

ROUND-TABLE SOMALIA

REPORT

CAPS ALLIANCE PROJECT



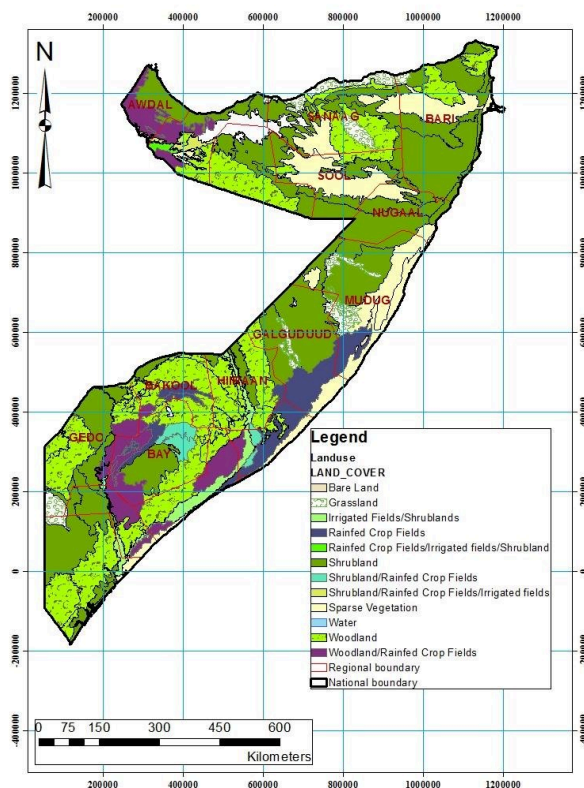
Background

Somalia's agriculture sector plays a vital role and is a key driver of its economy. More than two-thirds of the country's labor force is employed in the agriculture sector and it accounts for more than sixty percent of the country's productivity. Somalia's main agricultural sub-sectors (livestock, forestry, crops, and fishing).

Despite rising urbanization, over 49% of the population (6 million people) still lives in rural regions, with slightly more than half earning their living directly from nomadic pastoralism, slightly less than half from agricultural farming, and a considerably smaller share from fishing. The well-being of the surviving urban or internally displaced population is likewise heavily reliant on the consumption and trade of Somalia's cattle and allied goods, crops, and fisheries. The limited availability and sometimes inconsistency of the data have greatly constrained the analysis and consequently, solutions to address these agricultural productivity issues carried out in Somalia.

Introduction

The roundtable discussion on agricultural development in Somalia brought together key stakeholders from government ministries, international organizations, and local communities to assess the current state of the agricultural sector and identify opportunities for growth and resilience. This report summarizes the key findings and recommendations from the roundtable discussions.



The Sub-Saharan Africa MIP (2021-2027)

Priority area 3 – Green Transition

Africa is home to vast natural capital, unique biodiversity, and ecosystems. Population growth, linked with unsustainable economic growth and climate change is putting increasing pressure on already strained resources and causing more frequent natural hazards-related disasters, social unrest, conflict, displacement, and migration. The three planetary crises, climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are interlinked and inseparable. With the COVID-19 pandemic, these tensions and fragilities are further impacting African economies and societies.

The green transition and the fight against climate change and environmental degradation are therefore essential dimensions to stability. Actions related to the green transition, as diverse as they will likely be, will all require systemic and sustainable change in the fields of climate mitigation and resilience, energy, agri-food systems, sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems, environmental governance, sustainable raw materials value chains, sustainable water and land management, ocean governance, including sustainable fisheries, combating IUU fishing and the blue economy.

These sectors¹⁵ can generate transformation towards a low emissions and resilient growth path and a circular economy, thus contributing to green recovery. The EU support, across the different areas of the regional program, will foster a growth path that works for all people (in line with the rights-based approach, the principle of leaving no one behind, and the goal of reducing inequality) and respects the planet's ecological boundaries. These sectors also present a strong gender dimension that will be fully integrated at both strategic and operational levels. Youth also need to receive specific attention, not only as beneficiaries but also as key change actors.

Sustainable Agri-food systems

Agriculture contributes to 23 percent of the continent's GDP. It provides work for nearly 60 percent of the economically active population, with a significant proportion of women. Smallholders constitute the largest share of the 60 million farms on the continent. While

there is a large potential for job creation, young people do not always perceive agriculture as a profitable opportunity for livelihood. In 2019 there were more than 250 million undernourished people (more than 19 percent of the total population - up from 17.6 percent in 2014 and more than twice the world average, and 675 million people living in food insecurity in Africa). Overall, and without considering the effects of COVID-19, projected trends in undernourishment would change the geographic distribution of world hunger dramatically.

Africa would overtake Asia to become the region with the highest number of undernourished people (433 million), accounting for 51.5 percent of the total” (SOFI, FAO 2020). The performance of the agri-food sector is hindered by the lack of access to inputs and credit as well as land and water issues. Productivity is also affected by plant and animal diseases, climate change, environmental degradation, and natural disasters. This has a major impact on rural incomes, on the ability to meet increasing domestic demand (notably in cities), and on exports. Recurrent shocks are likely to become more frequent due to climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity loss and exacerbate the fragility of Sub-Saharan economies and societies.

These countries will likely continue to be confronted with the increasing tensions between current agricultural development strategies (that do not yet take regional climate change sufficiently into account), and forest conservation and restoration policies. Similar tensions are likely to occur between aquaculture/fisheries development strategies and unsustainable practices, increased competition among sea uses, and weak ocean governance.

Fisheries and aquaculture also offer opportunities for climate change adaptation. At the same time, agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture offer several entry points for climate adaptation. Under this component, the EU will contribute to developing a more sustainable agri-food system, inclusive of aquatic food systems, notably in line with the external dimension of the Farm to Fork Strategy and possibly the future of the EU-Africa Ocean Agenda that recognizes the close links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet.

Current State of Agriculture in Somalia

The roundtable participants highlighted the importance of agriculture to the livelihoods of half of Somalia's population and its critical role in food security and economic growth. Despite challenges such as climate change, conflict, and limited infrastructure, Somalia's vast arable land presents significant potential for agricultural development.

Challenges and Constraints

The roundtable discussions identified several challenges facing the agricultural sector in Somalia, including limited access to quality inputs, inadequate irrigation infrastructure, land tenure issues, and the impact of climate change on crop production. Additionally, the prevalence of piracy in coastal areas has hindered the development of the fisheries subsector.

The country's agriculture sector is heavily impacted by dilapidated infrastructure, environmental degradation, and climate change. The southern regions, in particular, face these obstacles, along with the effects of severe droughts in recent years.

The arid and semi-arid climate of Somalia, coupled with the increasing frequency and severity of weather shocks, pose a threat to agricultural production. Livestock and crop subsectors have been adversely affected by the degraded natural environment, droughts, floods, and lack of research and extension services. Crop production, in particular, has suffered due to these factors and the challenges posed by multiple legal systems and socio-cultural norms that hinder women's participation in agriculture.

Women in Somalia face numerous barriers to economic engagement, including limited access to financial resources, time poverty due to domestic responsibilities, lack of market research, and limited access to business networks. Narrowing gender gaps in agricultural production could have significant benefits for growth, poverty reduction, and food security.

Environmental degradation and climate change further exacerbate the challenges faced by Somalia's agriculture sector.[9] Diminishing flows of major rivers, caused by a drier climate and increased water usage upstream, threaten the growth of irrigated agriculture.[10]

Additionally, inadequate infrastructure, processing facilities, and transport links hinder the development of the fisheries sector.

Opportunities for Growth

The opportunities for growth in Somalia's agricultural sector are significant despite facing challenges such as poor infrastructure, low skills, weak security, and environmental degradation. The livestock and crop subsectors have been impacted by a fragile and degraded natural environment, extreme weather events, and a lack of research and extension services.

Participants emphasized the need for investment in flood control, irrigation systems, and improved seed quality to increase agricultural productivity and resilience to weather shocks. The potential for growth in the fisheries subsector was also highlighted, with recommendations for sustainable management of natural resources and support for small-scale fisherfolk.

However, there is potential for growth and development in various areas

1. **Livestock:** Somalia has a strong production and trade performance in live animals, which contrasts with weak performance in livestock products. There is an opportunity to improve the value addition and processing of livestock products to increase their market value and profitability.
2. **Crops:** While the crop subsector's performance is currently weak, there is high growth potential. By addressing challenges such as environmental degradation, climate change, and lack of research and extension services, crop production can be improved to contribute significantly to agricultural growth.
3. **Fisheries:** The fishery subsector in Somalia has good growth potential, but little is known about its performance. There is an opportunity to invest in fisheries management, supervision, monitoring, and infrastructure to support sustainable growth. Expanding fisheries, improving processing facilities, and enhancing market access can lead to increased economic opportunities in this sector.

4. Infrastructure and Institutions: Strengthening institutions, management, extension services, and infrastructure is crucial for supporting private investment in production and markets. By investing in infrastructure such as cold chains, processing facilities, and transport links, the agricultural sector can become more efficient and competitive.

By addressing the challenges faced by Somalia's agricultural sector and capitalizing on its growth potential, there are opportunities to rebuild resilient and sustainable agriculture. This can contribute to economic development, poverty reduction, peace-building, and improved food security in the country.

Recommendations for Action

1. Changes in Agricultural Productivity: Climate change in Somalia is projected to result in higher air temperatures, more variable and extreme rainfall, and drier conditions. These changes will have significant impacts on agricultural productivity. Higher temperatures will increase transpiration from the soil and water bodies, leading to reduced water availability for plant growth. More variable and extreme rainfall will result in erosion, runoff, and less groundwater recharge, further affecting crop yields. To address these challenges, interventions such as promoting climate-smart agriculture practices, improving irrigation systems, and enhancing water management are recommended to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change on agricultural productivity.

2. Impacts on Soil and Water Resources: Climate change in Somalia will exacerbate soil erosion, reduce groundwater recharge, and affect water availability for agriculture. These impacts will have detrimental effects on soil fertility, crop growth, and overall agricultural productivity. To address these challenges, interventions such as rehabilitating flood control and irrigation infrastructure, expanding rainwater catchment systems, and implementing soil erosion control measures are recommended. These actions will help to conserve soil and water resources, improve water availability for agriculture, and enhance soil fertility for sustainable crop production.

3. Impacts on Agrobiodiversity: Climate change in Somalia will also impact agrobiodiversity by reducing vegetation for grazing, changing water availability, and affecting livestock herding practices. These changes will have negative consequences for livestock herding and related livelihoods. Additionally, rising sea temperatures and acidification will impact fish

stocks and distribution, affecting the marine biodiversity in Somalia's waters. To address these challenges, interventions such as promoting sustainable land management practices, conserving biodiversity hotspots, and enhancing livestock management techniques are recommended. These actions will help to preserve agrobiodiversity, support sustainable livestock production, and protect marine ecosystems in Somalia.

Based on the discussions, the roundtable report proposes the following recommendations for enhancing agricultural development in Somalia:

1. Strengthening flood control and irrigation infrastructure to improve water management and increase crop yields.
2. Enhancing seed quality and pest management practices to boost agricultural productivity.
3. Addressing land tenure issues to clarify ownership rights and promote sustainable land use practices.
4. Supporting the growth of the fisheries subsector through sustainable management practices and capacity-building for fisherfolk.

Conclusion

By addressing key challenges and seizing growth opportunities, Somalia can rebuild a resilient and sustainable agricultural sector that benefits rural communities and contributes to overall economic growth.