

AEC 2016 Plenary session 5:

Lessons on Agro-Allied Industrialization from Country Experiences (AfDB)

Guidelines for Panel Discussion

Introduction:

Despite the importance of the agriculture sector in Africa, its productivity considerably lags other developing regions. Africa has the highest area of arable uncultivated land (202 million hectares) in the world but countries have not yet taken advantage of it. Food production, transformation, and consumption systems are not functioning optimally. In consequence, the continent has the highest incidence of undernourishment, estimated at almost one in four persons (World Food Programme, online), and African countries import increasingly more agricultural products than they export, putting additional strain on scarce foreign exchange reserves.

Plenary 5 on Lessons on Agro-Allied Industrialization from Country Experiences will discuss country experiences in Africa and Asia. Asia benefited from the green revolution, which started from the 1960s', and refers to the drastic rise in agriculture productivity as a result of chemical advances and the development of high-yield crops, thus making it possible to produce much larger quantities of food. African countries could build upon the green revolution in Asia and use these lessons learned to raise their agricultural productivity. The green revolution resulted in regional food surpluses within 25 years in East Asia. Driven by the political will to make their countries food self-sufficient, Asian countries doubled cereal production between 1970 and 1995, while the total land area cultivated with cereals increased by only 4 percent (World Bank, 2008).

However, the success of the green revolution has nonetheless been mitigated in the long run by the increasing dependence and poor management in the use of agrochemicals. This has resulted in adverse environmental consequences, including on water supply, soil quality and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as subsequent stagnation in crop production and rising cost of inputs. A large number of smallholder farmers ended up indebted and eventually became landless and poor. This shows the importance of achieving agricultural productivity in a sustainable way and the need to promote green growth in agriculture. Furthermore, while Asia's green revolution mainly focused on irrigated wheat and rice together with improved crop varieties and expanded use of chemical fertilizers, Africa's soils vary by region and need a more tailored approach.

Key questions to be addressed by the panel:

Discussing the lessons on Agro-Allied Industrialization from other parts of the world raises a number of vital questions that panelists shall address:

1. Asia introduced the green revolution since the 1960s. What have been the causes of this spectacular agricultural modernization in these regions? Have these green revolutions been successful? From which perspectives (adoption of modern machinery, input and know-how, research and development, wide-scale training, supportive government policies)?

2. Why has Africa missed the green revolution, in your opinion? What have been the challenges to the green revolution? Are these challenges similar to the barriers to green revolution faced by Africa? How did Asia overcome their own challenges to green revolution and is there any lessons for Africa to take in this regard?
3. While Asia's green revolution mainly focused on irrigated wheat and rice together with improved crop varieties and expanded use of chemical fertilizers, Africa's soils vary by region and need a more tailored approach. Is the green revolution a viable strategy for Africa? To which extent and what would be the alternatives to raise Africa's agriculture productivity?
4. What have been the adverse effects of the green revolution in Asia, especially on the environment and subsequent agricultural production, both in terms of quantity, quality and diversity of yields?
5. Has the green revolution in Asia been inclusive for small farmers?
6. What would be the lessons to take for Africa from Asia's own mitigated experiences of the green revolution? Building upon the country experiences, is it possible to modernize and industrialize agriculture while pursuing green and inclusive growth? How?

Format:

The Plenary Session of the Conference will last **1.5 hours** and will be addressed by a maximum of 5 panelists. A short keynote address (7-10 minutes) will precede the panel discussion. The Moderator of the session will introduce each panelist and provide a contextual briefing with guiding questions to focus the interventions of the panelists.

After the panelists' interventions, the Moderator will invite succinct interventions from the participants and then permit panelists to wrap-up with responses to matters arising.

The Moderator will allot time following these guidelines:

Roles and Activities

Moderator – Introductions and Briefing	6 minutes
Moderator - Transition between panelists	2 minutes
Panelists – Each panelist presents (7 mins/10 mins)	30 minutes
Moderator (Summary of panelists' interventions)	5 minutes
Open Discussion	25 minutes
Response by Panelists (5 minutes each)	20 minutes
Moderator Closing Remarks	2 minutes
Total	1.5 hours

The Moderator should ensure that these time limits are respected and not exceeded as it is important for the smooth progression of the Conference agenda. Finally, Moderators should ensure that the key issues of the sessions are captured by the rapporteurs.