



CONCEPT NOTE

Cultivate-Africa Dialog on:

“Galvanizing Partnerships for Promoting Resilient Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa in the Shadow of the Covid-19 Pandemic”

Dialog #1: Eastern and Southern Africa

Virtual Conference on 17&18 November 2020

In Partnership with

Cultivate **Africa**

Renovating
Reliance in
Agriculture

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Background

On April 16, 2020 Ministers of Agriculture of the African Union Member States met virtually in the wake of the growing challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on health, food and nutrition security and broad socio-economic conditions in Africa. They noted that COVID-19 could negatively impact agricultural development, food supply and nutrition in the region. Needless to mention, agriculture is highly labor intensive in Africa; the restriction of people's movement may create a shortage of workers.

It was also noted that trade in agricultural commodities and services could be affected due to restriction of movement and movement of transportation. In particular, distribution, market access and trade in perishable horticulture products and meat and dairy products could also become a significant challenge.

In addition to local production and distribution issues, urban areas, landlocked countries, developing islands and countries that depend on food import become more vulnerable. International and regional trade logistics, coupled with global production shortage, could result in sharply reduced supply of commodities and rises in food price.



According to COVID-19 in Africa: Protecting Lives and Economies, a report published by United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in April 2020, the ripple effect will affect millions of smallholder farmers. A downward trend in demand pressure has already reduced prices for coffee, tea and cocoa. Small scale farmers are the backbones of coffee and tea production in major coffee producing countries, making the ripple effect significant on small scale farmers.

The horticulture and fresh cut flowers sector is severely hit by COVID-19, leading to losses in export revenues and layoffs. The crisis is also affecting the finance sector due to outstanding loans, advanced to companies operating in the horticulture sector.

It is in this regard that a well-structured dialog has been conceived in order to address the interconnected challenges with a view of providing effective solutions to the threats of COVID-19 pandemic on the Agriculture Industry in Africa. A cross-sectoral dialog will strengthen understanding and reinforce efforts for tackling immediate and long-term challenges facing agriculture and food systems in Africa, and in identifying sustainable development plans.

The Cultivate-Africa Dialog will feature eight main thematic areas: Government & Policy, Social Protection, Domestic Market, Intra-Africa Trade, Supply Chain, Technology & Innovation, Women & Agriculture, and Agribusiness & Finance.

The planned dialog will be the first in a series starting with the Eastern and Southern African regions. This will be followed by another one which will cover the West African, Central Africa and Northern Africa Regions if resources permit.



Objective

The main objective of the Cultivate-Africa Dialog is to unlock a concerted multi-stakeholder partnership toward a sustained and effective response leading to averting potential adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition and food systems (production, distribution, trading and market access of agricultural commodities and services). The enabling objectives of the dialog will be three folds:

1. To take stock and document lessons learnt from sharing of experiences and good practices among partners and stakeholders on effective approaches that helped governments overcome or control the challenges arising from major crises and epidemics;
2. To discuss and agree on common strategies and realistic instruments for bringing different partners and stakeholders together and for consolidating their efforts in support and complementing governments in the Eastern and Southern Africa regions so as to effectively address the potential effects of the pandemic; and
3. To enhance the visibility of the different stakeholders and effectiveness of the roles they play in complementing and assisting Member States governments to respond well in averting the potential effects of the pandemic.



Expected Value-Addition

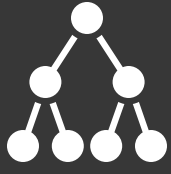
Cultivate-Africa Dialog is expected to add value by resulting in the following outcomes:

1. A set of innovative approaches for consolidating regional and in-country partnerships among stakeholders to play visible and effective roles in the fight against effects of the pandemic on agriculture and food systems in Africa.
2. A set of strategies established to be effective and successful which can be advocated to governments of Member States to prioritize in their contingency plans for responding to the pandemic.
3. An agreement on creation and operationalization of regional (REC-level) platforms for sharing action plans, reports, updates and relevant information on activities and developments across AU Member States, to provide continuous knowledge and experience sharing and garnering consensus on new solutions to emerging challenges.



Expected Opportunities

- Analysis of current strategies and systems and to what extent they have contributed in effectively addressing challenges of the Agriculture Industry
- Analysis of current and potential role of different stakeholders in response to the COVID-19 crisis
- Assessment of opportunities and challenges in achieving an effective response to the COVID-19 crisis
- Exchange of experience and lessons learned from effective response to COVID-19
- Opportunity for stakeholder engagement ---- governments, farmers, aid agencies, financial institutions, technology experts
- Opportunity to promote new regional partnerships and response effort



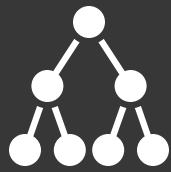
Structure of the Conference

The virtual conference will be a 2 half-day event on November 17 and 18, 2020 to be convened on the online platform AccelEvents®; a virtual event platform built for group discussion and one-to-one speed networking feature.

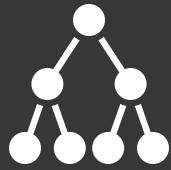
The Cultivate-Africa Dialog will take the format of three sessions, i.e.,

- a) an opening session;
- b) parallel/concurrent group discussion sessions or tracks (organized along eight thematic areas); and
- c) a general reporting plenary. Session (a) and (b) will take place on the first day and Session (c) will take place on the second day.

The Dialog will be structured along eight thematic areas as follows:



Track/ Thematic Area	Aim and Rationale	Convener (Chair)
Track #1: Government & Policy	Aims to discuss issues that affect the lives of farmers. Topics focus on policy, regional challenges and partnership opportunities. The session will address the difficulties of creating policies applicable for COVID-19, while balancing health risks and economic challenges.	Akademiya2063
Track #2: Social Protection	Highlights the response efforts made and the gaps. The session will address approaches being used to inclusive recovery.	FAO
Track #3: Domestic Market Track	Highlights the disruptions of COVID-19 in domestic market regionally. Discuss best practices and challenges in different countries.	Grow Africa (AUDA NEPAD)
Track #4: Intra-Africa Trade	Aims to discuss current challenges of trade customs due to lockdown and its effect on trading. The session will also discuss the future of Intra-Africa Trading for Agriculture.	AFDB
Track #5: Supply Chain	Aims to discuss how to safeguard input supply chains for small-scale agricultural producers in the context of COVID-19.	IFAD
Track #6: Technology & Innovation Track	Looks at today's most cutting- edge ideas to help the Agriculture Industry. Innovators and executives from a variety of industry will discuss the evolving landscape of technology-driven solutions and services in supply chain, finance, marketplace and response to pandemic.	tbc
Track #7 Women & Agriculture	Covers all aspects of women's challenge in the industry due to COVID-19 and discussion on filling the gap.	CGIAR & IFAD
Track #8: Agribusiness & Finance	Special focus on financial solutions for growers and for input manufacturers and ag retailers.	PACC & AFRACA



All sessions will be organized as panels/presentations, round tables, keynotes, A.I. enhanced one-to-one speed networking sessions, and independent group discussions. A broad range of stakeholders – from policymakers, African Union and United Nations Agencies, farmers and farmers associations, financial institutions, NGOs and the business sector- to incorporate diverse perspectives and facilitate an interactive dialog.



Participation in the Dialog

Participants in the dialog will be drawn from a cross-section of partners in agriculture, agribusiness (crop, animal and fisheries sub-sectors), agro-forestry, food security, nutrition and water and irrigation. Participants will be:

- Officials of Africa's continental bodies (AU Commission, Pan-African Parliament; AU Development Agency); Regional Economic Communities;
- Managerial level officials of relevant public sector organizations; Board Members, managers and executives of relevant private sector and civil society organizations;
- Officials of UN and other multi-lateral donor organizations and agencies
- Members of the academia and research organizations
- Practicing consultants