



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York



Permanent Mission of Ghana
to the UN

in collaboration with:  **iai** Istituto Affari Internazionali

Virtual Interactive Dialogue on
Sustainable Agriculture and Development in Africa: Lessons
learned from Covid-19 for Building Back Better
18 June 2020
10:30AM -13:00PM EDT

The Permanent Missions of Ghana and Italy to the United Nations, in collaboration with Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), will co-host a virtual interactive dialogue on the role of sustainable agriculture in advancing Africa's development and in addressing multiple challenges of climate change and biodiversity on the Continent. The dialogue will also provide an opportunity to debate on some key inter-linked issues that are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a post-Covid 19 era.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which started out as a health crisis has rapidly impacted the economic, social and human development of several countries globally. Beyond the economy and the already fragile social structures that have been negatively impacted, vulnerable groups including rural populations, women and the elderly are expected to be disproportionately affected by the crises, setting back significant gains made in the SDGs and targets for developing countries. Worse still, are those countries already confronted with conflict, humanitarian and climate crises. In dealing with such unprecedented disruption, it is imperative, for the global community and particularly for Africa, to ensure a more sustainable, inclusive and better recovery and to maintain the pathways towards the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

Sustainable agriculture in Africa will be significantly enhanced through intra-African trade, market integration and investment. Measures to increase the profitability of agriculture and to attract younger generations of agribusiness persons would need to go hand in hand with improving the quality and sustainability of critical infrastructure to make the change real. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has an important role to play in these efforts through boosting trade in agricultural products, reducing price volatility and ensuring food security in Africa. The interactive dialogue will provide a platform for debate among African Member States and Partners on sustainable agriculture and the role of the AfCFTA as a catalyst for agricultural development and to building long-term continental resilience in the post-COVID phase.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic presents Africa with challenges as well as opportunities. On the one hand, the Continent is at risk of losing the marginal gains in its economic and social development. On the other hand, Africa could harness its human, economic, environmental and abundant natural resources to recover from the impact the pandemic and in the long-term, achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

In this context, agriculture plays a significant role in African economies and livelihoods and is strongly linked to other aspects of development. With Africa's largely agrarian economy, it is the widely accepted view that improving food production systems and creating market value-chains and sustainable agri-business models will help reducing poverty (SDG 1) through their direct impact on job creation, food security and nutrition (SDG 2); promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8); and contribute to the fight against climate change (SDG 13). It would also contribute to protecting, restoring ecosystems, combating desertification and halting biodiversity loss (SDG15).

A presentation on the findings of the multimedia project entitled "[The African Century: People, Agriculture and the Environment](#)", soon to be published by the Italian think-tank Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), will set the tone for the discussion. The presentation will highlight Ghana's experience in adopting innovation in the agri-food sector, transitioning from outdated farming techniques to advanced and sustainable models.

Guiding Questions

- The Covid-19 pandemic: a window of opportunity for promoting sustainable development models?
- What is the role of sustainable agriculture in promoting African development and achieving the SDGs? How can new technologies and the private sector contribute to these objectives?
- How can agriculture help protect biodiversity and fight against desertification and climate change?
- How to reach an effective engagement and recognition of the role of women, who play a crucial role for the future development of Africa?
- How can the AfCFTA help increase intra-African trade of agricultural commodities and expand regional investments in the sector, as well as preserve global supply chain connectivity and the flow of essential goods like food in the current Covid-19 crisis and after?

Agenda

Welcoming remarks by the Co-Hosts

H. E. Martha Ama A. Pobee, Permanent Representative of Ghana to the UN

H. E. Mariangela Zappia, Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN

Introductory Remarks

Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser to the Administrator, UNDP

Abebe Haile-Gabriel, FAO Assistant Director-General for Africa

Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General, Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Presentation by Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) of the project “The African Century: Agriculture, People and the Environment”: ppt + trailer

Discussants:

- Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Chief Executive of the South African Center for International Relations

- Solange Uwituze, Deputy Director General of the Rwanda Agricultural Board

Interactive Debate moderated by H. E. Mariangela Zappia, Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN

Closing remarks