



COMMUNIQUE

Preamble

ActionAid Nigeria (AAN), Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), Oxfam, ONE Campaign and the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development of the ECOWAS Commission, organised a 2-day National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2024 Agriculture Budget held at Dover Hotel, Lagos, 24th –25th July 2023.

The National Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2024 Agriculture Budget is aimed at facilitating conversations amongst key stakeholders connecting the continental framework, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) targets and Government intentions within the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP) in Nigeria and strengthening citizens' participation towards making 2024 Agriculture budget responsive for food security and wealth creation.

It provided stakeholders the opportunity especially smallholder women farmers to participate in agriculture policy and budget formulation processes resulting to changes in priority budget line items that are pro-poor and even in the approach of government's implementation of programmes and projects.

A total number of 102 participants attended (51 physical while 46 participants actively participated in the event through Zoom in all 2 days). The participants included Senators, Office of the Auditor General of the Federation, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), State Ministries of Budget and Economic Planning, and State Ministries of Agriculture and representative of Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF). Also present were – members of Farmers' Organizations, representatives of Small-Scale Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria (SWOFON), and the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS). ONE Campaign, Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Solidaridad, FAO, ECOWAS Commission, CAADP Non-State Actors Coalition (CNC), National Agricultural Seed Council, Media, Academia, Research & members of the various Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) were also present.

COMMENDATIONS

- We commend the Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) for remaining committed to collaborating with Non-State Actors. Such collaboration improves the civic space, build synergy – allowing for new relationships, and practical, innovative, and sustainable solutions for the sector. This should be sustained for more inclusive and responsive agriculture policy and budget-making processes in Nigeria.

- We commend the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, ActionAid Nigeria),Oxfam, and ONE Campaign, the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development of the ECOWAS COMMISSION for their collaboration in organizing this meeting.
- We commend the Auditor General of the Federation and his Office, for their commitment and effort to ensure accountability, transparency, and openness in the Nigerian public finance systems. We commend his office for promoting improved budgeting practices for the agricultural sector and calling on the relevant ministries to show fiscal responsibility in the management of the agricultural budget.
- We commend distinguished Senator Dandutse Muntari and Senator Yahaya Abdullahi for their unending support and fully participating in this event. We appreciate the National Assembly for their continuous commitment to improving Agricultural budget legislation and increasing the allocation to the sector. We applaud their commitment & effort towards ensuring timely release for the agricultural sector and supporting the sector to pull in more private sector funding for agricultural sustainability– especially for the smallholder farmers.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

During the consultation, participants made the following observations as core issues to be addressed in the 2024 Agriculture budget and meeting the targets of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP):

1. Progress in the agricultural sector has been slowed as a result of climate change, insecurity in the country and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis; these have further exposed the vulnerability of our food system. ActionAid Nigeria had organised a press conference, media engagements and live media appearances between October and November 2022 to push for the Creation of a Separate Agriculture Emergency Fund outside the 2023 agriculture budget to avert the looming food crisis caused by several challenges to the sector including the devastating floods, hence the supplementary budget with allocation to the agriculture sector. Of the N19.2 billion (which was initially N69 billion) allocated to Agriculture in the 2022 Supplementary Budget of N819.5 billion, it is glaring that there were no releases to avert the looming food crisis as even the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has projected that about 25.3 million people in Nigeria would face acute food insecurity during the June to August 2023 lean season. A quarterly report released by the global organisation shows that the figure projected is higher than the 19.45 million forecasts in 2022.
2. For the 4th Biennial Review Process, ActionAid trained smallholder women farmers, Activista, Partners and other CSOs on the use of the Non-State Actors (NSAs) Value Addition Biennial Review Toolkit (VABKIT) and supported them to generate smallholder women farmers' state level data (related to the BR indicators) to feed into the Report of Nigeria for the 4th Biennial Review (BR) Exercise on the Implementation of Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).
3. The data collected through the VABKIT that reflected the realities of smallholder women farmers across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) shows that nationwide, smallholder women farmers currently have only:
 - (i) 26% access to processing facilities

- (ii) 18% access to storage facilities
 - (iii) 21% access to off takers/access to markets
 - (iv) 10% access to transportation for agricultural produce
 - (v) 39% access to post-harvest loss reduction training
 - (vi) On Extension Services, smallholder women farmers have access to only 49% farm demonstrations and 26% farmers field schools. 15% access to trainings on agricultural advisory services
 - (vii) On agricultural credit, they have access to less than 23% of existing formal credit facilities. 30% access to financial services
 - (viii) On Agricultural Insurance, smallholder women farmers have only 2% access.
 - (ix) On access to and control over land, about 60% of them have access to land, 30% have control, while only 10% are engaged in land governance discussions.
 - (x) While government is making effort to improve the space for more Public Private Partnerships arrangements in Nigeria's agriculture sector, smallholder women farmers' access to such schemes across the country remains below 31%.
4. Nigeria's food import bill is increasing and the highest imports of agricultural goods into the country was recorded in 2021 as products valued at N2.74tn were imported. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), over N1.9 trillion¹ worth of food imports business transactions were conducted in 2022. Meanwhile, our post-harvest losses is estimated at N3.5 trillion annually with each state and their LGAs, and FCT losing about N94.5 billion annually.
 5. The agricultural sector contributed less to GDP in Q1 2023 compared to the same period in 2022.² The sector showed a decline of 0.9% after years of positive growth. Unlike in the previous year where the sector was the largest contributor to Nigeria's GDP in 2nd quarter 2022 at 23.3%; beyond the contributions of Trade (16.8%), Telecommunication (15%), Manufacturing (8.7%) and the Oil and Gas sector (6.3%). The agricultural sector has the largest potential to lead millions of Nigerians out of poverty. Thus, the sector should be given utmost priority in national economic policies and national and subnational budgets taking into cognisance effective budgeting and timely releases.
 6. Regrettably, the late releases of fund to the sector continues to impede the capacity of Federal and State governments to drive socio-economic development including food and nutrition security within the policy thrust of the diversification of the economy towards agriculture. Stakeholders observed that the issue with budget disbursement is not only in the releases as stated above, but it must be timely to make the necessary impact in the lives of the beneficiaries who are mostly the smallholder farmers.
 7. While the implementation of the 2022 and 2023 budgets are ongoing concurrently, the utilization of capital projects in the agriculture sector in 2022 seems to have improved significantly; however, due to late budget releases, it can hardly be said that these allocations largely supported smallholder farmers, especially women who are still confronted with challenges of the very limited access to credits, farm insecurity in the form of banditry and herders-farmers clashes, natural disasters, late budget releases and crowd-outs by political farmers and contractors who are the budget first liners.

¹ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/07/10/nigerias-food-import-bill-hits-n7-8trn-in-6-years>

² <https://venturesafrica.com/takeaways-from-nigerias-q1-2023-gdp-report/>

8. Nigeria's agricultural sector is largely proliferated by hazardous agrochemicals and further compounded with its wrong application by farmers. Government budget spending through the FMARD and the CBN Farmer's Anchor Borrower programs favour inorganic pesticides over organic bio-agro inputs. These pesticides are often highly hazardous to humans particularly when wrongly applied, the environment, and biodiversity and cause a loss in foreign revenue resulting in food export rejection.
9. Nigeria loses about \$362.5m yearly in terms of foreign exchange to the ban on the exportation of beans in the last eight years, hence the importance of reducing the use of hazardous chemicals to help the country save money, export good and acceptable agricultural produce in the global market and promote sustainable agricultural practises.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We call on Federal and State Executives, National and State Houses of Assembly to Scale Up Public Investment in Agriculture, and ensure timely consideration, passage, and timely budget releases and utilization as a strategic approach to increase food production, reduce hunger and poverty and achieve the Maputo/Malabo Commitments.
2. Parliamentarians should ensure that their proposed zonal intervention (constituency) projects are agricultural and evidence-based to create meaningful impact in the communities.
3. The implementation of the National Agricultural Transformation and Innovation Policy- (NATIP) should be aligned to targets and indicators to the Biennial Review indicators to ensure Nigeria is on track in meeting the Malabo Commitments.
4. As approved by the 44th National Council on Agriculture and Rural Development (NCARD); the three tiers of government should commit 10% of their annual budget to the agriculture sector to meet the 10% Maputo/Malabo Declaration required to support at least 6% growth rate for the sector as postulated in the CAADP framework. There should be political will to allocate at least 10% of annual budgets and actuals of revenues to the agriculture sector with appropriate budget lines so that Nigeria will be on track in the next Biennial Reporting to the African Union Heads of States and Government in line with the Malabo Declaration and Commitments of 2014.
5. FMARD, State Ministries of Agriculture and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) should consistently create budget lines to ensure wider stakeholder consultations in the budget formulation, provide continued coordination and the implementation of the Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the Agriculture Budget annually at the Federal and State levels.
6. The 2024 and subsequent years agriculture budget should be gender sensitive and responsive by providing line items for the implementation of the National Gender Policy in Agriculture that addresses specific challenges that affect women farmers different from men as well as avoid lumping up budget for women farmers and other groups such as youths.

7. Federal and State governments should allocate more public investments in agriculture to address the strategic areas of investments that would increase the agricultural GDP to at least 6%. These strategic areas of investments include Extension Services, Access to Credit, Women in Agriculture, Youth in Agriculture, Appropriate Labour-Saving Technologies, Inputs, Post-Harvest Losses Reduction Supports (processing facilities, storage facilities, trainings, market access, etc.), Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA)/Agroecology, Research and Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, as well as Coordination.
8. The agriculture sector requires a special funding to enable FMARD achieve its mandate. The Federal Government should release a take-off grant for the implementation of the National Agricultural Development Fund.
9. FMARD has committed to strengthen access to credit for smallholder women farmers. State Ministries of Agriculture should create a yearly budget line to strengthen access to credit.
 - a. This funding should focus on getting consultants or consultancy firms to support women, youth and farmers living with disability cooperatives to be able to navigate the too cumbersome access to credit in Nigeria.
 - b. The team or consultancy firm will handhold the cooperatives to access existing CBN agricultural credit facilities through preparing their business proposals, interfacing, and negotiating with BOA, Bank of Industry, NIRSAL, commercial and microfinance banks. The team or consultancy firm will ensure that the cooperatives access such credit facilities and other services as extension, insurance, etc. and even market access and they are able to pay back at the end of each cycle, etc.
10. The proposed National Agricultural Growth Scheme and Agro Pocket (NAGSAP) should be well funded and executed to address the inputs gaps experienced by smallholder farmers, especially women.
11. FMARD and State Ministries of Agriculture should create a yearly budget line for Support for smallholder women farmers reflecting on what should be prioritized especially in the 2024 budget based on realities on ground.
12. National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM), established for the purpose of adaptive research leading to design and development of efficient and gender-friendly agricultural machines and technologies to reduce drudgery and improve the quality of agricultural production, should be adequately funded, and strengthened and facilitate linkages for commercialization of innovative technologies.
13. Small modular processing and storage facilities in communities based on different commodities should be promoted as an innovative approach to reduce post-harvest losses in the 2024 agriculture budget and subsequent years, as the larger Staple Crops Processing Zones (SCPZ) are most likely not to reach remote areas. Introduction of community grain bank is also another step to curb post-harvest losses.
14. Considering the agricultural risk; rising insecurity in farms; farm raiding, cattle rustling, and kidnapping, climate change and other natural disasters, farmers are not encouraged to continue farm practices without risk covers. Hence, both Federal and

state governments should promote early warning system and the enrolment of agricultural insurance policies for smallholder farmers, while challenging the poor security issues that threatens our farms.

15. Hybrid pasture project for livestock farmers should also be initiated as a way of mitigating the risk in rising insecurity as the quest for pasture is one of the major causes for farmers-herders conflict.
16. States should develop their own Agricultural Investment Plans. This will enable the efforts at the states and local government levels to be recognized in the overall determination of the country's commitment to the CAADP and enable accurate data for the Biennial Review (BR) Reporting.
17. FMARD should begin to develop pesticide policies and enforce the legislation that prohibited hazardous agrochemicals, and a significant shift made towards sustainable farm systems like agroecology. To achieve this, the government needs to develop a safe sustainable food strategy that reduces the use of highly toxic synthetic chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030; 25% by 2040, a maximum of 5% by 2050 and strong support to be given to farmers in their transition towards agroecology.
18. FMARD, CBN and NIRSAL need to educate all farmers groups, listed vendors, manufacturers, and importers of agrochemicals about the appropriate use and the negative impact of Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs) on Nigeria's public health, environment, and foreign revenue. FMARD, CBN (NIRSAL), Bank of Agriculture (BOA) and Bank of Industry (BOI) should mandate agrochemical dealers in their anchor-borrower programmes to remove all HHPs from their programmes and encourage them to supply more organic inputs such as biopesticides, organic fertilizers etc.
19. FMARD and State Ministries of Agriculture should increase budget allocation for organic inputs, bio-pesticides, and agroecology. To ensure the successful implementation of agroecological projects, the federal and states government need to be deliberate in collaboration with organisations and institutions that have proven record of successful agroecological farms across Nigeria.
20. There is need to strengthen the monitoring of implementation of Agricultural projects in the budget by all relevant stakeholders such as FMARD, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, State Ministries of Agriculture and Agriculture Committees in the NASS and State Assemblies, Farmers and CSOs using an adapted CAADP Results measurement framework and reports documented, shared, and reviewed to enhance lessons learning and improvement in budget implementation.
21. Strengthen Fisheries and aquaculture value chain through a structured innovative lending and regulatory model to reduce import in Fish and aquatic products.
22. Promote private investment in agriculture through incentives and policy reviews.

NEXT STEPS

- I. ActionAid Nigeria to transmit Communique to relevant MDAs and Institutions as well as all participants.

- II. State teams headed by Directors present at the meeting will lead advocacy at state-levels.

This communique is accompanied with the Shadow Budget (proposed 2024 budget) and advisory notes developed by stakeholders during the Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2024 Agriculture Budget.

Endorsed By

List of Organizations, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and Institutes that participated in the Stakeholders Consultative Meeting on the 2024 Agriculture Budget

1. Members of the National Assembly
2. Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Abuja
3. Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), Abuja
4. Office of the Auditor General for the Federation (OAuGF)
5. Nigeria Governors' Forum
6. Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Kogi State
7. Ministry of Agriculture & Animal Husbandry, Gombe State
8. Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Delta State
9. Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning, Delta State
10. Ministry of Agriculture, Kwara State
11. Ministry of Budget & Economic Planning, Kwara State
12. Ministry of Finance, Budget & Economic Planning, Kogi State
13. Ministry of Agriculture, Bauchi State
14. Ministry of Budget & Economic Planning, Bauchi State
15. Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget, Ondo State
16. Budget Planning and Development Partner Coordination Office, Gombe State
17. Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry, Ondo State
18. FCT Agriculture and Rural Development Secretariat (ARDS)
19. Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Ebonyi State
20. Ministry of Budget, Planning, Research and Monitoring, Ebonyi State
21. ECOWAS Commission
22. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
23. Oxfam
24. ActionAid Nigeria
25. ActionAid International
26. ONE Campaign
27. Solidaridad Nigeria
28. CAADP Non-State Actors Coalition (CNC)
29. Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS)
30. The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (The ICIR)
31. ATEKO Women and Girls Foundation
32. Youth and Women Health Empowerment Initiative (YAWHEP)
33. Hope Foundation for the Lonely
34. DANDALIN MATASA
35. PERISCOPE
36. Wildan Foundation
37. Women Empowerment Initiative (WEIN)
38. Fahimta Women and Youth Development Initiative (FAWOYDI)
39. Civil Society Legislation Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)
40. Keen and Care Initiative (KCI)
41. Small Scale Women Farmers Organisation in Nigeria (SWOFON)
42. Association of Small-Scale Agro Producers in Nigeria (ASSAPIN)
43. Smallholder Women Farmers Association of Nigeria (SHOWFAN)
44. Trade Network Initiative (TNI), Abuja
45. Environmental and Rural Mediation Center (ENVIRUMEDIC), Delta State
46. African Center for Environmental and Rural Development (ACERD)
47. Community Empowerment and Development Initiative (CEDI)
48. Neferok Development Initiative (NeDI)
49. Initiative for Grassroot Advancement in Nigeria (INGRA), Kogi State

50. Renaissance Care and Empowerment Foundation (RECEF)
51. Community Agricultural Initiative Programme
52. Centre for Community Empowerment and Poverty Eradication (CCEPE), Kwara State
53. Meadows Community Development Outreach (MCDO), Kwara State
54. Worthy Life Education & Health Foundation, Kwara State
55. Fresh & Young Brains Development Initiative (FBIN)
56. Participatory Development Alternatives (PDA), Ebonyi State
57. Loving Hands Initiatives, Ebonyi State
58. Initiative for Social Change in Africa (VOFCA), Ebonyi State
59. Community Activistas, Ebonyi State
60. Activista Nigeria
61. Development and Integrity Intervention Goal (DIG) Foundation, Ebonyi State
62. Community Heritage Watch
63. The Speaking Voice