

Consensus Emerges at 10th AAPC: Tanzania's Agricultural Sector Demands Special Policy Attention.

On the second day of the 10th Annual Agricultural Policy Conference (AAPC) in Dodoma on April 17, 2024, the public and private sectors unanimously called for a targeted policy focus on Tanzania's agricultural sector, which encompasses crops, livestock, and fisheries. Given its significant engagement of over 65% of the population, the industry is pivotal in driving national economic growth, ensuring food security, and enhancing livelihoods and business opportunities.

Tanzania's Ministers of State for Planning and Investment (Prof. Kitila Mkumbo, MP), Agriculture (Hon. Hussein Bashe, MP), and Livestock and Fisheries (Hon. Abdallah Ulega, MP) pledged their commitment to agricultural policy reforms, as they are essential for propelling the agricultural sector to new heights, aiming for a desired annual growth rate of 10 per cent. Among the most pressing needs these reforms aim to address is agrarian financing in the productive sector, starting at the farmer level. This reflects the ground reality of inadequate funding and a financial landscape that must align with agricultural operations' intricacies, from soil preparation and seed acquisition to farming practices, harvesting, warehousing, and market access to processing.

Hon. Ulega: Transforming Tanzania's Livestock and Blue Economy

Hon. Ulega, Minister of Livestock and Fisheries, lauded the remarkable strides in Tanzania's livestock and blue economy sectors over the past decade. He recognized the strong foundation laid through meticulous groundwork and commended the progress in advancing transformative reforms and sustainable development initiatives.

However, to further fortify the livestock industry's resilience and productivity and propel the blue economy towards new heights, Hon. Ulega underscored the imperative for additional reforms. These reforms are essential for harnessing the vast potential of Tanzania's aquatic resources to drive economic growth and enhance livelihoods.

In particular, he emphasized revising the outdated 2006 Livestock Policy. "The revision of the 2006 Livestock Policy is essential to ensure that our regulatory framework is responsive to the current environment and capable of supporting the growth and sustainability of the livestock sector," he said. This revision is vital to align with current realities and facilitate the formulation of robust legislation that effectively supports the development of both sectors.

Minister Ulega highlighted the Build Better Tomorrow (BBT) Life program as a groundbreaking initiative. The program aims to nurture young entrepreneurs in the livestock sector, specifically through livestock fattening, including chickens and goats). This fosters the development of sustainable, inclusive, and collaborative food systems. By offering tangible support and lucrative opportunities in Tanzania's livestock and fisheries sectors, the program aims to transform young participants from trainees into full-fledged entrepreneurs, significantly contributing to the nation's economic growth and sustainable development.

Hon Bashe: Targeted Policies in Agricultural Financing, Funding, and Insurance

Minister Bashe highlighted the urgent need for direct policies addressing financing, funding, and insurance in vital production sectors like agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. "In this era under President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, who forms the cornerstone of our reforms in these sectors, we must collaborate to seek specific policies that delineate how farmers or livestock keepers can access capital, interest rates, insurance, collateral, and loan duration," emphasized Minister Bashe. He stressed the importance of aligning these efforts with the substantial investment initiatives spearheaded by President Dr. Samia in these production sectors.

Minister Bashe emphasized the importance of crafting targeted policies to address farmers' and livestock keepers' financing, funding, and insurance needs. Collaboration is critical to identifying these needs and outlining how farmers can access capital, interest rates, insurance, collateral, and loan terms. Reflecting on President Hassan's leadership in agricultural reform, Minister Bashe underscored the need to align policy discussions with ongoing advancements in these crucial sectors, which contribute over 26% to Tanzania's economy and employ over 65% of its population. He thanked Prof. Mkumbo for pausing policy formulation until the National Development Vision is finalized. This ensures that unique policies benefiting production sectors (agriculture, livestock, fisheries) are aligned with Agenda 2030, Tanzania's strategic development agenda, which aims to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity.

Urges Bold Policy Reforms; Emphasizes Stakeholder Involvement in Shaping Tanzania's Future

Professor Kitila Mkumbo, the Minister of Planning and Investments, delivered a stirring call to action at the conference, urging attendees to embrace boldness in proposing policy reforms. He emphasized the critical importance of breaking free from self-censorship and encouraged participants to present innovative ideas that propel Tanzania into a brighter future. Prof Mkumbo underscored the government's unwavering openness to radical proposals that hold the potential to drive significant progress and advancement across all sectors of Tanzanian society. He reiterated the pressing need for innovative thinking and emphasized that the government eagerly awaits and stands ready to implement forward-thinking solutions. The Minister stressed that bold reforms are indispensable in tackling Tanzania's challenges and achieving sustainable development goals.

Moreover, the Minister emphasized the imperative for stakeholders to actively engage in shaping Tanzania's agricultural future by contributing to the inclusion of pivotal agricultural issues in The National Development Vision 2050. He stressed that the outcome of the document would shape policymaking decisions, underscoring the necessity for stakeholders' active involvement in moulding Tanzania's agricultural landscape. The Minister's remarks underscored stakeholders' crucial role in charting the course for Tanzania's agrarian development, highlighting the collaborative effort required among policymakers, experts, and stakeholders to generate and implement policies to drive Tanzania's socio-economic development agenda forward.

Enabling Environment for Private Sector-Led Growth in Tanzania's Food Systems

Day Two of the conference was marked by an intense exploration of strategies to foster private sector growth and sustainability in Tanzania. Themed around "Enabling Private Sector Policies," the day's discussions delved deep into regulatory frameworks and strategic imperatives poised to reshape the nation's economic landscape. Presentations dissected critical aspects such as food safety regulations, business environment analysis for specific subsectors, and policies fostering innovation and competitiveness. A dynamic panel discussion followed, featuring experts who deliberated on regulatory challenges and opportunities within Tanzania's private sector ecosystem.

Trade and market policies, discussions centred on optimizing trade facilitation and bolstering market access. Comparative studies, evaluations of existing systems, and aligning national strategies with regional frameworks took precedence. Panelists engaged in spirited discourse on harnessing foreign investment, enhancing trade facilitation, and capitalizing on emerging market opportunities within Tanzania's agribusiness landscape.

Environmental sustainability emerged as a key focus area, with discussions revolving around land leasing, farmland valuation, water resource management, and climate-smart farming technologies. Panels explored avenues for building resilience and sustainability in various sectors, emphasizing the need to leverage innovative technologies and best practices to mitigate environmental risks and enhance resource management.

There was also a spotlight on access to finance and support services, with presenters sharing strategies for youth financial inclusion, climate risk management through insurance products, leveraging technology for financial access, and policy developments in carbon regulations. Follow the SAGCOT Twitter account for more details about the presentations, actionable insights, and a renewed commitment to driving inclusive growth and resilience across various sectors of the economy. This underscores the imperative of collaborative efforts and strategic policymaking to realize Tanzania's economic potential.

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