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PANEL

SUMMARY

Recipes for success: policy innovations to transform Africa's food systems and build resilience

Africa has made great strides in advancing towards the goals set under the Malabo Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, that progress is fragile and ensuring food security and improved nutrition is still a challenge. As it stands, Africa is not on track to achieve the major goal of Zero Hunger by 2030 (SDG 2). Demographic changes, rapid urbanization, weather extremes and economic shocks put great stress on African food systems to deliver sustainable and healthy diets for all. In addition, the Covid-19 global pandemic has threatened and dramatically exposed the fragility of the food and agriculture sectors in Africa through supply chain disruption, job losses, rising food prices and reduced dietary diversity. About one in five people faced hunger in Africa in 2020 – more than double the proportion of any other region, and an increase of three percentage points in one year.

Between 2017 and 2020, the Malabo Montpellier Panel analyzed the policy and institutional innovations across seven thematic areas: including nutrition, mechanization, irrigation, digital agriculture, the energy-agriculture nexus, livestock, and trade to identify what the most successful countries have done to achieve sustained progress.

As the world regroupes and reconsiders its post-COVID priorities, it is an opportune moment to pause and reflect. To contribute to that, the Malabo Montpellier Panel dedicates this report to summarizing the main findings from the seven reports into one piece. The monograph provides a very practical guide to support efforts by African countries seeking to accelerate progress towards ending hunger and transforming their food systems. It also coincides with the end of a “super-year” – having been host to the UN Food Systems Summit, UNFCCC COP26, and the end of the first ten-year implementation plan under the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, to mention a few.

The wealth of evidence gathered in this report provides some answers to what needs to be done to achieve a food system transformation in Africa that is sustainable, resilient, equitable, and in line with overall climate goals and ambitions: *What must Africa’s leaders prioritize to maintain or even accelerate the pace of economic recovery and agriculture growth achieved so far? How can they broaden the impact on poverty and food and nutrition security to include the marginalized and most vulnerable? How can a food systems transformation tackle the triple challenge of providing affordable and healthy diets, creating decent and profitable employment, and strengthening the resilience of farmers and other stakeholders to future socio-economic and climatic shocks? What are the policy and institutional opportunities to align decision making processes to tackle this triple challenge more effectively? What Malabo commitment areas have countries overall performed well on, and where are the gaps?*

Among those African countries that have made progress towards tackling the triple challenge of food systems, some common features of success emerge:

These “recipes for success” can serve as a resource for African policymakers, development partners and the private sector as they seek to deploy a food systems approach for creating optimal and coherent policies, which can deliver positive spillover effects and manage trade-offs. They can also support African policymakers to leverage existing structures and frameworks and ensure that policies keep up with the rapid structural changes taking place across food systems.

Hence, the report proposes evidence-based recommendations to inform and guide policy choices to accelerate progress toward the ambitious goals of the AU Agenda 2063, the Malabo Declaration and the global development agenda.

INTEGRATE food systems transformation into long-term national vision, growth and development agendas.

ELEVATE African science and technology priorities and create research capacity for home-grown solutions.

INNOVATE to create the policies and technical solutions that will support the transformation of food systems.

CO-ORDINATE action across government for increased policy cohesion, and more broadly across sectors for greater impact.

OPTIMIZE conditions for sustainable growth through smart regulations that amplify complementarities and create synergies across the food system.

STIMULATE holistic investment in infrastructure including addressing the constraints that might deter private sector investments.

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Recommended citation: Malabo Montpellier Panel (2021). Recipes for success: policy innovations to transform Africa's food systems and build resilience. Kigali, Rwanda

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