

6th Annual ReNAPRI Stakeholder Conference



Journey to Self-Reliance: unlocking the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement

20th – 21th November 2019 | Kampala, Uganda

Concept Note

Introduction

Africa is on the move! July 7th, 2019 marked the launch of the operational phase of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). The objective is to bring together all 55 members states of the African Union into one of the world's largest free trade areas. Once trading begins on July 1st, 2020 the AfCFTA has the potential to;

1. Boost Intra-African trade by at least 52% (UNECA) through the reduction of import duties and improved harmonization of trade liberalization and facilitation instruments across the REC's;
2. Increase the competitiveness of African industry by providing opportunities for scale production, continental market access and improved resource allocation (TRALAC, 2019); and
3. Meet the growing food demand, which is projected to reach USD 1 Trillion by 2030 (AfDB, 2018).

However, if Africa is to realize this potential, there are challenges that will need to be addressed. Domestic and trade policy coherence that facilitates targeted investments in key value chains in order to ensure sustainable productivity growth. In the face of these challenges, valid questions arise as to whether or not the transformation narrative on the continent will falter (Fioramonti, 2017). To ensure sustainable transformation will require committed and innovative leadership, transparent accountability; and evidence that will allow for accurate measurement of progress.

Within this context, ReNAPRI's 6th Annual Stakeholder Conference provides a platform for engagement by a diverse group of stakeholders committed to unlocking the regions' agricultural potential through effective policies and innovative public and private sector investments which will open markets and facilitate broad-based growth.

Conference Theme

The overarching theme of the 6th Annual ReNAPRI Stakeholder Conference is; ***"Journey to Self-Reliance: unlocking the potential of the African Free Trade Area"***.

Conference Objectives

The purpose of the conference is to create a platform for strategic dialogue and evidence-based guidance within the context of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. Our premise is that an evidence-based understanding of unfolding trade policy environment and the challenges that it raises can assist African governments, private firms and civil society groups to anticipate and respond proactively.

The key objectives of the 6th Annual ReNAPRI Stakeholders' Conference is to:

1. Unpack the potential impact of the AfCFTA on the agri-food system and identify concrete policy-action to ensure its success;
2. Outline strategy for prioritizing targeted public investment that facilitates scale production within key value-chains;
3. Develop a 5-point agenda on expanding sustainable production to meet the regions' growing food demand;
4. Enhance engagement of African parliamentarians and government officials on issues pertaining to regional trade; and
5. Assess the operational feasibility of alternative policy options by clearly identifying concrete strategies that address the challenges to trade – i.e. focusing on the “how” questions.

Our Approach

The ReNAPRI conference will be held over a day-and-half period and will comprise the following activities;

- Keynote Presentations that highlights and prioritizes the key challenges on trade, national investment strategies, and sustainable agricultural production;
- Panel Discussions including industry experts/stakeholders and government officials, charged with identifying concrete strategies that address the challenges and unlocks the regions agricultural potential under AfCFTA;
- Interactive Dialogue on how best varying stakeholders can support intra-regional efforts at local, national and regional levels.

Participants

Conference participants include a range of stakeholders actively engaged in the African Agricultural sector. These include;

- Regional Economic Community and relevant government ministries representatives
- Farmer organizations
- Private sector organizations and companies
- Academics
- Development think tanks
- Research organizations (national and international)
- Development agencies and donor community

Expected Outcomes

- Greater awareness of the challenges to unlocking the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement
- Identification of concrete strategies aimed at addressing these challenges
- Linkages and new partnership opportunities among the various stakeholders

Planning/Organizing Committees

The planning and organization for this conference is coordinated by the ReNAPRI Secretariat and the host institution; The School of Agricultural Science, Department of Agribusiness and Natural Resources at Makerere University.