



**KEY NOTE PERSPECTIVES**

**BY**

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**MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, IRRIGATION AND WATER DEVELOPMENT**

**ON SUPPORTING COUNTRY AND REGIONAL POLICY**

**DURING**

**THE CELEBRATION OF IFPRI AT 40**

**WASHINGTON DC, USA**

**WASHINGTON MARRIOTT WARDMAN PARK HOTEL, 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2015**

- **The Master of Ceremony: Rajul Pandya Lorch**
- **The PFPRI Board Chairperson: Professor Kym Anderson**
- **The Director General of IFPRI, Dr. Shenggen Fan**
- **The Director for Development Strategy and Governance Division, Dr. Paul Dorosh**
- **Director for Africa, Dr Ousmane Badiane**
- **My Fellow Ministers from Guatemala and the People's Republic of Bangladesh**
- **The President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

- ❖ It is a great honour for me to be part of this great event to celebrate forty (40) years of the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) work under the banner "IFPRI at 40, Looking Back, Looking Forward"
- ❖ The theme for the event is very relevant indeed because there is a lot that can be learned from what the institution has achieved in the past to inform future engagements.

- ❖ Let me at this point congratulate IFPRI through the Director General for the great achievements and contribution to agricultural development policy which is key in many developing economies.
  
- ❖ In my country for instance, the agriculture sector contributes about 30 percent towards Gross Domestic Product (GDP), over 60 percent of the Foreign Exchange Earnings as well over 80 percent of employment. It also remains a single most important source of livelihood for our people who mainly live in the rural areas.
  
- ❖ Despite, the sector's importance and huge potential to contribute to the developing economies, the sector faces enormous challenges that limit its expansion and growth. Such challenges include lack of information, lack of access to markets, lack of access to inputs and improved technologies, lack of access to credit facilities, changing climatic patterns and limited mechanization. Due to these challenges the sector experiences low productivity leaving huge populations trapped in poverty with low levels of income and poor nutrition.
  
- ❖ **Ladies and Gentlemen**, the role of IFPRI in guiding agriculture policy through research solutions to sustainably reduce poverty

and arrest hunger and malnutrition in developing countries cannot be overemphasized. By focusing on the six strategic areas of research i.e. ensuring sustainable food production; promoting healthy food systems; improving markets and trade; transforming agriculture; building resilience; strengthening institutions and governance; IFPRI is ensuring comprehensive evidence based policy approach to resolve challenges surrounding agriculture.

❖ **Ladies and Gentlemen**, let me now turn to Malawi's experience with IFPRI. Malawi is grateful to IFPRI for the work that has been done to contribute to national policy development.

- Our association dates back to 1992 with outposting of Dr. Suresh Bapu who was a Post-doctoral Fellow at Cornell University. He worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development on a Food and Nutrition Information System with support from and in collaboration with UNICEF, the World Bank and USAID. Suresh also engaged with Bunda College, providing training on policy analysis, until 1994. This has remained an important feature of the institution providing national capacity for both policy formulation and research.

- As a carry-on of the UNICEF project, Dr Manfred Zeller, an IFPRI Research Fellow, came to Malawi to do research on rural credit systems as part of a global research program on rural finance and food security. Dr Manfred Zeller was joined later in 1995 by IFPRI post-doctoral fellow, Aliou Diagne and the two also worked at our national agriculture college providing classes and supervising field research of a group of young agricultural economists who are now in relatively prominent positions in Malawi and around Africa.
- IFPRI was also instrumental in setting up the Master's Degree Program at the then constituent college of the University of Malawi, Bunda College of Agriculture which today trains the bulk of agricultural sector practitioners providing technical support to farmers or working in research, academia or food and agricultural policy advocacy.
- In 1999, Dr Todd Benson led a project which conducted the first national poverty and welfare analysis for Malawi using the Malawi Integrated Household Survey of 1998 (IHS 1). There were carry over activities which continued through about 2004 and included extensive high-resolution poverty mapping work and design of the

questionnaire for the next round of the Integrated Household Survey in 2004.

- While there was no IFPRI staff based in Malawi between 2001 and 2009, work by external IFPRI researchers continued including providing training on and implementing a Social Accounting Matrix for use in an economy-wide model for Malawi, and by several researchers under the Regional Network on HIV/AIDS, Livelihoods, and Food Security (RENEWAL) project.
- My Ministry is now hosting the Malawi Strategy Support Programme of IFPRI since 2009. The project financed by the USAID has focused on policy-relevant research, technical support, and policy communications. IFPRI's presence has since broadened areas of support to the Ministry including various studies on agriculture and nutrition linkages in partnership with the World Food Programme, and a long-term study on the Food-Energy-Water Nexus. These activities are complemented by a new policy support project, the New Alliance Policy Acceleration Support (NAPAS) in partnership with Michigan State University (MSU), which supports my Ministry through high-level policy engagement and technical advice.

❖ **Ladies and Gentlemen**, IFPRI was also instrumental when Malawi was preparing its agriculture sector investment framework. Development of the framework was informed by analysis to define the priority options for investment. IFPRI supported this process through development of the economy-wide Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model using commodity scenarios. Based on this model the investment framework selected the maize led strategy to contribute to the CAADP growth and poverty reduction targets.

❖ **Ladies and Gentlemen**, our association with IFPRI has yielded some results. These include:

- through analytical work, IFPRI has helped place poverty and food and nutrition security at the top of the agenda; thanks to IFPRI and other partners' contributions we now have a better understanding of the determinants of poverty and food and nutrition insecurity as well as the important role that agriculture plays in enhancing outcomes in these areas
- through research contributions and engagement in policy debates, IFPRI has been part of several key policy reform outcomes or policy reform processes; for example: the adoption of a more liberalized stance on exchange rate

policy; reforms to the way the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) is implemented; and the drafting and hopefully imminent adoption of a new National Agriculture Policy.

- Increased capacity for policy formulation and analysis and national level through training support

❖ **Ladies and Gentlemen**, turning to the regional stage, IFPRI has also played a very critical role. Through the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS), established in 2006 under the CAADP, it supports efforts to promote evidence and outcomes based policy planning and implementation as part of the CAADP agenda. In Africa for instance, through its regional offices in West Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa, it facilitates focused analysis of the agriculture sector outcomes against CAADP targets.

❖ IFPRI has also supported assessments of the agricultural Joint Sector Reviews to advance the CAADP accountability framework. These JSRs promote the mutual accountability mechanisms in the agriculture sector ensuring that all stakeholder are accountable for both resources and outcomes.

❖ Finally **Ladies and Gentlemen**, let me underscore that IFPRI has been instrumental and remains relevant today and future

agriculture policy. The outcomes of IFPRI are very important since they are research and evidence based and therefore they interventions informed by the analysis are more likely to succeed than those that are not guided by any research.

With these remarks

I thank you for your kind attention.