



Report of the

SWITCH Africa Green Regional Sector Meeting on SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

27-28 November 2019,
Nairobi, Kenya



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INTRODUCTION

The SWITCH Africa Green regional sector meeting on sustainable agriculture was held on 27 and 28 November 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting served as a platform for stakeholders from Government, the private sector and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the agriculture sector to discuss the scale-up and replication of best practices. Specifically, the meeting brought together government officials, partners and participants from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda and representatives from regional economic communities and organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Africa Union Commission, the European Union, financial institutions and United Nations agencies, as well as other experts and stakeholders in the sustainable agricultural sector.

The unique platform provided an opportunity for discussions on green business, with a focus on organic farming, weed and pest control and management, organic disease control and management, pre-harvest and post-harvest management, composting, the use of waste for mulching and/or fuel, permaculture, certification, standards, market requirements, rangeland management and animal nutrition and health.

Green business development in sustainable agriculture is crucial to African countries, as the sector is labour-intensive and can generate a large number of jobs, reduce negative environmental impacts and create better livelihoods, especially for enterprises owned or led by women and young people.

The meeting kicked off with opening remarks by Ms. Juliette Biao, Director and Regional Representative, Africa Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mr. Sebastian Gil, Deputy Permanent Representative of the European Union to UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), representing the delegation of the European Union to Kenya, and Mr. Laban Kiplagat, Director, Land and Environmental Management, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Kenya.

Ms. Biao emphasized the need to green the agriculture sector, which provided economic opportunities and growth potential for African economies that were highly dependent on natural resources. Noting that most of the population in the region relied directly on natural resources for their immediate livelihoods, jobs and well-being, she said that SWITCH Africa Green was proof that Africa had chosen to take the inclusive green approach to growth.



Ms. Juliette Biao, Director and Regional Representative, Africa Office, UNEP, delivering her opening remarks.

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In his remarks, Mr. Gil said that the European Union continued to be invested in circular economy initiatives and would continue to provide support, including by financing sustainable agriculture projects. Green economy business models were good for the environment, good for business and good for society.



Mr. Sebastian Gil, Deputy Permanent Representative of the European Union to UNEP and UN-Habitat.

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In his keynote address, Mr. Kiplagat urged the participants to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the meeting to learn about sustainable consumption and production practices that were appropriate and applicable to their circumstances and conditions, so as to implement them in their home countries. He emphasized the ministry's continued support for the efforts of SWITCH Africa Green and other stakeholders to advance green business development in the country.



Mr. Laban Kiplagat, Director, Land and Environmental Management, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Kenya, delivering his keynote address.

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SESSION 2: SETTING THE SCENE

MODERATOR: MR. PATRICK MWESIGYE, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, RESOURCE EFFICIENCY, UNEP

The moderator set the scene for the meeting by explaining the sector's priorities and contributions to regional development. Ms. Rhoda Wachira, Programme Management Officer, UNEP, then presented the SWITCH Africa Green Regional Sector Report on Sustainable Agriculture: Focus on Green Business Development. She emphasized the importance of agriculture for sustainable development, including in terms of job creation, improved livelihoods and a clean environment, and explained how agriculture could support the achievement of commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, as well as other global, regional and national commitments.

Ms. Wachira presented the report on the SWITCH Africa Green survey, with the analysis and review of the implementation and results of phase I of the SWITCH Africa Green programme in the sustainable agriculture sector. She covered the strategic interventions, results achieved, cross-cutting issues, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations. She reported that the survey, conducted between 14 May and 22 June 2018, had collected data through questionnaires targeting at least 10 per cent of the project beneficiaries and all 34 grantees. In the sustainable agriculture sector, the survey covered 101 enterprises, or 23 per cent of the beneficiary enterprises, in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda. The survey results revealed that the programme was having a positive impact on decoupling agricultural growth from environmental degradation and improving human welfare, and that the strategic interventions in capacity-building and awareness-raising had had a positive impact on staff capacity, business skills and enterprise performance.

Notably, 62 per cent of the enterprises surveyed reported that they had acquired new skills in areas such as organic farming, weed and pest control and management, organic sesame disease control and management, pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest management, permaculture, certification, standards, market requirements, rangeland management and animal nutrition and health. Sixty-one per cent of the MSMEs had recorded increased sales as a direct result of SWITCH Africa Green. Slightly more than half of the surveyed enterprises reported new opportunities arising through business expansion and new products that included organic fertilizer, diversification into horticulture and livestock, agri-tourism, inter-cropping and the introduction of new breeds. Forty-eight per cent of the enterprises reported that new jobs had been created during SWITCH Africa Green implementation, with a total of 2,995 new jobs created, although some were seasonal and dependent on family labour. Fifty-five per cent of the enterprises had implemented water-efficiency interventions such as reuse, rainwater harvesting, water conservation and the installation of water-saving devices. Fifty-seven per cent of the enterprises had implemented waste reduction measures, including composting and the use of waste for mulching and as fuel.

The ensuing discussion focused on the challenges encountered and lessons learned from the programme, as well as recommendations, which included:

- ▶ Prioritize financing of the transition to sustainable agriculture through green financing mechanisms, fiscal incentives and public investment in infrastructure, along with protection of the environment.
- ▶ Introduce capacity-building and knowledge-sharing in terms of relevant sustainable consumption and production principles, including labelling, certification and eco-solutions.
- ▶ Align the policy and regulatory environment to support sustainability in agriculture, including through fiscal incentives and procurement. Other important policy dimensions include rural infrastructure, agricultural research and innovation systems, and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to enhance resilience, agricultural productivity and food security.

SESSION 3: PANEL DISCUSSION: SOME GOOD PRACTICES

MODERATOR: MR. WILBER LWANDE, SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE CONSULTANT, KENYA

The panel discussion session highlighted examples of good practices in green business and sustainable consumption and production from selected enterprises to identify opportunities for scale-up and replication, as well as challenges to be addressed.

MEAT NATURALLY INITIATIVE: EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA'S EMERGING RED MEAT SECTOR

Presenter: Ms. Caroline McCann, Market Specialist, Meat Naturally Initiative, South Africa

Ms. McCann spoke about how the Meat Naturally Initiative encouraged sustainable farming and rejuvenated rangelands in South Africa by providing livestock production support and mobile solutions to access needed services. The social enterprise provided a crucial link between small-scale farmers and commercial meat buyers by partnering with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to offer formal training in regenerative grazing techniques, rangeland restoration practices, cattle management, stock theft patrol and predator control. She also shared how the Meat Naturally Initiative supported NGO economic goals by organizing mobile auctions and abattoirs to provide small-scale farmers with the opportunity to reach new markets. In exchange for training, equipment and market access, farmers committed to preserving rangelands and providing high-quality meat products that were sustainably produced.



From left: Mr. Wilber Lwande, Ms. Caroline McCann, Mr. Lay Laban, Ms. Pauline Kimani and Mr. Yassia Savadogo.

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ECO-AGRICULTURE-SESAME LIVELIHOODS AND ORGANIC-GREEN BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG RURAL PEOPLE

Presenter: Mr. Lay Laban, National Organic Agriculture Movement of Uganda

The presentation highlighted how farmer groups had developed and implemented organic agriculture practices that could be accessed and afforded by smallholder farmers, such as organic pesticides, organic fertilizers, organic rodenticide and the use of banana leaves for storing grains and cereals as a way to control weevils and minimize post-harvest losses. The presentation showcased the technical support provided by SWITCH Africa Green through toolkits, training, technical monitoring, mentorship and innovative product development, which had resulted in increased sesame production and productivity. It also indicated how the intervention had improved the livelihoods of child mothers and their children, including through better nutrition and a savings scheme. The approach was being replicated by other smallholder farmers in Uganda.

CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT FOR GREEN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ECO-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Presenter: Ms. Pauline Kimani, Managing Director, Pamat Foods, Kenya

Ms. Kimani introduced Pamat Foods, a model MSME that provided natural, organic, healthy and sweet foods in East Africa by offering organic, locally grown produce free of chemicals and preservatives. The firm provided a ready market for small-scale farmers who were otherwise taken advantage of by middlemen, thereby helping to eradicate produce waste due to a lack of market access. Through SWITCH Africa Green's intervention, the company had made great improvements in bookkeeping and record-keeping, marketing and business planning, sourcing raw materials, human resources, water and energy efficiency and reducing waste generation, through several training courses in topics ranging from green business solutions to sustainable consumption and production principles.

TRANSFORMATION OF WASTE INTO ORGANIC FERTILIZER

Presenter: Mr. Yassia Savadogo, Coordinator, Association Jeunesse Solidaire pour le Développement Véritable, Burkina Faso

Mr. Savadogo presented how Association Jeunesse Solidaire pour le Développement Véritable had supported entrepreneurs in efficiently carrying out integrated waste management by turning biodegradable waste into compost, as well as non-biodegradable waste into various products, like brooms from plastic cans, fruit and vegetable bags from plastic bags, glass powder for coating buildings, woven fabrics from plastic bags, and fire briquettes from paper waste. The experience highlighted the role that compost could play in the promotion and practice of sustainable agriculture.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LOCAL AGRICULTURE THROUGH GREEN RETAIL AND GREEN HOSPITALITY

Presenter: Ms. Hemlata Choolye-Seechurn, Project Manager, SKC Surat and Co. Ltd., Mauritius

Ms. Seechurn introduced SKC Surat, a family-owned and managed enterprise whose core competency lay in the year-round distribution of fruits and vegetables. The company offered a link between retail partners and catering partners through fruit and vegetable sourcing, financing, transporting, dry and cold storage, quality selection, safety and controls, and preparing, processing, packing, labelling and tracking solutions. Ms. Seechurn showcased how the company practised sustainable agriculture to provide safe fruit and vegetables while offering superior supply chain management. The company had provided a market for sustainably produced products through the Mauritius Good Agriculture Practices (MauriGAP) promoted through SWITCH Africa Green. MauriGAP was a framework for good agricultural practices adapted from international good agricultural practices. The MauriGAP standards covered efficient use of resources; adoption of environmentally sound practices for natural resources; biodiversity preservation; pre- and post-harvest best practices; and agricultural waste recycling. The enterprise used the Sustainable Agriculture Forestry Environment Risk Management (SAFER) approach to ensure a cold chain from farm to plate, hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) certification in their storage and processing, and traceability through computerized packaging and transport. Promoting traceability is a strong requirement for customers who require sustainable products.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SESSION

1. Markets for sustainable agriculture products need to be enhanced regionally.
2. There is plenty of untapped indigenous knowledge among young people.
3. Communities have started working as a cohesive group instead of as individuals.
4. Capacity-building on sustainable agricultural practices is important and beneficial for farmers (smallholder and large-scale).

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SESSION

- ▶ Establish a platform where all activities will be posted, to enable countries to see what innovations are being used in different countries.
- ▶ Enhance collaboration through the networking facility.
- ▶ Share success stories regionally to enhance countries' awareness and knowledge.
- ▶ Embrace innovation and technology in implementing activities for sustainable consumption and production in order to improve lives.
- ▶ Change mindsets by making people aware of organic products.
- ▶ When speaking about sustainability, also speak about educating communities.
- ▶ Promote traceability, which is vital to ensuring efficient production.
- ▶ Enhance energy efficiency, including through using suitable refrigerants in cooling products and providing safer products.

SESSION 4: SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

MODERATOR: MR. BECQUET POLYCARPE BATIONO, DIRECTOR, PROMOTION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND GREEN INVESTMENTS, GENERAL DIRECTION ON GREEN ECONOMY AND CLIMATE CHANGE, BURKINA FASO

The session showcased sustainable agriculture interventions, programmes and projects being implemented in the countries.

THE ONE PLANET NETWORK SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS PROGRAMME

Presenter: Ms. Marina Bortoletti, Associate Programme Officer, UNEP

Ms. Marina presented the work being done by the One Planet network Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) programme. The programme advocated a systemic approach to – or holistic view of – all the food-related issues currently faced by society. The programme had created a multi-stakeholder platform that brought together existing initiatives and partnerships to promote sustainable food systems. A key SFS programme tool, the Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation, led by UNEP and developed in consultation with stakeholders, had been launched in the summer of 2019. Its aim was to support countries in adopting a systemic approach to the planning of policies and interventions while implementing food system activities.

ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTATION FOR FOOD SECURITY ASSEMBLY

Presenter: Patrick Luganda, Farmers Media Link Centre, Kampala, Uganda

The Ecosystem-based Adaptation for Food Security Assembly (EBAFOSA) was leading joint efforts to widely promote ecosystem-based adaptation practices with the Buganda Kingdom Government to zero in on cassava as a critical intervention crop for clean energy, climate-smart agriculture and agro-industrialization. The initiative had achieved remarkable success with the solar dryers promoted through an innovative financing facility that linked farmers savings groups to micro-finance facilities. The dryers ensured better quality and a greater quantity of cassava flour and avoided post-harvest losses, meaning more earnings for the farmers, which enabled them to save, purchase tools, and further improve their performance in using smarter practices.

ENHANCING THE AFRICAN GREEN ECONOMY THROUGH ECO-GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION FOR COFFEE

Presenter: Mr. Aeden Kaggwa, National Union of Coffee Agribusiness and Farm Enterprises, Uganda

Mr. Kaggwa introduced the National Union of Coffee Agribusiness and Farm Enterprises, a member-based organization and promoter of farmer ownership models for coffee value chain development. The organization fostered sustainable wealth creation for improved livelihoods and poverty alleviation in rural areas through the promotion of the green economy and sustainable consumption in Africa. More specifically, it promoted production of the highly valued Mount Rwenzori Arabica Coffee based on triple certification and market demand. The SWITCH Africa Green grantee was working to implement a new model for the coffee value chain in Africa based on triple certification of farmer associations – Geographical Indication (GI), Fair Trade (FT) and Organic (ECO) – to promote sustainable coffee production and consumption.

AN INCLUSIVE GREEN HORTICULTURAL PROCESSING SECTOR IN KENYA

Presenter: Ms. Marion Villacampa, Project Manager, Fundación Sustalde

Ms. Villacampa introduced the Horti-Green project, a 42-month intervention under SWITCH Africa Green, co-financed by the European Union. The project was aimed at fostering the adoption of sustainable consumption and production practices in the Kenya horticultural processing industry to support the transformation to an inclusive green economy that generated growth, created jobs and reduced poverty. The action was specifically aimed at equipping Kenyan horticultural processing MSMEs, eco-entrepreneurs and business service providers with the knowledge and tools needed to promote and adopt sustainable consumption and production practices and seize green economy opportunities.

SMALLHOLDER ACCESS TO HIGH-VALUE HORTICULTURAL MARKETS

Presenter: Mr. Johnson Bungu, Senior Business Development Manager, Solidaridad Network SA Trust, South Africa

Mr. Bungu presented the Farm2Market local, safe, sustainable food project, which helped emerging smallholder producers of fresh horticultural produce to gain access to high-value domestic markets in South Africa with certified safe and sustainable products, in partnership with Solidaridad, the Lima Rural Development Foundation and the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO). The company used leading-edge technology to provide integrated services and solutions, such as mobile applications for farmer support.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS FROM THE SESSION

- ▶ There are many good projects working to promote green business and sustainable consumption and production practices in agriculture in Africa.
- ▶ Countries should promote capacity-building for agriculture experts and agriculture extension officers.
- ▶ Projects should encourage grass-roots participation by young people, including through technology and knowledge transfer and growing plants for seeds.
- ▶ Stakeholders need to encourage farmers to have a sense of ownership and contribute to their activities.
- ▶ Various partners should support governments in putting in place institutional policies for sustainable agriculture.
- ▶ Getting buy-in from stakeholders, including retailer stakeholders, is crucial for sustainable agriculture.

SESSION 5: REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SECTOR REPORT ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE: FOCUS ON GREEN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

MODERATOR: MR. PATRICK MWESIGYE, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, RESOURCE EFFICIENCY, UNEP

A closed-door session was held for the peer review of the SWITCH Africa Green Regional Sector Report on Sustainable Agriculture: Focus on Green Business Development. The panellists for the session were:

- ▶ Reviewer 1: Ms. Olivia Makumbi, Senior Lecturer, Ndejje University of Agricultural Sciences, Uganda
- ▶ Reviewer 2: Mr. John Ereng, Rice Coordinator, Rikolto, Uganda
- ▶ Reviewer 3: Mr. James Lomax, Food Systems and Agriculture Adviser, Biodiversity and Land Branch, Ecosystems Division, UNEP

The participating countries were represented by their SWITCH Africa Green national focal points and National Technical Coordination Committee agriculture members.

Panellists noted that the report provided a detailed picture of programme implementation in the agriculture sector but did not give a clear picture under the policy section, which therefore needed further input from the countries. Participants also noted that although the case studies selected were good, the report could do with more case studies, as well as a review of some of the case study data, as some might not be accurate (such as for the case study from Uganda). Mr. Thomas Yatich, from the delegation of the European Union to Kenya, said that the report should highlight the impact of the programme in the countries and could be used to inform the European Union delegations on future funding of such programmes, given their significant impact on livelihoods, jobs and the environment. He noted that the audience for the reports needed to be clear. It was concluded that Ms. Wachira and the author, Mr. Dickson Khainga, would incorporate the comments and circulate the revised report to the reviewers.

DAY 2

SESSION 6: PARALLEL WORKING GROUPS: CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA.

The participants broke into four parallel working groups to discuss the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable agriculture in Africa. The groups discussed: (1) financing for enterprises in the sector, (2) policies to promote sustainable agriculture, (3) technical assistance models for enterprises in the agriculture sector and (4) sustainable trade and markets.



Group 1 discussing financing for enterprises in the sector.



Group 2 considering policies to promote sustainable agriculture.

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Group 4 discussing sustainable trade and markets.

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SESSION 7: PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

MODERATOR: MS. OLIVIA MAKUMBI, SENIOR LECTURER, NDEJJE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES, UGANDA

The session provided for an interactive discussion following brief presentations from the moderators of the four working groups on the lessons learned for each of the thematic areas. The moderator further engaged the participants on formulating recommendations for strengthening regional and national mechanisms for the uptake of sustainable consumption and production practices in the agriculture sector.

GROUP 1: FINANCING FOR ENTERPRISES IN THE SECTOR

MODERATOR: MS. CAROLINE NJIRU, PROGRAMME COORDINATOR, WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE KENYA

Recommendations and findings

- ▶ There is a need to train financiers on green financing so that they also focus on development of the region (the social, economic and environmental pillars of development) where they are based.

- ▶ Provision should be made for aggregators to train and mentor micro-enterprises. The aggregators are also well placed to access loans on behalf of micro-enterprises.
- ▶ There is a need for seed funding for credible green business start-ups. Small amounts like \$500 can go a long way for small enterprises.
- ▶ Public-private partnerships are key for directing financial flows to green business.
- ▶ Develop mechanisms to transfer lessons learned across the region – there is no need to replicate mistakes.
- ▶ Policymakers should also pay attention to appropriate interest rates and conditions for MSMEs.
- ▶ MSMEs require training in developing viable business plans and bankable proposals.
- ▶ There is a need to have data and impact stories at all levels to advocate for green financing.
- ▶ Financial institutions and central banks will listen to concerns if concrete data is available.

GROUP 2: POLICIES TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

MODERATOR: MS. EVELYNE LUTALO, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES, UGANDA

Recommendations and findings

- ▶ The current legislative framework touches on different sectors, hence the need for coordination among sector ministries.
- ▶ The main objective of the legal framework is to increase revenue rather than promote sustainable practices, which could be improved.
- ▶ Legislation in the countries should address the issues of access to markets and improved resource management in order for farmers to grow and hence generate more revenue and enhance sustainability.
- ▶ There is a proliferation of national policies, and weak anchoring of national policies in the regional context. The policies implemented should align with regional priorities.
- ▶ Coordination of existing policies is weak. Policies need to be prioritized and amended accordingly.
- ▶ The policy development process needs to be more inclusive. Current processes suffer from a lack of farmer input and are based on weak diagnosis of the challenges faced by small-scale farmers.
- ▶ There is a need to collect and analyse statistical data to inform policies in the sector.

GROUP 3: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MODELS FOR ENTERPRISES IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

MODERATOR: MR. MICHEL TAKAM, ECOSYSTEM-BASED ADAPTATION FOR FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA ASSEMBLY, CAMEROON

Recommendations and findings

With respect to technical assistance models:

- ▶ There is a need to develop comprehensive technical assistance models that are environmentally friendly, economically viable and socially inclusive.
- ▶ The models developed should be easy to replicate and cost-effective and should facilitate the adoption of sustainable consumption and production practices.
- ▶ Training extension workers regularly to ensure that they can support farmers in implementing sustainable consumption and production practices would support the viability of sustainable consumption and production practices in the sector.
- ▶ There is a need to raise producer and consumer groups' awareness of sustainable agriculture practices.

- ▶ Capacity-building should be comprehensive and include the whole value chain, not just farmers.
- ▶ Technical assistance models should also:
 - Be socially inclusive (women, youth, disability);
 - Have clear links with other sectors, including health and energy.
- ▶ Input from policymakers and academia is crucial for the development of sustainable capacity development models (i.e., all-inclusive model with input from all stakeholders).
- ▶ The models should place special emphasis on access to finance, data management and access to data.
- ▶ Implementation in the sector should be in line with the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme commitment (10 per cent of the national budget to be allocated to the agriculture sector).

GROUP 4: SUSTAINABLE TRADE AND MARKETS

MODERATOR: MS. JAYNITA O-HURHANGEE, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE, MAURITIUS

Recommendations and findings

- ▶ Countries in the region should develop and promote a sustainable public procurement policy for green products by 2030.
- ▶ The implementation of sustainable public procurement policies should be tracked to ensure that government institutions actually purchase green agriculture products.
- ▶ There is a need for awareness at the producer and consumer level, for instance, through the use of radio messages, fact sheets and social media.
- ▶ Enhance the links between markets and producers of sustainable agricultural produce; traceability should be anchored in this process.
- ▶ Market penetration of green products can be enhanced through research and development (increase funding for research and development).
- ▶ Boost government support for outgrowers and micro- and small-scale farmers.
- ▶ Retrain extension officers on sustainable consumption and production practices and motivate producers to adopt those practices.
- ▶ Adopt a multi-sectoral approach, as agriculture cuts across many sectors, and look at both the supply and the demand side.



From left: Mr. Patrick Mwesigye, Mr. Alex Mutungi, Mr. Felix Okurut, Ms. Elizabeth Ntonyi and Mr. Shiferaw Negash.

Photo | SWITCH Africa Green

SESSION 7: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE UPTAKE OF SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PRACTICES IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

MODERATOR: MR. PATRICK MWESIGYE, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, RESOURCE EFFICIENCY, UNEP

The last session of the meeting was a panel discussion on the role of regional economic communities and partners in implementing recommendations to strengthen regional and national mechanisms for the uptake of sustainable consumption and production practices in the agriculture sector.

The main recommendations and findings from the plenary discussion included the following:

1. There is a need to consider urban agriculture, given the increasing urbanization in the countries of the region. Countries need to consider the value of the waste generated along the value chain, and to look at green markets and green production. There is a need to look at the health conditions related to the production of agricultural goods, including contamination from chemical use along the value chain.
2. Countries need to be objective and look not only at the current problem of food nutrition but also into the future, two or three decades ahead, to consider and incorporate the issue of climate change and the availability of energy, including renewable energy. The actions being taken now should be taken in the context of the energy demand of future generations.
3. Multi-sectoral policy approaches had been tested in some countries and found ineffective. Information should be directed to decision-makers and success stories from countries using multi-sectoral approaches should be shared to encourage cross-learning among policymakers. Doing so will ensure that they learn from successful countries and create sustainable agricultural systems (e.g., exchange visits for policymakers to successful countries using multi-sectoral approaches to sustainable agriculture).
4. Post-harvest handling of agricultural produce (packaging, transporting) affects health and incomes. It is important to come up with strategies to reduce the losses associated with post-harvest handling.
5. Data for policy-making are traditionally obtained from the World Bank and other organizations. There is a need to use information and communications technology to enable governments to collect data systematically so that data from the field can inform policymaking.
6. Technologies that exist in Africa needed to be patented. Relevant policies and protocols are needed, including with regard to facilitating intellectual property rights. There is a need to harmonize policies and protocols to facilitate regional technology transfer.
7. Implementation is the main issue. The policy formulation process lacks the involvement and participation of key stakeholders. Even if policy formulation were rigorous, the commitment to implementation after adoption is inadequate (government and other stakeholders). Partners should be requested to support policy implementation processes rather than stopping at the development stage. Governments should allocate resources for policy implementation, monitoring and reporting during policy development.
8. Programmes and projects are needed to translate policies into action on the ground. There is a need to reflect on modes of implementation, consider whether countries have the systems required for policy implementation, and build crucial local capacity. In the African context, capacity had to be focused at the national, regional and continental level. In addition, adaptation techniques to transfer technology at the community level is critical for implementation. Implementation modalities, including financial resources and an entry point at the local level, need to be identified at an early stage.
9. Market access for MSMEs is a challenge and sustainability research is required to support their access to markets locally, regionally and globally. MSMEs need training on adopting e-commerce platforms. The Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area needs to be understood by all players. Sustainable

agriculture practices need to be continually assessed and shared with other players to spur action and achieve impact at scale, with a focus on attitude and cultural change to influence actions on the ground.

10. Technical working groups need to follow up on implementation strategies to ensure implementation. The drivers of implementation in the strategy needed to be clearly identified and articulated. Trade, financing, feedback and learning mechanisms need to be put in place.
11. The African Guarantee Fund (AGF) works across 38 countries and supports access to finance for the agriculture sector. The financial needs of MSMEs need to be assessed and packaged accordingly to enable commercial banks to fund them. The need for intermediary organizations to support MSMEs in developing bankable business plans should not be underestimated, while seed funding for start-ups should also be addressed. The regional bodies under the umbrella of the African Union should look into feasible policies to support MSMEs in the agriculture sector, including mapping out strategic partners for policy implementation and the financial regulatory systems, frameworks and policies in the countries and regions needed to provide a thriving environment for financing MSMEs.

Conclusions and main recommendations for developing an enabling environment for sustainable agriculture in Africa

In summary:

- ▶ **Policy formulation and harmonization.** There is a need for policy formulation and harmonization related to, among other things, market access, property rights associated with transfer of technologies and products (e.g., seeds) and sustainable consumption and production across Africa and in the various countries.
- ▶ **Support for market access.** Sound research and data is needed on market access, the needs regarding sustainable agriculture practices, and the existing gaps and how to address them. In that regard, there is a need to support and train MSMEs in adopting e-commerce platforms and to enhance their knowledge on various opportunities, including those provided by the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area. The issue of support for intellectual property rights applications needs to be addressed.
- ▶ **Capacity-building for various stakeholders.** There is a need for capacity-building for farmers and extension officers on green products; for policymakers and other actors on the implementation of existing and new policies; and for financial institutions on how to provide green financing and improve their understanding of sustainable consumption and production practices.
- ▶ **Funding and financial access.** There is a need for implementation arrangements for policies and financial frameworks using the multi-sectoral approach and synchronizing implementation approaches across Africa, including technical assistance from development partners and funding institutions. There is also a need to support MSMEs in accessing financing and seed financing for start-ups should be provided.
- ▶ **Innovative solutions.** There is a need to develop innovative solutions that enable consideration of the impact of climate change on sustainable agriculture, including on permaculture, conservation and urban agriculture. There is a need to capture the coping mechanisms being adopted by farmers in the face of climate change, which can be scaled up and replicated in other countries.

EXHIBITION SEGMENT

Following the opening session, the sustainable agriculture exhibition was officially opened. The exhibition showcased green products, mainly from innovations, ranging from dairy products to dried fruits and vegetables, sustainable leather products, organic produce and other sustainable agriculture products.



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