste** - Establish a “Global Community of Practice on Food Waste”, a public-private partnership that facilitates exchange of information and best practices, enables access to practitioners, promotes networking around mutual interests, identifies food waste hotspots, and promotes solutions.

6. **Roundtables on Food Security and Nutrition** - Establish annual, national, multi-stakeholder roundtables on food security and nutrition across both regions. Connect in-country farmers, local businesses, and relevant government.

To this end partners committed themselves to the following:

- Support for developing technical collaboration between AU and EU on quantifying FLW at national level, WRI and UNEP volunteered technical assistance, with open invitation to FAO;
- Interest in participation in the FLW Challenge, and WRI volunteered to spearhead and engage Champions 12.3. With Rockefeller as a knowledge partner;
- Rabobank committed to intensify their commitment for the Patient Procurement Program;
- Zimbabwe is committed to further promote contract farming as a means of preventing FLW;
- UNEP offered to host and mobilize the Community of Practice on Food Waste;
- UNEP expressed interest in orchestrating the National Roundtables on Food Security and Nutrition, and FARA offered to help facilitate it.

III. Improving Market Access, regionally and internationally

While a majority of African countries face little tariffs on their products in European markets due to their participation in trade preferential schemes, they still face challenges with regards to Non-Tariff Barriers. These challenges include issues related to SPS regulations and certifications, quality assurance and conformity assessment, private sector setting and others, especially as they relate to agricultural products. Key action areas identified:

1. **Set up a Africa-EU multistakeholder agricultural business platform** focused on market access;
2. **Develop a dialogue** to promote coherence between agricultural and trade policies, within a regional free trade area;
3. **Build private sector capacity** in compliance with and enforcement of marketing and trading standards.

To this end partners committed to the following:

- UNECA, supported by various AU and countries agreed to set up a working group to harmonize the equivalence of standards;
- The AU and EU, together with key partners to explore the establishment of a Agricultural Trade Academy, to achieve the goals under CSA and FLW.

IV. Increasing Responsible Private Investment

Investing responsibly in agriculture can effectively increase the productivity of agricultural labor and land, and boost rural businesses. Productivity is a major determinant of farm incomes, especially private investments will boost agricultural business operations and value chain approaches. Strengthening of the food supply chain by, inter alia, encouraging small farmers to organize themselves and diversify and upscale their marketing. Investments must take sufficient account of social and ecological impacts to prevent an erosion of community resilience by applying sustainable environmental and risk reduction approaches. Key action areas identified:

1. **Facilitate dialogue between private and public partners** to identify and adopt policies to create the enabling business environment for investment, including a CSR transparency group for agriculture value chains. Identify two partners to take the lead.
2. **Promote AU-EU Business partnerships** through matchmaking activities within existing agri-business platforms.
3. **Make feasibility assessment to develop agriculture extension services and vocational training**, in particular for youth, to attract agri-business investment.

To this end partners committed to the following:

- Germany to further explore to establish a platform for exchange of best practices of private investment in Africa;
- Grow-Africa commits to help realize all action under theme 4;
- The AU and EU member states agreed to further explore to strengthen the extension services, both public and private, with a particular focus on leveraging ICT and engaging youth;
- COLEACP is launching a new 25 million Euro "Competitiveness Through Sustainability" (Fit4Markets) programme, which is part-financed by the 11th EDF.

V. Science and Innovation for Agricultural Development

Institution building, capacity building and access to research and innovation determine the success of increasing agricultural productivity in a sustainable way. Enhanced instructional cooperation between universities and research centers in both regions can lay a firm foundation for sustainable growth, and attract the interest of youth to work in the agricultural sector, as young entrepreneurs, the future farmers. Key action areas that need to be scaled up are:

1. **1000 new African Ph.D. students by 2020.** With students from the African continent, trained on the African continent, focused on themes that address public and private priorities for agricultural development.
2. **Launch of Roundtables, on innovative finance**, to address at country- and regional-level, innovative forms of finance, **and on agricultural diversity for food security in a changing climate.**

3. **Creation of two new research-industry-public partnership incubators.**
4. **“E-capacities” usage pledge**, as an information platform developed by FARA-AU to assist African nations to catalogue their innovation ecosystem (10 countries in two years).
5. **Private sector initiated training gap analysis for horticulture in East Africa.**

To this end partners committed to the following:

- The Dutch Topsector Agri-food and Horticulture will support the set up of a AU-EU Business Forum involving Government, private sector, farmers organizations, and financial institutions;
- UNECA offered a platform for accelerating technology transfer on thematic issues, including on FLW.

The Way Forward

The Conference put forward key collaborative outcomes, to accelerate the implementation of relevant agreements and actions as well as to strengthen the cooperation with private sector.

Solutions can emerge more quickly and efficiently through private public partnerships. In this light several partnerships were initiated during the Conference and are under construction (Gambia, Uganda, World Resources Institute, Rockefeller Foundation, the Netherlands, UNECA, COLEACP,).

The Netherlands, as co-organizer of the AU-EU Investing in a Food Secure Future Conference, committed to funding two to four Agri-business incubators for Africa, and invited to further exploring this approach with other partners.

The European Commission committed to deepen their work in the five thematic areas, especially via EC Funds, mainly EDF, ENI for North Africa, the Global Public Goods Fund, Agrify, and Funds of the European Investment Bank.

And as a next step facilitate the continued dialogue called for by the Conference, by bringing a biennial Ministerial AU-EU 'Roundtable' focused on implementation to life, aimed at a strong and lasting partnership of AU and EU around the five main themes of cooperation.