

# Foreword

African leaders have long recognized the central role of agriculture and agrifood systems in advancing the continent's development aspirations. Improving agricultural productivity has therefore been a cornerstone of strategies to reduce poverty, foster inclusive growth, and promote structural transformation.

This commitment was formalized in 2003, through the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, which saw the establishment of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and reinforced by the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation, and most recently, the 2025 Kampala Declaration on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa, which lays out a continentwide strategy for the next decade of CAADP implementation. Public investment in agricultural research increased steadily in the early 2000s, with public-sector research spending averaging more than US\$2 billion annually across Sub-Saharan Africa during the first 15 years of the new millennium. Yet, compared with other regions, the transformative potential of agriculture-led inclusive growth has not yet been fully realized.

Persistent structural weaknesses, combined with climate change, environmental degradation, and geopolitical shocks, continue to threaten food security, livelihoods, and inclusive development across Africa. How the continent responds to these cluttering pressures will determine not only its ability to eradicate hunger and poverty, but also its position in a rapidly transforming global economy.

Experiences from across the globe demonstrate that sustained, inclusive economic growth can be achieved through agriculture-led development. Beginning with the Green Revolution of the late twentieth century, these regions achieved substantial gains in agricultural output, largely driven by improvements in total factor productivity. These productivity gains laid the foundation for structural transformation, poverty reduction, and broader economic diversification.

African states still invest much less in agriculture, below the CAADP target of allocating 10 percent of national budgets to agriculture, even though public investment has risen to double the levels seen in the 1990s. The dominant development paradigm has often focused narrowly on input subsidies, isolated technology transfers, and ad hoc institutional reforms, without fully addressing the structural and political-economic constraints that inhibit the diffusion of innovation and inclusive growth.

The adoption of the Kampala Declaration and the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035) marks a renewed and ambitious commitment to accelerate productivity growth, strengthen resilience, expand value addition and trade, and harness science, technology, and innovation as drivers of transformation.

Africa's transformation challenge is not only technical, but also institutional and political. Technologies deliver impact only when embedded in capable institutions, coherent policies, effective governance, and inclusive, supportive innovation systems.

The 2025 Annual Trends and Outlook Report (ATOR 2025), “*Moving the Technology Frontiers in African Agrifood Systems*,” advances a systems perspective on innovation, emphasizing that the true technology frontier lies at the intersection of digital, biological, engineering, and ecological innovations with institutional reform, political learning, and accountable governance. From artificial intelligence (AI), digital agriculture, and biotechnology to mechanization, irrigation, value addition, and circular bio-based systems, the report demonstrates that Africa's challenge is not a lack of promising technologies, but the need to adapt, govern, and scale them in ways that are inclusive, climate-resilient, and economically viable.

The 17th edition of the ATOR also highlights the critical role of public investment, regional cooperation, and partnerships with the private sector, producer organizations, research institutions, and development partners. Strong agricultural research and development systems, coherent seed and regulatory frameworks, empowered producer organizations, and robust data and accountability mechanisms are indispensable for translating innovation

into broad-based impact. In this regard, the report reinforces the centrality of CAADP as Africa's flagship framework for aligning policy, investment, and accountability around a shared continental vision.

Produced annually by AKADEMIYA2063 in collaboration with national, regional, and international partners through the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) program, the ATOR is the official monitoring and evaluation report for CAADP, tracking progress, informing policy dialogue, and supporting evidence-based decision-making. The 17th edition comes at a critical and opportune moment, as countries move to operationalize the Kampala Declaration and translate the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035) into concrete national and regional actions.

It is our hope that ATOR 2025 will serve as a strategic reference for policymakers, planners, investors, researchers, and practitioners, and contribute meaningfully to building more productive, resilient, and equitable agrifood systems across Africa.



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