

Food security: The battle of narratives and the role of private sector investment

The African Agri Council is hosting its 6th annual African Agri Investment Indaba (AAII) from 20-22 November 2023 at the Cape Town International Convention Center. This year's theme, ***Achieving food security through private sector investment: The battle of narratives***, emphasizes the importance of both attracting private investment and addressing negative perceptions of Africa as a business environment.

The AAII23 will feature the 2nd DFI Forum, the Banking & Microfinance In Agribusiness Forum, high-level policy discussions, Investment Discovery Sessions, closed strategic sessions, and food and agribusiness CEO panels.



Source: Kate HoltAusAID via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

This year Agri Indaba is set to bring together small and medium-sized farmers, agribusiness startups, captains of industries, development financial institutions, private equities, asset managers, commercial banks and lenders, microfinance institutions, policymakers, solution providers representing the entire value chain as different case studies, policies, and solutions are presented to achieve a food secured continent.

Transforming Africa's agriculture landscape

Africa is well positioned to become the global breadbasket, with 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land lying within its borders. This untapped potential holds the promise to transform Africa into a global agricultural powerhouse.

African governments have taken agriculture to the forefront of their development strategies, a move bolstered by recent advancements in technology and increased investments. However, despite these positive strides, African food systems have faced significant disruptions due to external shocks.

Despite years of policy reforms, investments, and abundant untapped land resources, African countries remain at risk of severe food shortages. This persistent vulnerability to global shocks raises concerns about the resilience of the continent's food systems.

To transform Africa into a food exporter and bolster its food security, addressing the underlying factors that contribute to food shortages is crucial. Various stakeholders have identified and explored potential solutions, ranging from agricultural practices to policy reforms, to achieve long-term food security.

Commercial opportunity for private sector

Whether it is the diversification of African food systems through the move from the major global commodities to more investment made towards African indigenous and resilient crops, the development of Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones, or the establishment of incubation farms, the implementation of community-based projects to develop targeted value chains. One thing is for certain, the food and agriculture industry presents a massive commercial opportunity for the private sector.

The food and agriculture value chain offers a growing number of attractive investment opportunities, driven by some compelling global trends.

Demand for both primary and value-add food is growing in emerging economies and demand in developed markets is tending towards more niche good-for-you products; this demand is being achieved through cross-border M&A activities and is spreading into emerging markets through private equity strategies as a gateway to new markets, secure supply chains and a response to regulatory and trade changes.

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