

FTCA NEWSLETTER

EDITION 01

APRIL 27TH 2023



The Food Trade Coalition for Africa held its Annual General Assembly from March 27th – 28th, 2023, in Lusaka, Zambia. The General Assembly convened its members, Coalition Champions and Senior Government Officials to discuss the Coalition’s progress so far, share the proposed work plan for the next year, and discuss pertinent issues that impact food trade in Africa.

The General Assembly was opened by Dr. Apollos Nwafor, Vice-President, Policy and State Capability, AGRA and Co-Chair of the Coalition’s Steering Committee. Opening remarks were given by Trust Mufune, Ministry of Trade, Zambia on behalf of Permanent Secretary John Mulongoti.

The General Assembly had Key Note Remarks given by the Guest of Honor, COMESA Secretary General Chileshe Kapwepwe.

The Coalition Secretariat shared the priorities of the

Coalition which include:

1. Policy influencing:

- a. Agricultural Data Systems – data is critical and its importance magnified by the challenges faced over the last few years
- b. Standards and Food Safety – standards are the biggest impediment to the movement of food in Africa
- c. The African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement – presents a critical opportunity for Africa to increase its food security and improve the livelihoods of millions

2. Learning and thought leadership:

- a. Creating a trusted space for stakeholders in the food trade ecosystem to share challenges and lessons, and co-create solutions





TRUST MUFUNE
Ministry of Trade, Zambia

Increased intra-African food trade is a key solution to tackling the food importation dependency and strengthening food security, economic growth and shared prosperity.



CHILESHE KAPWEPWE
General Secretary, COMESA

When prudently managed, intra-African food trade can be a key force in building resilient food systems and sustainable economic growth on the continent.

On the sidelines of the General Assembly, the Coalition hosted two policy dialogues:

1. Policy Interventions During Times of Crisis

COVID-19 and the Russia – Ukraine Crisis caused significant disruptions around the world especially on Africa's food security. During times of crises, countries often implement export restrictions on food and agricultural markets as crises policy measures to stabilize domestic prices and to ensure food security.

Opening Remarks: Dr. Agnes Kalibata, President, AGRA

“ In the last few years, we have seen everything we know about trade put to the test, from COVID-19 to the Russia – Ukraine Crisis, to the associated challenges around food access and prices. Smallholder farmers can get out of poverty using the agricultural sector if the markets are available to them.

Can we build a Coalition that can make trade in the food sector possible? We need to go beyond aid partnerships, and go into trade-related partnerships that help us understand how they did it well, and how we can do it will, what we can learn from them, and how that can work for African smallholder farmers.



Guest of Honor: Nicholas Woolley, High Commissioner to Zambia, UK

“ The UK Government is proud to support the work of the Food Trade Coalition for Africa. It is a partnership we greatly value.

3 Messages:

1. Agility – effective responses to crisis and shocks require agility and building resilience in multiple ways;
2. Partnerships – effective responses to crisis and shocks depend on strong partnerships that are based on core pillars of context, coherence and committed leaderships;
3. Balance – effective responses to crisis and shocks call for striking a balance between actions needed now for impact and actions needed for impact in the longer-term to enhance food system resilience.



Key points

- During crisis, policy makers are faced with a policy dilemma – whether to prioritize the interests of producers or consumers – striking a balance requires consultations with a variety of stakeholders
- Use of data while engaging stakeholders is critical, including leveraging tools such as the Regional Food Balance Sheet Initiative (<https://rfbsa.com/>)



2. Addressing NTMs to Accelerate the Implementation of the AfCFTA

Context: The African Union Assembly, during its 36th Ordinary Session adopted the theme for 2023 as, “Year of the AfCFTA: Acceleration of Africa Continental Free Trade Area Implementation”. Critical to achieving this is addressing challenges around non-tariff measures (NTMs), which are the biggest bottle neck to intra-African food trade. This includes SPS procedures, import/export restrictions, state interventions in markets and inefficient customs procedures.

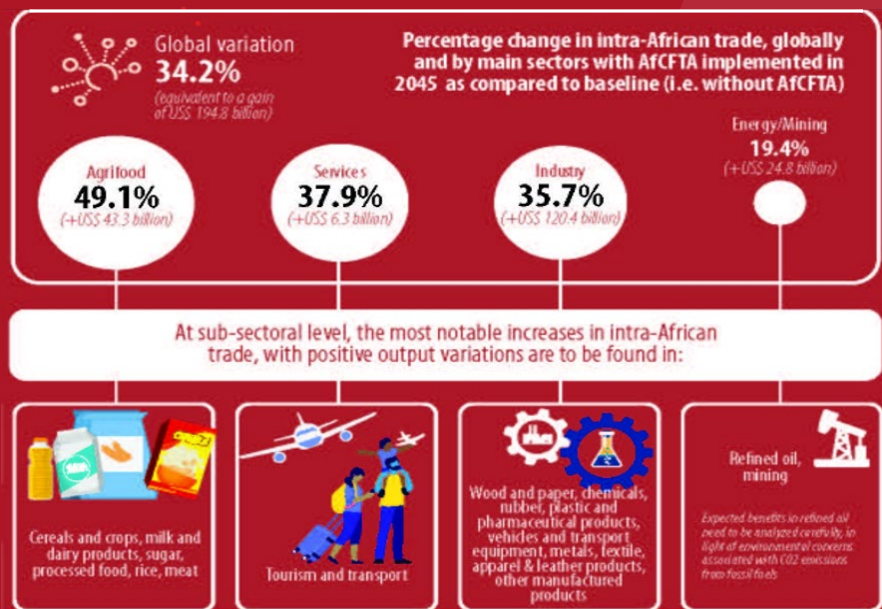
Some key points:

- From the private sector perspective, some of the key challenges include:
 - Inadequate supply of commodities

- Inconsistent application of SPS measures as well as quality standards
- Unpredictable fee levies
- Mutual Recognition Agreements establish the conditions or criteria and verification procedures for parties to recognize each other’s conformity assessment results
- Effective coordination between the AfCFTA Secretariat and the State Parties is paramount as a way of accelerating and keeping the AfCFTA implementation on track
- Critical to mount awareness campaigns for SMEs around the AfCFTA

Presentation by

Dr. Stephen Karingi,
Director, Regional Integration and
Trade, United Nations Economic
Commission for Africa



COMESA hosted the Inaugural Meeting of the Regional Food Balance Sheet Steering Committee

The meeting was graced by COMESA Assistant Secretary General Dr. Dev Haman and AGRA's Vice-President, Policy and State Capability, while the official opening was conducted by senior Ministry of Agriculture official representing the Permanent Secretary. All these officials lauded the RFBS platform as a decision-making support and early warning tool. They challenged the RFBS Committee members to adopt the draft terms of reference for the committee and set its own agenda in driving the RFBS Initiative as we embark on the journey of scaling of the RFBS platform to cover additional commodities and expanding into additional countries. They looked forward to this Committee coming up with a plan to further the development and implementation of the tool moving forward including sustainability considerations.

AGRA and RFBS Implementing partners provided an overview of the RFBS Initiative since inception and the progress made to date as well explaining to the committee members their specific roles. Key Takeaways:

- The Inaugural Regional Food Balance Sheet Steering Committee meeting considered and adopted the Draft Terms of Reference for the RFBS Steering Committee. The committee recommended

that the adopted TOR be presented by COMESA Secretariat to the Joint Technical Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources for approval.

- The Committee will be responsible for overseeing the successful implementation of the RFBS initiative, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders such as the COMESA member states, RFBS implementing partners, development partners, and the private sector.
- The preferred modality for private sector data ingestion by the member states is through apex bodies that will be represented in the Technical Working Groups in each country.
- A call was made for concerted efforts in supporting the RFBS initiative by timely submission of data from all national Governments and stakeholders.
- All the committee members were unanimous that sustainability of RFBS Initiative is paramount, and all efforts should be made with this mind.
- Building transparency, goodwill in data sharing among partners states as well as with the private sector is critical moving forward.



Africa Food Security Platform - Africa Food Security Technical Committee (AFS-TC)

The AFS-TC is a key organ to assist the Food Security Platform (AFSP) in fulfilling its strategic direction in the management of the continent's food and nutrition security through high level dialogues with governments, donors, private sector and other stakeholders. The technical committee was officially launched during its inaugural meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya on February 10th, 2023. The committee's main role will entail the review, collating and validation of data and knowledge products generated by member organizations and others, while also being able to identify gap areas and commission studies/analysis.

The AFSP will be working with AU member states to prepare well for pre-shock, during and post-shock situations including recovery measures around food and nutrition security. The AFSP is intended to fill the gap of lack of effective coordination mechanisms for responding to shocks the continent is facing. Membership to the technical committee comprises AUC, AGRA, 7 Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, EAC, ECCAS, IGAD, SADC, COMESA, UMA), Akademiya2063, African Development Bank, FEWSNET, UNECA, WFP, PAFO and NEPAD.

Some recommendations from the meeting:

1. The Committee will act as an advisory body to advise the Platform and inform food and nutrition security policy on the continent. Some of the existing tools include:

- a. AGRA's Regional Food Balance Sheet which has 6 countries of focus. AGRA has other products such as the Food Security Monitor and the Commodity Price and Policy Monitor that can be leveraged by the Platform
- b. Akademiya2063's crop production forecasting tool, Africa Agriculture Watch, which focuses on 47 countries
- c. FEWSNET's Data Explorer and Data Warehouse, which integrates different types of data. Price data is collected daily, and weekly.

2. The focus of the AFSP, and by extension the AFS-TC, should be both pre- and post-shock scenarios around food and nutrition security, ensuring that AU Member States are adequately prepared before, during and after the shocks.
3. There is need to clearly link the role of the AFSP to the Malabo Commitment to ensure the platform clearly falls in the CAADP process, at member state and regional level.
4. The activities of the committee should cover all aspects of food and nutrition security – availability, access/affordability and stability of access – with a focus on the following areas:
 - a. Early warning systems to inform the impending shock
 - b. Food and feed reserves as part of the response mechanism to shocks
 - c. Effective safety net programs for the marginalized groups
 - d. Stable and efficient national and regional markets
 - e. Effective and resilience food system with respect to production and productivity matters





food trade
coalition for
africa

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
Mumbi Gichuri, FTCA Coordinator
mgichuri@agra.org

WWW.FTCAFRICA.ORG

