

CAADP: Revitalising Africa's agricultural sector

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) has become the key point of reference for agricultural policies in Africa. This article briefly elucidates the background to CAADP and discusses whether CAADP is capable of fulfilling the high expectations attached to it. The article also considers the factors on which this depends.

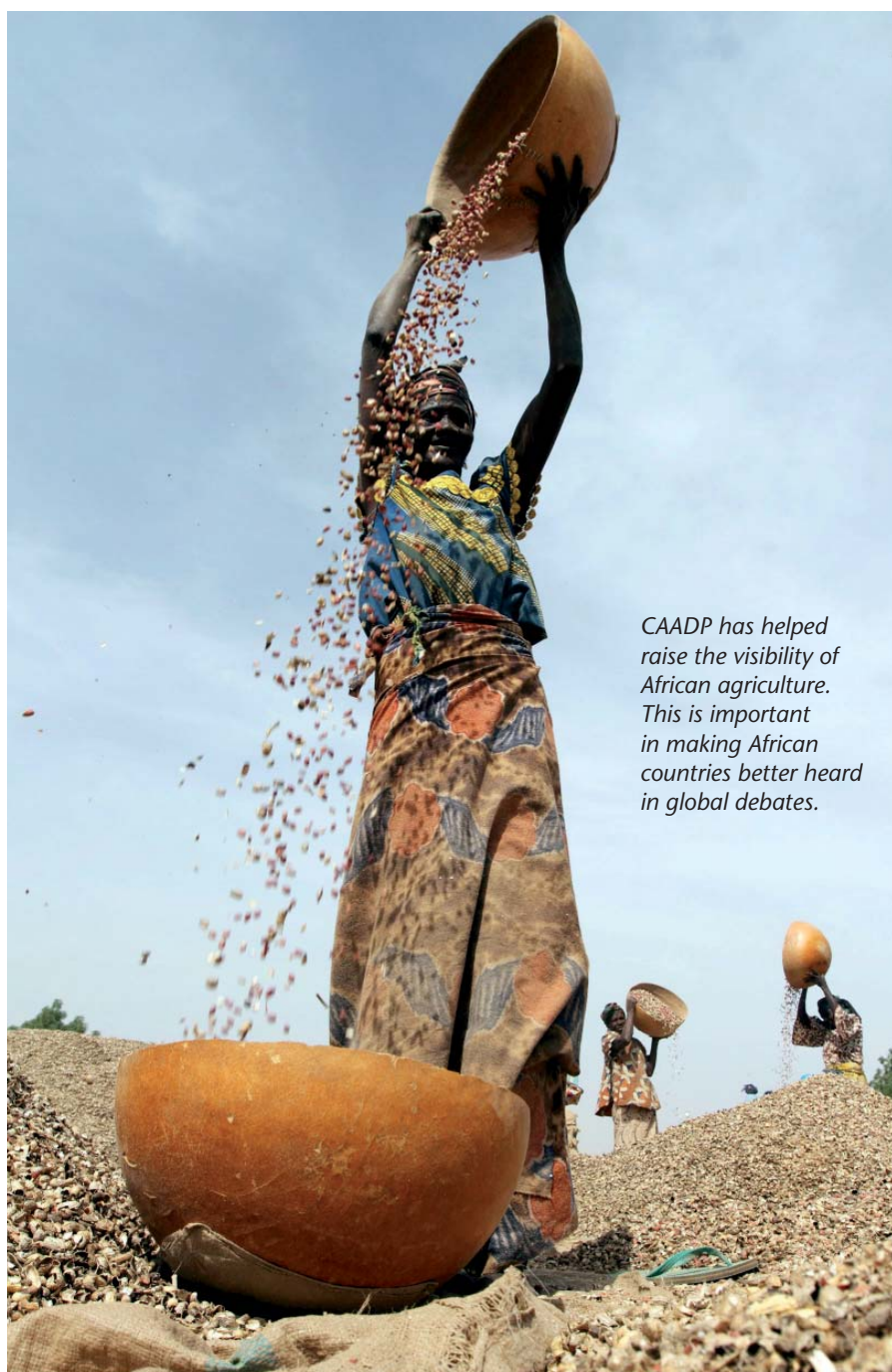
The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) represents Africa's attempt to revitalise agricultural policy on the continent in a process owned and driven by Africa itself. The aim is to make greater use of the potential of agriculture for furthering economic development and reducing poverty and hunger. The initiative has its roots in the founding of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2001. In the context of the newly founded African Union (AU), all member states committed themselves at Maputo/Mozambique in 2003 to achieving at least 6 percent growth in the agricultural sector and to allocating at least 10 percent of the national budget for this purpose. After several rounds of restructuring, the CAADP agenda builds on this commitment.

■ Great expectations

After what was initially a very sluggish start, CAADP has now become the key point of reference for African agricultural policy. Some 20 countries have signed a "compact". This is a key document in each CAADP process

Dr Michael Brüntrup

German Development Institute/
Deutsches Institut für
Entwicklungspolitik
Bonn, Germany
Michael.Bruentrup@die-gdi.de



CAADP has helped raise the visibility of African agriculture. This is important in making African countries better heard in global debates.

Photo: Reuters

which documents the voluntary commitment of all the main actor groups in the agricultural sector to work together in national programmes (see diagram). The idea is to structure CAADP activities according to four thematic pillars (see middle of the diagram) and several cross-cutting themes. The first few investment programmes based on the compacts are in the preparatory stage. CAADP is also involved in many other initiatives. As a result, the process benefits from the additional attention that has been lent to the agricultural sector by politicians and economists, particularly since the 2007/08 food crisis.

The CAADP is currently under enormous pressure to succeed. Given that virtually all agricultural and food security activities take place in some respect under the auspices of CAADP and most large regional, research, agricultural and aid organisations are seeking to coordinate their activities with CAADP, a huge need arises for coordination and quality assurance. For many donors, the implementation of a national CAADP process is increasingly becoming the crucial touchstone for closer involvement in a country's agricultural sector and for their support of that country's national strategies. In contrast to this, implementation procedures are still very rudimentary and capacity is lacking in all sorts of ways. The question arises whether CAADP will be able to fulfil people's expectations and which factors are the key ones that will decide the issue.

■ External profile is high ...

CAADP's achievements in terms of raising the international visibility of African agriculture and providing a point of reference for international debate are undisputed. This

role is increasingly important when it comes to taking up a position in the context of global partnerships which are increasingly being used as a super-structure for national activities. Some African countries have neither the capacity nor the reputation or persuasive power to gain a hearing in global debates.

Just a short time after being adopted, CAADP became part of the dialogue between the AU and the G8. Initially, CAADP benefited from the fact that NEPAD had been created and supported by the key leaders of Africa's most important countries, especially South Africa. However, once these individuals had left and the AU became stronger, the political legitimacy and representativeness of NEPAD weakened, particularly given that the AU established commissariats with similar profiles to those of NEPAD, including ones for the rural economy and agriculture. Thus while the AU increasingly adopted the role of a politically legitimised global dialogue partner, it could continue to refer to CAADP as the best

Africa-wide activity in terms of content and organisation and yet it had hardly any means of its own for getting things done in practice because it had no formal control of CAADP. At the same time, NEPAD/CAADP gradually lost one of the most important justifications for its existence.

This situation is likely to change with the reorganisation of NEPAD conducted in spring 2010. NEPAD became NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) and was integrated fully into the AU, in terms of both organisation and staffing.

■ ... internal impact remains to be seen

The impact of CAADP on regional and national agricultural policies is far more difficult to assess and is a source of some dispute. While there is clearly potential, the aspect of implementation is still weak and is dependent on a number of factors, some of which CAADP cannot influence.

Ideal-typical CAADP process at national level

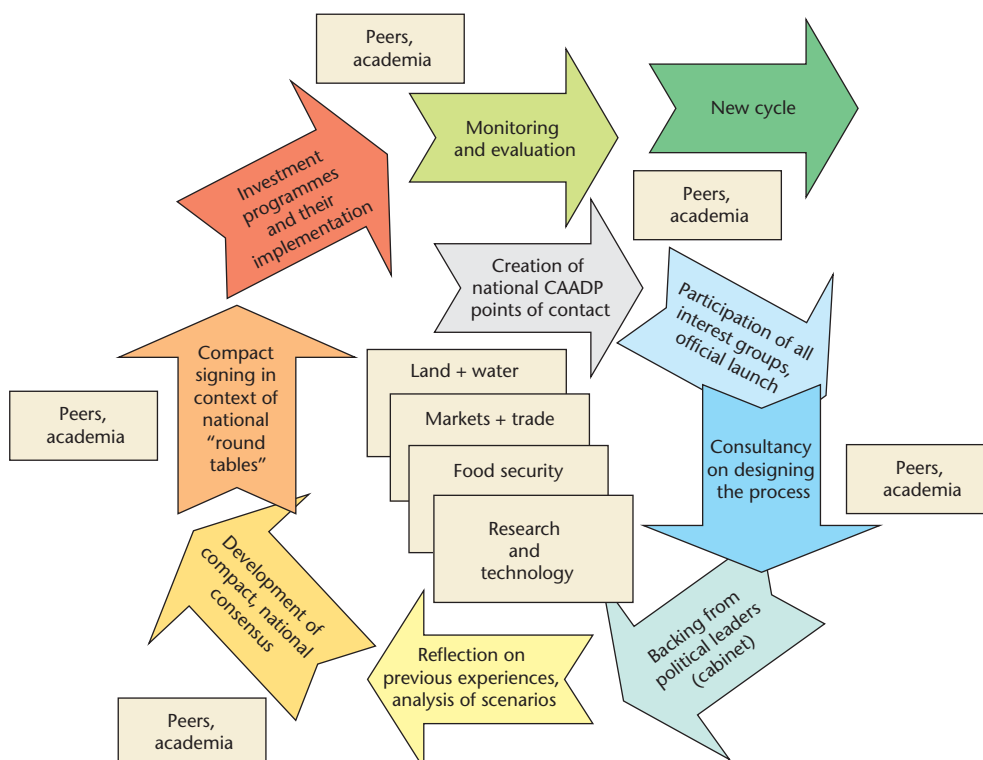




Photo: J. Boethling

For example, due to the many public references made to the commitments made in Maputo, it is obvious that CAADP has played a role in actually helping the agricultural budgets of many African countries to increase. This cannot be “proven”, however, because a whole range of other factors have also led to the rediscovery of African agriculture. So far, just eight countries have exceeded the 10 percent budget allocation for agriculture, while eighteen countries stood at below 5 percent between 2005 and 2009 (current data are not available for all countries). Agricultural sector growth in 2008 stood at more than 6 percent in only eight (of 30) countries, and between 3 and 6 percent in fourteen others.

It is also not clear whether a link exists between budget increases and growth rates, and it is fairly certain that CAADP cannot have contributed yet to

a qualitative improvement in current agricultural policies and investments: with the exception of Rwanda (2007) all the compacts were made after mid-2009. The CAADP guidelines have not all been adopted yet and the pan-African academic networks set up to provide consultancy for the countries are not yet operating. Peer monitoring and learning among African countries, as provided for in CAADP, has so far been put into practice to only a minimal extent.

In many cases, the main achievement of countries to date has been to rewrite existing national agricultural policies to accord with the spirit of the CAADP pillars and to have them re-approved in participatory yet minimal processes. Indeed, in some cases, efforts had to be made to ensure that CAADP did not become established in parallel to the existing national policy

National ministries must become aware that they can benefit from signing up to the CAADP agenda.

processes. At the same time, there are frequent reports of positive signals emerging from CAADP. What is striking is that it was only when certain donors – particularly the USA – announced that they were making CAADP a precondition for disbursing new monetary assistance that the processes gained massive fresh momentum.

CAADP is still far removed from fulfilling the expectation (actually embedded within it) of becoming the hub for all “green” policy areas, for agriculture-based industrial policy and for food security. To achieve this, many other ministries and policy communities would have to be coordinated under CAADP.

■ Outlook

Whether or not the central position taken up by CAADP in African agricultural policy will be maintained and expanded over the coming months and the next few years will depend above all on whether the organisational superstructure set up by CAADP has added value for agricultural policy and sectoral planning at national and regional level.

One of CAADP's greatest merits are the guidelines and minimum standards developed for the sector in relation to involving academia, the private sector and civil society as well as embedding national agricultural policies in regional contexts.

The degree of willingness on the part of national actors to unite under this umbrella and to negotiate policies will be crucial. Whether or not this occurs will depend above all on the **usefulness of CAADP for three groups of actors**. The ministries involved (and the national interest groups) need to become more aware than they have been to date that they can benefit from signing up to the CAADP agenda – in terms of both the proportion of the national budget available to them and the flow of donor moneys. The actors at national and international level responsible for budgetary decisions (finance ministers and state leaders along with

donors and banks) need to be persuaded that CAADP serves to improve the quality of agricultural policy planning and its implementation (sectoral policies, investment plans, governance, framework conditions for the agricultural sector, etc.) as well as the efficient and effective use of funds.

For many of these non-agricultural actors, the possibility of winning people's votes, gaining approval from elites, and securing greater political stability and international visibility offers a significant dividend over and above that of achieving specific development goals. National agricultural policy actors will decide in the light of these criteria (quantity, quality, visibility) whether they wish to support CAADP, or rather, whether they are inclined to have their previous negotiating positions and strategies modified by CAADP.

CAADP needs to ensure that the interests of the most important groups of actors are taken fully into account. This means continuing with the **strategy of international visibility in cooperation with the AU**, in which some actors such as the Pan-African Parliament and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) could be more closely integrated. It also means that CAADP should not intervene more than is necessary in existing processes or stir up different interests, especially

if there are no major funds available for alternatives. What CAADP certainly should do is **respect national policy processes and cycles** and provide support for them. Above all, though, it means making tangible and visible improvements to (or ensuring the quality of) agricultural policies which then lead to an increase in the flow of financial resources.

To do this, special emphasis needs to be placed on **monitoring and evaluation** (conducted by independent commissions or by peer review) of the programmes adopted. As a mediator between levels and actors, CAADP also needs to pay particular attention to issues of **transparency and communication**.

In straddling various different interest groups, donors need to proceed very carefully in order not to destroy CAADP's incipient ownership by large parts of African agricultural policy communities. Advances of goodwill in the form of, say, freely available funds or sectoral budget assistance may be appropriate, and diverse regulatory and strategic approaches should be accepted. Mistakes, too, need to be tolerated – after all, donors are certainly not free of committing errors in their past and present agricultural policies. Nonetheless these freedoms need to be accompanied by results-oriented monitoring and calculable sanctions.

Zusammenfassung

CAADP ist ein ambitionierter Plan der afrikanischen Staatengemeinschaft, die Agrarpolitik auf dem Kontinent zu reaktivieren und die Landwirtschaft zu einem zentralen Instrument für Wirtschaftswachstum sowie für die Armuts- und Hungerbekämpfung zu machen. Unumstrittener Erfolg von CAADP ist die internationale Sichtbarkeit der afrikanischen Landwirtschaft. Die Wirkungen auf die nationalen und regionalen Agrarpolitiken sind allerdings noch nicht eindeutig zu beurteilen. Positiv ist, dass CAADP zu allgemein anerkannten Prinzipien und Regeln für agrarpolitische Prozesse beigetragen und die regionalen Bezüge nationaler

Agrarpolitik institutionell verankert hat. Bei der Implementierung dieser Prinzipien muss CAADP seinen Mehrwert noch beweisen. Hierfür müssen vor allem Transparenz, Kommunikation und Qualitätssicherung vorangetrieben werden.

Resumen

El Programa General para el Desarrollo de la Agricultura en África (CAADP por sus siglas en inglés) es un ambicioso plan de la comunidad de estados africanos para reactivar la política agraria en el continente y convertir a la agricultura en un instrumento central para el crecimiento económico y la lucha contra la pobreza y el hambre. Un éxito indiscutible del

CAADP es la visibilidad que ha adquirido la agricultura africana a nivel internacional. Sin embargo, aún no es posible evaluar de manera inequívoca los efectos sobre las políticas agrarias nacionales y regionales. Un resultado positivo es la contribución del CAADP a los principios y las normas de reconocimiento general para los procesos de política agraria. Asimismo, ha logrado institucionalizar los vínculos regionales de las políticas agrarias nacionales. Sin embargo, el CAADP todavía debe probar su valor agregado para la implementación de estos principios. Para ello es primordial impulsar sobre todo la transparencia, la comunicación y el aseguramiento de la calidad.