



Challenges and opportunities facing African smallholder farmers: An overview

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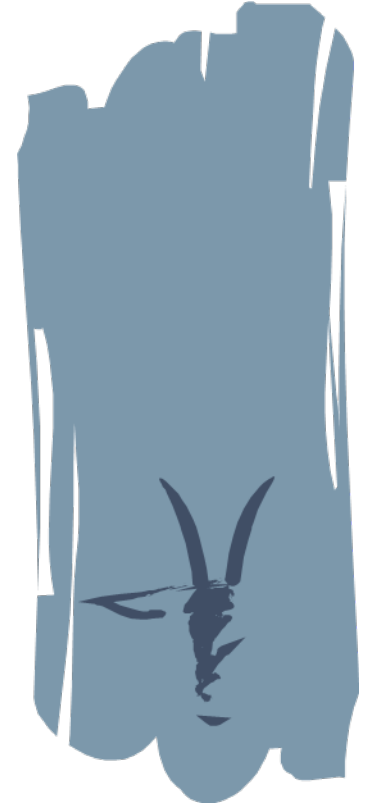
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Outline

- **Introduction**
- **Challenges**
- **Opportunities**
- **Conclusions**



Introduction



- Agriculture holds the key to achievement of SDGs in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA): SDG2, SDG1, and several others
- Agriculture is dominated by smallholder farmers – they produce 80% of the food consumed in SSA
- Transforming SSA smallholder agriculture is therefore key to achieving sustainable development
- Agriculture transformation involves a greater reliance on **input** and **output** delivery systems and increased **integration** of agriculture with other sectors of the domestic and international economies

Challenges: poor input and services delivery system



- Lack of access to productive assets:
 - Land: inappropriate tenure systems; land fragmentation; declining soil fertility
 - Capital: irrigation; machinery,
 - Financial services: credit, insurance, etc
- High input costs:
 - seed; animal breeds; fertilizers
- Low adoption of improved technologies:
 - lack of technical knowledge; poor advisory services; low research funding
- Inadequate infrastructure:
 - transportation; storage, energy
- Inappropriate policy environment: quality standards, regulatory regimes, etc
- Poor risk management: weather- and climate-related shocks - climate change
- **Result: Low agricultural productivity**

Challenges: Underdeveloped output delivery system



- Lack of well functioning markets:
 - Lack of market information: demand, prices,
 - Grades and standards
- High post-harvest losses – inadequate storage, transportation, infrastructure
- Inappropriate policy environment:
 - macro-economic policies – penalize agriculture
 - Unpredictable government interventions
 - Poor regulatory regime – food safety, contract enforcement, etc
- Results: **high transaction costs, low output prices, low profitability**

Challenges: low integration of agriculture to domestic and international economies



- Low public investment in agriculture compared to other sectors
- Market interventions – agriculture uncompetitive
- Macroeconomic policies – exchange rates, multiple taxes
- Trade policies – domestic (export bans, import restrictions)
- Trade policies – developed countries (subsidies, agriculture protection)
- Result: **Smallholder farmers face limited market access (domestic, regional, and international)**

Opportunities: improved policies, availability of technologies, rising demand



- Macro-economic policies: improving, but risk of reversal
- Continental policy frameworks prioritize agriculture: CAADP; AfCFTA
- Devolution/decentralization
- Collective action models: Farmers organizations, cooperatives,
- Biotechnology – potential to close the technology gap
- Information technology: extension services, market information, financial services, etc
- High food prices/rising demand: population growth, increasing incomes, urbanization

- **Result: Future looks brighter – but there is a lot of work to be done**



Conclusions



- Smallholder farming in Africa is a risky, poor return undertaking, exacerbated by climate change – extreme weather conditions and related shocks

- African smallholder farmers are not a homogeneous group – women, youth, poor, marginalized, pastoralists, net-buyers v/s net-sellers of food, etc

- Face differentiated challenges and opportunities

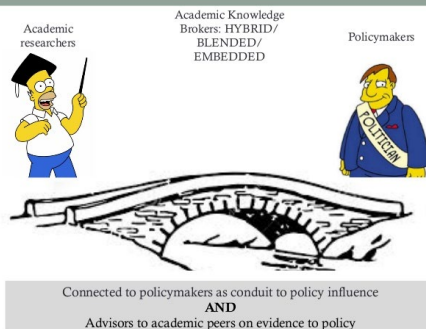
- To address the local challenges and exploit the opportunities sustainably:

- Need local capacity – co-create innovative, evidence-based solutions (research, dissemination, diffusion)

- Networks of researchers – interdisciplinary; multidisciplinary

- Dialogue forums: policy makers, practitioners, researchers

- **Appropriate niche for AgriFoSe2030**



THANK YOU


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