



Towards African Food and Development Security

Agriculture should be homogenous consortiums innovatively financed and managed small and medium scale international businesses from Africa.

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Introduction

It remains a fact that over sixty percent of the world's arable land for commercial and private agriculture is in Africa. The functioning of Africa's agriculture is crucial to her economic development and food security. The small-scale rural farmer dominates Africa's agriculture. Today more than ever, their success is intrinsic to African socio-economic well-being. Agriculture in Africa therefore presents us an opportunity to successfully tackle Africa's underdevelopment issues including creating jobs, achieving food security and inclusive economic growth. The author explains that agriculture in Africa should be structured as consortiums of market researched small to medium scale businesses, and these agriculture businesses are innovatively financed and managed to be part of the African economic development and growth story. This is a view shared by The Grace Communications Foundation, they explain in GCF (2014) that unlike large-scale industrial farms, small and medium scale sustainable farms feed more people and provide more jobs on smaller plots of land than industrial farms. Mwaniki (2005) explains that small-scale rural farmers who are producers of about 90% of Africa's food accounts for almost 40% of Africa's food insecure population. Therefore a good place to make a significant impact on attaining African development and food security is rural Africa, and a main strategy should be to transform the rural African farmer into a farmer conscious of the

value chains and market opportunities concerning different crops. Agricultural production in Africa should be from consortiums of small and medium scale farmers or farmer groups because the as the author's research shows, the benefits of such are in line with African developmental needs such as the creating of sustainable jobs and food security. Achieving food security is more of a creation of wealth business issue, because Food insecurity is incidental to poverty and the inability to purchase food.

Innovation and strategy drawn from the author's research assert that the African rural farmer will have to be creatively financed and managed to benefit from researched international market opportunities as well as knowledge of the importance of adding value to crops in various ways with a view on targeted and researched markets locally and or abroad. Also important is for the woman African rural farmer to be included in such financing and knowledge benefits in ever increasing large numbers, because among many other reasons, women are in many African areas the custodians of the knowledge of cultivation and processing of food. An important strategy for African nations to achieve sustainable inclusive economic development and growth, is to finance and manage the rural African farmer in profit seeking partnerships with organizations such as the African export import bank and the likes, developing consortiums of small and medium scale Agricultural businesses operating locally and internationally from Africa. The author's assertions and proposals are explained a little further in the following paragraphs, starting with the link between the scales of agricultural practice and achieving inclusive economic development and security.

The relationship between Scale of agricultural practice, economic development and food security

In spite of very many years of claims to the contrary, industrial farming has not alleviated food insecurity in the world. According to the European Commission EC (2014), Food prices are climbing to record levels and The food and agriculture organization of the United Nations FAO has called the present moment a new era of rising food prices and spreading hunger, pointing out that land is becoming the most sought-after commodity as the world moves towards food scarcity. This highlights the business opportunities in Africa to be financed and managed in view of the fact that 60% of the world's arable land is in Africa. However, Rehber and Grega (2008) explain that an unintended effect of industrial scale farming and international agreements on agriculture, and trade is that, agricultural surplus from wealthier nations is dumped on poorer nations. These practices do not support local food providers, local production, or local markets, and therefore spread poverty, which in the authors view, is a main cause of African underdevelopment and food insecurity. In contrast research shows that production and the benefits from segmented consortiums of small and medium scale farmers or farmer groups are in line with African developmental needs such as the creating of sustainable jobs and food security. Bugusu (2013) explains that Food security is one of the most pressing

challenges in the world today. The challenge is particularly important as the world population is projected to reach over 9 billion people resulting in increased food demand by the year 2050. For Africa, the author asserts that Africa should note that the afore mentioned scenario presents business and trade opportunities for Africa, via small and medium scale agriculture and agro allied farming businesses to be innovatively financed and managed towards African development and food security.

Why Small Or Medium Scale Agriculture businesses?

According to (European commission, 2014) many of today's food production techniques, undermine the future capability of global land to grow food. They go on to assert that Global food production is overshooting or is approaching its environmentally sustainable limits. For all concerned with the fight against global food insecurity this is unacceptable practice. Sustainability in the context of agriculture means the use of resources in agricultural practice, at rates that do not exceed the capacity of the Earth to replace them. It's a lot simpler to implement sustainable agricultural farming practices when the farming operation is on a small or medium scale. Contributing to over production of certain foods and crops is more unlikely from small and medium scale farms. The Grace Communications Foundation (GCF, 2014) tells us that unlike large-scale industrial farms, small and medium scale sustainable farms feed more people and provide more jobs on smaller plots of land than industrial farms. Interestingly, according to a research carried out by the University of Essex sustainable small and medium scale agriculture increased food or crop productivity by 93% on the average in over nine million farms including in the Sahel region of Africa. (GCF, 2014) goes on to tell us that recent attempts to introduce industrial scale agriculture to Africa by some western nations and foundations was rejected in a document produced by a United Nations affiliate organization, the rejection was supported by 58 countries and was produced by 400 experts. In their document they strongly proposed instead small-scale agricultural models. According to the United Nations in 2011 with small-scale low-input organic methods, African farmers could double their food and crop production. (GCF, 2014) asserts that sustainable agriculture in its nature can feed the world with no harm to the environment or human health.

Financing and managing Agriculture in Africa towards economic development and food security

The functioning of Africa's agriculture is crucial to her economic development and food security. The small-scale rural farmer dominates Africa's agriculture. Today more than ever, their success is intrinsic to African socio-economic well-being. Considering the publications of the Food and Agricultural Organization FAO (2015) it is clear well over US\$11 billion would be needed in Sub-Saharan Africa, in financing and investments supporting the rural African farmer in order to see a significant positive change in Africa's food security and overall economic well being. However in such times of any sort of global economic crisis, it is clear that such money

cannot come from any one traditional means of funding. Africa must be innovative in new strategies for funding her much needed and rural small and medium scale farmer. New research-derived strategies will ensure the farmer and agriculture is managed to present a business and profit incentive to private profit oriented investors and banks. This means that governments, multilateral organizations, development or profit oriented banks and the likes in Africa must commission now in very much increased levels independent research for findings on real world market opportunities for crops and value added products from of the African rural small and medium agriculture business. It is also crucial to partner with the African farmer in real world circumstances managing and implementing new strategies from findings to their profitable outcomes.

Increased commissioned Research will reveal new strategies to expose agriculture in Africa as profitable to the investor; inadequate access to finance is a major problem for agriculture in Africa. Findings from research will also lead to strategies eliminating the high-risk perception of agriculture in Africa, which is certainly not in line with actual risks. Such findings will open the door to easier access finance for the rural African farmer, which will in turn lead to acquiring agricultural technologies that lead to higher agricultural productivity and value added products. Increased commissioned research will certainly lead to a strong push for important changes in policies across the continent that will allow for more secure and solid investments in farming in Africa, such as a sensitive but necessary correlation between the ownership of land and collateral for money invested in farming on the land. Coates et al (2011) agrees with this point of view as it explains that in developed nations lenders can rely on securities that can be obtained in the control of agricultural land. Naturally this has lead to more solid investments in agriculture. To make financing the rural African farmer easier, farming consortiums can be organized into segments according to what they grow, and what capacity for value addition they have. A similar view is explained in Christen and Andersen (2013). Nevertheless the author points out that it is important that management of the rural African farmer is always a manifestation of consultations and cooperation between farming cooperatives, financing organizations and local authorities. It is also prudent to note that successful local rural micro finance banks and the likes are nearest at hand to the rural African community and farmer, such institutions are often willing to share risk with the local farmer but lack the capacity to make a significant difference. New strategies towards African agricultural well being could incorporate such local finance institutions.

The Woman African Farmer Businessperson

Tripathi et al (2012) in their publication inspired by the presentations and discussions at the round table on food security and gender, express that Women are critical to agriculture development in less developed countries. According to their publication. Women comprise of 43% of the agricultural labor force. This is especially true in Africa where women can be considered

the backbone of agricultural practice. In this authors view, any transformations of the African rural farmer to the farmer businessperson must include a majority of women farmers for success against food insecurity to be achieved at a faster rate. Drawing from the conclusions of Tripathi et al (2012) the African woman rural farmer could lead the way in indigenous innovation in the African farmer businesspersons' quest to succeed locally and internationally, because women are in many African areas the custodians of the knowledge of cultivation and processing of food. Dr. Olivier De Schutter the United Nations special rapporteur on the right to food puts it plainly in his report De Schutter (2013) "Gender and Right to food". He expresses that transforming women with the business knowledge of agriculture is the secret weapon, or the shortcut, to reducing hunger and malnutrition. In this authors view this is important support for the point presented in this paper. In the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization 2010-2011 state of food and agriculture report FAO (2011), it is expressed that giving women equal access to agricultural resources could increase world food security and reduce world hunger by 12-17%. In originating the African farmer businessperson all the implementers must ensure the women farmers have equal and easier access to the transformation initiative explained in this paper. In this authors view its time for action, action that should stand out in its effectiveness against food insecurity by giving the African rural farmer the business knowledge and opportunity to sell his crops for good profit in researched markets in international and local arenas.

Strategies and recommendations (Towards food and development security in Africa)

- Push for important changes in policies across the continent that will allow for more secure and solid investments in farming in Africa, such as a sensitive but necessary correlation between the ownership of land and collateral for money invested in farming on the land.
- Commission research with a view to develop new investment strategies-models for agriculture financing in Africa that provide inducement for financiers and all other stake holders in the agriculture value chain.
- Commission research with a view to develop new insurance programs for small and medium scale agriculture in Africa.
- Organize or structure Agriculture in Africa into segmented and market researched small to medium scale businesses partnered and financed by profit seeking financial institutions. In consultation with local authorities and farming cooperatives, develop consortiums of small and medium scale Agricultural businesses operating locally and

internationally from Africa. Farming consortiums can be organized into segments according to what they grow, and what capacity for value addition they have.

- Ensure that the rural African farmer is conscious of the value chains and market opportunities concerning different crops.
- Ensure that the woman African rural farmer is included in such financing and knowledge benefits in increasingly very large numbers,
- Manage the rural African farmer to benefit from researched international market opportunities as well as knowledge of the importance and the capacity to add value to crops in various ways with a view on targeted and researched markets locally and or abroad.
- Encourage small to medium scale low-input organic methods in Africa.
- Commission research with the goal of developing strategies to eliminate the false high-risk investment perception of Agriculture in Africa.
- Ensure that management of the rural African farmer is always a manifestation of consultations and cooperation between farming cooperatives, financing organizations and local authorities.
- Incorporate successful local rural micro finance banks and rural local finance institutions into strategies towards African agricultural and food security well-being

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