The Role of Policy Research Think Tanks in Food Systems and AU Agenda 2063

Bridging Research, Policy, and Implementation for Sustainable Transformation

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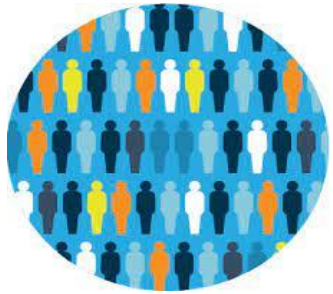
Presentation at the Official Launch of APRC

24 February 2025

Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

MEGA TRENDS



Rapid population growth

- Increasing land scarcity
- Need to intensify production on existing farmland

Urban population growth

- Conversion of agricultural land into real estate
- Increasing demand for food

Economic transformation:

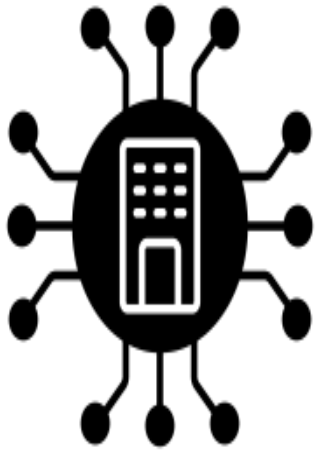
- Movement of labour from farm to non-farm sector
- Rising wages and per capita income
- Wealthy people demanding land and getting into farming
- Changing composition of diets and food demand

Climate change and variability

- Increasing risks to agricultural production
- Environmental degradation

Global & regional shocks

- Covid-19 pandemic
- Regional & global conflicts
- Economic disruptions



Rapid advancement in technological innovations

- Opportunities to enhance productivity, efficiency, and resilience
- Greater focus on adaptation of new tech to local conditions
- But Africa's Ag. R&D&E is severely underfunded

AU AGENDA 2063: THE AFRICA WE WANT

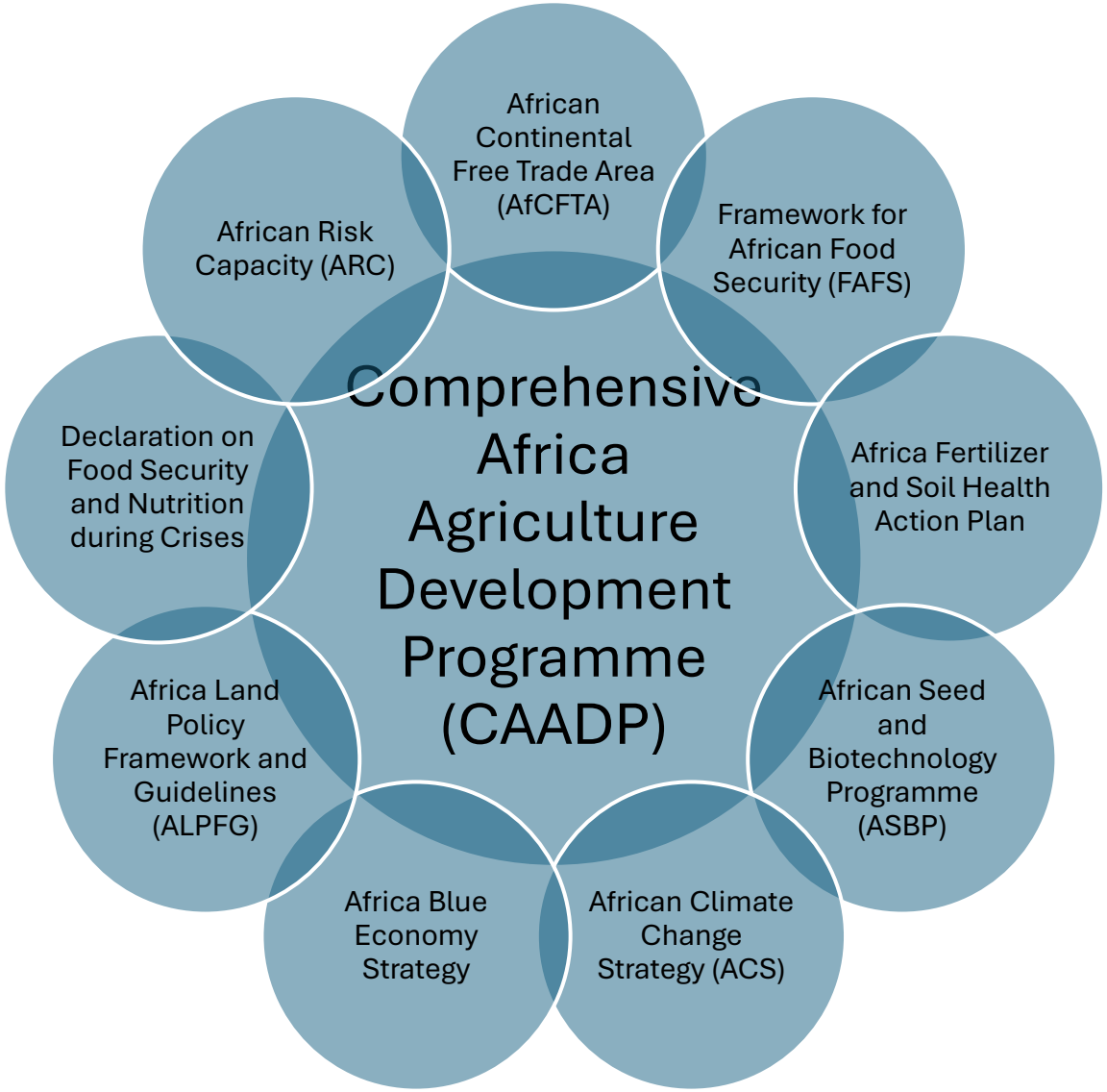
- Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse.
- It is grounded on the following aspirations:
    - A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.
    - An integrated continent politically united based on Pan-African ideals.
    - Good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law.
    - A peaceful and secure Africa.
    - Strong cultural identity, common heritage, and shared values.
    - People-driven development, leveraging the potential of women, youth, and children.
    - Africa as a strong, united, and influential global partner.

KEY CONTINENTAL FRAMEWORKS UNDER AGENDA 2063

African Union

ANAPRI

KEY AU FRAMEWORKS/PROGRAMMES/STRATEGIES SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY



Third National Development Plan 3 (NDP III)
National Agriculture Policy 2014
Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy 2003
National Social Protection Policy 2015
National Trade Policy 2007
National Standards and Quality Policy 2012
Nutrition Action Plan (UNAP II) 2020/2021–2024/2025
National Irrigation Policy 2017
National Climate Change Policy 2015
Vision 2040

UGANDA

SAD TRUTH!

The design and implementation of major continental agricultural development initiatives in Africa are largely financed by international organizations, often resulting in limited local ownership, leadership, and long-term sustainability.

“So we cannot in the third world simply borrow or buy science from those ahead of us. Pure science we can take as it comes, but much of applied science we have to make for ourselves.”

— Arthur Lewis, Nobel Banquet address, 1979

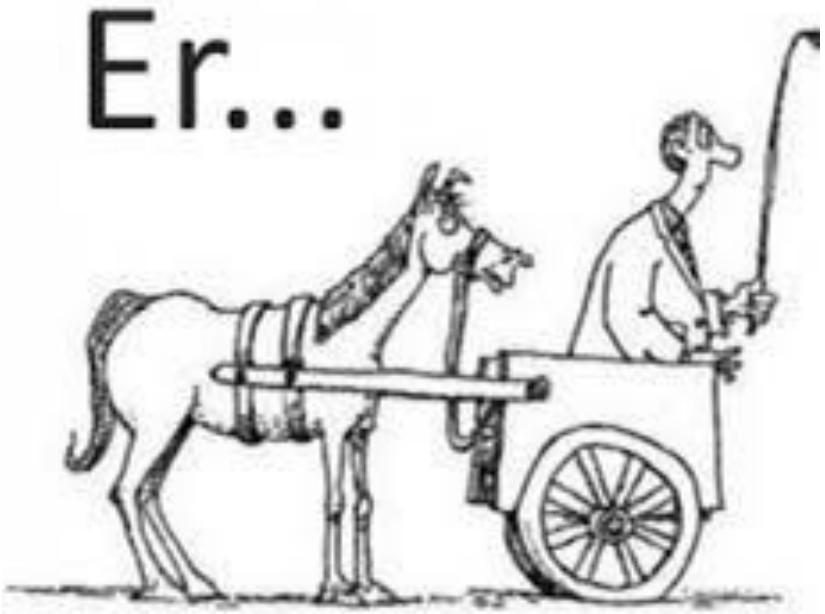
ROLE OF POLICY RESEARCH THINK TANK

Research and Analysis

- Conduct in-depth studies on food systems to identify gaps, opportunities, and policy interventions.
- Provide evidence-based policy recommendations to governments, AU bodies, and development partners.
- Contextualize continental and global food systems frameworks within local realities for domestication and effective implementation.
- Support the piloting and scaling of innovative solutions through collaboration with governments, private sector actors, and development agencies.

Capacity Building and training

- Strengthen the capacities of policymakers, farmers, and key stakeholders through training, workshops, and knowledge-sharing platforms.
- Support institutions in adopting best practices and emerging innovations for resilient food systems.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange between countries to enhance cross-learning and policy harmonization.



.....ROLE OF POLICY RESEARCH THINK TANK

Outreach and Communication

- Raise awareness about the significance of sustainable food systems in achieving AU Agenda 2063 goals.
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement and coordination to foster collaborative solutions.
- Provide platforms for knowledge exchange, public engagement, and the dissemination of research findings.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

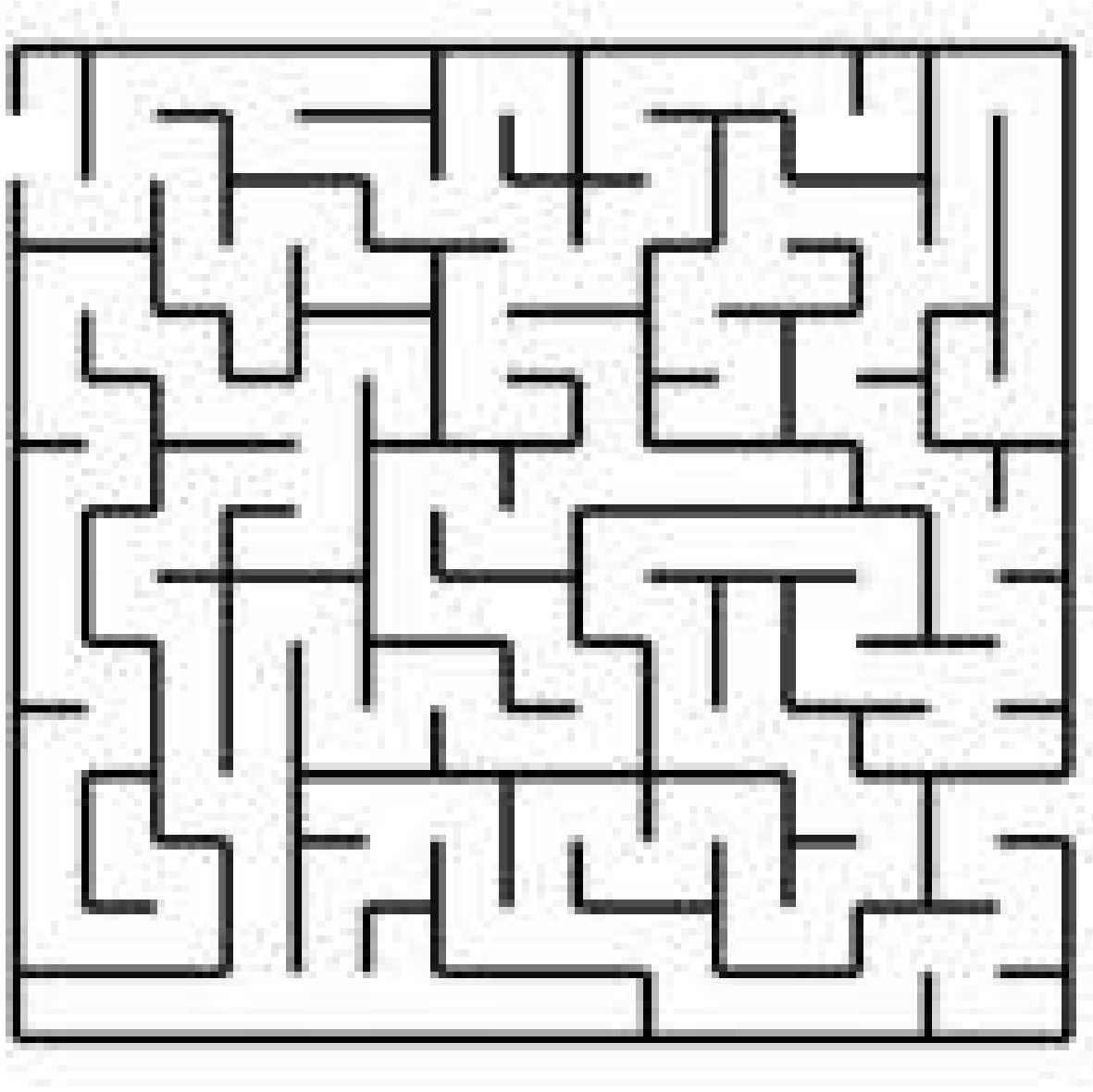
- Track and assess progress toward AU Agenda 2063 food security and agricultural transformation goals, providing data-driven insights for policy adjustments.
- Monitor national food security strategies and policies, providing data-driven insights for mid-course adjustments.
- Offer feedback mechanisms to improve policy implementation and measure the impact of interventions.

POLITICS VS. GROWTH

Agriculture is critical for

- Employment
- Economic development
- Food & nutrition security

Needs to be inclusive



Which way to go?

SOME HURDLES

see-saw/back-n-forth

Vested interest/rent seeking behavior of technical staff and some well-connected stakeholders

Politicization of issues resulting in polarization (e.g. maize, fertilizer, poverty or vulnerability statistics

Change in leadership or technical staff turnover

APRC