

GHANA

Strategy Support Program



Overview

SESSION SUMMARY

The Ghana Strategy Support Program hosted the 'Transforming Agriculture Conference' in Accra on Nov 8-9. The central question was how to effect structural transformation both within agriculture and across sectors in Ghana. This was the culmination of over 5 years of policy research by IFPRI's Ghana Strategy Support Program, which has sought to answer this question by focusing on how the activities of government and private sector in key areas can be best designed to support agricultural transformation. The previous work of GSSP provided models of various scenarios of growth, from which two key reference points for supporting broad-based growth emerged: (i) smallholder inclusiveness and (ii) food security linked to poverty alleviation. The Government of Ghana's medium term investment plan, METASIP, provides guidance for agricultural investment; however, the government needs support to critically examine various components and implement them.

The conference consisted of 10 panel discussions with over 30 accompanying briefs. Participants included parliamentarians, staff of Ministry of Food and Agriculture and Ministry of Finance, development partners, commercial farmers, foreign investors and national researchers. The format for the sessions was brief introduction of the key issues by panelists to inform discussion among all participants on the topic. This format worked well and participation was excellent. Topics included: structural transformation, how to increase productivity (seeds, machinery, FBOs, irrigation, and the complementarity of these inputs), political economy of improving investment in agriculture, potential for

agro-processing, organizational capacity, and entrepreneurship in agriculture.

Issues emerging from the conference were:

- The need for government to shift its focus away from direct intervention in market transactions, to investing in infrastructure and research. The boundaries between the role of public and private sector need to be re-examined.
- Agriculture sector needs to become more competitive as demand is shifting from subsistence to urban market orientation, and imports are increasing.
- More research needs to be done to understand changing land and labor markets.
- Several interesting cases of successful farming businesses were presented, highlighting government interventions which have worked (such as irrigation infrastructure investment, good research and extension services).
- Farming in Ghana is diverse across crops, agro-ecological areas as well as proximity to markets and ports. Government policies such as fertilizer subsidy and rural infrastructure need to be better targeted to the areas and farmers which actually benefit from the policies.
- Institutional issues arose such as a need to improve coordination across government ministries, as well as institutionalizing the demand and creation of evidence-based policy research.

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