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IMPLEMENTING AFRICA'S COMMITMENTS ON FOOD SECURITY, AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

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Presenters

Abebe Haile Gabriel, African Union Commission

Jeff Hill, USAID

Moderator

Julie MacCartee, USAID

Presentation

Julie MacCartee: We'll go ahead and dive right into our introduction from Jeff Hill, who, again, is director for policy with the USAID Bureau for Food Security. So I'll hand the microphone over to Jeff.

Jeff Hill: Thank you, Julie. We're really very excited to be sponsoring this webinar with Dr. Gabriel as the primary speaker. This webinar is focused on broadening awareness of the implementation plans for the African Union Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation, for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods that African heads of state and government from across Africa committed to at the AU Summit in June 2014.

We're excited about this because of the strong shared goals and interests reflected in the AU Declaration and the US Feed the Future Initiative. These shared goals include concerns for extreme poverty, hunger, inclusive growth and improved livelihoods.

Feed the Future is working in 19 countries and 5 sub-regions around the world. The majority of them are in Africa. It is focused in countries and regions where the leaders of those countries and regions are delivering on their commitments and increasing investment in agriculture and food security.

As an FTF policy, for a country to be identified as a focus country, the country needed to have an externally reviewed national agriculture investment plan, and the plan submitted by our country teams were required to demonstrate how and where they were aligned with the national agriculture investment plan. The new AU Declaration creates a vision for African agriculture and food security for the period of 2015 to 2025, and significantly deepens the commitments that have been made by each of the African heads of state. This webinar provides us with the opportunity to better understand those commitments and the actions proposed to be taken by the African Union, regional economic communities, and countries to implement the declaration.

I'd like to introduce our primary speaker, Dr. Abebe Haile Gabriel. He's the director for the African Union Commission Department for Rural Economy and Agriculture. Dr. Abebe has played a lead role in facilitating the consultations and negotiations that led to the development of the declaration, as well as served as a primary architect in developing the strategy and roadmap for implementation of the declaration.

This webinar is very timely. It comes after significant consultations have been held with many stakeholders across Africa over the past six months, led by the AUC and NEPAD to help identify priority actions to facilitate implementation. Dr. Abebe, let me hand it over to you. We're delighted that you're able to join us from Addis, where you'll be making your presentation from.

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Julie, thank you, Jeff, for that introduction. It's a great pleasure for me to share the perspectives from the African Union Commission side, as well as from, indeed, the NEPAD planning and coordinating agency. The point, we are together in this. Both of us are, for those of you who might not know, both the African Union Commission, which is the secretariat of the African Union, and the NEPAD planning and coordinating agency, which is the technical arm of the Commission, we collaborate on this, among others.

I would like to also thank those of you who have joined us this afternoon – it is in the afternoon here in Addis – for this webinar. Talking about Africa's commitments on agriculture, food security, nutrition, as Jeff quite rightly alluded to, it's very important to understand what the commitments are in the first place, so that we can have clarity on what we are talking about.

It brings us back to 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture, where the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program, which is now commonly known as CAADP, was adopted. And the philosophy behind CAADP is the priorities that should be given to the agricultural sector in Africa, because of those direct impacts on the livelihood of the majority of the people in Africa, for the simple reason that they depend directly on agriculture, and also – so it's effect and impact on the performance of the overall economy in Africa, because of its heavy weight.

So CAADP was adopted as a framework, even though there are some confusions around whether CAADP has been a program or a framework. It's a framework. It's function is basically to guide the development and the view of policies, strategies, and actions by member states. What it brought to the fore principally are political commitment and leadership, as well as inclusive participation of all stakeholders, and ten years on in 2014, when the African Union Assembly declared the year 2014 as the Year of Agricultural and Food Security, also marking the tenth anniversary of CAADP.

We used the opportunity to look back and reflect on the progress made, as well as the lessons learned. This week, there was a very

important document that was launched by FAO, and it's called *Regional Overview of Food Insecurity*, and this is for Africa. And I just want to use some of the figures by way of looking at what progress have we been making over the last couple of decades.

The information that we have in this document shows that food availability has increased by about 12 percent over the last 2 decades. Of course, the data covers for Africa south of the Sahara, undernourishment declined from 60 percent to 20 percent over the last two decades. Poverty rate also declined by about 20 percent.

And the message, the key messages of why Africa has made such encouraging progress, is because of leadership. And I'm just reading – I'm making reference to this FAO document which was launched this Monday. It talks about leadership and political commitment, talks about stakeholder' participation, and it talks about involvement of the private sector. These are considered as drivers that have contributed to such a progress, but also as drivers that we should be focusing on in terms of looking forward.

Now the 2014 Malabo Commitment on Agriculture that Jeff has mentioned has two important components. The first, it talks about the goals, the commitment and specific goals to be achieved by the year 2025. You may consider this as the vision. The second, which is quite interrelated to this, is a commitment to mutual accountability.

Now when we look at the commitments and the goals to be achieved, we can summarize, and you can find this on our website, the Declaration, the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture, about five kind of substantive commitments.

One is on ending hunger. The second one is boosting inter-African trade in agriculture goods and services, and this is because the evidence indicates that Africa trades more with the rest of the world than within Africa, even though, again, evidences indicate that there is a lot of – there is a big and growing market for agricultural goods and services within Africa. So the target is to at least triple inter-Africa trade by 2025.

Third is to enhance the contribution of agriculture to economic growth, but more importantly, also, to a significant poverty reduction objective. And agriculture is expected to contribute to at least half of that contribution to poverty reduction. This varies from country to country. The poverty reduction targets are set by the countries themselves. But what Malabo says is whatever target

the countries are setting for themselves, agriculture should make a high contribution, at least half of that, to agricultural growth and transformation.

The fourth one is about enhancing resilience of production systems and livelihoods, and this is to respond and to address the high rate of vulnerability of livelihoods and production systems in Africa. As we know, agriculture is amongst the sectors who are climate sensitive, and the impact of climate change, in particular drought and flood, has been huge, and it continues to be so. And we want to address through building and enhancing resilience, so this is one goal.

And the fifth one talks about investment in finance, enhancing investment in finance in agriculture, both public and private. And one of the lessons that was learned over implementation of CAADP over the last ten years was that there has been a lot of emphasis on mobilizing public investment resources, which is quite right, and Malabo also makes reassertion and reaffirmation of the need for both public sector to continue to increase spending in agriculture, but Malabo brings this even – in terms of leveraging other sources, most importantly private sector finance in agriculture. So we can talk about these five goals to be achieved as commitments.

The second statement is about mutual accountability. This is very straightforward. The commitment is for African countries to conduct a biennial agriculture review process, to conduct this review process every other year, once in two years, starting from 2017, and the outcome of that to be reported in the January 2018 session of the African Union Assembly, to the heads of state and government. And that is going to be the inaugural report. And hence, the reports are going to be done every two years on a regular basis.

So it also makes a commitment to foster alignment, harmonization, and coordination among multi-sectorial efforts and multi-institutional platforms. And this arose out of the realization that agriculture cannot afford to be the agenda of ministers of agriculture only. The commitments or goals indicate that ministries of trade, infrastructure, energy, transport, even health, finance, and so on, are equally important, and the challenge is on how to bring these critical sectors around the table, for them to co-own and provide co-leadership to the transformation agenda.

Another aspect of the mutual accountability commitment is in

terms of strengthening national and regional institutional capacities, in particular on knowledge and data generation and management, because we are talking about enhancing planning and policy making, implementation, tracking, monitoring, and reporting. And the demand on data is huge. The capacity on the ground in Africa for this is limited. And unless we make a deliberate effort towards addressing this, the other objectives might not be met. So this is also an important component of the commitment on mutual accountability.

Following the adoption of Malabo Declaration, we went ahead, together with relevant stakeholders through a very consultative process to develop an implementation strategy roadmap, and subsequently, a program of work. The strategy roadmap basically identifies key strategic action areas, about 11 of them, grouped into 2 categories, and implementation modalities in the roadmap, whereas the program of work, based on this implementation strategy, outlines the specific activities proposed for implementation.

The strategy itself has two objectives. The first objective responds directly to the substantive aspect of transforming agriculture and ensuring inclusive growth. So this is the first objective. The second objective, on the other hand, talks about strengthening systemic capacity for transformation. So the first one we made for simplicity's sake, call it substantive. The second one, we might call it strengthening systemic capacity.

Now to make it easier for us to understand, the first objective deals with issues of, for example, doubling productivity and increase production in a sustainable manner. This is included in the declaration, enhancing value chains, markets, trade, as well as resilience, and strengthening of governance of natural resources.

The second objective, which focuses on strengthening systemic capacity for transformation, dwells much on areas of capacity strengthening for planning, policies and institutional reform, strengthening leadership coordination and partnerships, knowledge, skills, and agricultural education, which I talked about earlier on, as well as data and statistics, and institutionalizing mutual accountability, as well as enhancing investment financing.

We have proposed, and now it has been validated, an implementation modality. Having the implementation strategy and the program of work is one thing, but in view of the multitude of institutions and stakeholders that are involved, that should be

involved in implementation, a clarification of the implementation modality is very much important.

The first thing to clarify is that implementation is a national responsibility, first and foremost. So it's about national ownership and national leadership. As I said earlier on, implementation also is a multi-sectorial responsibility. Yes, it's the ministries of agriculture who are the holders of the portfolio, but other sectors are equally important. Within government, we are talking about infrastructure, trading, industry, health, education, and so on. But also beyond government, we have producers, the smallholder producers, the private sector, civil society, and so on.

And therefore, there is a strong need for strengthening multi-sectorial co-leadership engagement and coordination. As an implementation modality, also, we have to recognize that there are regional and continental institutions, including our own Africa Union Commission, NEPAD agency, as well as regional economic communities with mandates, and the role of these institutions is basically to provide catalytic support functions, and they facilitate linkages to continental and regional strategies and plans, thus contributing to the strengthening of the systemic capacities at national levels.

And we have an important stakeholder and partners group. These are development and technical partners that have important roles. And it is mainly to provide the strategic support to the implementation at different levels; more importantly, at national level, in an aligned and coordinated manner. And a system of regular review and tracking progress as part of mutual accountability helps us to tie these things together.

I have already talked about the relationship between the Malabo declaration, together with the CAADP present framework that guides the tracking of progress and the mutual accountability, as well as the implementation strategy and roadmap, and the program of work that arose out of it.

In terms of proposed activities, we can talk about four categories. The first one is the whole issue of policy development, formulation, and institutional reform. If we want to bring about those desired change, it will never happen without the right kinds of policies and institutions, and therefore, policy and institutional change and reform is absolutely necessary. This is number one.

The second is we have said already the focus is implementation,

and therefore, naturally, we should talk about investment program design and implementation. That's where the national agricultural investment plans come into picture, which Jeff was talking about earlier on.

The third aspect of it is the whole issue of capacity building and coordination. This is very, very crucial. And the fourth one, and this is linked to the mutual accountability, and it is about monitoring and evaluation, about data and knowledge management. So these are the proposed activities categorized into four.

In terms of early action, and I'm talking about 2015, 2015, priority action areas, we have identified a number of action areas, starting from engaging countries on appraisal of their NAIPs. Most of the countries have developed investment plans through the CAADP process, and now because of Malabo, things are going to change, and they should be building on what exists already in member states, and appraisal of those NAIPs is going to be undertaken.

The second is about the design of the biennial agricultural review cycle. I said the first review is going to take place in 2017, and we are only two years left, and therefore, we need to finalize this design as soon as possible. In fact, our plan is to finalize it before the end of this year.

The third aspect is the programmatic support for implementation. Once the NAIPs have been reviewed, we need to make sure that countries are provided with the necessary support to enhance implementation. And then one aspect which is crucial, and this is also one of the lessons that we have learned, we need to harmonize and develop communication strategy around the agenda.

I'm going into more details in terms of actions, proposed actions at country level. We want to clarify major streams of work and instruments that are in place at the country and regional levels. This will help us identify gaps, and then develop options to ensure that the necessary services and support systems are available for implementation.

We need to build technical networks. This thing will not work without putting in place capitalizing on existing networks which are already there, but we need to build that network around thematic topics which reflect the Malabo commitments and its implementation strategy.

We have been working with some of our partners with a view to identifying and agreeing on lead technical partners who have – and institutions with relevant mandates and institutions that have programs on the ground, and institutions that can confidently collate some of the aspects and coordinate at country and regional levels.

And of course we have now started working on the design and establishment of the framework for the biennial review. We are also – we have also started defining – in fact, we are finalizing the communication strategy. And lastly, we have started engaging our partners, including governments, to secure the financial commitments to support implementation at country level, as well as regional level.

In terms of detailed actions, there are several actions. I will just very quickly mention their titles. I understand that the soft copies and the hard copies will be made available to the participants, so it should be easy to follow.

In terms of detailed activities, we are talking about building and strengthening capacity.

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Okay. I was talking about detailed activities at the country level. I was outlining about three of them. I'll just rehash very quickly. The first one was building and strengthening capacity for evidence-based planning, implementation, review, and dialogue. The second, I talked about review and implementation of policies and institutional reforms to strengthen leadership, management, and technical capacity.

Thirdly, I spoke about strengthening local ownership and leadership to champion agriculture through CAADP and align coordination and implementation partnerships through strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination platforms. Fourthly, I spoke about enhancing skills and knowledge and agricultural education. And the fifth was on strengthening data and statistics for evidence-based planning, the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation and review process.

Sixth was establishing and institutionalizing mutual accountability mechanisms with regular peer reviews and strong dialogue platforms. Seven is to identify and enhance innovative financing models for increased public and private sector finance for investment in agriculture along the value chains.

Yeah, so these are some of the detailed actions that we need to launch in the countries. And talking of country ownership and country engagement, last week, we had held a retreat with permanent secretaries of agriculture of African Union member states, together with the CAADP focal persons, and the purpose was to consult and agree on the necessary steps to be taken to implement the commitments, the Malabo commitments.

The retreat appreciated and came to agreement – actually as, by way of adopting a communique, joint communique, on the broader areas of operationalization, as well as immediate steps to be undertaken. The proposed activities which I have earlier on outlined have been validated. Implementation arrangements and the review process have been agreed. Now each country will, as necessary and as relevant, depending on their situation, will embark on working on their respective NAIPs, investment plans, to respond to the commitments and to embark on the review process.

In October this year, we are going to convene a ministerial conference. It's called the African Union Specialized Technical Committee, STC, on Agriculture, Rural Developments, Water, and the Environment. So this brings together sector leaders, ministers from related – agriculturally related ministries. And it is a kind of organ – it's an organ of the African Union, so it's a policy organ of the Union.

One of the things which we will table for that meeting is the operationalization, the agreement that was reached by the permanent secretaries, as well as the review cycle, the instrument or methodology of the review, for adoption by the ministers. Of course, their report will be submitted to the January summit of the African Union for endorsement.

So in terms of country engagement, we are making some headway. We understand that we are late. Malabo was adopted last year, in June, in 2014, and we have been working on the strategy, partners, and so on. But last week's retreat with the permanent secretaries was the first direct interaction to undertake conversation with them on operationalization of Malabo commitments. And it was a very productive, very fruitful retreat.

Now I was also asked to talk about expectations from the donors, donor expectations. These are the country engagements. I've talked at length about the country ownership and country leadership of these commitments. That is very important. But equally important is the involvement and active participation of all

the stakeholders, including the donors.

The expectation from donors is straightforward. I'm not going to talk, we're not going to be very innovative in this regard. It's common things. The first is to align their support to the priorities as defined by the countries themselves. We have already said that countries, number one, should prioritize agriculture. Number two, prioritize the Malabo commitments, because they are going to be measured. The progress is going to be measured. And there is a positive feedback from the countries that this is going to be so.

So we would expect our partners, donors, to also support this process, not to replace it or to undermine it or to engage in a parallel process. So this is a very important, strong comment. I must use this opportunity to appreciate the efforts of the USAID. Jeff Hill has been very supportive of this approach, and already we have seen some progress in that. And we want to encourage.

The second one is we want – we also expect donors to coordinate among themselves, their efforts, for them to work together, and that would facilitate the country engagement itself. It would really ease the burden on the part of the countries to work with that kind of coordinated approach. And it would be good if some of our donors take lead in terms of motivating and encouraging other partners to come around the table to support this agenda.

The third perhaps is to agree to work within the framework of – and the parameters of mutual accountability. We have developed the CAADP Result Framework, and this framework was developed in continuous consultative process. Our partners have been part of this. And we expect now in terms of operationalization our partners to agree now to work within such a framework.

The fourth one is in terms of the efforts of our donors to work towards leveraging investment finance, both public and private. Already, there are some progress in this area, but we want to learn from those and expand it. Some of our donors have some experience on how this can be done. That platform, the donor platform, which I was talking about, which would facilitate coordination among themselves, can also be used for lesson learning amongst themselves on how the public and private finance, investment finance, can be leveraged, through the actions, deliberate actions by our partners.

Sorry. It seems I have taken more time than I was given. But I

would like to thank you. This ends my presentation. Julie, over to you.

Julie MacCartee: Thank you so much, Dr. Abebe. We really, really appreciate your presentation. That came through loud and clear for the most part. And we've gotten a lot of questions coming in, so we'll ask a couple shortly.

I would just like to make sure that everyone on the webinar knows that this event is being recorded, and so if you had to step away or you missed anything, we will send a recording out to everyone who joined today, or anyone who registered for the webinar, along with a transcript. That should make it easy for you to read through these points.

We're also working to get the PowerPoint presentation available for you also, so that you can review anything that you missed there as soon as possible.

Questions and Answers

Julie MacCartee: All right, well we've had a lot of great questions come in, and so we will go ahead and dive right in to a few questions for Abebe, beginning with a question from Samson Conlon from USAID Ghana who wanted to know what the linkages are between the biennial agriculture review and the JSRs. How will those relate, or change going forward?

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Do I respond to the questions one by one or do you want to collect my questions and tell me to respond together?

Julie MacCartee: I think we'll start off on one by one, if that's all right.

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Okay. Thank you. The relationship between JSR and the biennial review process. Well, the biennial review is going to build on the ongoing work on JSR. It's not going to replace it. If you may, the biennial review process, it has a very specific objective. It's not going to be a very complicated review, it's objective is to mobilize and sustain political leadership and commitment.

The JSRs have not been communicated formally to the African Union Assembly Affairs of State in the Government. So they are undertaken and then they have their own purposes. But the biennial review is a deliberate attempt to link tracking of progress in the implementation of specific commitments in this respect

Abebe Haile Gabriel: -- and report to the Assembly Affairs of State in Government who have adopted those declarations. So the biennial will build on and refine the JSRs. They are related but they are different.

Julie MacCartee: Great. Thank you for that response. We've also had a question from Nargeisa Ludgate, a PhD student with the INGENEAS Project who asked, "How is gender integrated into the CAADP framework? And what are the specific mechanisms to make governments commit to gender issues in agriculture?"

Abebe Haile Gabriel: I think it will be easier for me to talk about how the Malabo commitments capture gender considerations. In the run-up to Malabo as we were working in preparation for the formulation of the declaration there has been a number of consultations involving different stakeholders, and including women's groups. So issues like gender, like environment, like youths were deliberately concerned as crosscutting issues. That's why you don't see them amongst the specific commitments that I have outlined, which we'll find in the declaration.

These are crosscutting if you'd be able to find them everywhere. But if you open the declaration itself and each one of the provisions you will find – and this is also to be captured in the tracking of progress and reporting, how and in what ways can the gender differences be addressed, either so enhancing, for example in terms of ending hunger goal or boosting trade or resilience building or impact of the agricultural progress and transformation or poverty reduction, access to finance, access to productive resources, and so on.

So Malabo makes a very explicit treatment of why and how gender aspects should be addressed. So this is an integrated aspect of the whole declaration. And of course when you talk about operationalization of Malabo commitments we are talking about such kinds of differentiated responses.

Julie MacCartee: Thank you very much for that response. All right, we have another question from Jocelyn Sonkho from Soros Economic Development Fund in New York, in the United States. A similar question to that of expectations of donors by countries: "What are expectations of the private sector, relative to this framework, strategy or roadmap? Are there any different expectations for the private sector?"

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Expectation from the private sector? We have different kinds of private sectors in African agriculture. The first one is the very producers themselves, the smallholders themselves. These are the

majority of the producers in the private sector. The second is the domestic private sector, who are engaged in different kinds of agribusiness, agro industries. The third one is the foreign investors, and to use a simpler technology.

Now what we're trying to capitalize on in terms of operationalization of Malabo I believe that this is transformational and therefore the discussion should include transformation of the product, not just increased productivity and production. That's where along the value chain because that's where a lot of jobs can be created and a lot of incomes can be generated.

And these are some things which cannot happen just by the action of the public sector, or the smallholder farmers themselves. There is a lot of potential; there is a lot of market. It's going to grow actually over time for agribusiness and agro industries. The agro industries are the ones which are being given emphasis for development in the future.

So the expectation of the private sector is that private sector would engage in a productive – which is going to be rewarding, we believe – engagement by investing in the agricultural transformation agenda. But the role of the public sector is something which we emphasize to facilitate this to happen. For this to happen there is a lot of things to be done by the public sector in terms of improving the business climate and reducing the cost of doing business in Africa.

We have already started creating platforms for the private sector to interact with the public sector – the private sector from foreign sources as well as from the local to come together, work around common agenda and concrete work with each delivering on their respective expectations. This is what we have been trying to do. So for example the New Alliance, [*crosstalk*] – Jeff knows it very well. Also with Grow Africa Initiative. So bring together the private sector and the public sector so that investment in agriculture can increase for African agriculture to play its role of increased productivity as well as expansion of jobs and incomes to reduce poverty and bring about shared prosperity.

Julie MacCartee:

Great. Thank you so much, Abebe, for that very thorough response. I'm going to pass the microphone over to Jeff Hill for a question.

Jeff Hill:

Thank you. Dr. Abebe you made a very thorough presentation in terms of describing some of the architecture for supporting

implementation moving forward. And you've made actually I think, in a clear presentation, to say that moving forward the intent is to build upon the structures that have actually been created in the earlier generation of CAADP at the continental, regional and country level. But you've also actually presented that there are going to be changes in the architecture for supporting implementation.

The new commitments that have been made, you know, are really demanding engaging other technical audiences and support groups to advance the various issues. And you've laid out the intent as an early set of actions to support implementation, the intent to develop the technical networks around major thematic topics reflecting the commitments and the implementation strategy and roadmap plan. And so those technical networks will be an additional feature to support implementation in becoming very important, it appears, moving forward.

Can you clarify, in terms of the inclusion in those technical networks, will they be aimed at actually bringing together the different technical agencies that are currently working on the various issues, including the private sector, civil society – will they be giving voice to these various constituencies in helping to frame, you know, the support services moving forward?

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Thank you. Thank you, Jeff. Yes, you are quite right. One of the things which we want to capitalize on is on building on initiatives and capacities that already exist in the countries. We have already said that implementation is a country's responsibility as a country. After Malabo commitment itself is a commitment by member states, by the heads of state of member states. So it's a commitment and operationalization is going to be their responsibility.

What institutions such as continental institutions, regional institutions, technical institutions, do is to support that process. I think this is very important. So the question is how can we position ourselves to provide that technical support in a manner that facilitates – not duplicates but facilitates and builds on what has already proved to be promising experience.

So the technical networks. This is a lesson, for example, we have learned from the pillar lead institutions – you remember during the CAADP, the earlier use of CAADP because CAADP has four pillars. Some few institutions were designated as pillar lead institutions to provide the technical leadership but soon we came to

realize that these kind of things cannot be led by one or two pillars. The reality is much, much, much more complex. And we move towards – Jeff, as you know, what we call KIS: the Knowledge, Information, Skill approach, basically focusing on the capacities of countries, what capacities there are within the countries themselves, and build on those capacities.

So now these technical clusters, technical networks, one of the reasons why they're different is they directly respond to Malabo. Malabo has defined their areas of work. If it is ending hunger and malnutrition, so it's very clear. Resilience, it is very clear. Boosting trade – and so on.

But we realize that there is already a lot that is happening in different countries in Africa, there are different technical agencies that are already active in Africa. Our role should be how can we leverage such capacities through building and coordinating these networks. As far as the African Union Commission is concerned we are trying to position ourselves in terms of even reorganizing the department overall economy in agriculture around clusters so that we'll be able to build our capacity, to be able to lead and coordinate those technical networks. And the same thing is true for NEPAD.

So we are going to be following an approach which is inclusive – and in fact we have always been inclusive; CAADP has always been inclusive. The stakeholder, the private sector, the civil society organizations, the technical agencies, they will continue to be involved actively. And in fact as one of my presentation slides suggest we even seek a kind of co-leadership and co-coordination, taking note of recognizing the expertise that already exists in some of those technical agencies.

So yes, Jeff, I can assure you that is going to be very inclusive, but those networks are going to be started with perhaps those few who have already demonstrated some work and results on the ground.

Julie MacCartee:

Thank you very much for that response. We've had a lot more questions come in so we appreciate your attention and your willingness to respond to these questions. It's extremely helpful to our audience here today.

Amari Ayalu emphasized that unsafe foods can impede the lives of millions of people in Africa and national economies and stresses the need for access to safe food. He asks, "Dr. Abebe could you shed some light on AUC and member states' actual and potential

focus on addressing food safety challenges during the phase of implementation of Malabo declaration commitments?"

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Thank you for that question. Well, this particular question actually shows how Malabo actually speaks to the different aspects of the agricultural and trade aspects. Now food safety, when we talk about improved nutrition, which is a goal in Malabo we cannot achieve it without addressing the challenges of food safety. Also when you talk about boosting intra-Africa trade as a goal it's not to just increase the volume of trade of whatever food quality there might be; it's going to be based on standards, set of standards that are going to be regulated on food safety while working with different agencies, both within Africa and from without on strengthening the sanitary and phytosanitary aspects as well as food safety aspects of both the agriculture and trade and health aspects of this transformation agenda. So yes, when we go to the countries, as I spoke earlier on in our interaction with the permanent secretary and said this is going to continue.

As they review their national agriculture investment plans these are some of the things which should come out very clearly. It's not possible to enhance trade without addressing issues of food safety, even within Africa, let alone enhancing export, food exports. So yes, Malabo responds to this – we have, I'm very glad to say – that the partnership for aflatoxin control, that is hosted by the African Union Commission. In fact it is one of now the flagship programs of the African Union, is already here within my department.

We have a full-fledged institution based in Cameroon, Yaoundé, it's called Inter-African Phytosanitary Council, and deals with issues of phytosanitary. And we have also another big office in Nairobi, again in my department that deals with the animal health issues, and they are working, the country, on institutionalizing food safety mechanisms.

So we have taken a very bold and explicit stance on addressing this important challenge because it is as a center of the quality of food that we should eat, nutrition, as well as on the capacity of African countries to trade both amongst themselves as well as with the rest of the world.

Julie MacCartee: Excellent. Thank you very much. We had a question from Patricia Risoka Masa-Nganis from USAID Southern Africa: "Many countries are not able to invest enough resources into the agriculture sector to get the growth that can contribute to ending hunger and malnutrition. What is going to be done differently now

in terms of creating discipline and support to achieve the targets by 2025?

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Yeah, if we look at the data on public spending on agriculture over the last decade or so the public expenditure on agriculture has been increasing by about seven percent per annum. On the other hand, total expenditure, public expenditure, during the same period of time, has been increasing by about nine percent per annum, which means that even though there have been a positive trend in terms of growth of public spending on agriculture the pace at which it has been increasing was less than the total expenditure. So the observation is quite right.

Maputo declaration itself puts a minimum of ten percent of budget expenditure to be allocated to agriculture, and this was to be achieved by 2015. The data shows that less than ten countries have achieved this one. But we are very much encouraged to see that countries have been – even though they haven't reached this level many of them have been allocating and increasing a portion of their budget, even though it is at its lowest level.

That's why Malabo talks again about the relevance of enhancing both public and private investment in agriculture. And it again recalls this ten percent allocation, at least ten percent allocation to agriculture, makes every commitment towards it, but even goes beyond. It talks about the quality of the investment, however small it has been. Where does it go? And how do we ensure that this increased investment brings about the desired change.

This is a task which is actually a challenge for us, institutions like the African Union Commission and NEPAD to make sure that we follow up on this commitment. And one of the things to do this – and you have talked about how can we encourage countries, governments to do more in terms of allocating resources to agriculture, is to use this instrument of the biennial review process and reporting it. We are going to come up with a kind of scorecard where the performance of each country is going to be measured and reported and distributed and a presentation would be made in a meeting that heads of state and government attend in a summit.

And that, I can tell you, can be a very good booster because this is a kind of peer review, and the heads of state, they would like to be seen that they actually demonstrate what we have committed to. So we will provide data and good data, to measure the progress made in terms of allocation of public resources among other things. And we hope that that will – in fact, because of great

advocacy, a lot of advocacy over the last several years, since the adoption of CAADP in Maputo in 2003, we have seen an increase, as I said, in allocation of resources to agriculture.

So this thing is a continuous process; we have to do more. We understand the challenges but we still believe that the future is – and it should be better.

Julie MacCartee: Great. Thank you so much. We had a question from Dave Hanson from Ohio State University who stressed that capacity building in higher education for agriculture is critical for development of national agriculture in food sectors. So he is wondering what actions are the AUC and NEPAD taking to increase attention to higher education – is this part of your agenda?

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Actually yes, it is part of our agenda. When you get a copy of my presentation actually you will find the area of higher education institutions building the capacity of tertiary education and technical and vocational training and institutions is actually one of the components of the agenda. But it doesn't mean that we have not been doing anything on that. We have to look at another strategy as part of this, Malabo.

Malabo is just one focusing on what I have presented. We have a science, technology, and innovation strategy that was also adopted that focuses on agricultural education, including tertiary education, as well as research and innovation.

One of the pillars of CAADP, is called fourth pillar, is promotion of agricultural research, innovation and extension, and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, FARA, that's based in Accra, together with the sub-regional organizations, Asarika, Corop, have been pillar-leading institutions. And in fact a strategy for driving that process was developed and adopted before Malabo and that I called the science, technology and innovation, also together with NEPAD – NEPAD has also programs on this.

We have been working with institutions of higher learning in Africa. There are consortium of institutions of higher learning. There is a Rue forum, for example, we have signed memorandum of understanding on how we can work together on this. So yes, it is not only a part of the agenda but also it is as a center of it.

Julie MacCartee: Thank you. We have just a few more questions for you before we wrap up. The next question is from Courtney Buck on the BFS policy team at USAID. She has a question about inclusiveness:

"How are countries being encouraged to be more inclusive in their policy processes? Will the biennial review and the JSR incorporate indicators for representation and inclusion of non-state actors?"

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Yeah, thank you so much for that question. The inclusiveness of different stakeholders is not something that we are creating just because of Malabo. As I said, this is one of the good lessons that we have learned over implementation of CAADP over the last decade or so.

When we had worked with countries who have signed the compacts – more than 40 countries have signed their CAADP compact. And those compacts have been developed through a consultative process. So CAADP is also a set of principles, including the principle of inclusiveness. The countries have already gone through that. They have taken that as an important lesson. It's not only countries, meaning governments, but also the different stakeholders, the civic society organizations, the farmers' organizations, the private sectors players, they are also aware because they have been part of that at different levels – of course the quality and the level of engagement might vary, depending on specific situation of the countries and the capacities of those, the stakeholders, but they have already – they have developed a kind of minimum capacity to make that kind of demand and take that – they have expressed this in different for a.

So we will continue to work with member states as well as other stakeholders but this inclusiveness should continue because it is a CAADP principle. It's a central principle of the CAADP process to which the heads of state have, again through Malabo, recommitted themselves to. Yes, the indicators definitely should indicate, should have some kind of measure of the level and quality of inclusiveness of the review.

Julie MacCartee: All right. Thank you very much. Next we have a question from Kedar Menkad from the ONE campaign: "What steps does the African Union plan to take on strengthening land governance and security of land tenure rights? Will there be a commitment to implement the AU framework and guidelines on land in Africa as part of your efforts?"

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Well again, this is not something that we are going to start now. The framework and guidelines on land policy that was adopted through a declaration, by AU declaration in 2009, has been there. And the land policy initiative – this is a joint initiative of the

African Union Commission, the United Nation Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, has been trying to work with member states towards operationalization of that particular policy initiative, so that declaration.

So strengthening land governance: there was an important document that was launched last year as part of the 2014 year of agriculture and security and this is the set of principles and guidelines on strengthening land governance. In particular, on responsible investment on large-scale land-based investments because that has been an area of concern by many. We thought that we should be playing a constructive and important role in helping countries to engage in a kind of contracts with different kinds of private sector in a transparent and inclusive process, as that would result in a win-win situation for all, in particular towards addressing the challenges of the people on whose livelihood depends on those kinds of lands.

So we have a lot of roles to play. We have a strategy on how we should be taking that forward. There is a secretariat at the moment – it is housed within the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. It's called the land policy initiative secretariat. I would like to invite the participants to visit their website. Apparently I happen to be the chair of the sitting committee of the land policy initiative so I'm aware of what has been taking place since.

Julie MacCartee:

Wonderful. Thank you so much. Well, we want to be respectful for your time and we are so incredibly grateful for all of your responses to these questions. To our attendees I think that we will begin our wrap-up process now. We're sorry that we weren't able to get to every single question but we greatly appreciate your engagement and we're glad that we were able to get too many of them.

So Dr. Gabriel we wanted to give you a chance if there are any closing thoughts you would like to express to our audience, based on the questions you heard or just any final comments we'd love to hear what you have to say before we wrap up.

Abebe Haile Gabriel:

Thank you, Julie. Just one point which I think is also very important. When I look at some of the questions that were raised they are related to inclusiveness. And I think this is a key word. I know I have been speaking to people who are involved in supporting the implementation of strategies, policies, projects on the ground in different capacities. So I'm not surprised if this

question comes now and again, that of the inclusiveness. I also understand the concern.

What I would like to say is that the African Union Commission and NEPAD planning and committee agency – we are very much committed towards making sure that all the stakeholders are actually involved, not just participating but co-own the process. And we also expect them to be as inclusive as possible at their different levels. If it is at the country level now I can see a lot of participants are from USAID. USAID has been supporting member states in different areas. So when they engage the countries I would like to encourage them to also be as inclusive as possible.

I also would like to encourage them to engage the countries themselves – Jeff was very helpful actually when he, as part of his introduction, he has given us some reassurance that that is what is happening actually on the ground. But I would like to encourage USAID colleagues also to work with other partners along the same kind of approach because this inclusiveness, you know, the African Union, it is an inter-governmental agency but also it is union of the people, not just the governments. And we want to make sure that the voices of the people, the voice of the different stakeholders are not only heard but also acted upon. That's why we keep talking about and emphasizing on mutual accountability.

And we're very serious about it. This is what I would like to say and I would like to thank as our facilitator Julie, Jeff – thank you so much for inviting me to share my views with a number of participants. I'm so happy – I can see some of the feedback and I'm very happy to note I had made some clarity on the subject that I have been coordinating over the last few years. I hope this is not going to be the last time we should be talking too. I look forward to perhaps a presentation from one of the participants so I can also ask some of the questions. Thank you so much.

Jeff Hill:

Dr. Abebe thank you very much. You've given us a lot of your time here. It is an important juncture here, just as you're doing preparation for the financing for development meeting that will be taking place in Addis next week. So we know you're deeply engaged in those preparations and thank you very much for taking the time for sharing these insights and these plans with all of us. I think this is going to be very helpful to many of us in being able to frame some of our support and the next steps there.

So again, thank you very much and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Julie MacCartee: All right.

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Thank you so much, Jeff. Thank you.

Julie MacCartee: And I'd like to echo Jeff's thanks and just say have a wonderful evening. And to all of our participants who have joined --

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Thank you.

Julie MacCartee: -- thank you very much for your participation. Please fill out our exit polls, if you wouldn't mind, before you leave us today, and we will send you an email within about one week, letting you know when the recording and all of the other post-event resources are available.

So thank you very much; we're going to go ahead and sign off and we'll see you at future webinars.

Abebe Haile Gabriel: Thank you.

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