

Chapter 69

Prospects, Challenges, and Policy Directions for Food Security in India– Africa Agricultural Trade

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focusses on the agricultural and investment potential between Sub-Saharan Africa and India, in order to combat food insecurity. There is much scope for meaningful collaboration with governments and public-private partnerships, which could be instrumental in reducing hunger and poverty and managing the adverse effects of climate change. Increasing inclusivity, devising sustainable land-holding policies, incentivizing exporters, knowledge sharing in terms of technology and expertise will also boost employability, production and trade potential. Moreover, effective financial and technical cooperation between India and the African countries may be the key to achieving the desired synergies that will bring about positive changes towards ensuring food security.

INTRODUCTION

It is a well-documented fact that hunger is on the rise in large regions of the world. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has found that those facing chronic food deprivation has increased to nearly 821 million in 2017 from around 804 million in 2016, and is still rising. The proportion of malnourished population in the world was projected to have reached a worrisome 10.9% in 2017. The perpetual economic and climatic precariousness across the globe has ended up in grave challenges with respect to food security. Some of the worst affected parts of the world include regions of South America and Africa.

Africa is still affected by the highest prevalence of undernourishment (PoU). Approximately, 21% of the population in the continent have been victims of food insecurity. The condition is also worsening in South America with PoU rising from 4.7% in 2014 to 5.0% in 2017. Although the projected PoU for Asia has slowed down, it is unlikely that without extraordinary measures, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target of wiping out food insecurity in any form will be achieved by 2030, especially in Asia and Africa. Complex socio-economic situations that involve chronic malnourishment cannot be addressed by a single stakeholder alone. Since the underlying causes lay in a variety of economic sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, social security, international trade and markets, it will require very strong local, national, and global level actions such that policies and programs are beneficial for all.

Africa is the most food-insecure region of the world, constantly battling against acute and chronic hunger. Inadequate infrastructure, lack of investments, and extreme poverty have propagated the malnutrition issue to frightful levels. However, the dependency on agriculture still remains at the heart of the problem. While nearly two-thirds of Africa's population make a living through agriculture, the sector contributes less than one-third to the continent's GDP. Although its importance in the economy differs widely across African countries, agriculture remains a prominent sector for most of them. Additionally, a projected 38% of Africa's working youth are presently employed in agriculture (Bojang & Ndeso-Atanga, 2013; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2016).

The natural resources of Africa are greatly underutilized, although the continent produces a large variety of staple food crops and some traditional crops that are high in global demand (coffee, cocoa, tobacco, palm oil, sugar, etc.) (Achancho, 2013; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015). In spite of natural endowments, large parts of the continent face acute poverty and hence, hunger. While there are large tracts of agricultural land at their disposal, the levels of mechanization, rainwater harvesting, use of fertilizers, storage and distribution networks and such like facilities still remain the lowest in the world. Given the urgent need for cross border investments, collaborations, and cooperation, the African case needs no special argument in support of these. Also, it has been noted that India and Pakistan have the highest import duties for agricultural goods from most parts of Africa, barring sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). This has raised a lot of questions in terms of the level of cooperation that exists for potentially addressing food security (Stroh de Martinez, Feddersen, & Speicher, 2016; The World Bank, n.d.).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2 (SDG 2) focuses on the target to end hunger and achieve food security and improved nutrition by 2030. Given that the combined population of Africa and India constitute about one-third of that of the world's, it is obvious that this would comprise the most impactful zone for the SDG 2. Both, the country and the continent of Africa have experienced promising growth and have been attractive destinations for trade and investments. It is projected that Africa's GDP may touch \$2.6 trillion by 2020 (Leke & Barton, 2016; Campbell, 2019; Leke, Lund, Roxburgh, & van Wamelen, 2010; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2018b; United Na-

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