

Integrated Rural Development in Africa

Paper written by **Joseph Kwame Baah-Dwomoh**



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Integrated Rural Development in Africa Back to the Future?

Joseph Kwame Baah-Dwomoh

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABC	Brazilian Agency of Cooperation
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AfDB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program
CCCE	Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique
CDD	Community-Driven Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
EU	European Union
FAC	Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRD	Integrated Rural Development
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Project
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (of Uganda)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OED	Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank (currently IEG)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SARD	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

1.0 Introduction

The objective of this background paper is to review the general approach followed by Governments and donors to support African agriculture and rural development over the last several decades. It focuses in particular on evaluating the integrated rural development (IRD) approach that was used in Africa especially during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s but was heavily criticized and partially abandoned from the late-1980s. The paper looks at the difficulties that the approach encountered and what lessons came out of the extensive evaluation of projects using the integrated rural development approach. The paper looks at the different approaches that have evolved since around 1990 to support African agriculture and rural development including how the lessons learned from the implementation of the IRDs have been incorporated in the design and implementation of these new rural development programs. The paper finally seeks to answer the question whether there may be better approaches to designing programs and projects to support agricultural growth and development in Africa than the integrated rural development approach or whether this approach needs to be revisited as a means of putting agriculture at the center of processes to transform rural Africa and promote growth of the rural sector.

1.1 The Concept of Rural Development

Rural development is often taken to denote development activities and initiatives that are taken by governments, donors, non-governmental organizations, and communities with the objective of improving the standard of living in rural areas such as non-urban neighborhoods, countryside, and remote villages. In these areas, agriculture is often the main or most prominent occupation, with the main focus of economic activities relating generally to the primary sector, production of foodstuffs and raw materials.

Rural development programs have been around since the 1950s but the concept was brought to the forefront of development in the 1970s by Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank. During a speech to the Bank's Board of Governors in 1973 in Nairobi, he emphasized the alarming situation of the absolute poor in the developing world and proposed a rigorous approach to fight this poverty. The strategy he outlined for this poverty reduction or elimination was to be centered on an integrated approach to rural development. The World Bank therefore vigorously championed the cause of rural development in the 1970s defining rural development as: "a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people- the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and landless" (World Bank, 1975).

Following McNamara's 1973 speech, the World Bank adopted a rural development strategy in 1975 (World Bank, 1975) which was a major element not only in the Bank's poverty alleviation initiative, playing a dominant role in its lending during the 1970s and 1980s, but influenced in a major way other donor support for agriculture and rural development. Governments and donors saw rural development as a strategy to improve the economic and social life of people in the rural areas, specifically the rural poor. Rural development has therefore been expected to extend the benefits of development to all those seeking a livelihood in rural areas including smallholders, tenants and the landless. Since rural development's basic intention is to reduce poverty and to strengthen human wellbeing in rural areas, it must clearly be designed not only to promote production and

raise productivity to increase food availability and incomes, but also to improve basic services such as health and education as well as infrastructure. The concept of a rural development program therefore is seen as extending beyond any particular activity or single sector. A program of rural development, whether at the area, regional or national level is expected to include a mix of activities including projects or programs to increase agricultural productivity and production, provide employment, improve health, education and infrastructure, expand communications and improve housing.

Given the above expectations of rural development programs, it was commonly agreed that a successful rural development program would demand some form of coordinated development at the rural level and therefore this led to the introduction of the concept of integrated rural development (IRD), a model that emphasized coordinating the various sectoral actions of the state at the local level. Because of its nature, IRD became a complex and multisectoral model, the success of which was dependent on the interaction of multiple factors and performance of different entities, whose integration are a necessary prerequisite to effective implementation.

1.2 Recent Approaches for Financing Rural Development in Africa

The general approach followed by Governments and donors to support African agriculture and rural development has evolved over time. The approach has evolved from emphasis on technology transfer with the hope that development would have some trickle down effects, through emphasizing poverty alleviation using a development focus on rural areas, to an integrated approach to such rural development. When people began to question the lack of impact of the integrated rural development approach, the latter was replaced by market liberalization through structural adjustment programs and as a consequence, direct support for agriculture and rural development, either by donors or Governments, declined substantially. Starting in the mid-1980s, the agriculture sector was neglected by both governments and the donor community, including the World Bank, which was the largest single donor in the sector. A World Bank Report on aid to the sector indicates that “bilateral and multilateral donor aid for development of African agriculture declined by about half from \$1,921 million in 1981 to \$997 million in 2001 (in 2001 dollars)¹.”

Moving away from the integrated rural development approach from the 1990s, donor strategy for agriculture especially in Africa was increasingly subsumed within a broader rural focus, which diminished the importance of the agricultural sector. Donor support for agriculture was “sprinkled” across various agricultural activities such as research, extension, credit, seeds, and policy reforms in rural space, but with little recognition of the potential synergy among them and the need for integration even among agricultural subsectors to effectively contribute to agricultural development. Funding for rural development in general moved into a phase of community-driven development with emphasis on participation and empowerment and systems to diversify rural livelihood opportunities.

Since the mid-1990s, community-driven development (CDD) has emerged as one of the fastest-growing approaches to rural development led by investments by NGOs, aid organizations and multilateral developments banks. The interest in the CDD approach stems from the recognition

¹ World Bank (2007): World Bank Assistance to Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa: An IEG Review.

that large-scale, bottom-up and demand-driven, poverty reduction subprojects can increase the institutional capacity of small communities for self-development. Intensive forms of community participation especially in Africa have been attempted in projects funded by several donors for many years. These include multilaterals such as the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), the Africa Development Bank (AfDB); the European Union (EU), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the World Bank. Bilateral donors, such as the French Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), have used CDD-type approaches for a long time as well, as part of their sustainable livelihoods and integrated basic needs development assistance in developing countries. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Danish International Development Agency have also used CDD principles in the mandate of a rights-based approach to the development projects they fund².

Some notable and successful CDD projects in Africa include the Benin National Community-Driven Development Project, the Nigeria Second National Fadama Development Project II (NFDP-II); the Morocco National Initiative for Human Development (INDH);

Though investment lending to the agricultural sector in general was limited from the 1990s, donors continued funding rural projects with agriculture components. While the integrated rural development projects of the 1970s and 80s came in for severe criticism about their lack of success, the success rate for the agricultural projects funded in Africa in the 1990s appear to have been only marginally better. The World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) data show that the percentage of satisfactory outcome ratings for World Bank funded largely agricultural investment projects in Africa during 1991–2006 was lower than that for non-agriculture investments in the Region (60 against 65 percent satisfactory). The satisfactory rate of just 60 percent was also lower than the percentage for similar investment projects in other Bank Regions (73 percent satisfactory)³. One of the key disturbing findings of the IEG Report was that the lending support provided by the World Bank did not reflect the interconnected nature of agriculture activities, an element that the IRD projects had tried to address earlier.

More recent approaches in funding agriculture and rural development have included Development Policy Loans with agriculture components or with agriculture as the main target sector, environment and natural resource management, infrastructure-oriented competitiveness improvement programs and Sector Wide approaches to agricultural development that aim to support single sector policy and also expenditure programs in support of the agricultural sector. In all these approaches there are still programs and projects (especially those with strong community participation) that practice the coordinated or integrated approach and that seem to be having a good impact on the communities where they are being implemented.

² The CDD approach has also become a preferred operational strategy in post-conflict and fragile situations, where CDD operations have been used for economic reconstruction, supporting local coalition building, strengthening relations between the state and citizens at the local level, and fostering social cohesion, in several countries, including, Angola, Burundi, Sudan, and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

³ World Bank (2007): World Bank Assistance to Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa: An IEG Review.

2.0 International Experience and Approaches to Rural Development over Time⁴

Rural development is a term that is sufficiently vague to allow the user to let it mean what she or he wants it to mean. Nevertheless there are a number of definitions that have been developed over the years, the majority of which aim for simplicity. Most of these definitions however regard rural development as a development approach that aims at leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor.

The literature on rural development is characterized by a mix of “how ‘development’ should or might occur, and real world efforts to put various aspects of development into practice.” (Potter, 2002: 61). The history of rural development globally follows closely the different approaches to development briefly, as the different approaches outlined below by decade demonstrate⁵.

Hence it is often said that broadly, the:

- The 1950s and the 1960’s are associated with modernization approaches emphasizing technology transfer
- 1970’s are associated with large scale state development interventions and integrated rural development programs
- 1980’s are associated with market liberalization and attempts to roll back the state
- 1990’s are characterized as being strongly process focused with an emphasis on participation and empowerment within a context of diversifying rural livelihood opportunities. By the end of the 1990s a more balanced approach had started to emerge but there remained no agreement worldwide on how to get the right mix.
- 2000’s have a focus of poverty eradication, reinvigoration of small holder agriculture, sustainable farming systems and the location of producers within global value chains.

The Decade of the 1950s. Starting in the 1950s, the key ideas informing approaches to rural development revolved around the need to modernize rural areas with the idea that the small scale subsistence sector had little potential for improved productivity or growth and that agriculture development could only be stimulated by investment in large scale monocrop estates and plantations. Community development approaches that aimed to mobilize rural communities for development were prevalent. Much rural development thinking was premised on the notion of the need to change the work ethic of the small peasant whose ‘backward attitudes’ were regarded as the primary obstacle to rural development. The earliest interventions~ in the agricultural sectors in Africa focused on commodity, or “export crop” projects aimed to increase the production of export crops by smallholders, and were financed by European commercial companies, development

⁴ This section draws heavily on a very interesting and useful paper on a comprehensive literature review on issues of rural development for The Drakenstein Municipality of South Africa in 2009 by Phuhlisani Solutions Consulting Group. The evolution by decade in rural development thinking was first presented by Frank Ellis and Stephen Biggs (2001)

⁵ Ellis and Biggs (2001) who neatly presented the different approaches and priorities of rural development by decade in a table form caution that rural policies have not evolved in such a neat, linear and schematic manner and that “development ideas are not trapped in time capsules conveniently organized in decades. Ideas that first appear in one decade may gain strength in the following decade and only affect development ten or fifteen years after they were first put forward.” They also emphasize that approaches may not fit into a clear linear and schematic model as they show and that “there are leads and lags in the transmission of new ideas across space and time.”

corporations and/or national governments⁶.

The 1960s saw high expectations of the promise of technology with a focus on technology transfer focused on large scale, input intensive agriculture based on packages of higher yielding hybrid seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, mechanization and post-harvest technologies which came to be known as the Green Revolution in Asia. The period was also characterized by methods to try to get rural farmers to adopt new technologies and farming practices through stepped up efforts in agricultural extension. The approach to extension however largely ignored local and indigenous knowledge, farming systems and tenure arrangements and also targeted mostly men overlooking the fact that much agricultural work was done by women. The decade also saw a re-evaluation of the contribution of small scale agriculture to economic growth with a number of people arguing that small scale agriculture could in fact be the engine for economic development in developing countries. Farming systems research during this period began to portray small scale farmers as rational managers of risk and change rather than being “lazy” as they had hitherto been perceived.

Towards the end of the decade however, there were beginning to be concerns raised about the success and sustainability of the ‘green revolution’ as well as concerns about its impact on smallholder farmers and on the environment. In Africa however it was apparent that, despite large investments in crop research and production (particularly the introduction of high yielding and fast-maturing varieties), there was little improvement in the productivity and incomes of the majority of subsistence and low-income farmers. Developments in crop production in Africa had mainly been on export oriented crops and food crop production had not benefitted as much and hence a number of families had been unable to gain acceptable livelihoods in the rural areas. Some integrated rural development projects were therefore started in the late 1960s financed principally by donor agencies with autonomous project units and planned and implemented to a large extent by expatriates. These included projects such as the Chilalo Agricultural Development Project (CADP), and the Wolamo Agricultural Development Project (WADP) in Ethiopia, the Lilongwe Land Development Program (LLDP) in Malawi, and the seven Zones d’Action Prioritaires Intégrées (ZAPI) and Société de Développement de Nkam (SODENKAM) settlement schemes, both in Cameroon. The Kenya’s Special Rural Development Program and the Tanzania Ujamaa movement represented a second type of integrated projects in this era but implemented through existing government administrative structures.

In the decade of the 1970s, development practitioners concluded that despite more than a decade of rapid growth in underdeveloped countries, there had been little or no benefit to most of the poor who were being bypassed. A number of Africa’s agricultural sectors were characterized as dual economy structures with the parallel operations of a relatively advanced export crop sector and a relatively backward subsistence sector. Development practitioners then proposed a shift of emphasis to ways in which resources could be transferred to poorer groups in society either by direct transfer or through targeted investments in agriculture, education and health that would increase the productive capacity, production and incomes of the poorer groups. Basic needs approaches representing a shift of emphasis towards social services and transfer

⁶ Examples of projects during this early period included: (i) The Kenya Tea Development Authority (RIDA) established in 1960 by the Kenya government, assisted by foreign loans (ii) The development of smallholder tobacco production in Urambo, Tanzania, by the Tanzanian Agricultural Corporation in 1951, and in Tumbi, nearby, by the British and American Tobacco Company, in 1954; (iii) development of cotton production in Mali in 1952 by the government with assistance from the Compagnie Française pour le Développement des Fibres et Textiles (CFDT) and a similar scheme for groundnut production, “Operation Arachide”, started in 1967 by the Bureau pour le Développement de Production Agricole (BDPA).

payments, designed to help the poor gained ascendancy. As part of this process, the decade was also characterized by large scale, complex, state led, top down, blueprint approaches to rural development. These placed emphasis on the development of interlocking national policies and institutions to guide and regulate development planning and support, generally referred to as integrated rural development (IRD) projects. During the period also, most policies were state-driven and farmers got a lot of support for extension, input supply, and for marketing of outputs. These were provided through parastatals in the form of controlled floor prices and subsidized inputs which protected local producers and stimulated production. Extension services during this period continued to be provided by the parastatals or other government agencies, but now started to incorporate new approaches which were more gender sensitive and which built on local knowledge.

The World Bank's Rural Development Strategy adopted in 1975 seems to have led the way in terms of the main approach to rural development financing. The strategy had a major influence on the Bank's lending program and operational policies and eventually on the lending approach of other development finance institutions both bilateral and multilateral. The new strategy made the Bank shift the focus of its development efforts towards smallholders. The earlier financing pattern had been one of supporting mostly large-scale agricultural production or plantations, although donors and governments had started financing some smallholder projects in the 1960s, especially those that were export oriented. This change in emphasis by the Bank influenced a similar evolution among other donors and borrowing governments and was a notable achievement of the rural development strategy⁷.

In broader terms while the impact of the strategy was appropriate and effective, it was felt more in Asia than in Africa. However rural people in Africa did benefit from rural infrastructure investments, with increases in food production in several countries, and approaches developed to help subsistence farmers.

Most of the projects during the decade in the form of integrated rural development projects were often too complex and overwhelmed the weak management capacity of state institutions of a number of African countries, including the parastatals set up to manage them. Many became technocratic and remote from local people's needs. Programs became dependent on external expertise from donor countries for their design, implementation and management. A number of projects failed due to serious institutional weaknesses, and progress was slowest where most needed—in Sub-Saharan Africa. A lot of the IRD projects therefore achieved disappointing results.

The Decade of the 1980s saw the advent of the international debt crisis caused by the steep oil price rise of the 1970s. This forced developing countries to increase the levels of their borrowing with very dim prospects for repayment. International development agencies led by the Bretton Woods Institutions (IMF and the World Bank (WB)) introduced the structural adjustment programs (SAP). The WB shifted the bulk of its lending to focus on stabilization and to support economic and structural reforms. These reforms, based on deregulation, liberalization and fiscal discipline, were designed to engineer a policy environment which would be conducive to the private sector,

⁷ The other main donors that were active in financing agriculture and rural development projects were the French Caisse Centrale de Coopération Economique (CCCE) and Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération (FAC) in several instances in cofinancing with the World Bank; the British Department for International Development (DfiD), through the Commonwealth Development Cooperation, the African Development Bank from the mid-1960s, USAID, and several other bilaterals.

economic growth and development. The SAPs advocated the progressive removal of price and wage controls and the reduction in government expenditure on social services. This led to a shrinking state in development especially in Africa with very significant impact on Government involvement in rural development. The structural reforms led to the dismantling of a large number of parastatals and marketing agencies, input subsidies were cut, and the hitherto free extension services were scaled down or became subject to cost recovery. In general the SAPs had a devastating impact on the integrated rural development programs and came with high social costs. In spite of these major shortfalls however, the SAPs pro-poor impact appears to have been positive. A World Bank OED study (OED Précis 1995) concludes that “countries that successfully implemented the adjustment policies agreed with the Bank achieved growth in per capita income and reduced the proportion of their populations in poverty”.

Other development approaches that emerged during the 1980s included: the emergence of non-state actors such as international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as important actors in rural development in the context of a shrinking state; emphasis on participatory approaches and an increasing awareness of the value of indigenous technical knowledge; research on mixed farming systems to better understand the interdependence and complexity of the different programs farmers were involved in. Gender and development emerged as an alternative to the women-in-development approach in the previous decade. In this period, drought in Africa was perceived to be a primary cause of food insecurity and this led to new interventions to promote drought mitigation, natural resource management, and household food security. It was also during this decade that the issue of environment was reframed from purely ecological dimensions to a more holistic, if vague, concept of sustainable development.

Rural Development in the decade of the 1990s was still subsumed under the structural adjustment programs which peaked during this period. There was a strong focus on institutions and public sector management in the 1990s, and the notion of good governance in the management of public resources was introduced in the allocation of aid resources. The failure of agricultural credit schemes as part of earlier integrated rural development and even as stand-alone operations in the 1970s and 1980s and the perceived success of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh led to a global reappraisal of microcredit schemes to help in poverty alleviation. The approach that relied on mutual trust between group members led to the introduction of mutualist credit schemes in several countries accompanied by voluntary or compulsory savings programs. The 1990s also saw a heavy emphasis on agricultural policy reform. A number of adjustment operations were funded by donors, led by the World Bank that sought to get Governments to move away from public production and state administration to adopt policies that would supposedly promote private sector replacement for the withdrawing Government. Unfortunately this did not happen as envisaged in Africa.

As world-wide calls for debt forgiveness for poor countries increased during the second half of the decade, the World Bank and the IMF introduced Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) as a new framework to enhance domestic accountability for poverty reduction reform efforts and a means of ensuring that resources freed through debt reduction would be used to support

and fund programs targeted at the poor^{8 9}. Resources from debt relief and concessional financing were to support poverty reduction programs especially through rural development. The ensuing approaches to development emphasized community-based activities, including participatory rural appraisals, participatory research and planning, stakeholder analyses, and increasing reliance on the contribution of local knowledge to development processes. Environment and sustainability gained in importance with the recognition that improved natural resource management, better environmental goods and services do make significant contributions to livelihoods of poor rural households.

The period **starting around the year 2000** had a strong focus on the millennium development goals (MDG) with the start of the decade marked by the dominance of broader livelihoods approaches. The sustainable livelihoods (SL) approach led by institutions such as IFAD, DFID, and other bilaterals challenged fundamentally single-sector approaches to solving complex rural development problems and recognized the different livelihood sources of the poor, including agriculture, wage employment, farm labor, small-scale enterprise, etc., and highlighted shocks and stresses which impact on these livelihood sources and the enabling factors which enhance them. Most donors subscribed to the objectives of the MDGs and the key aim to halve extreme poverty in all its forms by 2015. The key approach to rural development was governed then by the Millennium Development Goals, country ownership and good governance, considered as a new approach to lending and aid agreements. While the good governance approach was a continuation of ideas started in the 1990s, the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness of 2005, insisted that for aid to be effective, it must be aligned with recipient countries' own policies and systems and be country-owned rather than externally imposed. From this perspective therefore, aid effectiveness would require that recipient countries be able to develop a coherent rural development vision and build the institutions capable of supporting and/or implementing this vision. The good governance approach of the 2000s has been accompanied by calls for decentralization, aimed at strengthening local institutions, improving the quality of local decision making, incorporating local knowledge in project/program design and implementation, and improving accountability. Since about 1990, decentralization has advanced in Africa with many African central governments initiating and deepening processes to transfer authority, power, responsibilities, and resources to sub-national levels. A 2010 USAID study¹⁰ confirms other studies that the key problem that decentralization has faced in practice is that political and administrative decentralization has not been accompanied by fiscal decentralization. The Report also concludes that sub-national autonomy remains quite restricted by several top-down forces, especially the control exercised by state authorities. While the decentralization process requires new representative institutions at the local level with powers to make and implement meaningful decisions, they have not and will not be successful unless adequate provision is made to finance the devolved or decentralized responsibilities.

Another major evolution in the new millennium is the introduction of the notion of Sector Wide development approaches (SWAp) to agriculture and rural development. This has been preferred

8 In 1996, the World Bank and the IMF supported by other multilaterals and the major industrialized countries adopted the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative to provide a comprehensive and structured program designed to ensure that the poorest countries in the world are not overwhelmed by unmanageable or unsustainable debt burdens. HIPC was to reduce the debt of countries meeting strict criteria and to help poor countries with their debt burdens with a goal of getting the debt to sustainable levels.

9 Several sub-Saharan African countries signed on to this new approach of doing things by preparing PRSPs as a prerequisite for financial support from the international community.

10 USAID (September 2010). COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALIZATION IN AFRICA: FINAL REPORT AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, September 2010

by donors as a natural evolution from the Paris declaration and based on shifts in donor thinking emphasizing the importance of 'country ownership' of donor-financed programs. The focus on sectoral approaches has however been limited by the absence of effective institutions in the recipient countries, and the ability of the approach to deal effectively with the cross sectoral nature of rural development. To be successful the sector program should have six clear components: (i) a clear sector policy and strategy; (ii) a sectoral medium term expenditure program, based on a comprehensive action plan; (iii) a performance monitoring system; (iv) a formalized process of donor co-ordination; (v) an agreed process for moving towards harmonized systems for reporting, budgeting, financial management and procurement; and (vi) a systematic mechanism of consultation with clients and beneficiaries of government services and with non-government providers of those services. (HLSP Institute, 2005).

Other issues that have come to the fore in the 2000s include social protection that seeks to help people to manage risk and vulnerability and to enable the very poor to share in the benefits of economic growth since many will not be reached by "trickle-down" of growth. While poverty eradication has been part of the emphasis on rural development over time, the UN through the MDGs, set the target to halve the number of people living in extreme poverty by one half by 2015 as MDG number one. Linked with this MDG, was the reinvigoration of smallholder agriculture, which once again attained prominence, on the assumption that improving the productivity of agriculture in general and the competitiveness of smallholders and marginalized groups as well as by creating employment among poor rural people and making food available to consumers everywhere, can make a meaningful impact on poverty. There have been increasing discussion on the use of ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) on promoting pro-poor development. There has been an increasing awareness of the impact of climate change and its impacts on poor and vulnerable households and discussions on the consequences of a globalizing agriculture and fair trade. This period also saw the African Union, in conjunction with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), develop the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) through which African heads of state committed to increase spending on agriculture (from levels generally less than 4 percent of public budgets to 10 percent). The CAADP process was also established to assist in articulating more robust programs. African heads of state have followed this up more recently with the Malabo declaration which is a commitment adopted by the AU Heads of State and Governments to provide effective leadership for the achievement of specific goals by the year 2025, including ending hunger, tripling intra-African trade in agricultural goods and services, enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems, and ensuring that agriculture contributes significantly to poverty reduction¹¹.

2.1 What Happened to Rural Development in Africa in this Chronology?

While the basic objective of rural development of providing sustainable improvements in the quality of life of rural people has remained the same throughout the past six decades, approaches have varied to follow the evolution of general development concepts. Nevertheless a number of project concepts have remained the same. In Africa given that the agrarian sector has a strong rural base, concern for agriculture and rural development is one and the same, and that the core of agriculture and agricultural development in Africa is rural development. Thus, agriculture

¹¹ See: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/07/achieving-malabo-declaration-on-agric-needs-evidence-based-approach-stakeholders/>

has remained at the center of rural development programs and for institutions like the African Development Bank, Agriculture and Rural Development are synonymous¹². However over time, the inclusive, complex and crosscutting character of rural development has also not changed and has included in one form or the other, approaches to rural service provision, primary health care, HIV/AIDs and malaria mitigation, education and transport – as key components of rural development initiatives. The lack of a well-accepted paradigm of rural development often creates problems in that approaches often reflect changing global development trends that can sometimes lead to a de-emphasis of investments in areas that may need them the most. Even the definition of the term rural development sometimes leads to ambiguity. As a concept, it connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. It is therefore seen as a process that aims at improving the standard of living of the people living in the rural areas.

For many governments in Africa, the term ‘rural development’ is used to mean any development initiative undertaken in rural areas. In this sense, a rural development strategy often simply means little more than a greater resource commitment to rural areas. Some of the governments have seen ‘rural development’ as a set of functions that require administrative co-ordination at the central government level, the regional level, or both. For international agencies, such as the World Bank ‘rural development’ should be looked at in terms of a particular target group. ‘Rural development’ it says, ‘is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people — the rural poor.

Despite the different approaches adopted over the past five decades or so by the various donors and development practitioners, agriculture remains at the heart of most rural development and as indicated in a 2005 World Bank study even though “the thinking about the role of agriculture has changed over time, the dominant paradigm from the 1970s has accepted agriculture as an “engine of growth” in the early stages of development because of its high share of economic activity and its strong growth linkages with the rest of the economy, including the rural nonfarm economy” (World Bank, 2005). The Study which reviewed 12 countries undergoing reforms¹³ from the 1990s concluded that agricultural value added per worker grew faster than nonagricultural value added per worker in over half of the countries, reflecting the movement of labor to nonagricultural sectors as part of a successful structural transformation process. Rural poverty fell in the 1990s in all of the case study countries except Indonesia, which underwent a financial crisis late in the decade. The importance of agriculture in rural transformation in Africa has also been confirmed by other multilaterals such as IFAD¹⁴, AfDB¹⁵ and research institutions such as IFPRI¹⁶.

Based on a review of historical evidence and case studies, these Reports all confirm that agriculture plays a lead role in the early stages of pro-poor growth because of the concentration of the poor in the sector; the large size of its growth linkages to other sectors; and the positive externalities from assuring food security and reducing food prices. Several country studies also confirm that rural

12 AfDB (2000). AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR - BANK GROUP POLICY. OCOD, JANUARY 2000. In this document there is practically no mention of rural development without agriculture.

13 The Report (Agriculture, Rural Development, and Pro-poor Growth: Country Experiences in the Post-Reform Era) looked at 12 countries documented in case studies and that fell into three distinct regional groupings based on national statistics on the importance of agriculture and relative land and labor productivities: five of the countries are in Africa (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia), four in Asia (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam), and three in Latin America (Bolivia, Brazil, and El Salvador).

14 IFAD (2010). Rural Poverty Report 2011, November 2010 and IFAD (2015). IFAD Rural Development Report 2016: Towards Inclusive Rural Transformation - Concept Paper. January 2015

15 AfDB (2000) op. cit

16 IFPRI (2015). Putting Agriculture at the Heart of Development in Africa

development continues to be critical to reducing poverty and inequality even in countries where the role of agriculture in growth declines with structural transformation. Thus even with the shifts in approach to agricultural change and approaches to rural development, agriculture has continued to be a key concept in promoting growth and transformation in the rural economy in Africa and other developing countries..

3.0 Integrated Rural Development (IRD)

3.1 Background

The integrated rural development (IRD, sometimes referred to as area development) approach became the prototype for development assistance to rural communities and was adopted by many in the development assistance community especially in their activities in Africa in the early 1970s. The IRD concept grew from the realization towards the end of the 1960s in development agencies that despite large investments in crop research and production (particularly the introduction of high yielding and fast-maturing varieties), it was becoming clear that there was no significant impact on the productivity and incomes of the majority of subsistence and low-income farmers in Africa and that rural dwellers continued to be poor.

The perceived relative failure of the agricultural development programs of the 1950s and 60s was attributed to two main factors. First, there seemed little point in simply emphasizing the technology of crop production when the majority of farmers were beset by a formidable array of constraints and liabilities (sickness, illiteracy, lack of credit, absence of reliable water supply, food crop failure, lack of market access, etc.). Development practitioners argued therefore that to be able to deal effectively with the issue of low productivity of small producers and promote the participation of the landless and jobless in the development process, would require a simultaneous attack upon several fronts in addition to the technology of crop production: in most cases - health, education, access to markets, physical infrastructure and off-farm job creation, and in some cases soil conservation, tenure reform and community development. Underlying all these arguments for introducing IRD is the idea that it is the responsibility of government to ensure that the small farmer has access to the services and inputs he requires to improve his/her livelihood.

Second, within the agricultural sector itself, the emphasis of donors had been on supporting large scale agricultural production and even for programs that had a smallholder focus, there was a problem of elite capture of components such as credit, improved seeds and other agricultural services at the expense of the majority of poor farmers. It was in this context that practitioners argued for a minimum 'package' approach to agriculture and rural areas particularly the notion of delivering a minimum level of necessary inputs through a service structure, with functions such as land settlement, extension, credit and marketing, integrated within a single organization. The two key issues believed to be retarding rural productivity growth— the need for action on several non-agricultural factors simultaneously with efforts to increase agricultural production, and the need to provide inputs to the neglected small producer — therefore suggested a more ambitious strategy of 'rural' – as opposed to purely 'agricultural' — development and made an integrated approach quite attractive to development practitioners at the time. The IRD programs therefore grew out of this original excitement of development practitioners, who hoped to transform undeveloped rural settings into cohesive communities, with profitable productive opportunities, and where members

could enjoy basic public and social services.

Another important interpretation of the coordinated approach to development at the rural level that perhaps strongly influenced the manner in which IRD was designed and implemented was the idea that IRD meant not only comprehensive action, but also integrated action. The idea was that the various complementary activities of rural development required a single administrative framework rather than being implemented by a variety of separate agencies. Because of this interpretation, IRD projects, generally defined by area, had their own special project agencies set up partially replacing existing departmental responsibilities.

We should note however that, for a number of donors and perhaps even Governments, the IRD label on a project could mean one of three different types of project: those that are primarily concerned with provision of rural services and infrastructure; those that deal primarily with agricultural development (crop production and marketing especially); and those that are primarily concerned with employment (agricultural production plus rural industry). All of these types of projects which were often "area-based" could be described as 'integrated' to some degree. In practice, given the number of donors operating in developing countries, an integrated area project may simply be a package of projects, separately funded but running in parallel in an area where a number of investment possibilities and infrastructural requirements had been identified. Thus the notion of IRD was used very broadly and could probably have contributed to the poor name that IRD made for itself.

3.2 Experience with Integrated Rural Development

The concept of integrated rural development has guided much of development efforts of the majority of donors in the rural sector since the end of the 1960's. Even when approaches to rural development financing started to shift from the mid-1980s, institutions like the AfDB continued financing IRDs in Africa throughout the 1980s and several donors continued to apply the concept of an integrated or coordinated approach to rural financing. As an example, a large number of the community-driven development activities of the early 1990s had strong elements of integrated rural development except perhaps for the manner in which they were managed. From a conceptual point of view, designing programs or projects that would deal simultaneously with the several complex issues facing the farmer makes a lot of sense. Once we accept this premise, this argues strongly for the multi-activity, multi-sectoral approach embodied by IRD projects. The notion of complementarity, promoted in integrated rural development, in terms of ensuring that all inputs that depend on each other to support crop production (e.g. improved seeds, fertilizer, and water) are available at the same time also makes economic sense. Similarly complementarities among health, education, basic infrastructure, and agriculture provide the rationale for IRD projects' multi-sectoral efforts.

Definitional issues made it difficult to distinguish the different types of projects that donors were supporting. Many of these projects could be classified as area development operations or even investments (sector or multisector) in rural space. However the heart of the rural development strategy, initially defined by the World Bank which led the donor effort in support of rural development, was to ensure that activities are poverty-focused and this extended the definition

of rural development beyond agriculture-based activities¹⁷. In operational terms the strategy was broadly-based. The World Bank's 1975 Rural Sector Strategy argued that; "Since rural development is intended to reduce poverty, it must clearly be designed to increase production and raise productivity. Rural development recognizes, however, that improved food supplies and nutrition, together with basic services such as health and education, can not only directly improve the physical well-being and quality of life of the rural poor, but can also indirectly enhance their productivity and their ability to contribute to the national economy. It is concerned with the modernization and monetization of rural society, and its transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy. The objectives of rural development, thus, extend beyond any particular sector. They encompass improved productivity, increased employment and higher incomes for target groups, as well as minimum acceptable levels of food, shelter, education and health. A national program of rural development should include a mix of activities, including projects to raise agriculture output, create new employment, improve health and education, expand communications, and improve housing. Such a program might be made up of single sector or multisectoral projects, with components implemented concurrently or in sequence"¹⁸

The strategy was thus quite tentative in terms of its focus on raising agricultural growth and productivity but as indicated by the World Bank's Operations Evaluation Department (OED) in an evaluation of results of World Bank Operations in 1990, in this area, the strategy's: "essential elements were thought to be: (1) new forms of rural institutions and organizations to promote the inherent potential and productivity of the poor; (2) acceleration in the rate of land and tenancy reform; (3) better access to credit; (4) assured availability of water; (5) intensified agricultural research and expanded extension facilities; and (6) greater access to public services."¹⁹

Most donors did not distinguish between IRDs and area development projects which formed the bulk of rural development investments from 1970 to about 1990. The area development projects had the same design objectives as IRDs. They were investments designed to develop a rural area largely to benefit the rural poor. They often serve degraded areas neglected by past investment strategies, many are multi-sectoral, with activities in agriculture (crops, livestock, conservation, fisheries, forestry), water supply, health, rural infrastructure, and small-scale off-farm enterprises. The World Bank for example financed about 290 area development projects between 1952 and 1992 with about 79 percent of them (227 projects) approved between 1975 and 1989. About 45 percent of these area development projects, developed in response to the need for broad-based development in rural areas were in the Africa Region and these were a central part of the Bank's rural development strategy. A number of the rural and area development projects also sometimes had a single subsector focus or put heavy emphasis on one or two major crops in addition to providing services to growers in the form of a good technical package and credit and marketing arrangements, associated with relatively close control of farm operations and supervision of credit. The subsectors of emphasis were areas such as irrigation, livestock, and/or cash crops (cotton, coffee, cocoa, oil palm, rubber, etc.). These often had subsistence activities associated with them even if the cash crop or subsector was the main focus.

17 See also IFAD (2010) Rural Poverty Report 2011 page 15 asks for new opportunities for rural poverty reduction and economic growth requiring a broad approach to rural development, which includes the rural non-farm economy as well as agriculture..

18 Rural Development Sector Policy Paper; World Bank, February 1975, pages 3-4

19 World Bank (1992). Evaluation Results for 1990 – Rural Development Revisited. World Bank, OED June 1992

Box 1. IFAD-Financed Successful integrated rural development in Madagascar

The Upper Mandraré Basin Development Project, Phase 2 (2001-2008) covered 11 communes and aimed at contributing to the reduction of rural poverty through diversifying and increasing rural incomes, improving the food security of rural households, and contributing to the restoration and sustainable management of natural resources. It had 5 components: (a) local capacity-building (7.7%); (b) support to local initiatives (46.6%); (c) support to financial services (4.6%); (d) rural roads and tracks (28.2%); and (e) project coordination, management and monitoring and evaluation (12.9%).

The project had strong beneficiary involvement in local development and on strengthening their technical and organizational capacity. The project provided support to commune-level institutions in the planning and management of local development. Implementation was managed by a light coordination unit supported by public operators (research and development, public works) and several NGOs, both national (animation and organization of beneficiaries, strengthening of technical capacity) and international (support to financial services). The major infrastructure works were entrusted to enterprises, but local initiatives were often implemented by beneficiary groups under the supervision of the project and its executing agency.

The project coordination team was very capable and took initiatives in favor of adjusting the project's implementation modalities to improve project performance. These adjustments included mobilizing several partners that were not foreseen at project design; introducing the communal level as the core for local planning; implementing a value-chain approach; and directly managing several rural engineering works. The balanced participatory approach adopted greatly improved the capacity of rural communities in terms of planning and managing local development initiatives, and helped meet the needs expressed by communities during participatory needs assessments.

The project made a significant impact on incomes and food security through increased agricultural production, thanks inter alia to the application of a value-chain approach for three crops (rice, garlic and onions). Women were the main drivers of the development of garlic and onions. However the impact of project support to livestock and rainfed crops, which constitute the main livelihoods of more than half the inhabitants of the project area, was rather limited possibly because they were not part of a value chain approach. The main factors that contributed to the sustainability of project achievements include: the high marketing potential of the crops promoted as part of the value chain; simplicity of design and operation of irrigation systems; emergence among the population of a new awareness regarding the need to protect the natural resource base; good project management.

Source: http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/public_html. N° 60 - July 2009

The above example (Box 1) from Madagascar is a more evolved form of integrated rural development that takes into account some of the lessons learned from earlier projects. It also incorporates strong features of the community-driven development approach.

3.3 Lessons of Experience from Integrated Rural Development Projects^{20 21}

Most donors that financed IRDs did reviews of these projects in the 1980s and early 1990s in response to mounting criticisms that these projects were not achieving the intended objectives. Two of such major assessments and reviews were done to cover World Bank financed rural development operations in the Africa Region up to the late 1970s²² and the other to review the World Bank's global experience with rural development over the period 1965-1986²³. These reviews report that some 60 percent of the completed projects had satisfactory results²⁴. There were however variations in satisfactory rates according to project type and/or subsector. Area Development operations with only a 45 percent satisfactory rate and livestock operations 41 percent, were the two areas that had the most unsatisfactory results while irrigation projects had a 68 percent satisfactory rating. The largest proportion of unsatisfactory outcomes were reported in Africa (46 percent satisfactory rate) and Latin America and Caribbean (50 percent satisfactory). Asia had projects with the most favorable impact (70 percent successful). While one cannot attribute the dramatic increase in food grain production in Asia during the late 1970s and early 1980s solely to these projects, it is clear that these rural development projects, together with those financed by the governments, many other agencies-domestic, bilateral, and multinational-contributed significantly to overall public investment and related achievements. OED also indicates, in its *Rural Development Revisited*²⁵ report that large numbers of individual project evaluations document successful experiences over the 20 years starting in 1970, having carried out impact evaluations of over 50 projects of many different types, including perennial crops (coffee, cocoa, tea, oil palm, rubber), cash crops (cotton), settlement schemes, and irrigation programs (surface and groundwater in arid and tropical settings).

The African Development Bank (AfDB) also used integrated rural development (IRD) projects as one of the primary vehicles for implementing agricultural projects in its portfolio in the 1980s and well into the 1990s. It reports significant design and implementation problems in integrated rural development projects that it supported. It reports in its evaluation that though the idea of integrating rural development is a good one, the Bank's experience reflected that of other major donors and has not been positive in general²⁶. In its evaluation, it reports that "the organizational complexity of the different components of integrated rural development projects -- i.e., health, roads, infrastructure, extension, credit, input supply marketing -- led to considerable delays in project implementation." (AfDB (2000)). For the most part, it concludes that IRD projects in North Africa experienced better success in their implementation, where the countries have stronger institutions and line ministries.

While the above evaluations of donor experiences do suggest that some of these rural development operations did work and did achieve impressive results, the very large number and proportion of

20 In this section, there is no distinction made between the area development operations and the integrated rural development activities and evaluation results for one type of project are valid for the other.

21 Given that the World Bank financed the largest number of these integrated rural development and area development projects, the lessons of experience are drawn heavily from the evaluation of World Bank financed projects. There are however references to lessons from other donor financed activities especially in Africa especially IRD projects financed by AfDB. See AFDB (200): AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR -BANK GROUP POLICY. ., JANUARY 2000, Section on Integrated Rural Development

22 World Bank (1978). Rural Development Projects: A Retrospective View of Bank Experience in Sub-Saharan Africa, OED, October 1978.

23 World Bank (1988). World Bank Experience with Rural Development 1965-86

24 Satisfactory results here refer to results that were achieved at project completion compared to quantitative objectives that the Bank set for these projects at the time of appraisal.

25 World Bank (1992) Evaluation Results for 1990: Rural Development Revisited page 76

26 AfDB (2000): AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR -BANK GROUP POLICY pages 14&15

less-than-satisfactory projects suggests that there are also many constraints and problems associated with these operations. The groundswell against these integrated rural development projects started in earnest with a publication in 1983 by Robert Chambers entitled *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* that argued that billions of dollars were being wasted in rural development programs without meeting community needs or reducing poverty. This was followed by several evaluation studies, some by the donor agencies themselves and some by academics. These reviews and evaluations, especially those covering projects in Africa, showed that farm output did not increase as expected and where they did increase they were not necessarily sustainable and economic rates of return were therefore substantially reduced. Often the objectives presented at appraisal were not achieved as planned.

The reviews of IRD projects in general concluded that although the concept of a multipronged approach to rural development appears sound and attractive to many, its actual application has in many instances been disappointing. In particular, concrete achievements and hence measurable benefits have often fallen short of planning goals. One of the reasons for some of the disappointing results has been the fact that a lot of the development efforts of the 1970s and 1980s were often hampered by a “one-size-fits-all” mentality, with programs and reforms prescribed from a centralized perspective, without regard for the specific needs of a given area, population or community and without giving proper consideration to social, economic, and cultural peculiarities of the chosen locality.

3.4 Reasons some IRD Projects fell short of Expectations

Some of the reasons that came out of the evaluations of completed projects and that led to the discrediting of the integrated rural development (IRD) projects included several of the issues raised in the following section.

Design Issues. The “one-size-fits-all” mentality led to **design** issues. OED of the World Bank as well as institutions such as FAO (1992) in their evaluations of completed area and rural development projects concluded that many of the problems in project implementation stem from deficient project design. The deficiency in design most of the time stemmed from inadequate diagnosis of the development problems the project was expected to help solve and hence leading to inadequate preparation. Where problems were identified during preparation there was always what FAO referred to as a “pervasive optimism over possible solutions”²⁷. The reviews also showed that a lot of the projects lacked design flexibility with strict targets set in advance instead of seeking to build a problem-solving capacity among the people involved. This lack of design flexibility often led to goals and objectives that were not realistic or precise.

Project Complexity. Second, the complexity of IRD projects have raised several issues about the administrative feasibility of carrying out such projects. A project-related difficulty that is compounded by the complexity is that comprehensive, or multi-sectoral rural development projects are more difficult to design and to administer than single-sector projects. Past experience also indicates that they are more difficult to implement. Given that most government departments are organized along functional lines, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, health, public works,

27 FAO 1992. FAO Investment Centre. “Guidelines on Sociological Analysis in Agricultural investment Project Design” Technical Paper No., 9, 1992

education, and small-scale industry, the incorporation of non-agricultural components into IRD projects, expecting them to be managed effectively by institutions that were staffed and managed fundamentally by agricultural staff, overloaded management so that implementation suffered. The numerous components and executing agencies, entering into many sectors simultaneously, demanded too much from weak institutions some of which had just been set up for project implementation. In addition the complexity and the technical aspects of project design effectively excluded the target population from any effective participation in project formulation and preparation. The complexity rendered it difficult to be able to make accurate and realistic forecasts about future project results on which the project would be judged.

Unfavorable Macro-economic and/or Political Environments. The success of a number of the IRD projects was also adversely affected by constraints which were beyond the control of the project itself to resolve. Many IRDPs especially in Africa were implemented in an economic situation that made the proposed developments nearly impossible. During the period when integrated rural development projects were in vogue, distortionary macroeconomic policies led to wide implicit taxation of agricultural producers. Overvalued exchange rates in a variety of countries had especially severe negative impacts on the agricultural sector and provided very poor incentive structure in terms of agricultural production. During this period the problem of ensuring food supplies in urban areas was frequently exacerbated by the pricing and marketing policies followed by governments towards food crops. Because of the complexity and size of some of these IRD projects, the recurrent budgets of governments were frequently unable to meet the operating costs required by the projects: for example, staff salaries, building and vehicle maintenance and operating costs, and supplies were often not available.

Beneficiary participation in project design and implementation. Experience over the years has shown that development programs and/or projects are much more likely to reflect local priorities, reach their goals, and be sustainable if and when they are designed and implemented with a high degree of involvement and participation by the beneficiaries and local stakeholders. A number of the IRD projects however were planned, designed, prepared and executed with little or no community participation in terms of decision making. In preparing a large number of these projects, a “blueprint” rather than “process” approach was used since the latter approach would have required that implementation would only be allowed to proceed as communities decide. True participation would have implied that affected communities initiate changes, not that they merely accept, or do not object to, changes offered to them by outside agencies which was exactly the approach of most IRD projects. Sustainability has been problematic for the IRD projects since, in general, true participation helps to ensure that only investments which have prospects of being sustained, are financed.

Project Management Units. Given the absence of strong institutions in Africa where most of these projects were implemented, donor agencies and Governments sought to by-pass weak government agencies by setting up special project management units (PMUs) sometimes with heavy expatriate staffing. Staff of the PMUs were also often given incentives in the form of allowances and operating means not available to the regular government agencies. Invariably therefore when donor financing of these projects come to an end and staff incentives end, the PMUs are often not sustainable and are disbanded. Regular government agencies are then asked to look after the projects and since the projects did very little to strengthen them, they are unable to ensure continuation or sustainability of the operations. Alternative approaches were tried during the

1980s where line agencies were charged with implementing area development and/or integrated rural development projects. Under this approach, in which several line agencies are involved in implementation, it was not uncommon that a coordinating committee would be set up with each sectoral Ministry responsible for activities in its sector. However, such committees seldom worked effectively together and were not able to ensure effective coordination, even when they met regularly. Very often agencies tended to give priority to their own sector programs at the expense of contributions to the programs of others. This has been especially the case when a number of the agencies see themselves playing a minor role and they perceive the overall program as “owned” by one agency, typically from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Rigidities and Staffing of Development Agencies for Integrated Rural Development. The IRD projects were designed to be concentrated efforts that bring to a specific rural area, a basket of goods and services including social and infrastructure components. This represented a novel approach to lending by donor institutions whose staff were mainly technical specialists (agronomists, engineers, and economists) because of the nature of the work they did before the advent of IRDs which were fairly well defined and consisted of definable engineering-type projects. As part of this new approach, these same technical staff, used to preparing engineering-type projects, were confronted with new issues that bordered on social and human behavior. These included trying to understand the motivations of people in foreign cultures, preparing and dealing with projects with several components and to try to adapt them to the wishes of recipients in these alien countries. The staff also had to understand and appreciate the risk to the beneficiaries (mainly poor farmers) of adopting recommendations that often looked good on paper but that presented a number of practical and operational risks. For effective implementation of these new complex operations the staff of these donor institutions had to contend with personal and inter-institutional rivalry in the member countries they worked in, and they had to design implementing institutions to deal with a large number of components, each dealing with a particular economic or social aspect of the multi-task project; components that were unrelated and whose simultaneous development often created a totally new problem of inter-agency coordination. While it was much simpler to define what success of an engineering-type project would look like, it was much more difficult to define success for these new style projects, combining economic and social development goals.

Given that this new approach involved much more emphasis on social and human development, the approach proved to be very different and often more frustrating than building a bridge or an irrigation system. The shift in emphasis therefore led to much uncertainty and discussion in the institutions involved as well as to much soul searching and frustration among their staff. The inexperience of donor staff in this new line of business coupled with the structure and inexperience of the (mostly public sector) institutions that were asked to implement the project designs did not help matters very much in terms of appropriate and sound project execution.

Inadequate Understanding of Farming Systems and Technological Packages. The literature on early IRD projects suggests that many of the earlier projects suffered from a lack of detailed knowledge, by those who designed these projects, of the general farming systems, and the particular crop production systems operating in the project areas. The projects normally included proposals of new crop technologies that probably required further testing on smallholder farms in the areas. In most of the projects the adoption and yield assumptions deriving from the proposed crop technologies were too optimistic and the basis for achieving the productivity gains, on which

project benefits were based, was to some extent theoretical. Absorptive capacity of farmers of the proposed packages was often exaggerated and unrealistic.

Because of the issues of ill adapted crop technologies, over-optimistic yield assumptions, and the often controlled producer prices, a number of farmers found the crop-production packages in the projects not sufficiently financially rewarding to them to pay for their inputs and to adequately reward them for the increased labor inputs that these technologies entailed. Invariably therefore the proposed changes in cropping systems resulted in only modest improvements in farm income and thus were not attractive enough for farmers.

Concluding Remarks on Issues encountered under IRD. Integrated rural development was designed to meet broadened development objectives. While there were some successes in the IRD projects of the 1970s, the approach as practiced during the period was basically flawed because; it overestimated state capacity to coordinate; the approach was too complex and the project implementers received insufficient and inappropriate support. Most of the projects became centralized, bureaucratic, and unable to coordinate actors on the ground. The approach did not take account of emerging private sector roles, and undermined cooperative producer organizations. While IRD projects benefitted millions (see example in Box 1), many studies have also attested that they achieved disappointing results in general compared to the resources invested in them. Some projects failed due to serious institutional weaknesses, and results were most disappointing where most needed—in Sub-Saharan Africa. The difficulties encountered in implementing the approach and the many failures in agriculture-based projects led to a rethinking of donor financing for the rural sector and resulted in close to two decades of neglect of agriculture under the Washington Consensus (1985-2005)²⁸. The neglect globally led to decline of the shares of agriculture in public expenditures and in overseas development assistance²⁹. During this period however emphasis was placed on structural adjustment, retreat of the state from direct involvement in development, getting prices right, the role of free markets, and looking at rural development as a process not a product. Despite the earlier disappointments of donors with integrated development, IRDs or area development as a donor-financing tool however did not disappear from their portfolios. The experience from several IRD projects and decades of its use has provided many lessons learned, and offered donors and governments, better tools and methods to design projects with a more realistic, seasoned approach to reach the rural poor. Some rural development projects launched in the late 1990s and early 2000s, have gone on to be restructured or followed up with a second and third project, with the ultimate objective of improving crop production and returns to producers.

4.0 Alternative Financing Approaches for Rural Development

From the early 1980s most non-oil producing developing countries faced an international debt

28 The "Washington Consensus" is an approach adopted by international donors and Western Governments (initially applied to Latin American countries but later extended to the developing world) that recommended "that governments should reform their policies and, in particular: (a) pursue macroeconomic stability by controlling inflation and reducing fiscal deficits; (b) open their economies to the rest of the world through trade and capital account liberalization; and (c) liberalize domestic product and factor markets through privatization and deregulation. Propagated through the stabilization and structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, this has been the dominant approach to development from the early 1980s". Charles Gore (2000). *The Rise and Fall of the Washington Consensus as a Paradigm for Developing Countries*. World Development Vol. 28, No. 5, pp. 789±804, 2000

29 The share of agriculture as a percentage of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) fell from about 13% in 1985 to about 3% in 2005.

crisis following the oil price shocks of the 1970s³⁰. Sub-Saharan Africa was hit particularly hard by the oil crises and built up a significant debt burden and this led to the advent of World Bank-led economic structural adjustment and market liberalization. As stated earlier the structural adjustment programs had significant impacts on support for rural development and on farmers who lost access to input subsidies and in some cases saw services cut back or provided by government agencies and consultancies which recovered a portion of their costs from their rural clients.

Most donors reduced their funding of rural development as a whole and agriculture in particular and institutions such as the World Bank provided resources for overall adjustment or agricultural sector adjustment, proceeds from which could be used to support agriculture or any other sector the Government wanted. Institutions such as IFAD shifted progressively into funding of community-driven development followed in the 1990s by the World Bank. Aside from donor support for structural adjustment and policy-lending operations which included agriculture components, donors who stayed in agriculture, funded thematic activities (such as participatory research, farming systems research, seed development, extension), community development and participation, some small-scale irrigation schemes, interventions to promote drought mitigation and household food security, natural resources management and some area-based development projects (generally rural projects with agricultural components). While some of these activities had encouraging results, overall impacts have been limited in terms of overall contribution to agricultural development because of weak linkages among the different activities.

As criticisms mounted in international circles about the neglect of agriculture in donor and government financing, donors reflected on how to remedy this. Despite the earlier withdrawal of the state that accompanied the structural adjustment programs, donor thinking still recognized the important role of the state, in both poverty reduction and rural development. This partially reflected the view that liberalization and structural adjustment may have moved too quickly, with insufficient attention to the need for strong institutional underpinning of markets. Thus in rural areas, it was recognized that the state needed to ensure that the poor can access reasonably performing and stable markets for finance, inputs and agricultural outputs, while also underpinning safety nets.

With the support of donors therefore, some of the main areas of public intervention and themes that were emphasized during the 1990s in Africa, included: access to productive resources (especially land and water); sustainable agricultural production, including fisheries and livestock; research/extension/training; water management and irrigation (mainly small-scale); rural financial services, including microfinance; rural microenterprises (non-farm rural enterprises); storage/processing of agricultural produce; marketing and access to markets; small-scale rural infrastructure (feeder roads, etc.); and capacity-building for producer groups and organizations. Again these activities were prepared and implemented individually and did not exploit the potential synergy between them by putting them together as one project or as sequential operations where necessary.

In a major review by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of agriculture activities funded by the Bank between 1991 and 2006, the Report concluded that despite significant

³⁰ Oil prices quadrupled between 1973 and 1974 and there were also further steep rises in oil prices in 1979/1980 leading to heavy borrowing by developing countries to pay off their energy loans.

results in a number of areas³¹, there was less focused attention on “the need for various activities that are critical for agricultural development in rural space to come together at the same time or to take place in some optimal sequence.”³² Because of the relative neglect of the sector, the study also concluded that the technical skills that the Bank needed to support agricultural development adequately in Africa had also declined over time. The study’s main recommendation, aside from improving the technical capacity of the Bank in Africa, is that the Bank support improvements in agricultural productivity by helping to design “efficient mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, that can bring together various factors such as improved seeds, water, credit, and good extension advice, among others, to farmers in a coordinated manner” (World Bank, 2007 pg xxviii). In terms of the Bank’s technical capacity the recommendation was to increase the Bank’s “capacity to improve the quantity and quality of analytical work to help set country-level priorities and ensure that policy advice and lending are grounded in its findings and by rebuilding its technical skills”. The same study did not lay the blame only on donors. It identifies poor governance and conflict in several countries, weak institutional capacity, and inadequate government appreciation of the importance of agriculture in development, as well as insufficient coordination of donor efforts, as some of the main factors in the continent’s poor agricultural performance³³.

4.1 Incorporating Lessons of Experience of IRDPs in the Design of new Operations

Reviews done in the decade of the 1990s tried to synthesize the main lessons drawn from the difficulties encountered with the integrated rural development operations. In these analyses, there was a general consensus (donors and Governments alike) that food production and rural well-being are issues that must be returned to center stage in national agendas worldwide. It was agreed that emphasis must be put back on rural growth, not just agricultural production or natural resource management and governments should focus on farmers’ access to knowledge, technologies, markets, health care, education, financing, and land ownership. These reviews were especially insistent that a new focus be placed on the needs of women, who are the predominant agriculturists in many developing countries. Two other areas of renewed emphasis were fighting rural poverty and protecting the earth’s natural resources by ensuring that agriculture is environmentally sustainable.

Going forward, the World Bank, as the leading institution financing agriculture, promised to work in partnership with others: local stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, private-sector interests, and the international community in order to:³⁴

- Strengthen the process of country strategy formulation involving broad-based national stakeholder involvement;
- renew emphasis on agricultural research and dissemination, at both the international and national levels;

31 The areas included; building capacity of national research organizations and development of agro-ecological focus to research, improved drought management systems, achieving physical targets in water management systems in rainfed areas, modest gains in improved seed development, raising awareness about importance of extension, contributing to improving the macroeconomic environment and fiscal discipline in several countries, etc. World Bank (2007): World Bank Assistance to Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa: An IEG Review.

32 *ibid* World Bank (2007) page xxvi

33 World Bank (2007) *op. cit*

34 World Bank (1996): RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Putting the Pieces in Place. Environmentally Sustainable Department (ESD)

- ensure stronger community and local-level involvement in the design and implementation of projects;
- seek the sequencing of investments, beginning with smaller projects and pilot activities designed to expand as experience and implementation capacity grow; and
- put increasing emphasis on clarifying land rights for farmers and herders

These are all lessons of experience suggested by the evaluation of the integrated rural development projects of the 1970s and 1980s.

The financing and approaches to financing rural development and agriculture continued to evolve from the integrated rural development and structural adjustment eras. The main objectives of rural development have continued to be directed at reducing rural poverty. Fighting rural poverty therefore has gone beyond financing of projects (as was the case under the IRD era) and has increasingly incorporated the idea of putting in place measures for accelerating economic growth that can be shared by the poor with a major focus on creating an appropriate macro and micro environment. Current rural development strategy as accepted by most donors makes a commitment in five core areas: fostering an enabling environment for broad-based and sustainable rural growth; enhancing agricultural productivity and competitiveness; fostering nonfarm economic growth; improving social well-being, managing and mitigating risk, and reducing vulnerability; and enhancing the sustainability of natural resource management. It is worth noting that most of these elements were included in the ideas that led to the financing of the integrated rural development projects and have also been funded separately and as individual activities by various donors. However the nature of donor supported investments in the sector, and the instruments for channeling those investments, have been changing over the last decade and a half.

The new approaches have tried to better articulate good practice in agricultural policies and investments. New projects have reviewed a wide range of emerging good practice and innovative approaches to investing in the agriculture sector and has emphasized in most cases: providing public goods for agriculture; turning consumption subsidies into production subsidies; boosting the non-farm sector; promoting decentralization and community-led development; finding ways to support poor people trapped in conflict; and, in general, applying new thinking about poverty reduction in rural areas.

4.2 Evolving Instruments for Funding Agriculture and Rural Development

Over the last decade and a half, the key areas that seem to fit the strategic directions of the key donors in Africa, including the World Bank, AfDB, and IFAD, and which have received bilateral donor support and hence the bulk of agricultural investment financing include:³⁵

1. Building Agricultural Policy and Institutional Capacity
2. Investments in Agricultural Science and Technology
3. Investments in Agricultural Extension and Information Services

³⁵ These are financing areas indicated by the World Bank in a key document prepared in consultation with its multilateral and some bilateral partners. World Bank (2005): Agriculture Investment Sourcebook – Agriculture and Rural Development Department

4. Investments in Sustainable Agricultural Intensification
5. Investments in Sustainable Natural Resource Management
6. Investments in Agribusiness and Market Development
7. Investments in Rural Finance for Agriculture
8. Investments in Irrigation and Drainage
9. Investments in Land Administration, Policy, and Markets
10. Managing Agricultural Risk, Vulnerability, and Disaster
11. Scaling-Up successful Agricultural Investments

In these new areas, financing has been in the form of investments and innovative approaches in the investment areas either individually or in a combination of the investment themes. While most of these have not been designed as integrated operations, care has been taken to ensure that they incorporate a wide range of experience and lessons from past operations and from different sources, including from other donors, governments, institutions, and other groups active in agricultural development. They have particularly placed emphasis on new themes such as: research and development and sustainable production systems; agricultural value chains and markets; higher value crops, animals, and fish; and nontraditional exports. These are in line with the changing emphasis in agricultural growth strategies in the various countries and as espoused by the different donors.

In line with the different investment areas above, and drawing lessons from the impact of the structural adjustment programs on the agricultural sectors, several opportunities and challenges have opened in the area of agricultural and rural development starting from the early 2000s. One of the key investment areas has been to help Governments develop effective institutions and appropriate strategies that would provide an enabling environment for pro-poor agricultural growth. Investment and policy advice have been part of the areas to enable Governments to provide public goods and establish supporting legal, administrative, and regulatory systems to correct for market failures, and facilitate efficient operation of the private sector. Investments in policy and institutional capacity have also been critical elements of the new approach to promoting agriculture. These investments seek to ensure that the public sector can effectively carry out its functions, which include coordination, participatory development of sector strategies, policy formulation, and allocation and monitoring of public investment in agriculture.

An area of emphasis that became quite important for promoting agriculture after the IRD era concerns policy, economic, and institutional reform. Although adjustment lending and associated policy and institutional reforms did have a significant impact on developing public policies for the agricultural sector, the reform process was not complete under the SAPs. Agricultural programs of the late 1990s and during the decade of the 2000s therefore included so-called second generation policy adjustments deemed necessary in many cases, and capacity strengthening for effective implementation of many reforms. There was the need for a renewed focus within the public sector to correct persistent market failures, efficiently provide core public goods, and establish supporting systems that encourage private initiative and investment. There has been increasing recognition that “good governance” in terms of the capacity for analyzing policy options and for implementing policies and programs with transparency and accountability, is key to sustainable development

and poverty reduction. This new crop of investments in the agriculture and rural sector also recognized that emphasis must be on actually implementing reforms and fine-tuning these to suit local situations and evolving market conditions. Another instrument that has been developed post-IRD period is identifying innovative channels to support direct investments in agriculture, public-private partnerships and greater involvement of the private sector.

5.0 New Approaches to Rural Development

Despite the major issues that were associated with the integrated rural projects of the 1970s and 1980s, most development practitioners continued to argue that there are complex linkages and interactions within the system of overall rural development and that just emphasizing agriculture and ignoring its linkages to the rest of the economy could result in analytical bias. While the concept of rural development is accepted as much broader than agricultural development, and that some activities under rural development provide an alternative to agriculture as a source of incomes and livelihoods, agriculture still can serve as an engine of rural growth for the rural area and the economy as a whole, and that agricultural growth has a significant impact on poverty reduction. Development practitioners therefore have been reviewing how to support agriculture in a synergy approach with rural development.

5.1 Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD)

The UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 adopted a series of measures for action in three important areas: sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD), combating desertification and drought, and integrated planning and management of land resources. These three areas became key in the agriculture/rural development debate and their resurgence during the decade of the 1990s and formed the basis for planning agriculture and rural development programs over the next couple of decades. Ten years after Rio, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) at their meeting in Johannesburg eventually put these in a single cluster called “land and agriculture”. The basic premises underlying the strategies of SARD and of integrated management of land resources are that sustainable development of the agricultural sector should go hand-in-hand with broader development and investment efforts in rural areas, with the steady improvement of rural livelihoods, the achievement of a better food security and food safety for consumers, and a more rational and equitable utilization and conservation of the limited land resources for present and future generations.

The SARD initiative called on member countries to develop operational multisectoral plans, programs, and policy measures to enhance sustainable food production and food security. African Governments saw the SARD initiative therefore as an opportunity to emphasize agriculture and rural development, operationalize the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) that they had created, and to put agriculture at the center of their development process. They therefore developed the AU NEPAD/CAADP initiative which became the manifestation of African governments’ commitment to address issues of growth in the agricultural sector, rural development and food security. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) was adopted in 2003 in Maputo as Africa’s policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth

creation, food security and nutrition, economic growth and prosperity³⁶. A specific objective of CAADP is for Africa to attain an average annual growth rate of 6 % in agriculture. It offers an integrated framework of agricultural and rural development priorities covering the following four pillars: (i) expansion of areas under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems; (ii) improvement of rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for better market access; (iii) enhancement of food supply and reduction of hunger (including emphasis on emergencies and disasters that require food and agricultural responses); and (iv) development of agricultural research technology dissemination and adoption to sustain long-term productivity growth. The areas included in the four pillars cover priorities and elements included in one or several of the key areas of emphasis of the land and SARD cluster adopted in Rio and confirmed ten years later in Johannesburg (referred to as Agenda 21)³⁷.

The CAADP Pillar 1 on sustainable land management, for example, corresponds to the SARD objective of dealing with the inappropriate and uncontrolled land uses as major cause of degradation and depletion of land resources. As part of the CAADP Pillar 1, several initiatives related to land, water management and fertilizer access have been launched over the last decade. NEPAD initiatives such as TerrAfrica to integrate environmental concerns into the CAADP first pillar, and to include irrigation within the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, the International Water Facility, and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative in Africa are also efforts in this direction. Another area to note is the enhancement of food supply and reduction of hunger (Pillar 3) that corresponds directly with the Agenda 21 (SARD) objective of increased food production and enhanced food security.

In addition to the CAADP programs that followed from the SARD initiative, a compendium of successful but heterogeneous project cases was put together by FAO for member countries and to serve as good practice examples of projects in the cluster and indicate further directions for action³⁸. This compendium represented a wide range of possible initiatives and contributions to the attainment of SARD and sustainable land resource management objectives in five distinct areas including: (i) what technical innovations are leading or would lead to improvements in food production with SARD; (ii) what novel institutional partnerships and joint working arrangements have been developed for the implementation of land and agriculture cluster programs; (iii) what examples of enabling policies have been implemented by governments to support sustainable land management and SARD; (iv) what rural development outcomes have occurred with successful implementation of SARD; and (v) what wider environmental outcomes have been achieved with successful implementation of SARD.

Projects that have followed the SARD approach have generally included: components to modernize agriculture to increase productivity and production and to diversify agricultural production; the participation of the private sector to help create employment through agricultural investment and establishment of a supply chain; and establishment of development models at the community level

36 UNECOSOC/ECA (2007). Africa Review Report on Agriculture and Rural Development (Main Report) August 2007

37 Agenda 21 is a United Nations action plan for worldwide sustainable development. Agenda 21 was first introduced at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At that event, 178 countries voluntarily signed to indicate their intent to adopt the program. It is a statement of intent that many countries have signed, and is a non-binding, voluntarily implemented action plan.

38 The compendium report draws together 75 cases illustrating how activities in the cluster (referred to as UNCED, Agenda 21) were being implemented. The activities were drawn from 45 countries including developed and developing countries. These are described in an FAO prepared document titled:

LAND AND AGRICULTURE - From UNCED, Rio de Janeiro 1992 to WSSD, Johannesburg 2002: A compendium of recent sustainable development initiatives in the field of agriculture and land management. FAO June 2002

that help communities manage issues that affect their agriculture including land, the environment and natural resource, finance, contractual arrangements, etc. Such projects have integrated the different subsectors and activities in agriculture and resemble agriculture focused IRD. While such projects recognize the importance of other sectors such as health and education in the regional/ rural development process, they do not necessarily include specific components for these other sectors in order to avoid overloading project management. The tendency is rather to include in these agricultural projects, components that are mostly agriculture-related and emphasize natural resource management.

These sustainable agriculture and rural development projects have included major elements intended to improve agricultural productivity, test novel institutional arrangements (including involving decentralized services in project management) that can coordinate development activities in rural space, or put in place enabling policies to support agriculture development, and/ or produce positive environmental outcomes. The coverage and impact of some of these projects mimicked those of the integrated rural development projects with the exception that these new projects had less complex governance structures, had agriculture firmly rooted at the center of the operations, had better community and farmer involvement, and had better defined roles for the private sector. The new projects emphasized subsector and inter-sectoral coordination and more especially sought to address certain constraints such as access to land and to finance and markets. The approach to financing rural development increasingly became sectoral and projects sought to involve all stakeholders to address all the different constraints facing the sector such as technology, land, financing, water management and policy. These types of projects became inclusive development activities, involving farmers, private partners and the government.

5.2 Public-Private Partnership Initiatives (The ProSavana Project Example)

A triangular partnership between Brazil, Japan and Mozambique to accelerate agricultural growth in Mozambique may hold promise as a novel approach to integrated rural development through partnership. The approach uses Brazilian know-how on agribusiness and technical support to increase agricultural productivity in the Nacala Corridor, located in the north of Mozambique. This project (called the ProSavana project) seeks to use elements included in the land and SARD initiative of the UN CSD, experience from investments in the Cerrado in Brazil, and possible direct private sector relationships with farmers to implement a project aimed at contributing to Mozambique's food security and help the country build a competitive rural sector. The partnership involves the Government of Mozambique, the Agência Brasileira de Cooperação (ABC: Brazilian Agency of Cooperation), and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The ProSavana program is a development initiative, involving farmers, private partners and the government.

ProSavana is a twenty-year agricultural cooperation program that aims to create new models of sustainable agricultural development in Mozambique's savanna region (following the example of the Cerrado region in Brazil), taking into consideration the conservation of the environment; searching for agrarian development; and oriented to the rural/regional competitive markets. ProSavana is intended to improve the living conditions of the population of the Nacala corridor in Mozambique by engaging private investments in the development of production chains. It includes programs to modernize agriculture, increase productivity and create new models of agricultural development, currently based on family subsistence production, and to guide them

to the market. It is a program that supports an integrated approach to development starting with provision of inputs through to the access to markets.

The project started in May 2011 with ProSavana-PI: the component for improving research and technology transfer capacity for Nacala corridor agriculture development. The objective of this component is the improvement of the research capacity of the Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique (IIAM) and the transfer of suitable agriculture technology through field trials. The component is expected to establish appropriate agricultural models for the region and carry out studies to support preparation of an Agricultural Master Plan. It started in 2011 and it is planned to last five years.

The second component which started from March 2012 was to prepare an Agricultural Development Master Plan for the Nacala Corridor that would contribute to social and economic development of the corridor. The masterplan proposes the creation of zones for the production of different crops. Central to the masterplan is a strategy to integrate local producers into the same value chains as commercial investors (most of them from Brazil) via contract farming and cooperatives; an approach that could be replicated across the country and continent. The master plan lists 32 projects to be carried out by both public and private sectors in order to boost agricultural productivity. These include better land demarcation; support to smallholder farmers, including extension services; training of leading farmers, credit schemes, and establishment of cooperatives; and provision of inputs, including subsidies for importing chemical fertilizers, promotion of seed production, and of tractor hire. Also unofficially, ProSavana is linked to an investment fund for large-scale agriculture development called Nacala Fund. This Fund is expected to attract up to \$2bn into the region over ten years to support private investors, and to include a social share class to be used to finance smallholder farmers.

The third component is to implement pilot (both subsistence and commercial) production projects. The component would support farmers and their organizations and also promote an increase in production by offering agricultural extension services. A primary objective would be to demonstrate and disseminate business models with high social benefits led by companies and groups of farmers. This component is expected to improve extension services and increase agricultural production.

The basic idea behind the ProSavana master plan, especially the development model part and the partnership between the private sector and smallholders, is to support the spread of contract farming over the Nacala corridor. This is supposed to allow the entrance of foreign investors (majority Brazilian) into Mozambican agriculture without automatically dispossessing local farmers of their land. A novelty introduced by the program to Mozambican agriculture and central to the masterplan is a strategy to integrate local producers into the same value chains as commercial investors via contract farming and cooperatives. The approach focuses on establishing certain 'clusters' defined in the Master Plan and based on agricultural potentials, land use, and environmental constraints of different zones. Each cluster is supposed to be started by a pioneer core project that a private company develops with priority given to quick impact projects that would function as a 'showcase' to 'attract local and foreign companies to invest in agriculture and agribusiness projects in the Nacala Corridor. The program favors contract farming as the agricultural system that can most effectively pair corporate agribusiness investors with Mozambican smallholder farmers.

While the ProSavana program has many positives, including the integration of farmers into value chains, access of farmers to inputs and technology, development of farmer-based cooperatives, and the approach of vertical integration of farmer activities, the ProSavana has become a controversial and contested development cooperation program in Mozambique. National social movements in Mozambique as well as several outsiders including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Brazil and Japan, have made public statements against it. They have raised concerns over present practices, such as what they call lack of transparency and participation, and over future impacts, notably related to food security, displacement of local farmers, and land conflicts that may be introduced by the arrival of foreign investors. Japan Cooperation (JICA) has countered these arguments by saying that the program is promoting appropriate investments in line with “the Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of Natural Food Security” and “the Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI).” For them “the program represents a concrete example of how an inclusive development initiative, involving farmers, private partners and the government, can deliver outstanding results through the promotion of responsible agricultural investments” (JICA 2014).

A program such as ProSavana has several positive potential impacts if a number of issues can be resolved satisfactorily. These issues would include: (a) appropriate consultation and dialogue with smallholder farmers who may be impacted by the program; (ii) protection of farmers’ land rights and prevention of land grabbing; (iii) integration of peasants and their protection in the production process which may be exclusively controlled by large Trans National Companies and multilateral financing institutions; (iv) full transparency, availability of information and consultation and association of civil society groups; (v) establishment of appropriate management systems for contractual farming and establishment of clear guidelines for foreign investments; and (vi) the establishment of an independent organization to monitor the execution of the Guidelines and follow up on the contractual arrangements.

The current program seems to have some of these elements and all efforts need to be made to ensure that they are satisfactorily applied to ensure that the program achieves its intended objectives.

5.3 Sector Wide Programs (SWAp)

The last decade and a half has witnessed a transformation not only in the thinking about financing of agriculture and rural development but also in the process used. There has not only been an unprecedented consensus on development objectives at the international and national levels, but probably more importantly, a commitment on the part of donors and their partners as to how those objectives may be pursued more effectively. The consensus has come from a number of factors including the following: the adoption and commitment of governments around the world and development partners in September 2000 to the Millennium Development Goals; national poverty reduction strategies, which were expected at their introduction, to provide a common framework in a given country for all development partners, and which may not have adequately addressed the role of agriculture and rural development but provided a good forum for donor coordination; and, within the international development community, the harmonization, alignment and results agenda that, followed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of February 2005. This consensus has insisted on country ownership of development efforts and the need to harmonize and

reform the way that the donor community works in order to enhance the impact of development assistance through improved alignment at the country level.

The main outcome of this transformation has been the acceptance by donors to finance agriculture and rural development through the sector-wide-approach (SWAp). The approach is referred to by several names, including the terms 'sector approach', 'sector support', 'sector wide programs', 'sector investment program', and 'SWAp' and these are frequently used interchangeably. The approach involves a financing mechanism where "... all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure program, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on Government procedures to disburse and account for all funds".³⁹

First, the SWAp represents a partnership between the government and the development partners in which Government is expected to provide leadership on preparing and managing the sector program and the development partners and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector are expected to adopt common positions and, to the extent possible, harmonize their support. Second, the partnership established through SWAps are designed to provide a framework for a process of dialogue and action relative to a shared sectoral vision and objectives. Third, and in contrast to earlier financing approaches, SWAps are expected to focus not only on the financing of a comprehensive investment program, but also to provide a forum for policy dialogue and change, and on the provision of support to, and reform of, national institutions. Thus SWAps can include financing of any investment projects/programs provided these support the policies, strategies and investment activities associated with the SWAp; and, second, that all funding – including that of the development partners – would be considered as part of the national budget, and be reflected as such in the Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and annual allocations. With the adoption of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) by African Governments in 2003, the CAADP process of coordinated national planning for agricultural development is intended to strengthen countries' capacities to coordinate their donors in the agricultural sector.

The SWAp model was first developed for the social sectors – principally health and education but has been adapted to other sectors such as roads/transport and agriculture and rural development. It has come to represent sectoral programs for the achievement of key objectives for broad-based growth and poverty reduction. Both donors and Governments agree that the SWAp approaches are some of the most effective platforms for the pursuit of common sectoral objectives. It is important to note that SWAp is not a lending instrument nor a particular financing modality but rather an approach to support a country-led program for a coherent sector in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. The goal is to develop a comprehensive sector framework that can guide public and private action in support of improved service delivery, growth and poverty reduction outcomes. Thus projects in different forms (private sector, IRD, area development, community-driven, water management, research, extension, single subsector, cash crops, etc.) can be supported under a SWAp. A recent example of the approach is the comprehensive Agricultural Master Plan (CAMP) that JICA is assisting the Government of South Sudan to develop ([http://www.idcj.co.jp/english/pdf/4-2\(12-8E_12-8N\).pdf](http://www.idcj.co.jp/english/pdf/4-2(12-8E_12-8N).pdf)).

³⁹ The Status of Sector Wide Approaches, A. Brown, M. Foster, A. Norton, F. Naschold; January 2001. Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Working Paper 142. London: ODI

Sector-wide approaches in Agriculture and Rural Development are still relatively new and it is therefore difficult to be sure about progress. A few case studies commissioned by the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development however do show good progress in terms of the effectiveness of the approach^{40 41}. Case Studies in Tanzania and Uganda (Box 2) on Agriculture and Rural Development SWApS show that adopting a sector or multi-sector approach has provided a platform for systematic policy engagement on agricultural growth and poverty reduction in the two countries. An advantage of the SWAp approach is that in defining 'the sector' one can go beyond the mandate of the Ministry of Agriculture and adopt a broader rural and inter-sectoral approach⁴².

The lessons coming out so far with this approach include:⁴³

- The need for strong country-leadership on the vision, agenda and scope for the program being supported by the SWAp and acceptance of this leadership by the development partners;
- The program should be gradual and not forced and should start at the sub-sector or sub-program level if that provides a clearer basis for building a clear vision and reducing fragmentation;
- Planning process that ensures effective complementarity between national and local sector strategies. The strategies must plan for sub-national engagement from the beginning and ensure that what is being promised at decentralized levels is feasible and achievable;
- Effective mechanisms for local private sector and civil society engagement including setting up policies and incentive systems that would not crowd-out the private sector but rather encourage their participation;
- For most poor countries, the need to develop long term 'aid' compacts that commit donors and governments to 15-20 year partnerships with a rolling results framework and clear rules around within-year/between-year predictability as well as clear exit strategy for both sides.
- Development partners' commitment to provide financial support on-budget in all cases, through coordinated mechanisms as far as possible and in all cases fully aligned with the rolling strategy and results framework.
- Ensuring that planning and finance systems at sector level are fully aligned with national PFM systems, including audit and procurement and that inter-ministerial coordination is backed up by high level political leadership;
- Setting up public expenditure review and tracking (PETS) processes to help track/monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of spending in the agricultural and rural development sectors and establishing M&E systems which can generate relevant data within relatively short periods of time in alignment with national M&E frameworks.

40 Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (2007). In December 2003, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development was created from a growing consensus among donors that collective action is needed in rural development to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Platform seeks to increase the overall effectiveness of aid in rural development. This is in line with the aid effectiveness principles put forward by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as laid out in the Rome Declaration on Harmonisation and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. www.donorplatform.org.

41 Box 2 below gives an example of the Programme for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) of Uganda, one of the most mature SWApS on Agriculture in Africa

42 Provided one has strong institutions that can assure effective coordination, the SWAp model may be able to combine all the positive reasons for integrated development without the managerial problems associated with a single agency managing multisector activities

43 These are the main recommendations that came out of the multi-country review of SWApS done by the Global Donor Platform on Rural Development (2007)

Box 2. Uganda's Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (SWAp)

The Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) in Uganda was conceived in 2001 by the Government of Uganda (GoU) (led by the Ministry of Finance) to stimulate agricultural growth and poverty reduction through a restructured agricultural governance framework. The emphasis of PMA has been on the coordination of cross sectoral activities based on seven identified priority pillars (i) research and technology development; (ii) national agricultural advisory services (iii) agricultural education; (iv) improving access to rural finance; (v) agro-processing and marketing; (vi) sustainable natural resource utilization and management and (vii) physical infrastructure. The PMA is more of a multi-sectoral reform process than a sector program but includes many of the same characteristics as a sector approach like a major emphasis on decentralization, empowering local communities and encouraging private sector provision of goods and services.

Cross-sectoral coordination among the Ministry of Agriculture (MAAIF), other ministerial departments, private sector, civil society, and development partners is assured through an annual agriculture stakeholders forum, that reviews complementary activities from other sectors as input into agriculture sector budget and review process, identifies and advocates for complementary investments to agriculture by other ministries in the annual budget process. A PMA Secretariat is responsible for management of the program and reports to the Permanent Secretary, MAAIF on a day to day basis. The Secretariat provides indirect support functions to the Top Policy Management (TPM) Committee which is comprised of the MAAIF's political and technical leadership and the TPM Technical Committee which is composed of directors and heads of agencies.

In the spirit of mainstreaming the government's poverty reduction agenda, there is no separate budget for the PMA. Its activities are meant to be prioritized by PMA line ministries and agencies within their respective budgets. As part of the shift towards decentralized funding of investment activities, the PMA is supported by a Non-Sectoral Conditional Grant (NSCG) which acts as a mechanism for transferring funds from the central government PAF (Poverty Action Fund) to sub-counties for communities to plan and finance investments linked to locally perceived needs. A Local Government Development Program (LGDP) provides the framework for the selection of districts that receive the NSCG.

The PMA has had difficulties in 'protecting' its share of the core budget because of the complexity of the institutional relationships in a multi-sectoral framework; uneven integration of PMA priorities in different line ministries and a continued preference amongst several line ministries for donor project financing. What the experience of the PMA reveals is the need to address financial issues and the prioritization of activities in the budget process at all levels, and to engage stakeholders across line ministries to ensure that funding commitments and priorities are fully aligned in support of the agriculture and rural development agenda.

Sources: Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (2007); and Ministry of Agriculture;
<http://www.agriculture.go.ug/Agencies/119>

The results so far from SWAp and lessons coming out suggest that if conditions for putting in place these sector programs are met, they would alleviate some of the major constraints that plagued the IRD projects of the 1970s and 1980s. It is important to note that there can be a strong parallel between the IRD concept and SWAp. IRD projects can be viewed as an integrated program for coordinating development resources in a geographic area, whilst SWAp represents an approach to pooling the resources of international donor agencies and governments

with individual and institutional contributions at the level of programs or initiatives without necessarily adopting a geographic integration model. The SWAp approach also seems to present an appropriate model for other types of financing including single subsector programs provided they go through coordinated funding mechanisms through the national budget and are part of the MTEF. The good thing about a SWAp is that in addition to it being a funding mechanism, it also supports a single sector policy and expenditure program derived from a shared sectoral vision and objectives.

6.0 Agricultural Transformation and Financing Approach

There is a general consensus among development practitioners that an agriculture-led strategy of economic growth offers most countries of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) their best chance at rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation. African Governments have also agreed to the importance of agriculture and through the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), they have established the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) to support agricultural development and promote food security. CAADP's objective is to improve food security, nutrition, and help increase incomes in Africa's largely farming based economies. It aims to do this by raising agricultural productivity by at least 6% per year and increasing public investment in agriculture. The program requires participating African countries to commit at least 10 percent of government expenditures to the agricultural sector under the premise that agriculture can drive growth and serve as the antidote to hunger, poverty, and food insecurity.

It is clear from all recent evaluations of agricultural development programs in Africa that many donors (including bilateral and multilateral donors as well as international financial institutions) are already supporting countries and regional organizations under the framework of CAADP implementation. CAADP has significantly contributed to the enthusiasm around the prospects for an African green revolution over the last decade by emphasizing agriculture-based development in policy discourse and spending. More than any other initiative, CAADP has received political endorsement and continent-wide attention as well as the commitment of the countries' own resources.

For an effective transformation of African agriculture, the CAADP process seems to present a unique opportunity for Governments not only to improve their agricultural growth potential, but to improve rural development in general. The harmonization, alignment and results agenda that, following the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of February 2005, is leading the way to reform the way that the international development community – donors and partners alike – works in order to enhance the impact of development assistance through improved alignment at the country level. This should facilitate the pooling of resources to finance priority agricultural and rural development programs. The Paris declaration and the various follow-up agreements on harmonization by donors⁴⁴ also present Governments with a clear opportunity to take leadership of the process of reinvesting in the agricultural sector. These two factors, country leadership and donor harmonization and alignment point clearly to the importance of countries preparing themselves to adopt the SWAp approach as an important tool for supporting agriculture and rural development.

44 Apart from the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, there have been other agreements including the Accra Agenda for Action 2008, Busan Partnership for Effective Development in 2011, and the Rome Declaration on Harmonization of February 2003

7.0 IRD – Back to the Future?

To reduce rural poverty, countries need to address rural areas in their entirety—all of rural society and every economic, social, and environmental aspect of rural development. The concept of rural development therefore remains useful in its recognition of the multi-faceted nature of the process of change that this development involves. This process, however, is made up oftentimes, of a number of discrete activities. Sometimes some of these activities need to take place simultaneously; sometimes in sequence. For the process to be effective, some form of integration of these activities may be useful, implementing some together or in sequence as required. Thus while the concept of an integrated rural development remains valid, it may not be necessary to seek to integrate a large number of activities, which often requires a large degree of co-ordination. The SWAp as a tool should make it possible to define coordination systems and mechanisms to implement and to integrate as much as possible these different activities involved with rural development.

The IRD approach of the 1970s was well-intended given the alarming situation of the absolute poor in the developing world as described by the World Bank president in 1973 in Nairobi. While there were issues about the design and implementation of the IRD projects, there were some successes and the projects attempted to respond to a real need to address poverty in the rural areas. More importantly, the decades of implementation covering several countries and projects involved have afforded many lessons learned, offering policy makers and government officials, better tools and methods to design projects with a more realistic, seasoned approach to reach the poorest of the poor. The process has also helped governments and donors to gain a better understanding of community involvement and participation in projects for which they are beneficiaries. It is clear that review and evaluation of the past IRD approaches have identified most pieces of the puzzle and we need now try to put them together in a way to attain the objectives of sustained rural development.

Lessons from the past suggest that there is much to be gained using a coordinated approach to rural development. While we may not necessarily go back to the integrated rural development model of the 1970s, the sector-wide approach presents an appropriate model for a new approach to integrating activities in the rural sector. While intra- and inter-sectoral coordination would remain a challenge in agriculture and rural development, early experience in implementing SWAps point to possible solutions to the problem. A good example is Uganda's Programme for the Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) (Box 2) which requires all line ministries with relevant mandates to review and reorient their activities in line with PMA objectives and coordination is assured by cross sectoral committees, the most important of which is chaired by the Minister of Finance.

A final note of caution is that a lot of countries in sub-Saharan Africa may not yet be ready to implement a SWAp effectively in the Agriculture/Rural Development sector. As indicated by the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development "the 'entry conditions' for a SWAp clearly matter." It would therefore be important that countries pay particular attention to the following conditions:

- a sound macroeconomic framework,
- a basic agreement on strategy and policy between government and donors,
- the possibility of participation by key stakeholders including the political leadership and private sector in SWAp formulation processes, and
- a donor community that is committed to moving towards common and aligned approaches

Experience from the early IRD programs and recent literature on aid effectiveness would require that the right incentives be set up; that countries put in place sound institutions and policies and that donor resources be directed towards knowledge sharing. Where countries can effectively deal with local concerns about land issues, a public-private partnership such as is being tried under ProSavana in Mozambique may provide a useful approach.

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