ENHANCING CAPACITY BUILDING FOR FOOD SECURITY: THE ROLE OF PRIVATE AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES IN KENYA

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EAMARC3 conference held at United States International University-Africa, Nairobi from 15th - 17th November 2016
BACKGROUND

- Enhancing capacity building for food security is one of the ways of eradicating hunger and realising UN sustainable development goal of Zero hunger.

- Mohajan (2014), one of the backbones of Kenya’s economy is the agriculture sector which has seen to contribute up to 26% of the GDP of Kenya and it also supplies up to 65% of Kenya’s total exports and provides approximately 18% of the employment formally.

- While food insecurity still remains a big concern in Kenya according to FEWSNET (2016), the role of private agricultural companies in enhancing the capacity building to address food security has not been critically studied to ascertain their impact since they can facilitate services and programs efficiently to ensure profitability of the sector.
PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The desk research was conducted to analyse the role of the private agricultural companies in Kenya in enhancing capacity building to reduce food security and it was organised around the following four objectives which are presented sequentially as follows:

- Promoting partnerships to provide agricultural training and educational programs.
- Enhancing strategies for agricultural biological diversity.
- Providing stakeholders opportunities to participate in the development and implementation of agricultural policies.
- Promoting networks for exchange of information and experiences.
Partnerships to provide agricultural training and educational programs

- **Research** - According to Kenya Agricultural Sector Development Strategy 2010–2020, the agricultural research system comprises of collaborations between the public and private agricultural research institutions geared at enhancing productivity, product quality and safety.

- **Technical and managerial capacity building** - According to FAO (2016), decentralisation policies have transferred authority and the private agricultural companies have partnered with governmental bodies with the assistance of local extension officers to promote new crops or improved varieties for production, and provide technical production training from basic agronomic skills to executive agribusiness training.
Partnerships to provide agricultural training and educational programs

- **Curriculum development** - World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements Seminar in March 2016 indicated that private agricultural companies such as Eastern Africa Grain Council are creating partnerships with the EAC to develop agricultural related training curriculum programs.

- **Compliance** - World Bank report (2005), private agricultural companies in Kenya have also partnered with the non-governmental organisations and the public sector in increasing capacity building in the level of compliance with quality, grading and food safety standards which improves productivity, quality, yield, and revenues from agricultural produce and exports.
Strategies for agricultural biological diversity

- Biodiversity and ecosystem services are at the heart of many solutions to sustainable increase in agricultural productivity and they reduce negative environmental externalities of production according to the United Nations (2016).

- According to Kumaraswamy (2013), in order to achieve food security, farming systems have assumed unsustainable practices to produce more from a finite land area and this has been cause for concern due to the irreversible damage done to the otherwise productive agricultural landscapes.

- Intervene and mitigate - Private agricultural companies according to Kumaraswamy (2013) intervene and mitigate by creating awareness on integrating biodiversity with agricultural landscapes in order to implement offset mechanisms, which are balancing approaches to restore the ecological health and function of an ecosystem.
Stakeholders opportunities to participate in the development and implementation of agricultural policies

- According to Futures Agricultures (2006), agricultural policy in Kenya revolves around increasing productivity and income growth, especially for smallholders; enhanced food security and equity, emphasis on irrigation to introduce stability in agricultural output, commercialisation and intensification of production especially among small scale farmers.

- Private agricultural companies provide stakeholders opportunities in the development of agricultural polices by creating **platforms for policy dialogues** since the emerging trend in the policy formulation process points to a more participatory, consultative and inclusive development process. Eg. Through KEPSA
Networks for exchange of information and experiences

- One of the strategies for exchange of information that private agricultural companies have come up with is the provision of market information systems. E.g. Regional Agriculture Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN)

- Grain Trade Business Directory - increase regional market efficiency and structure trade, as well as facilitate the sharing of information between all grain actors within the value chain.

- The private agricultural companies have also organised summits, agricultural expos as a way of sharing information and experiences
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The private sector is vibrant in nature and full of potential and Kenya offers good opportunities especially in the agricultural sector but very little has been documented by the private agricultural companies in the role that they have played in the four objectives hence not fully able to assess their impact since this was a desk research that used secondary data from the internet.

- There is need for further research that will collect primary data and perspectives from the private agricultural companies to validate evidence and facts gathered through secondary data to show the role and impact gained in their involvement in the agricultural sector.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For the private agricultural companies to fully exploit their role in enhancing capacity building for food security they need to have government support in terms of legal frameworks to assist especially in policy formulation.

Appropriate policies should provide for the changed role of Government as a facilitator and regulator of agricultural activities so there is cohesion and coordination of activities with the private agricultural companies without duplication of effort.

With Kenya having the Kenya Agricultural Sector Development Strategy 2010–2020, private agricultural companies need to plug in to the different strategies outlined since those are clear government priorities and propose partnership with the government in the support and initiatives outlined be it training, provision of market information, provision of networking opportunities, policy formulation and implementation.
REFERENCES

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THANK YOU!!!

FOR YOU ATTENTION..........................