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Part V

African Regional Organisations – a Channel of Communication?

Opportunities for African regional organizations to help shape the international framework for a responsible land policy

Input

Abebe Haile Gabriel,
Director,
Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture,
African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I have been asked to focus my contribution on the expectations of African regional organizations from international community in terms of strengthening food security in Africa and, in particular in promoting a sustainable land policy; and on the to which the African regional organisations are able and empowered to act as a channel through which to communicate their members' interests in sustainable land policy at the international level.

A stocktaking of emerging trends and practices as to how Africa as a continent has begun to doing business would provide the context in which to frame regional organisations' expectations from the international community.

1. **Emerging continental frameworks to enhance harmonization and integration:**

- (a) Africa-wide continental frameworks have been espoused as a basis for aligning development policies and strategies and investment plans at sub-regional and national levels. A case in point is the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a model of development based on agricultural growth to spur the process of socio-economic transformation and development; thus far, 25 countries have aligned their policies, programmes and investment plans with CAADP. There is now a growing recognition among development partners to channel support as part of this endeavour (G20, L'Aquila commitments, etc.) – resources are being made available to 5 countries through the GAFSP. Recall that sustainable land management is captured in Pillar #1 of CAADP.
- (b) Africa is experiencing with the project of articulating and advancing common positions with a united voice: the case in point is the African common position on climate change and the mechanism of speaking with one voice in international climate change negotiations. This has implications for redefining and evolving roles of regional organizations, partnerships, etc.

2. Evolving roles of regional organizations:

The role of regional organizations (AUC, NPCA, RECs) in driving and facilitating the integration and development agenda in terms of formulating and championing continental/regional initiatives, frameworks, common positions as well as in mobilizing support and forging partnerships has been instrumental; and these roles keep evolving with emerging challenges and opportunities. There is a growing recognition among actors regarding the crucial roles that these regional organizations have been playing in terms of advocacy, harmonization of policies and strategies, coordination of efforts and mobilization of support.

African regional organizations (AUC, NPCA, RECs) have mandates to communicate and advocate the interests of their member states, including on sustainable land policy, in international fora. However, capacity constraints have hindered them to effectively playing this role. These constraints are being addressed progressively.

3. Evolving partnerships:

(a) Africa has been forging partnerships with the rest of the world through the AU – to mention some: the Africa-Arab; Africa-China, Africa-EU, Africa-South America, Africa-India, Africa-Japan, Africa-USA, etc. Increasingly, continental/regional initiatives are positioning themselves within such partnerships. For example, capacity building support for rolling out the Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa at sub-regional and country levels is being facilitated through the Africa-EU partnership.

- Partnerships that involve Africa-based continental organizations (notably AUC, UNECA and AfDB) made possible to initiate and launch continental frameworks such as the Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa, through the AUC-ECA-AfDB Land Policy Initiative.
- International organizations are expected to rally their support behind the continental frameworks/initiatives that are developed to guide actions at regional and national levels (CAADP, F&G on Land Policy, etc.); and should not engage in running parallel overlapping initiatives, or undertake activities that may frustrate such continental frameworks. Progress is being achieved in this regard in the context of CAADP, but still a lot remains to be desired.