



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



Concept Note on High-Level Event:

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE RURAL TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA: Evidence in favour of improved coherence between social protection and rural development policy

Date: Thursday 18th November 2021
Time: 16:00-18:00 EAT

Venue: Virtual (<https://bit.ly/3zKlwww>)

Contact Person

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BACKGROUND

African countries are currently engaged in planning and implementing large-scale rural transformation agendas. While rural transformation has the potential to reduce poverty and inequality, this can only occur if programmes and policies are designed specifically to be inclusive of poor, and extreme poor households. These households face constraints in taking part in these processes due to liquidity constraints, lack of access to financial instruments (e.g. credit and insurance), low human capital and risk management capacities. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown many small farmers, the backbone of African agri-food systems, into poverty, disrupting their ability to engage fully in the local economies and food systems where these transformations are taking place. This has sparked a need for massive expansions of social protection to protect food security and livelihoods of this vulnerable group. As a result, governments are interested in integrated social protection programmes that aim to support a transition to more sustainable livelihoods as an integral part of COVID-19 recovery.

A robust body of evidence shows that social protection programmes can increase the economic activities of beneficiary households and have multiplier effects for local economies, empowering them to more fully and productively involved in processes of rural transformation¹. Findings show that beneficiaries of social assistance often are enabled to make choices to invest in and spend time on more productive activities, enhancing household and livelihood resilience. These impacts

¹See evidence from the [Transfer Project](#) and FAO's [From Protection to Production](#) project.

can be enhanced when social protection interventions are articulated with agricultural programmes that enable small-scale producers to gain access to markets, inputs and services. However, establishing such articulation is challenging and requires deliberate efforts at policy, institutional and implementation levels. The existing evidence points to the need for institutional designs and programmatic tools geared toward improving coherence between social protection and economic inclusion interventions in Africa, with the aim of placing social protection and agriculture at the heart of rural transformation strategies and of Covid-19 recovery plans.

EVIDENCE GENERATION ON SOCIAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURAL COHERENCE IN AFRICA

During 2019-2020, IFAD provided a sub-grant to FAO to carry out studies related to synergies between social protection and economic inclusion in selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa, as part of a comparative cross-regional project that included selected countries from the Latin American region. Accordingly, FAO carried out a set of impact evaluations and institutional assessments in four (4) African countries: Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mali and Zambia.

The findings

The key message across studies is that linkages between social protection programs and productive rural development can generate positive synergies that help achieve greater impacts on the wellbeing of poor and vulnerable rural households than would be possible to achieve with standalone, sectoral interventions. Complementarity between social protection and productive interventions can also contribute to increasing the resilience of households in the face of external shocks, such as the one we are currently facing because of COVID-19.

In Ethiopia, FAO evaluated the linked implementation of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and the Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services with Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT). The study showed positive impacts, especially in the livestock sector, where both the share of households owning some livestock and the average herd size increased substantially. There were also positive effects on other productive variables such as ownership of farm tools, crop production / diversification, and non-farm entrepreneurial activity.

In Lesotho, FAO analysed the complementarity between Child Grant Programme (CGP) and Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Government Service Support (SPRINGS). The study revealed that complementarity in implementation between the two programmes had positive impacts across four key dimensions: household income and resilience, financial education, income-generating skills, and nutrition. In addition, the combination of the two programmes stimulated local demand and production, which had an income multiplier effect in the local economy.

In Mali, the experience from the Mali Cash Plus Project, which sought to address recurrent drought in the Nioro Circle, demonstrated that the combination of a cash transfer and agricultural

productive inputs exerted stronger positive impacts on food security and household production than cash alone.

Finally, in Zambia the results from the analysis of the Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programme and the Conservation Agriculture Scale-Up (CASU) project highlighted the need for action to improve coherence not only between programs, but also within individual programs. Combining the HGSF with agricultural programs like CASU presents high potential for benefits, but programmes must be designed and implemented in a coordinated manner, paying particular attention to targeting and coverage aspects, as well as smallholder capacity building, in order to fully harness the potential of synergic effects.

HIGH-LEVEL EVENT FOR EVIDENCE BASED-POLICY MAKING IN AFRICA

In an effort to promote evidence-based policy making, FAO will organize a high-level event with policy makers, development partners, civil society stakeholders and academia to generate discussion on the implications of these findings for future policy and programming across the social protection and agricultural sectors, in particular as it may relate to agri-food systems. This event will capitalize on the current momentum and attention to social protection policy discussions as part of the response and recovery strategies for COVID-19 pandemic, with an aim of influencing future policies and programmes to be more integrated to improve resilience, inclusive rural transformation and achieve SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger) and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Objectives

To hold a high-level event to discuss how cross-sectoral, integrated strategies combining social protection and productive interventions can play a key role in supporting Africa's post-COVID-19 recovery process and spur inclusive rural transformation in the region.

Specific objectives are:

- Raise awareness among policy makers and key stakeholders, including regional bodies (AU, REC, etc.), farmers associations, civil society and academia of the potential benefits of leveraging coherent social protection and productive rural development interventions to build resilience and encourage inclusive agricultural transformation in Africa
- To identify ways in which synergies between social protection and productive rural development interventions can be enhanced in support of the transformation and modernization of agri-food systems in Africa
- To get inputs from civil society in the discussion on social protection needs of agri-food system actors, and understand the role they may play in increasing coherence

- To identify ways in which national social protection and agri-food policies and programmes can be designed or adapted to be more coherent and in order to support COVID-19 recovery and achievement of SDGs 1, 2 and 10

Timing: 18th November 2021

Format: The high-Level event will be held online. The event will be conducted in English with simultaneous translation in French available throughout the meeting.

Content: Session Outline (120 min)

Time	Session/Topic	Responsible Person
Session 1: Opening and setting the Scene (30')		
1600-1625	Welcome Remarks by Moderator (5') objectives of the workshop	Dr Hlamalani Ngwenya, Chief Director APSD; Western Cape Department of Agriculture, South Africa
	Statement by FAO /Short overview providing context for the studies (5')	HE. Prof. Abebe Haile-Gabriel, Food and Agriculture Organisation Assistant Director- General and Regional Representative for Africa – FAO
	Statement by IFAD/Short Overview and Context Setting (5')	Sana F. K. Jatta Regional Director of IFAD
	Welcoming Remarks (5')	Prof Adipala Ekwamu – Executive Secretary RUFORUM
	Official Opening address (10')	H.E. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, AUC
Session 2: The evidence and implications for policy makers (50')		
1625-1640	Brief overview of key findings across the four (4) studies (15')	Benjamin Davis, Director Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division , FAO
1640-1715	Panel Discussion – brief country statements interspersed with Q&A (35') Minister of Labor and Social affairs or his/her Representative, Ethiopia • Minister of of Agriculture or his Representative, Mali	Moderator Dr Hlami Ngwenya



Time	Session/Topic	Responsible Person
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minister of Social Development or his/her Representative, Lesotho Minister of Agriculture or his/her Representative, Zambia 	
Session 3: Reactions from key stakeholders (35')		
1715-1755	Key note Discussant (10')	Steven Devereux, Institute of Development Studies (Social protection expert)
	Moderated Open Discussion and implications for Policy makers (15') Voices from the Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Beneficiaries (TBD) Tavengwa Nhongo, Executive Director African Platform for Social Protection (APSP) SACAU EAFF ROPPA AKADEMIYA2063 Women's organization (TBD) Other civil society
	Development Partners- Perspectives (10')	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> African Development Bank European Union Commission Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
Session 4: Wrap up and Closing Remarks (5')		
1755-1800	Key messages & Closing	Dr. Alice Mutiti Mweetwa – Deputy Executive Secretary Program Development and Implementation RUFORUM