



**Promoting regional agricultural trade and value chains for
2025: Malabo speaks to Central Africa**

Regional Conference

***Malabo, Equatorial Guinea
16 to 18 November 2015***

Concept note



I. Background and key issues

In Central Africa, agriculture is key to economic development. In some countries of the sub-region, more than 60% of the population live in a rural environment, while 50% of the working population are involved in the agricultural sector. The process of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), launched during the Summit of the Heads of State and Government held in Maputo in 2003, was recently realigned during the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union held in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) in 2014. In particular, the Malabo Summit strengthened the prospect of transforming agriculture so as to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth in Africa during the period 2015–2025.

The agricultural policies of the Central African countries follow a number of different approaches, depending on their urbanisation levels and their strategies with regard to the exploitation of natural resources. One common characteristic to all of these countries is that the level of local production and processing of food products is insufficient to meet consumer demand. A substantial majority of the countries in the sub-region are largely dependent on imported food products, which impact enormously on the region's balance of payments.

Despite its geographical situation and the potential complementarity in the trading of food and agricultural products, Central Africa remains one of the least integrated regions of the continent in terms of intra-regional trade, the movement of people and how the physical infrastructure interconnects.

Although regional trade integration could lead to improvements in the availability of food products and reduce the dependence on extra-regional imports, the region is far from economically integrated, with very low regional trade figures (approximately 1.2% in 2010). The main trading partners of the region's countries are the EU (32% of the region's trade), the USA (23%) and, increasingly, the emerging economies (including China, 16%).

The main constraints holding back regional trade in agricultural and agro-food products are: a) the inadequacy of supply and surplus production; b) the limited marketing capacity, particularly with regard to transport infrastructures and the structured and regulated cross-border markets; and c) the continuing Tariff and Non-Tariff Trade Barriers (procedures) for agricultural products. The poor performance of currency hedging instruments when trading is carried out between currency areas, also constitutes a significant constraint.

At institutional level, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) are the two organisations responsible for regional economic integration. In substance, the efforts of both RECs (Regional Economic Communities) appear to be juxtaposed rather than combined.

CEMAC, which took the first step towards a Free Trade Area (FTA) by applying a General Preferential Tariff on trade in products of Community origin, has established a

functional Customs Union. However, one must note the absence of free practice combined with a Common External Tariff (CET) that has for several years seen a number of misalignments and distortions in exchange rates and tariff codes.

ECCAS, on the other hand, is aiming for the eventual creation of a regional Common Market over a period of twenty months through a gradual process of trade liberalisation. However, the Free Trade Area, although established in 2004, is not yet operational. Likewise, the ECCAS Preferential Tariff has not yet been incorporated into the tax systems of the Member States (with the exception of Gabon).

Taking stock of the state of progress of the implementation of the Common Market project in Central Africa, although efforts to establish a specific CEMAC-ECCAS CET are still in progress, it should be noted that there are still substantial constraints to regional trade.

In this context, and bearing in mind the very important role played by the agricultural sector in terms of jobs, revenue, and food and nutritional security, the question of intra-regional trade in agricultural and agro-food products and of the development of value chains is an important issue for the region, at the present time.

Indeed, the improved circulation of agricultural products and services should have an immediate positive impact, at the least, on the food security of local populations by enabling the products to move easily from areas with surplus production to areas with a deficit, and to better satisfy the demand of the rapidly expanding urban markets. It will only be possible to achieve resilience, mainly based on economic growth and food and nutritional security, with better structuring and liberalisation of intra-regional trade and the strengthening of strategic value chains, particularly those related to cereals, livestock meat, poultry, manioc, yam, plantain, etc.

Situated at the crossroads between ECOWAS, COMESA and SADC, Central Africa also has great potential for inter-regional trade, which is currently expanding. There are already substantial African investments, and these could increase in the coming years if the right conditions are created to encourage them.

As well as favourable agricultural and trade policies and a suitable regulatory framework, the countries of the sub-region must have the institutions and tools that enable them to provide a better structure for agricultural services and trade in agricultural and agro-food products, and to strengthen the inclusive value chains, essential for sustainable economic development. The region must also identify those regional value chains with the greatest structural potential for regional trade, so that it can support them at supranational level.

Supporting the structuring of both national and regional strategic value chains will then help to increase the value of products and producers' income by reducing costs throughout the chain and distributing margins more equitably between the different stakeholders. The information networks and the growing role of new information and communication technologies (ICT) should help to support the more marginalised actors and improve the dialogue between the different sectors.

II. Objectives and expected outcomes of the conference

This conference is a Central African initiative which, following on from the Malabo Declaration, endeavours to realise two of the seven commitments made by its Member States, specifically: commitment Number 2 on *strengthening the funding of investments in agriculture*, and commitment Number 5 on *stimulating intra-African trade in agricultural products and services*.

This is why the conference needs the support of the framework and priorities defined by the region in its PRIASAN and its regional Aid for Trade strategy. The unifying programmes for promoting value chains and developing intra-community trade remain at the heart of integration through trade and increased agricultural investment.

The aim of this conference is to provide a regional platform for dialogue and exchange for all of the public and private actors concerned:

- to review the challenges of transforming agriculture in order to exploit the opportunities related to regional trade in agricultural products and services;
- to produce a progress report on the development of the sub-region's agricultural value chains, with the emphasis on food crops (corn, rice, manioc, yams and plantains, fruits and vegetables) and animal products (livestock meat and poultry) from case studies and comparative analyses;
- to exchange opinions and debate on the policies, approaches, tools and mechanisms needed to: (i) develop regional trade in agricultural products; (ii) structure and strengthen the strategic value chains; and (iii) fund investment in the strategic value chains;
- to learn from the public-private partnerships (PPP) in order to help implement innovative and long-term solutions (e.g. the corridor approach).

Finally, the conference recommendations will have to be incorporated into the framework of the PRIASAN action plan, as will the arrangements for the governance system of the Regional Council for Agriculture, Food and Nutrition in Central Africa (CRAAN).

The conference will be structured with a view to producing a plan and schedule for the implementation of concrete activities and specific institutional responsibilities.

III. Topics to be addressed

Four topics will be addressed during the conference:

1. Progress report on regional agricultural trade and the performance of the strategic value chains: constraints and success factors
2. Regional regulatory and policy framework: moving towards greater coherence in trade and agricultural policies in Central Africa
3. The grain, livestock, fisheries, fruits & vegetables and roots & tubers sectors: what are the priority actions?

- a. Structuring agricultural trade: which tools and institutions?
 - b. Marketing Information Systems (MIS): how can we develop sustainable systems?
 - c. Warrantage, commodity management and agricultural commodity exchanges: challenges and opportunities for the region
4. Cross-cutting topics:
- a. Integrating women and youth in value chains
 - b. Funding the value chains: finding innovative approaches
 - c. The role of multi-stakeholders platforms: facilitating the emergence of sector associations (“inter-professions”)

IV. Participants

The conference will bring together a number of key actors involved in agricultural trade and the development of the region's priority sectors (in particular staple food). It will also involve representatives of the regional integration institutions, specialist regional agencies, producers' organisations, traders, processors, agro-food companies, chambers of agriculture, warehouse managers, bankers, insurers, etc.



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Draft programme



16th November 2015

Time	Subject	Speakers	Moderator
7.30-9.00	<i>Registration</i>		
9.00-10.00	Official opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECCAS • NEPAD • CTA • PROPAC • Equatorial Guinea (Prime Minister) 	Equatorial Guinea (EG) Representative.
10.00-10.30	<i>Coffee break</i> Press conference <i>(restricted)</i>		
10.30-11.30	State of regional agricultural trade and performance of strategic value chains	<p>Keynote speech#1: John Mususa Ulimwengu, Agriculture and Rural Advisor, Prime Minister's Office, IFPRI, DRC</p> <p>Panel#1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oumarou Balarabé, ECCAS, Gabon • Trade ministry, Equatorial Guinea • Gabonese Employers • UNCTAD 	Léon Mudubu, ECCAS
11.30-12.30		Discussions	
12.30-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>		
14.00-15.00	Policy and regulatory framework: towards greater coherence in trade and agricultural policies	<p>Keynote speech#2 : Serigne Diene, ECCAS/OIF</p> <p>Panel#2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augustin Wambo Yamdjeu NEPAD, South Africa • Adama Ekberg, UNECA, Ethiopia • Francesco Rampa, ECDPM, Netherlands • GICAM (private sector), Cameroon • Agri ministry, Equatorial Guinea 	Isolina Boto, CTA
15.00-16.00		Discussions	
16.00-16.30	<i>Coffee break</i>		

16.30-17.30	Business environment and agribusiness development in Central Africa	Keynote speech#3 : Philippe Francillon, UNIDO, DRC Panel#3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Ivanovic, IFC/World Bank, Senegal • Trade Expert (André Monkam), CEMAC • Private sector / Chamber of Commerce, Congo Brazzaville • DG Trade DRC • DG Trade Rwanda 	
17.30-18.30		Discussions	
19.00-21.00	Cocktail reception		

17th November 2015

Time	Subject	Speakers	Moderator
08.30-09.45	Cereal sector, livestock, fisheries, roots and tubers, fruits and vegetables: what priority actions?	Keynote speech#4: Dr Mpoko Bokanga, International Expert Panel#4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Nzola Mahungu (roots & tubers, cereals, fruits & vegetables), IITA • Dr. Toussaint Bengone Ndong, DG CEBHEVIRA • Dr Aliou, APSS • Jordao Kussonga, Focal point CAADP, Angola • Dr Sunday Odjo, IFPRI • Dr Emmanuel Sabuni Kasereka, COREP 	Vincent Fautrel, CTA
09.45-10.15		Discussions	
10.15-10.30	<i>Coffee break</i>		
10.30-11.20	Cereal sector, livestock, fisheries, roots & tubers, fruits & vegetables: what priority actions?	Panel#5 « multi-stakeholder platforms and sector associations » <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salomon Namkossere, Regional cassava platform • Guillaume Fongang Fouepe, University of Dschang, Cameroon • SNV, DRC • Jean-Pierre Imele, AAFEX, Cameroon • Pabele Kolyan, PROPAC, 	

		Chad	
11.20-12.20	Cereal sector, livestock, fisheries, roots and tubers, fruits & vegetables: what priority actions?	<p>Panel#6 cross-cutting « Integration of women and youth, ICT and Nutrition »</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tarikua Woldestadick, CTA • Marie-Joseph Medzeme Engama, Cassava women group, SOCOOPMAPA, Cameroon • Youth and ICT (name to be specified by CTA) • Florence Fonteh Anyangwe, Nutrition and value chains, University of Dschang, Cameroon 	
12.20-13.00		Discussions	
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>		
14.00-15.15	<p>Structured trade: what tools and institutions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Information Systems (MIS): How to develop sustainable systems? • Warehouse receipt systems, collateral management and commodity exchanges: challenges and opportunities for the region 	<p>Keynote speech#5: Lamon Rutten, Manager, CTA</p> <p>Panel# 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam Gross, Consultant CTA • Pierre Etoa, Coffee and Cocoa Board, Cameroon • BEAC or BDEAC • Bank or financial institution involved in collateral management • DG Trade, Burundi 	Augustin Wambo, NEPAD
15.15-16.00		Discussions	
16.00-16.30	<i>Coffee break</i>		
16.30-17.30	Financing trade infrastructure and strategic value chains and Public-Private-Partnerships	<p>Keynote speech#6: Dougou Keita, AfDB</p> <p>Panel#8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alain Houyoux, EU • ECCAS (Trade Expert or transport) • Hans Balyamuyura, Expert • AFREXIM Bank • ECOBANK • CCEI Equatorial Guinea • Rabobank • MC2 	
17.30-18.00		Discussions	

18th November 2015

Time	Subject	Speakers	Moderator
08.30-9.00	Experiences from export value chains: what lessons for regional value chains?	Allessandro Vitale, ITC, Switzerland	Léon Mudubu, ECCAS
9.00-9.30	Towards a roadmap for the development of intra-regional agricultural trade and value chains - Priorities for Central Africa	Augustin Wambo Yamdjeu, NEPAD, South Africa	Rapporteur : Adama Eckberg, UNECA
09.30-10.00		Discussions	
10.00-10.30	Coffee break		
10.30-12.30	Roadmap	Working Groups (x6) Rapporteurs (to designate)	
<i>12.30-14.00</i>	<i>Lunch</i>		
14.00-15.00	Roadmap	Presentation of group work reports (6x10')	
15.00-15.30		Discussions	
<i>15.30-16.00</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>		
16.00-17.30	Action Plan for Malabo (Reading and Adoption)		
17.30-18.00	Closing		