



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Grassroots African Coalition Fights for Inclusive Food Policies, More Action



Africa Lead II

Group convening for national level Sensitization Workshop on Malabo Declaration, CAADP, Uganda Vision 2040, and related joint sector reviews. Kampala Uganda, August, 2015.

While millions of Africans go hungry every day, the continent has critical resources—including land, labor, and knowledge—to feed more people and employ more in agriculture. Since 2003, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), an initiative of the African Union that inspired Feed the Future's model of country-led efforts to promote food security and nutrition, has worked to influence policies and transform agriculture. But at a 2010 CAADP meeting, attendees acknowledged that too many local stakeholders continued to be uninvolved in the process.

In March 2015, culminating a years-long drive to organize itself, the CAADP Non-State Actors Coalition (CNC) was launched, filling a critical gap by formalizing a platform to unite farmers' groups, civil society organizations, and private sector actors. This coalition of non-government organizations and networks is growing, with more than 100 organizations from 45 nations identified so far. Together, they've begun speaking out in country capitals, regional economic headquarters, and beyond for policies and actions that favor local farmers, strengthen agricultural value chains, and create jobs.

"For five years, we struggled while operating as an ad hoc group with a few colleagues sacrificing their time," said Buba Khan of The Gambia, Interim Coordinator of the CNC and longtime agriculturalist with ActionAid. "It is a great achievement to grow from a loose group to one more structured and coordinated. We hope before the end of this year to have a full-fledged institution able to coordinate the affairs of non-state actors."

Already, the CNC is bringing a fresh, grassroots stance to policymaking tables. Together, coalition members have started advocating for policies that better enable local people and communities to increase their productivity and food security, and increase their income from agriculture. This includes advocating for investment, including from domestic resources, strategies that strengthen the roles of small-scale producers, training, and technology transfer. These actions enhance the sustainability of development outcomes and impacts.

For example, in July 2015, the CNC delivered a letter, signed by 20 members, to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. “Agriculture has the potential to create millions of jobs throughout the value chains, putting more money in the hands of the poorest and increasing standards of living,” the letter read in part. “Small-scale producers, mostly women, who depend on agriculture for primary subsistence, are driving that engine of agricultural productivity.” The letter called on assembled world leaders and development practitioners to recognize Africa’s development agenda. “It was worrying that agriculture was not even mentioned in the main document coming from the conference, and it was our role to bring that to the fore,” Kahn said.

In May 2014, one year before the official launch of the group, CNC’s founders presented [10 Joint Policy Recommendations](#) on behalf of more than 120 African civil society groups at the CAADP Ministerial meeting. These policy recommendations were subsequently reflected in the Malabo Declaration commitments, which were endorsed by more than 50 African Heads of State in June 2014. Recommendations included imperatives on the quality and transparency of agricultural spending, eliminating youth and gender gaps, increasing extension and advisory services, and strengthening land rights for small-scale producers.

Moving forward, CNC members will help assess how well the government, private sector, and others are implementing the commitments stipulated in the CAADP compacts and other agreements. This includes holding themselves accountable for delivering services and making progress against a shared development agenda.

The March 2015 CNC launch event spurred attendees to return to their countries and begin organizing colleagues and building awareness. Members have begun developing country-specific report cards, which will eventually enable the CNC secretariat to consolidate a continental report card and account for CNC actions and impact. These accountability efforts will ensure the CNC is prepared to contribute to broader accountability processes, including the CAADP Biennial Review that will take effect in January 2018.

In the months since the launch, African non-state actor (NSAs) civil society groups have convened workshops in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya to familiarize civil society organizations with CAADP and the Malabo Declaration, discuss the value these organizations can add to the agriculture sector, and initiate action plans for strengthening NSA engagement, including developing joint commitments that align to country investment plans and the Malabo Declaration targets.

To ensure its success, the CNC is focused on building its constituency, ensuring legitimate and accountable representation, attracting resources, training members, building awareness, and ensuring balanced advocacy. The U.S. Government’s Feed the Future initiative, through its [Africa Lead II](#) program, is providing direct assistance to the CNC to help strengthen its capacity to mobilize and support country-level NSA networks engaged in agriculture. This continent-wide capacity building program is working with diverse African non-state actors at the country, regional, and continental level to strengthen their capacity to engage in policy formulation and implementation processes.

CNC coalition members recognize that Africans will ultimately ensure that Africa be fed, while at the same time providing jobs to a growing population. This will come, in part, by connecting farmers to value chains that span rural and urban areas, creating income for farm families and related businesses, and generating jobs and other economic opportunity. As members of the CNC discover how best to help each other, they will be able to strengthen the coalition and make it a sustainable and influential voice in agriculture policymaking and accountability across the continent.