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The CAADP Years: *Agricultural and Economic Performance among African Countries since 2000*

By Ousmane Badiane, Wondwosen Tefera, and Julia Collins

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^{*}Executive Chairperson, AKADEMIYA2063

^{**}Senior Associate Scientist, AKADEMIYA2063

^{***}Senior Associate Scientist, AKADEMIYA2063

Editorial

Since its adoption by the African Union (AU) in 2003, the [Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme](#) (CAADP) has been Africa's primary policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security, economic growth, and prosperity. It guides the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and Member States in driving agricultural transformation toward a self-reliant and productive Africa.

The recently adopted Kampala CAADP Declaration on “[Building Resilient Agrifood Systems in Africa](#)” and the [CAADP Strategy and Action Plan \(2026-2035\)](#) will build on the success and deepen the progress achieved after two decades of CAADP implementation, during which Africa significantly improved in economic and agricultural growth, poverty reduction, nutrition outcomes, and agricultural trade expansion. The next 10-year cycle of CAADP implementation must further deepen its focus to incorporate lessons while responding to emerging issues to accelerate sustainable food system transformation within a context of climate change and multifaceted stressors and shocks.

The longevity and continued success of CAADP can be attributed to its credibility as a shared framework designed to guide Member States toward agricultural transformation and economic growth. Driven by the CAADP principles and values, with emphasis on African ownership and mutual accountability, alongside review and benchmarking, data and analytics have been central to CAADP's evidence-based planning and implementation approach. As Africa prepares for the implementation phase of the Kampala CAADP Declaration, which comes into force on January 1, 2026, evidence and robust data analysis will continue to remain indispensable to the successful implementation on the ground. This is the rationale behind AKADEMIYA2063's *Kampala Policy Brief Series*.

The purpose of the policy briefs is to serve as reference documents for policy analysts and planners across AU Member States as they prepare their programs in response to the Kampala CAADP Declaration. The policy briefs will provide a synthesis of a large body of research tackling topics of strategic relevance to Africa's development agenda in parallel with key issues to be addressed during the new phase of CAADP implementation, to provide insights, analyze emerging ideas, review cross-cutting thematic areas, and propose policy recommendations that can be replicated for sustainable impact.

The evidence presented in the Kampala Policy Brief Series is derived from published research and data by AKADEMIYA2063's scientists and collaborators across Africa and outside the continent. These lessons will be accessible to policymakers, non-state actors, and other practitioners at continental, regional, and national levels, as well as development partners, to support the implementation of CAADP 2026-2035. In addition to packaging the lessons and insights into comprehensive yet accessible knowledge products, AKADEMIYA2063 is facilitating policy dialogue through webinars. During these sessions, the findings will be presented to a broad range of stakeholders to guide programmatic interventions supporting the implementation of the Kampala CAADP Agenda.



Introduction

Africa has made remarkable progress over the last 20 years, notably in improving living standards and building prosperity. The continent overcame tremendous challenges and reversed years of stagnation by enhancing the quality of governance and policymaking. Between 2000 and 2020, Africa experienced some of the highest GDP and agricultural growth rates in the world. In recent years, the continent's **emerging agrifood industry sector** has been the main bridge between smallholder producers and the rapidly expanding urban food markets, with the potential to deliver greater prosperity and security for the continent's smallholder farmers while simultaneously reducing import dependency. Six of the top-10 performing economies in the world were forecast to come from Africa south of the Sahara in 2024, according to the **International Monetary Fund**.

In particular, policies have become progressively better as they have become more informed by evidence-based analysis and subjected to more open and inclusive dialogue and review. This has, in turn, permitted African countries to reap the benefits of higher-quality planning and implementation in terms of better development outcomes.

Despite the impressive progress since 2003, Africa continues to face persistent and new challenges. While this robust growth performance represents a striking contrast with previous decades of stagnation and decline, the continent has not been spared from global disruptions.

Africa, like the rest of the world, has been impacted by various shocks, including the climate crisis, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the COVID-19 pandemic, with far-reaching impacts on the continent's progress.

After four CAADP Biennial Review (BR) cycles, Africa has come a long way – still, much remains to be done. As the continent moves into the third phase of CAADP implementation, African governments must take urgent steps to fill persistent data gaps limiting their ability to sustainably and resiliently transform agrifood systems to meet pressing challenges such as climate change and lingering food insecurity.

Issue #1 of the **Kampala Policy Brief Series** focuses on key data trends garnered over the last two decades to capture Africa's performance in various critical areas of the continent's agricultural sector. This brief revisits relevant evidence to highlight progress in CAADP implementation, discussing impacts on agricultural and economic growth, trade performance, nutrition, and public investment.

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)



Designed to be a practical instrument & framework by which Africa was going to drive efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Adopted by the AU in 2003, CAADP is Africa's policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security and nutrition, economic growth, and prosperity for all. The main agricultural development initiative of the continent, CAADP's vision is to maximize the contribution of agriculture to achieving the ambition of a self-reliant and productive Africa and delivering economic growth and sustainable development for its people. The goal for the sector is an agricultural-led development that eliminates hunger and reduces poverty and food insecurity, thereby paving the way for an expansion of exports and putting the continent on a higher economic growth path within an overall strategy of sustainable development and preservation of natural resources.

Designed to be a practical instrument and framework by which Africa will drive efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), CAADP emphasizes the importance of evidence to inform policy design and implementation, inclusive participation of multiple stakeholder groups at all stages of the policy process, and mutual accountability for actions and results. These principles contribute to the formulation of high-quality policies and help to ensure that successful policies are scaled up while unsuccessful policies are adjusted. CAADP has raised the profile of agriculture and encouraged greater policy and investment focus on the sector, with strong linkages to overall economic growth.

AKADEMIYA2063's Support to CAADP Implementation



Data, Analytics, and Knowledge Products – Established in 2006 under the CAADP, the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (**ReSAKSS**) supports efforts to promote evidence and outcome-based policy planning and implementation. In particular, ReSAKSS provides data and related analytical and knowledge products to facilitate CAADP benchmarking, review, and mutual accountability processes. AKADEMIYA2063 leads the work of ReSAKSS in partnership with the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, and leading RECs. The mission of AKADEMIYA2063 is to provide data, policy analysis, and capacity-strengthening support to enable AU Member States to achieve economic transformation and shared prosperity in support of the AU's Agenda 2063.



ReSAKSS Annual Trends and Outlook Report – As the main platform for monitoring CAADP implementation, ReSAKSS tracks the progress of core CAADP indicators through an interactive website and a flagship Annual Trends and Outlook **Report** (ATOR), the official CAADP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) report. In addition to tracking progress on CAADP indicators, the ATOR presents analysis on a feature topic of strategic importance to the CAADP agenda each year.



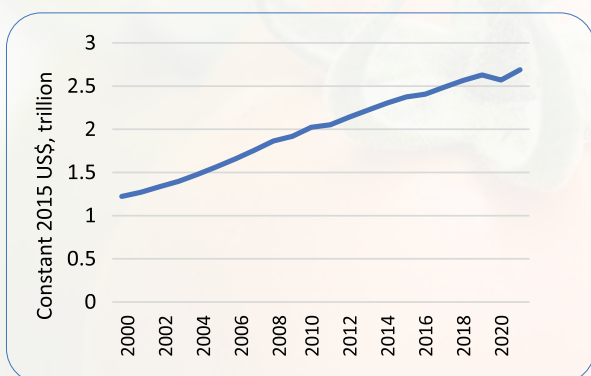
CAADP Biennial Reviews (BRs) – ReSAKSS provides technical assistance to the CAADP BR process, which reviews country, regional, and continental progress toward meeting the 2014 Malabo Declaration commitments. ReSAKSS supported the inaugural BR in 2017 as well as subsequent BRs in 2019, 2021, and 2023, by contributing to the refinement of technical guidelines, tools, and indicators, training of national experts from across Africa, and the development of the eBR, a user-friendly interface for data entry and automatic generation of performance scores. ReSAKSS also publishes country and regional **CAADP BR Briefs** that highlight BR results for AU Member States and RECs, including progress, challenges, lessons, and recommended actions for ensuring the achievement of Malabo goals and commitments.

1. Agriculture and Economic Growth

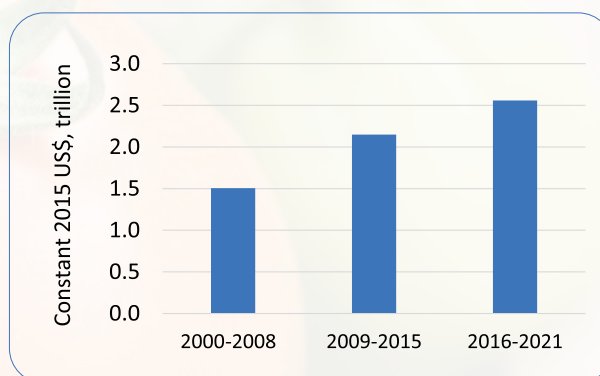
Africa realized sustained economic growth in the last two decades and managed to double its GDP from US\$1.2 trillion in 2000 to US\$2.7 trillion in 2021. Economic growth was especially high during the early 2000s, with 5.5 percent growth in GDP in real terms between 2000 and 2008.

Figure 1.1. Annual average GDP.

a. GDP, annual average (constant 2015 US\$, trillion)



b. GDP, annual average (constant 2015 US\$, trillion)

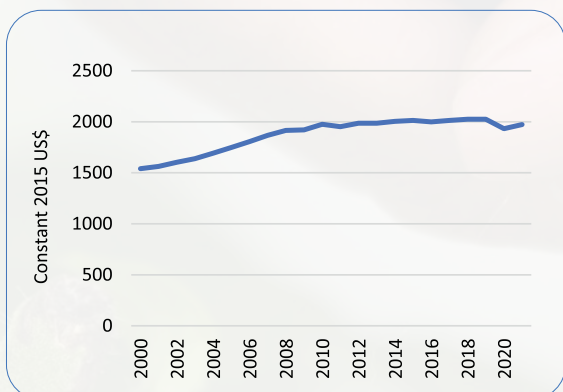


Source: ReSAKSS (2023),¹ based on data from the World Bank.

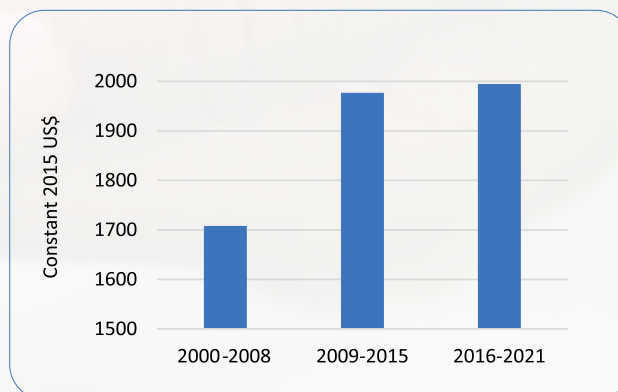
GDP per capita grew consistently since the 2000s, increasing from an annual average of US\$1708 in 2000–2008 to US\$1977 in 2009–2015 and later marginally to US\$1995. However, with the onset of the pandemic, GDP per capita contracted by 5.3 percent in real terms. GDP per capita in 2021 was equivalent to the amount recorded a decade ago in 2010, indicating that the pandemic and other headwinds have posed major challenges to sustaining the strong growth of the last decade.

Figure 1.2. GDP per capita.

c. GDP per capita (constant 2015 US\$)



d. GDP per capita, annual average (constant 2015 US\$)

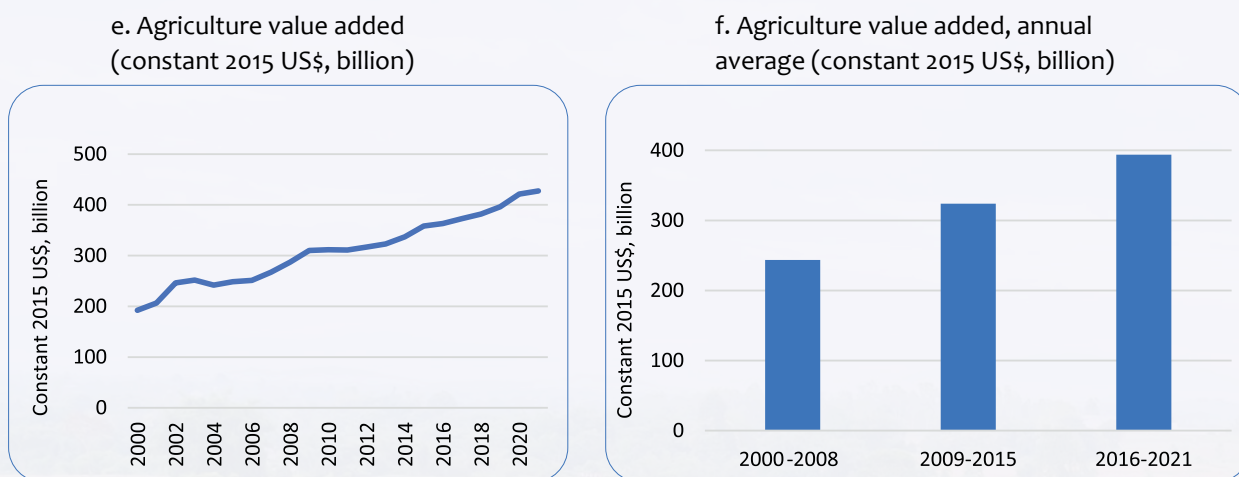


Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from the World Bank.

¹ReSAKSS (Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System) 2023. ReSAKSS Database. Accessed December 10, 2024. <https://www.resakss.org/node/11>

Agriculture value added recorded significant improvement for Africa as a whole. It more than doubled in constant 2015 US\$ within the last two decades. That is, it increased from US\$ 192 billion to US\$ 427 billion between 2000 and 2021. The sector produced consistent growth during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

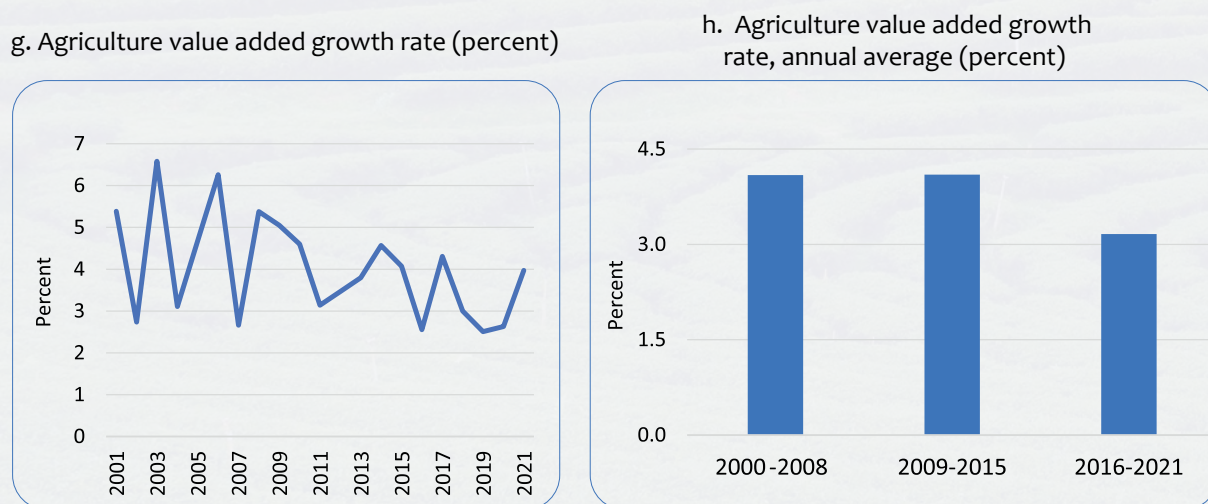
Figure 1.3. Agriculture value added.



Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from the World Bank and FAO.

The year-to-year growth rate of agriculture value added has been fluctuating around 3–6 percent during the review period. On average, agricultural value added grew at 4.1 percent per annum during both the 2000–2008 and 2009–2015 periods and at 3.2 percent during 2016–2021.

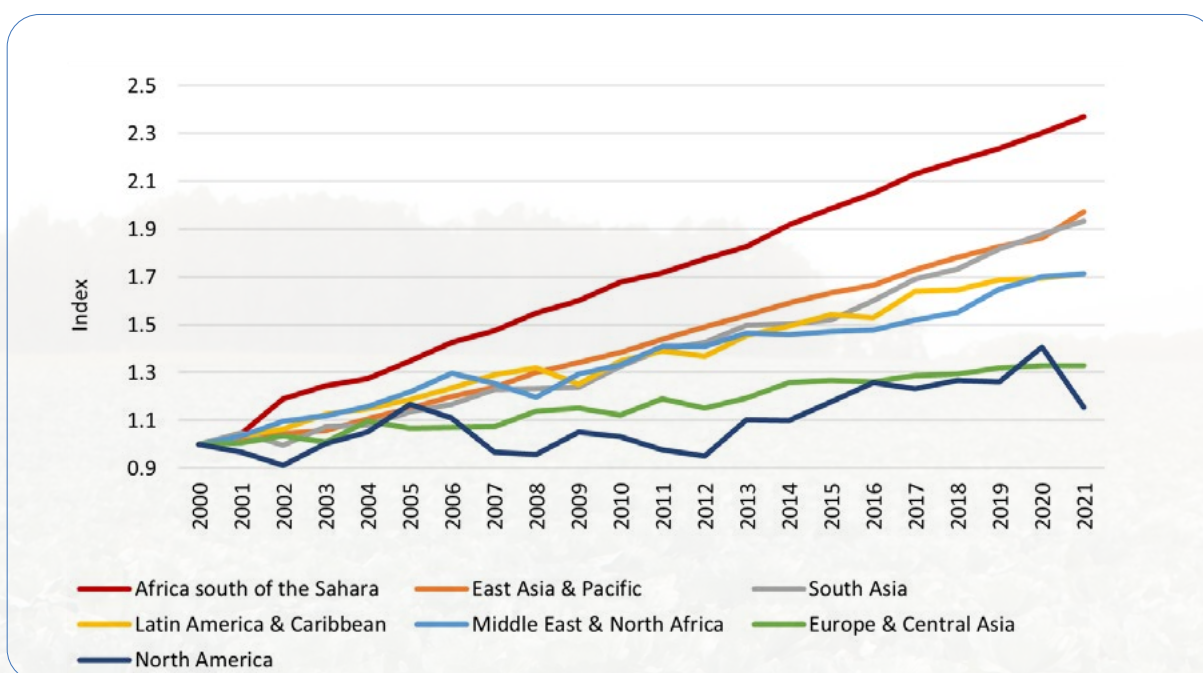
Figure 1.4. Agriculture value added growth rate.



Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from the World Bank and FAO.

Africa south of the Sahara has had the fastest growing agriculture sector since 2000 when compared with the rest of the world. The region’s agricultural value-added index more than doubled between the early 2000s and the 2020s.

Figure 1.5. Agricultural value added index, 2000-2021 (1=2000)



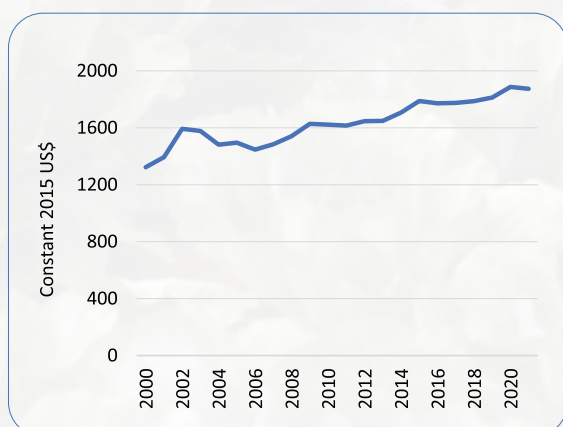
Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from the World Bank.

Measured by agriculture value added per worker in constant 2015 US\$, agricultural labor productivity recorded an increasing trend from US\$ 1323.4 in 2000 to US\$ 1874.2 in 2021. Labor productivity grew by almost half within the last two decades.

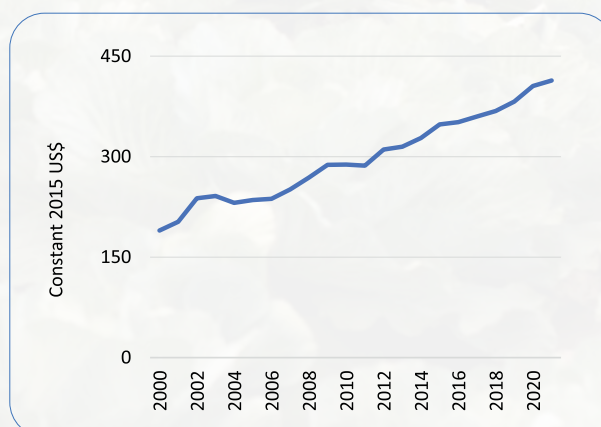
Land productivity measured by agriculture value added per hectare of agricultural land more than doubled during the past two decades. The rate of increase in land productivity remained higher than labor productivity throughout the review period.

Figure 1.6. Labor productivity.

i. Labor productivity (constant 2015 US\$)



j. Land productivity (constant 2015 US\$)

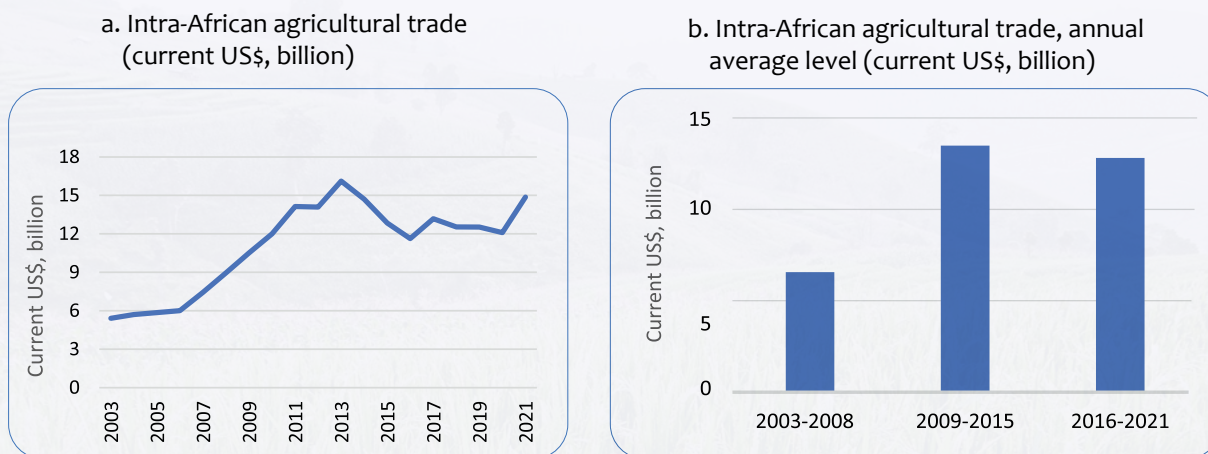


Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from the World Bank and FAO.

2. Trade Performance

Between 2003 and 2021, intra-African agricultural trade increased by 175 percent from US\$ 5.4 billion to US\$ 14.9 billion. Growth in intra-African agricultural trade was the highest during the early CAADP period with an annual average growth rate of 10 percent during 2003–2008. The performance reached its peak during 2013, recording a value of US\$ 16.1 billion. In general, the 2009–2015 period showed the greatest performance, with intra-African agricultural trade values of US\$ 13.5 billion on average per year.

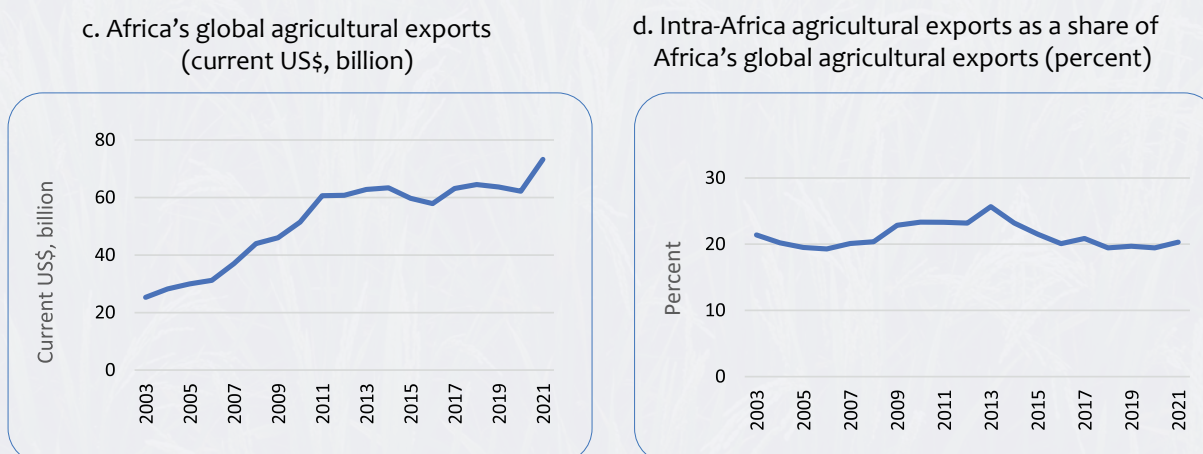
Figure 2.1. Intra-African agricultural trade.



Source: Africa Agriculture Trade Monitor (AATM) 2023 database, based on data from UN Comtrade.

Africa’s global agricultural exports significantly increased from US\$ 25.3 billion in 2003 to US\$ 73.2 billion in 2021. The share of intra-African agricultural trade in Africa’s global agricultural exports showed a declining trend in recent periods, mainly due to the decline in the former since 2013. However, intra-African trade started to pick up in 2021. The recent performance shows that about 20 percent of Africa’s exports remain within the continent. This indicates the presence of opportunities to further increase intra-African trade provided that conducive policies are in place.

Figure 2.2. Africa’s agricultural exports.

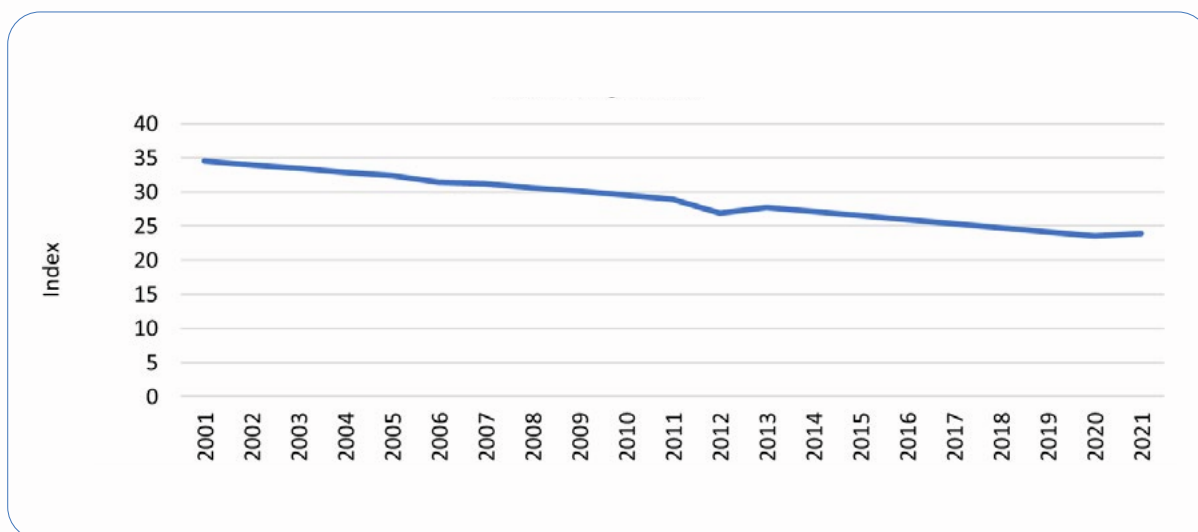


Source: Africa Agriculture Trade Monitor (AATM) 2023 database, based on data from UN Comtrade.

3. Nutrition Outcomes

Africa recorded notable reduction in hunger until recently, as shown by the global hunger index (GHI).

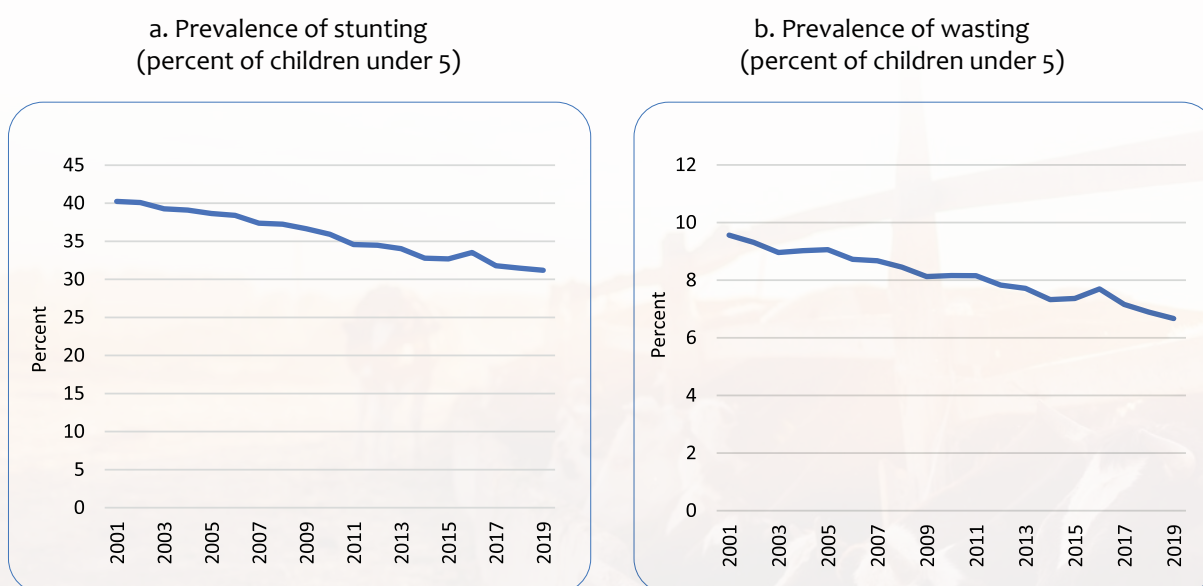
Figure 3.1. Global Hunger Index.



Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from Welthungerhilfe, Concern Worldwide, and the World Bank.

In addition, Africa recorded continuous reduction in the prevalence of stunting and wasting among children under the age of five.

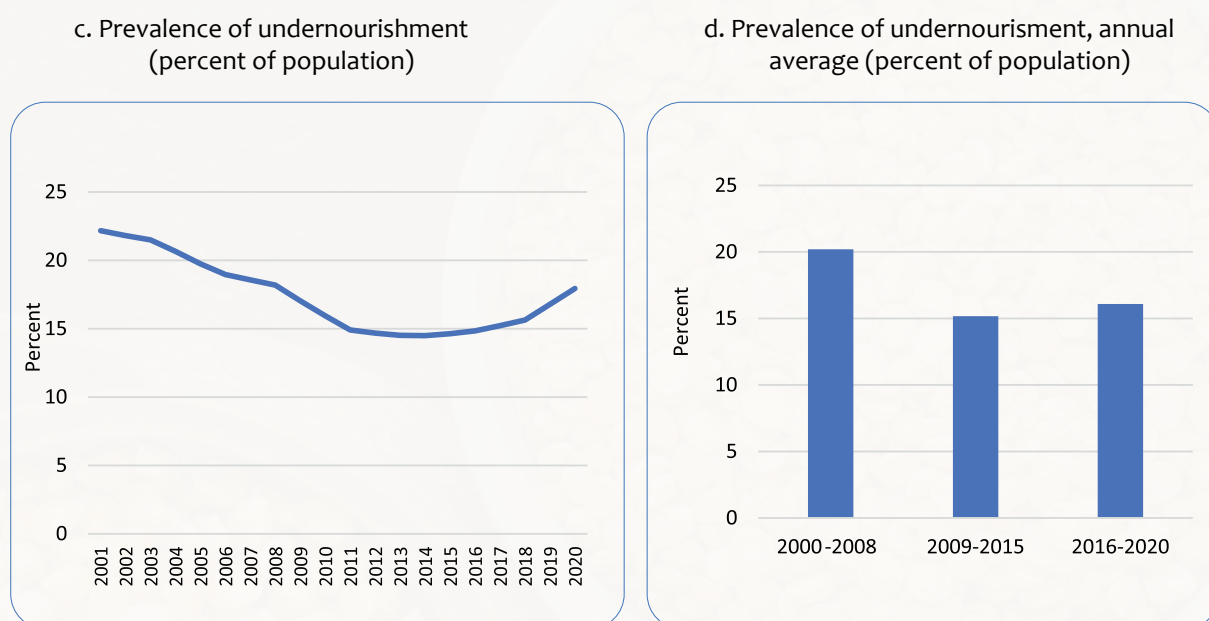
Figure 3.2. Prevalence of stunting and wasting.



Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from the World Bank.

The prevalence of undernourishment had been declining for Africa until the mid-2010s. It started to increase slightly in 2015 and the upswing became sharper with the advent of the pandemic in 2020. The trend shows a reversal of several years of steady progress. This development is intriguing and concerning. Given that other nutrition indicators showed sustained progress, the rather sharp increase in rates of undernourishment either reflects a serious data issue or a serious failure to translate the two decade-long period of economic growth into effective hunger reduction.

Figure 3.3. Prevalence of undernourishment.

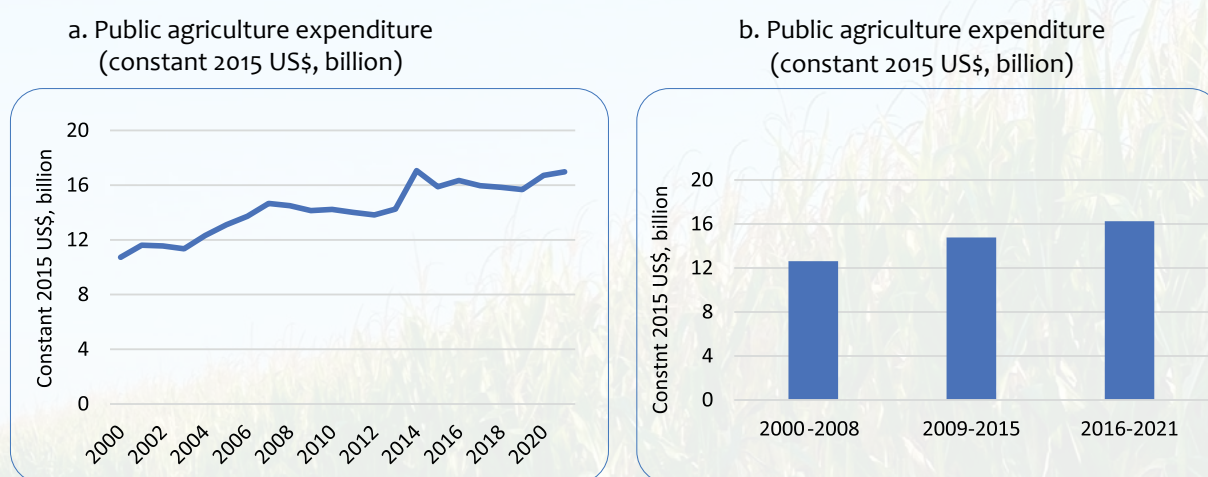


Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from the World Bank.

4. Public Investment

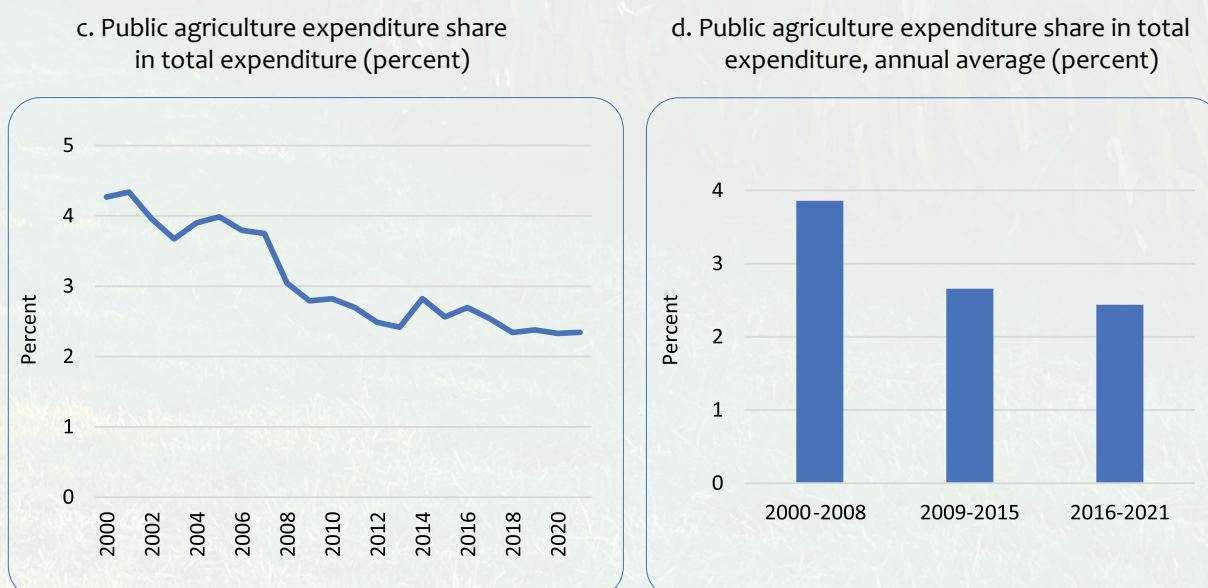
In absolute terms, public agriculture expenditure (PAE) increased from US\$ 10.7 billion in 2000 to US\$ 17 billion in 2021. Growth in PAE was the highest during the 2000–2008 period at an annual average of 4.1 percent before it declined to 2.6 percent and further to 0.9 percent during the 2009–2015 and 2016–2021 periods, respectively. The share of PAE in total public expenditure recorded a declining trend during the review period, falling from a 3.9 percent annual average share in 2000–2008 to 2.7 percent and later to 2.4 percent in the respective sub-periods. While Africa's PAE share remained much lower than the CAADP target of allocating 10 percent of national budgets to agriculture, public investment has risen to double the levels seen in the 1990s. This fact is often eclipsed by the fact that countries have yet to achieve the 10 percent budget share target. This is because countries had to equally meet large investment demands in infrastructure and social services following more than two decades of economic stagnation up to the late 1990s.

Figure 4.1. Public agriculture expenditure.



Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from IFPRI, the World Bank, and national sources.

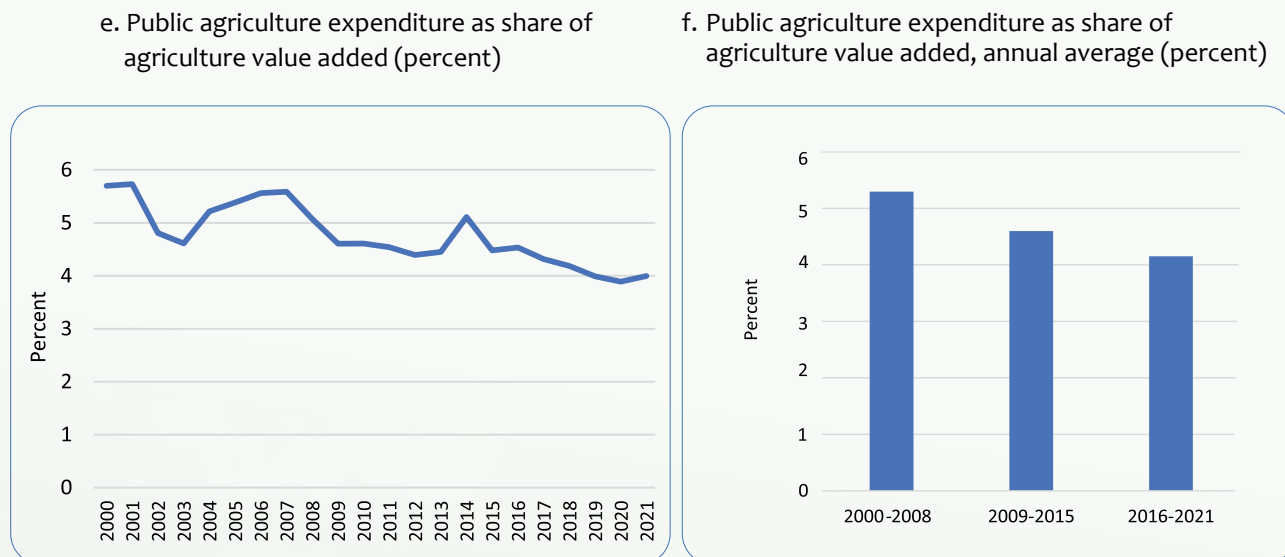
Figure 4.2. Public agriculture expenditure share.



Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from IFPRI, the World Bank, and national sources.

A declining trend was observed in the share of PAE in agriculture value added. This shows that Africa is allocating smaller amounts in PAE relative to the size of the agriculture sector in the continent. However, there is an opportunity to significantly boost agricultural investment by returning more of the wealth created in agriculture back to the sector.

Figure 4.3. Public agriculture expenditure share.



Source: ReSAKSS (2023), based on data from IFPRI, the World Bank, and national sources.

5. Lessons for Kampala CAADP Implementation

There is sufficient evidence to conclude that growth performance, as well as poverty and nutrition outcomes during the last 20 years of CAADP, were much better than during the preceding 30. Still, we have started to lose considerable momentum over the last decade. With the recent adoption of the Kampala CAADP Declaration, there is a real opportunity for Africa to carefully review the experience of the previous two CAADP cycles and draw relevant lessons for the next decade of the agrifood system transformation agenda.

1. Ambitions Versus Progress

The CAADP Malabo goals and targets define a set of ambitions by African leaders to guide development action by individual countries. Because the BR outcomes answer the binary question of whether these ambitions have been achieved or not, they are adequate in tracking to what extent they have become reality. However, they lack the granularity necessary to guide and inform policy planning on the ground. This is because they do not measure the extent to which progress in various areas has been realized. As an illustration, if all African countries individually achieved a 9% budget share and 5% annual agricultural growth, not a single country would be on track to achieve the benchmark 10% expenditure and 6% growth targets. Yet, this would have been a remarkable performance and relevant information for future strategies.

Taking a more in-depth look at progress related to key performance areas, as done in this brief, allows for a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in advancing agrifood system transformation as we gear up for the next decade of CAADP implementation. It is therefore important for continental organizations, Member States, and nonstate actors to acknowledge the challenges reflected in the BR outcomes but to go beyond and unpack the countries' trajectories over the past 20 years in order to better plan for the next phase of CAADP.

2. Recapturing Momentum Post-Malabo

There is no question that Africa's recent growth and poverty performance constitutes a real turnaround compared to the stagnation and decline of the 80s and 90s. It is, however, observable from the data presented in this brief that several indicators have plateaued at best, with some even showing signs of decline. Regaining the momentum to accelerate the pace of progress and reverse any setbacks should be a key priority for the Kampala CAADP cycle.

It is urgent for countries to assess in detail and all objectivity, the real achievements on the ground, vis-à-vis all Kampala key priority areas, and come up with robust action plans on how to boost performance over the next decade, similar to what was achieved during the Maputo era.

3. Implementation Lessons from Maputo

The Maputo Agenda was guided by a set of clear, well-articulated steps for country-level implementation. In contrast, the modalities for the domestication and implementation of Malabo were rather loose and mainly emphasized sensitization and awareness at a more general level.

The domestication and implementation of the Maputo agenda called for a series of clear actions, including a minimum set of data and evidence to inform an inclusive national roundtable to allow countries to take stock, clarify priorities, identify institutional and technical capacity gaps, and define partnership modalities across key stakeholder groups. Each roundtable led to a clear outcome in the form of a country compact signed by Ministers of finance and agriculture, RECs, development partner organizations, and nonstate actors. The last step was the development of a CAADP investment plan, followed by a formal business meeting to review and vet the plan.

After 20 years of CAADP, the same model may no longer be applicable; still, its key components and their articulation could guide the elaboration of effective modalities for a successful domestication and implementation of the Kampala CAADP Agenda.

4. An Evidence-driven Approach

It is still challenging to distinguish conventional wisdom from facts on the ground when reviewing the performance of African economies in agriculture and food systems. Still, as the continent embarks on the next decade, it is essential for every country to take time and take a good inventory of where they stand vis-à-vis these different areas of progress. This will be critical to ensuring that the next ambitions are rooted in realities on the ground, thereby maximizing the chances of success. The Kampala CAADP Agenda must be preceded by a robust and facts-based stocktaking phase, where countries follow the data to better define and calibrate their goals and milestones.

5. Unleashing the Potential of Data

While a lot of progress has been made in embracing evidence-based policy planning, implementation, and mutual accountability, as reflected in the large number of countries taking part in the Biennial Review (BR) and robust Joint Sector Review (JSR) systems, a lot remains to be done in terms of improving the data situation in countries. After four BR cycles, we still observe significant data gaps at the country level. However, the potential for data improvement is immense. By building capacity and leveraging national institutions specialized in data collection, countries can mobilize a major effort to put together comprehensive datasets for the agrifood systems, thereby significantly improving data quality and quantity.

6. Leveraging Emerging Geospatial and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Advances

Africa should have a high-priority ambition of becoming a leader in investing in emerging technologies that will enable the continent to be better positioned to enhance its infrastructural and institutional capacities to respond to its development ambitions. Given the promise of granularity, disaggregation, timeliness, and speed of access, these emerging technologies will play a crucial role in addressing the continent's data accessibility and quality gaps.

ABOUT AKADEMIYA2063

AKADEMIYA2063 is a pan-African non-profit research organization with headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda, and a regional office in Dakar, Senegal.

Inspired by the ambitions of Agenda 2063 and grounded in the recognition of the central importance of strong knowledge and evidence systems, the vision of AKADEMIYA2063 is an Africa with the expertise we need for the Africa we want. This expertise must be responsive to the continent's needs for data and analysis to ensure high-quality policy design and execution. Inclusive, evidence-informed policymaking is key to meeting the continent's development aspirations, creating wealth, and changing livelihoods for the better.

AKADEMIYA2063's overall mission is to create, across Africa and led from its headquarters in Rwanda, state-of-the-art technical capacities to support the efforts by the Member States of the African Union to achieve the key goals of the African Union's Agenda 2063 of transforming national economies to boost growth and prosperity.

Following from its vision and mission, the main goal of AKADEMIYA2063 is to help meet Africa's needs at the continental, regional and national levels in terms of data, analytics, and mutual learning for the effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and the realization of its outcomes by a critical mass of countries. AKADEMIYA2063 strives to meet its goals through programs organized under five strategic areas—policy innovation, knowledge systems, capacity creation and deployment, operational support, data management, digital products, and technology—as well as partnerships and outreach activities. For more information, visit www.akademiy2063.org.

Building Resilient Agrifood Systems in Africa



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GET IN TOUCH

AKADEMIYA2063 HEADQUARTERS

Kicukiro/Niboye KK 341 St 22 | P.O. Box 1855
Kigali, Rwanda

+250 788 318 315

kigali-contact@akademiya2063.org

AKADEMIYA2063 REGIONAL OFFICE

Lot N*3 Almadies | P.O. Box 24 933
Dakar-Senegal

+221 338 652 881

dakar-contact@akademiya2063.org

www.akademiya2063.org

For inquiries on this publication, contact communications@akademiya2063.org.