



## 2016 ReSAKSS Annual Conference: Achieving a Nutrition Revolution for Africa: The Road to Healthier Diets and Optimal Nutrition

### KEY MESSAGES

*The 2016 ReSAKSS Annual Conference brought together over 130 participants to discuss findings of the 2015 Annual Trends and Outlook Report (ATOR) on nutrition and to review progress in supporting CAADP implementation. Participants included representatives of the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), regional economic communities, ministries of agriculture and health, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities, international and technical organizations, and development partners. Below are key messages from the conference:*

#### **2015 ATOR: ACHIEVING A NUTRITION REVOLUTION FOR AFRICA**

- Africa is making progress in reducing malnutrition as reflected by reductions in undernourishment in the entire population and in stunting, underweight, and wasting in children under 5 years of age. However, the rates of these indicators remain high.
- Meanwhile, micronutrient deficiencies are still stubbornly high and the continent is experiencing increases in overweight and obesity and related non-communicable diseases.
- Therefore, governments now have to simultaneously address the triple burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight and obesity).
- Ghana is about to face a *nutrition transition* and will need to effectively reduce undernutrition and the risk of overnutrition at the same time.
- Ending malnutrition will require political will supported by SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) commitments for accountability.
- Increased investments and budget allocations for nutrition sensitive food system reform programs are critical as current commitments do not match the need.
- Innovations are needed to drive behavioral change required to make agriculture and food systems more nutrition sensitive. This will entail identifying powerful vehicles, drivers, champions, and inclusive and effective partnerships.
- Integrated agriculture and nutrition interventions (such as Helen Keller International's Enhanced Homestead Food Production Program) can help to improve child and maternal nutritional status and lead to maternal empowerment.
- Leveraging agriculture for nutrition will require creating and strengthening institutional and policy environments that enable agriculture to support nutrition and health goals.
- Developing capacity and leadership to use evidence-informed decision making is necessary to enhance the impact of agriculture on nutrition and health.





- Institutional innovation is needed to facilitate comprehensive agriculture, food security and nutrition policy and program development, effective coordination, and establishment of integrated monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Leadership and strengthened capacity of the technical and managerial nutrition workforce are essential for supporting multisectoral action.
- Agricultural value chain development efforts must pay attention to food safety by, for example, reducing aflatoxin contamination which can impede nutrition and health objectives.
- Biofortification can be an integral part of agriculture, reaching many people with much needed micronutrients.

### **PROGRESS ON CAADP IMPLEMENTATION**

- Countries that have been engaged in the CAADP process the longest have seen more positive impacts of CAADP, especially on agricultural growth and productivity. The impact was also positive on incomes for early implementers but counterintuitive on nutrition, reflecting the weak emphasis on nutrition early on.
- More countries have taken up recommendations and outcomes of agriculture joint sector review (JSR) assessments to improve their JSR processes. For instance, countries are conducting technical studies, engaging more sector ministries and non-state actors, and seeking support to strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacities.
- The establishment of country Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support Systems (SAKSS) has highlighted crucial lessons including the importance of i) country buy-in and leadership, ii) an inclusive engagement process, and iii) defining SAKSS governance structure early. In-country SAKSS negotiation processes can take time, but they are important for building mutual trust and confidence.
- SAKSS platforms to focus on mobilizing national expertise to set up analytical networks to link knowledge supply to demand.
- Mobilization of analytical tools and experts to support the appraisal of second generation national agriculture and food security investment plans (NAFSIPs) is under way. A NAFSIP technical task force is in place and already providing training to local experts.
- In preparation for the first CAADP Biennial Review, performance indicators and coordination mechanisms have been adopted; the roles of AUC, NPCA, regional economic communities, and their partners have been defined; and a roadmap for training and preparing the biennial report is operational.

