

Political Economy of Agricultural Policy in Africa: Has CAADP Made a Difference? A Rwanda Case Study

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1. Introduction

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) is an African Union initiative intended to accelerate agricultural growth across Africa and improve food security as well as strengthen the resilience of the continent's environment. African heads of state and governments endorsed the initiative at the 2003 African Union Summit in the Mozambican capital, Maputo. CAADP's strategy, as defined by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency, consists of three components: a) improvements in policies and investments at country level; b) greater coordination and purpose from development partners; and c) enhanced learning and collaboration between African countries.

The strategy targets an increase in public agricultural investment to ten percent of annual national budgets and six percent annual agricultural growth throughout Africa. CAADP's core strategic functions, on the other hand, are: a) advocacy for agriculture, the aim being to restore African agriculture as a major driver of development; b) strengthening country processes for better investment programmes; c) mobilisation of partnerships for investment at the national, regional, and international levels; d) pushing for commitments and holding governments and partners accountable for their promises; and e) harnessing African strategic thinking, positions and scenarios for the future (NEPAD 2010).

Rwanda has been enthusiastic in its embrace of the initiative, with the government making an effort to fulfil all its obligations. Has CAADP made a difference? This paper argues that it has, and that in this, it has been helped significantly by the government's own prior ambitions and the centrality of agriculture therein. Section 2 of the paper explores the background against which Rwanda embraced CAADP, showing evolutions in thinking about agriculture among the country's policy elite and its development partners. Section 2.1 looks at the politico-social incentives for agricultural policy, while section 2.2 looks at the steps taken to revalorise agriculture once a decision was made that it would be a key component of the foundation on which the country's wider strategy for pursuing prosperity would rest. The post-war political settlement has been important in providing the necessary stability without which the pursuit of development is impossible. Section 2.3 examines the contours of the settlement, while section 3 tells the story of how CAADP in Rwanda unfolded. Section 3.1 highlights the critical role of donors whose efforts have been supplemented by those of non-donor actors, including the business community and farmers' groups, both of which are explored in sections 3.2 and 3.3. Section 4 highlights the limited but still important regional dimension of the CAADP process, while section 5 assesses the overall significance of CAADP in cementing the central role of agriculture in Rwanda's pursuit of economic development and prosperity, before section 6 wraps up the story.

2. Background to Rwanda and CAADP

The insecurity arising out of the devastating war Rwanda experienced between 1990 and 1994 drove agricultural life to a standstill and left behind a run-down sector. During the immediate post-war period a number of factors conspired to stagnate the sector. First was the flight into exile of around two million people. In a country where up to 90 percent of the population are employed in agriculture or live off the sector, many of the refugees were farmers whose departure deprived the sector of much-needed labour. Second, the country descended into an insurgency lasting several years (1994–1997), during which a great deal of the new government's attention and meagre resources were devoted to securing the country and re-establishing the stability and order necessary to kick-start the reconstruction and development processes.

The lack of resources was compounded by the hostility, scepticism or uncertainty of many in the international community. This translated into unwillingness to commit resources to a government whose survival and ability to hold the country together seemed far from assured. Instead, most aid took the form of emergency assistance, the bulk of it going to international non-governmental organisations who expended it on what they considered to be the priority activities and domains. The post-war government therefore inherited a devastated country with no resources, where the population that had not fled was largely impoverished, landless, hungry, fearful, hostile and sceptical.

The post-civil-war context was therefore hardly conducive to immediate reconstruction efforts that might have seen agriculture and other sectors receive much-needed attention. Also, when the international community eventually turned to financing reconstruction efforts, they dedicated their attention mainly to the social sectors (Putzel and Golooba-Mutebi 2009). Ironically, between 1996 and 2000 agricultural output grew at a rate of almost ten percent. Thereafter, it declined to five percent between 2001 and 2006. In 2007, thanks to drought, it plummeted to 0.7 percent.

Alongside the crisis in agriculture were other problems, as shown by a series of appalling statistics from the time. Poverty rates in the country were extremely high, with 56.9 percent of the population living below the poverty line in 2006, and 36.9 percent in extreme poverty. Between 2001 and 2006, inequality widened, as shown by an increase in the Gini coefficient from 0.47 percent to 0.51 percent (Ansoms 2011). And then there was acute land shortage. In 2006, two percent of farming households were landless. Fifty percent owned less than 0.5ha each. More than 60 percent cultivated less than 0.7ha, and over 25 percent cultivated less than 0.2ha. Landless households were the poorest (Huggins 2012).

Rwanda signed a CAADP compact in 2007, the very first country to do so. By this time it was already implementing its strategic plan for the transformation of agriculture (PSTA). Preparations for a post-compact high-level roundtable meeting took place over the subsequent two years, and were overseen by the NEPAD office located inside the Office of the President. Assisting the NEPAD office was the strategy and policy unit (SPU), also in the Office of the President. Meanwhile the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) worked alongside the two units to lay the groundwork for the roundtable.

The high-level roundtable meeting took place in December 2009, led jointly by the Ministries of Agriculture and Finance and Economic Planning, with the active involvement of the Ministry of Local Government. The Ministry of Local Government is especially pivotal given its jurisdiction over local administrations, the structures responsible for policy implementation across several domains in the country. More significant was President Kagame's attendance in person. It left neither ambiguity nor doubt about the importance he and the government attached to the CAADP process in Rwanda and to locating agriculture at the centre of the country's pursuit of economic growth and development. It was a clear demonstration that in Rwanda the CAADP process was being led from the highest levels of the country's political leadership. Other key actors in the process included the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), members of the donor community, civil society groups and the private sector.

Since the signing of the compact, the percentage of the national budget dedicated to agriculture has gone up. The figure for 2010/11 has been reported at 10.2 percent (MINAGRI 2011), a hefty rise from the previous 4.2 percent in 2008 (CONCERN 2010). The government has its eyes set on stepping it up to 15 percent (MINAGRI 2011). The agricultural sector itself has registered significant growth, with the figure for the sector's growth for 2010/11 put at 3.2 percent (Ibid). Crop yields per hectare have also experienced remarkable increases. The production of maize, wheat and potatoes has gone up, due especially to opening up new land for cultivation. In 2008 the sector's growth rate jumped back to ten percent per annum as a result of increased use of new seeds and fertilisers thanks to a fertiliser subsidy programme, and land consolidation under a crop intensification programme.²

Some of the land that has been opened up for use has been reclaimed from marshlands, leading to an increase in the amount of land available for farming. While in 2006 only 11,000ha of marshland were under cultivation, by 2010 the figure had gone up to 17,363ha, with the total area under cultivation countrywide having increased by 13 percent (MINAGRI 2012). Meanwhile, inorganic fertiliser use rose from 14,000t in 2006 to 44,000t in 2010. Only 40 percent of the land was protected from erosion

in 2006; by 2010, it had risen to 87 percent, due to a massive programme of terracing. Cassava production is said to have almost tripled while Irish potato, soybean and bean yields have approximately doubled (Kathiresan 2012). The impact of these gains on nutrition and food security has been significant (Kalibata 2010).

Given the raft of anti-poverty initiatives the government of Rwanda has put in place over the years,³ these developments cannot be the sole reason why poverty levels have fallen in recent years. However, their impact on people's lives, especially in rural areas where the vast majority are farmers or live off agriculture, could not have been insignificant. From 56.9 percent of the population living below the poverty line in 2006, current estimates put the figure at 44.9 percent. From 37 percent of the population living in extreme poverty in 2006, the figure is currently 24.1 percent. Meanwhile, GDP growth rates have averaged seven to 11.2 percent (Ansoms 2011).

2.1. Domestic political incentives for agricultural policy in Rwanda

What Rwanda's current leadership refer to as the 'new Rwanda' emerged out of a history of sharp divisions arising from the particular way in which the country first transitioned towards independence, then evolved as an independent state until the early 1990s, when it descended into civil war. In the aftermath of the war, the new government had two urgent tasks to perform: reconciling people who had been actively divided across several generations, and reconstructing a virtually collapsed state. The two tasks initially also had to run alongside efforts to put down an insurgency and secure the country's borders,⁴ both of which kept the government largely distracted. A consequence of this distraction and the international community's slow response to the government's need for resources was the limited attention paid to the pursuit of development in general and service delivery in particular. Following the restoration of order, the government's attention had necessarily to turn to the pursuit of development. For some years, however, agriculture was starved of attention and suffered considerable neglect.

According to Huggins (2012), the government's lack of focus on agriculture stemmed from choosing to concentrate on efforts to develop information technology and other high value urban economic activities. It is indeed true that at some point influential figures within the country's policy elite were of the view that agriculture, especially the subsistence type practiced by the country's peasants, had no future. Strangely, rather than provoke a debate as to what kind of agriculture might serve as an alternative, this view evolved into ideas about the imperative for Rwanda to leapfrog into a service and industrial economy. In many ways this captures the government's long-term vision, for agriculture is now seen as the foundation on which a more complex future economy will be built.⁵

It is worth pointing out, nonetheless, that even if the attention to technology and other urban-focused activities contributed to the neglect, the more important reasons included the post-war insurgency, the general insecurity it begot, and the wars Rwanda fought in the DRC for the most part of the late 1990s.⁶ These took up a significant portion of the meagre resources at its disposal during a period when the international community was still withholding development assistance, for reasons that included outright hostility and uncertainty as to whether the new government would manage to hold the country together and also consolidate its position and power.⁷ It is evident from Rwanda's 'Vision 2020' plan that as early as 2000, the government recognised the importance of agriculture. However, a combination of meagre resources and donor bias towards social sector spending at the expense of the productive sectors continued to starve it of much-needed investment.

More generally, assistance by donors to the agricultural sector throughout the developing world was by then low and had declined markedly over time. Donors have long emphasised the need to prioritise aid to rural development in policy documents,⁸ and bilateral assistance to the sector in different developing countries had accounted for an average of 25.8 percent of all ODA from 1973–1977. By 2003–2006, however, the period covered by Rwanda's first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) (2002–2005), it had shrunk to an average of 3.7 percent of all bilateral ODA.⁹

2.2. *The turn-around*

The turn-around in the fortunes of Rwanda's agricultural sector started with, among other developments, the realisation that at the end of the country's first PRSP in 2006, poverty remained deep and entrenched. Despite focused action during its implementation, poverty had decreased only marginally from 64 percent to 57 percent. Moreover, as already shown above, inequality had increased considerably. The results shocked the government and spurred it into placing agriculture at the centre of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008–2012), the country's second PRSP. The EDPRS, whose successor (EDPRS II) is now under implementation, focused on increasing investment in four growth-promoting areas, of which agriculture was one.¹⁰

There were other reasons too. With one of the highest population densities in the world and one of the lowest levels of productivity in agriculture, land in Rwanda has long been a source of conflict.¹¹ Land scarcity is said to have played a role in fomenting political violence since independence (Newbury 2011; Jefremovas 2002). To address this problem, the stepped-up focus on agriculture has been accompanied by land reform whose objective is to give ownership to rural producers over the land they occupy and use. This in turn has been accompanied by a villagisation programme intended to (re)settle rural dwellers in planned settlements (Huggins 2012). The

objective is to free up land hitherto taken up by haphazard settlement and pool it for more productive farming (Lichtenstein 2012).

Financial services have been introduced in previously un-served rural communities through banks and credit and savings associations. There are some initial indications that this has been beneficial to smallholders (Lichtenstein 2012; Nyamulinda et al. 2011). Efforts to encourage farmers to engage in the production of high-value products for the market are also showing potential for bearing fruit (Booth and Golooba-Mutebi 2012). Nonetheless, all three initiatives have come under somewhat speculative criticism alleging they disregard the interests of peasants and violate their rights (Huggins 2012; Ansoms 2008). However, other research (Pritchard 2013; IFDC 2010; MINAGRI 2010) suggests the situation is more complex and possibly evolving in less damaging ways than the critics acknowledge.

With limited natural resources and a miniscule private sector, the country has few other realistic avenues outside agriculture for tackling mass rural poverty in the short to medium term. The huge reservoir of unskilled labour in the countryside for which employment must be found risks political instability if no channel for their energies and source of livelihood are made available. Further, it is difficult to develop the country if 80 percent of the population are outside the cash economy. Putting money in the hands of farmers will raise demand for a wide range of products and services. 'Poverty elimination therefore depends heavily on raising agricultural productivity through new technology, improved access to markets, better prices and policies that promote agricultural growth... The major aim is to reinforce the capacity of farmers as a priority for turning traditional agriculture into a market-oriented and revenue generating activity' (Nyamulinda et al. 2011: 2–4). Available figures show that before the agricultural reforms took hold, 66 percent of the food crops grown were for own consumption and only 34 percent made it to the market (Ibid: 6).

The political risks associated with doing nothing to tackle poverty have been outlined by Newbury (2011). She underlines how rural poverty undermined the legitimacy of the Habyarimana regime and fed into the political instability and violence that eventually led to its collapse:

Increasing immiseration of the rural population and a growing gap between rich and poor contributed to the delegitimation of the Second Republic, led by Juvenal Habyarimana... In the late 1980s and early 1990s rural resentments boiled to the surface. Land access and agrarian policies more generally were not the only issues, but these were at the root of many grievances. Many rural producers found themselves unable to make ends meet, while corruption and accumulation increased among some high government officials. (Newbury 2011: 227).¹²

Amidst the still high levels of poverty, it was essential that the government embark on efforts to raise agricultural productivity. Over and above keeping the population fed and creating employment for the large numbers of unemployed and underemployed rural poor, it would be in the enlightened self-interest of the new political elite. Their ability to maintain stability depends partly, if not largely, on their capacity to create wealth and bring prosperity to the greatest number of their compatriots. State fragility is strongly associated with slow economic progress often characterised by, at least in the early stages of development, low levels of agricultural productivity (Hesselbein et al. 2006).

If hardship linked to declining prosperity and growing poverty during the late 1980s and early 1990s contributed significantly to political upheaval and the violence that accompanied it, a re-occurrence of similar circumstances could easily threaten the hard-earned post-war political stability. That the importance of agriculture in the country's development ambitions and in its aspirations to maintain legitimacy in the rural hinterland¹³ is well understood is evident from the emphasis by government officials that it is a strategic sector to whose development it is committed.

2.3. The importance of the post-war political settlement

If the government of Rwanda today enjoys much internal legitimacy with the general population, it is because of at least three things: its post-war restoration of peace and political stability, its capacity to maintain them, and the consequent enabling of Rwandans to get on with their lives. Bolstering this legitimacy is the current political settlement built around four core elements: power and responsibility sharing among legally registered political parties;¹⁴ non-sectarianism; the pursuit of development as a strategy for ensuring the ethnic divisions and extremism of the past do not re-emerge; and rule-governed rather than patronage driven politics.¹⁵

The decisive switch from the one-party political model and the associated systematic political exclusion practiced by the First and Second Republics to a multi-party one based on active consensus building and the pursuit of inclusion¹⁶ was arguably the most significant change and the foundation on which everything else has been built. Although persistently portrayed by some (Hayman 2011; Longman 2011; Beswick 2010; Reyntjens 2004) as a one-party dictatorship, Rwanda operates a multi-party system enshrined in its post-civil-war (2003) Constitution. The Constitution provides for limited pluralism within a framework of power and responsibility sharing among parties that attain a certain degree of popular political support during elections.

These arrangements render the practice of democracy in Rwanda quite distinct from what would be familiar to commentators steeped in the Western liberal democratic model that critics of the Government of Rwanda seem

to take as some kind of standard template to be applied by any country aspiring to qualify as a democracy regardless of context. Ten legally registered political parties participate actively in decision-making.¹⁷ Perhaps because inter-party relations in Rwanda are devoid of the melodrama and posturing associated with conventional multi-party politics in some of Rwanda's neighbours, critics (Skjeseth 2011; Stroh 2009) often dismiss enthusiastically all non-Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) parties as inconsequential. However, of the 11 registered parties, eight are represented in parliament where policies and legislation are actively debated, so much so that some bills are rejected and referred for revision and refinement. The two parties without representation participate in debate with the others and in decision-making through the National Forum for Political Organisations where issues of national importance are first discussed and consensus built before they are taken to parliament.¹⁸ All of this raises questions about the one-party dictatorship thesis that has come to dominate discussion about politics in Rwanda.

The state in post-genocide Rwanda also has a reputation, even among its most ardent critics,¹⁹ for effectiveness. This attribute is underlain by a certain hunger on the part of the country's leadership and political elite more generally for, and pursuit of, success. Catherine Newbury (2011: 228), hardly a fan of the post-genocide government, best captures this phenomenon when she refers to the RPF's 'strong sense of mission'.

Among the products of this relentless pursuit of success is the dramatic fall in poverty rates within a fairly short period of time. Nonetheless, even amidst this steep decline, poverty remains entrenched and widespread and continues to challenge the minds of Rwanda's leadership.²⁰ It is primarily the pre-occupation with poverty and the drive to improve the wellbeing of the general population that gave impetus to the ready embrace of CAADP.

3. The CAADP process

The driving force behind the CAADP process in Rwanda has primarily been political leadership at the highest levels. President Kagame signed the Maputo Declaration alongside other presidents. Prior to this, Rwanda had fully embraced the NEPAD agenda. The country already had a fully staffed NEPAD office whose mandate was to domesticate all NEPAD programmes in Rwanda. NEPAD itself had been the brainchild of like-minded leaders with a particular view of how Africa ought to conduct its affairs and to relate to the outside world (Hope 2002). From the beginning NEPAD spoke to the Rwandan government's own aspirations for the country under Kagame's leadership. And so it was natural that he would want to follow its evolution keenly. Locating the NEPAD office within the Office of the President was strategic. According to one official, 'it meant there would be no hassle with budgets – we never had any problem with budgets. It also meant that other government organs would take it seriously.'²¹ For example, after it was up and running, all meetings were well attended, not

least because invitation letters had 'Office of the President' on them. The President followed developments very closely and was updated on a regular basis. The importance of the NEPAD office was underlined by the fact that its head was also Rwanda's representative to NEPAD in Addis Ababa.

Agriculture was a key focus of NEPAD from the start and was topmost on the list of priorities. It was in that connection that it was a major item on the agenda of the Maputo Summit in 2003. By this time the government of Rwanda was also saying the right things about agriculture in its policy documents. That, and the fact that this was a NEPAD initiative, rendered it easy for the Rwanda government to embrace it readily, although the signing of the compact had to await specific details regarding its operationalisation to be sorted out. Currently, Rwanda's NEPAD office facilitates both COMESA and the NEPAD Secretariat to quickly implement their programmes in the country. Because of high-level political commitment in Rwanda to the search for African solutions to African problems, NEPAD initiatives seen to be in furtherance of those aspirations have also tended to be looked at favourably.²²

In the run-up to the roundtable the NEPAD office urged the Ministry of Agriculture to own the process. IFPRI was invited 'to put numbers' to Rwanda's Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (PSTA) and to link existing programmes to CAADP. The PSTA metamorphosed into PSTA II, which was aligned with the CAADP framework. When it eventually happened, the roundtable brought policymakers, potential investors, civil society groups and the existing local private sector together. The objective of the roundtable was to demonstrate to the politicians, many of whom had by then become less sceptical about the role agriculture could play in the country's development, as well as to donors who had hitherto been focused on the social sectors, that if they made agriculture a priority, it would lead to specific outcomes, among them poverty reduction and the attainment of several Millennium Development Goals. As an official said, 'we demonstrated using figures that if you invested so much in such and such a crop, this is what you would get out of it. We then showed what kind of budgets would be needed and how they could be shared between the government and donors'.²³

Nonetheless, the government's embrace of CAADP was part of the leadership's much wider interest in NEPAD, their enthusiastic pursuit of development, and their determination to seize every opportunity that presents itself and to make the best use of it. As one high-ranking official pointed out, 'Rwanda is always eager to grow and overcome poverty. If you give them numbers as we did in this case, they are quick to respond. There is that urge to stand out, to be exemplary'.²⁴ For example, for the peer review process under the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the government readily opened itself up to examination. 'When they brought accountability to the table, other African countries

showed a reluctance to get involved. But President Kagame immediately said, "come to my country". It was as if he was saying, "we have nothing to hide".²⁵

High-level political commitment to CAADP in Rwanda has been extensive, with ministers and parliament also working alongside President Kagame to drive the process. This in turn has translated into commitment at the local government level, where responsibility for policy implementation lies and where performance contracts (*imihigo*) ensure officials remain focused on set goals. This multi-level commitment within the political and administrative set-up has been critical to attaining the advances the country has made after it embraced CAADP. In many ways it explains why, among all the countries that have signed the compact, Rwanda is one of the few where actual progress has been made.

3.1. The role of donors

The donor community has been central to the achievement of the advances Rwanda has made in the agricultural sector through the support they have provided in recent years and the commitments they have made to the government and fulfilled since agriculture assumed a central position in the country's development ambitions. Development assistance has underpinned the government's own ability to plan long-term, a crucial element in state-building and the pursuit of prosperity.²⁶ As already shown, donors in Rwanda did not turn their attention to the productive sectors decisively until after 2007. Thereafter, they become a great deal more interested owing to a large extent to the in-country CAADP process and the manner in which it brought attention to bear on Rwanda's agricultural sector. Interest in agriculture was especially heightened by the CAADP roundtable, at which it was shown that the dividends from financing the sector in terms of poverty reduction and the possible achievement of the Millennium Development Goals would be significant. In addition, the roundtable attracted even non-traditional donors in search of bankable activities to fund.

Eventually the increased interest and activities in agriculture and other sectors by donors rendered their coordination necessary in order to, among other objectives, prevent duplication of efforts. Coordination within the agricultural sector reflects the government's general approach to the coordination of donors and their activities. This section therefore discusses donor coordination in general terms with a view to capturing the nature of government-donor relations in the agricultural sector since the CAADP roundtable. However, nothing specifically different has happened in the sector since the roundtable to distinguish it from other sectors in terms of donor-government relations.

A key arena within which donor coordination in Rwanda takes place is the Sector Working Group (SWG). Each SWG is co-chaired by the concerned Ministry's

Permanent Secretary (PS) and the representative of the lead donor in a particular sector. Other members of a SWG are drawn from government and non-government organs or bodies whose work or activities are linked to those of the particular ministry. For example, in agriculture, ministries such as those of commerce, environment and even health are represented. Health has a particular interest in malnutrition, as it is seen as a function of the production and availability of specific types of food products. Donors who do not attend SWG meetings are informed of developments within the sector by the co-chair. Other donors also communicate with the government through the co-chair. If problems arise within a sector, it is not only the government (PS) that will be held to account by the Ministry of Finance as coordinator of aid, but also the donors (co-chair): 'you cannot come here and say things did not work and claim you don't know why'.²⁷

Among other things, SWGs discuss budgets and funding gaps. Officials say donors are 'pushed' to get involved at sector level, which means 'they get to know quite a lot about what is going on'. They are therefore able to speak on behalf of the government during fundraising drives: 'because they know what is in the kitty, and because they know where problems are, they mobilise funding for us'.²⁸ Ministries are required to report to the Office of the Prime Minister about any problems that may arise. Meanwhile donors are supposed to report to the Ministry of Finance, the coordinator of aid. Reporting to the ministry is meant to trigger corrective action. 'If they do nothing, we hold them culpable just like we would hold other members. That is the government's interpretation of partnership'.²⁹

Relations between the government and its development partners have not always been easy. CAADP has not changed that. Besides purely political matters such as those pertaining to respect for freedoms and human rights³⁰, at the heart of their 'now troubled, now smooth' relationship is what one official described as the government's preparedness to say 'no' to things it does not deem to be in the country's interest. Hayman (2011: 125) quotes a donor employee echoing this view: 'the government is unlikely to comply with donor demands unless they see it as being in their own interest'. Although, as one official pointed out, 'they [donors] know that there are things over which the government will negotiate and those over which it won't, and while such knowledge 'shapes the relationship with our partners', some donors appear to be grudging in their acceptance of the government's assertive – to some overly assertive – approach. Government officials claim, however, that they have merely adopted the Paris Declaration to the Rwandan context.

One of the things the Paris Declaration has enabled the Rwandans to do is to institute a 'donor division of labour'. This entails encouraging each donor to work in no more than three sectors, those in which they enjoy

comparative advantage and to which they can provide resources. Involvement in additional sectors entails going in as a silent partner. 'You want to give money? Pass it through another partner. But you don't engage in the dialogue [pertaining to the fourth sector]. We don't want you to be scattered'.³¹ On how they managed to arrive at relating to donors in this way, a government official reported: 'to get them there, we did fight'. At the time of the field research, the government was, for example, 'pushing the Germans to quit health and go to vocational training. They are known internationally to be good there'. In this instance the person in charge of health at German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) had to leave because she was no longer needed.

Sector Working Groups develop strategies for their respective sectors and also monitor their implementation. Donor members of SWGs are not encouraged to 'play donor'. Rather, they are pressed to be partners and enjoined to work with other members to solve their own problems. The only exception is when the problems are multi-sector. The government subjects donors to a planning framework. Strategies such as the EDPRS are developed amidst consultation with them as partners, after which they are monitored jointly.

In terms of actual coordination, there are different channels through which it happens. The joint sector reviews are supposed to take place on a quarterly basis but in reality the meetings are more frequent. Some ministries have developed sub-sector working groups. In agriculture they have been created for irrigation and post-harvest handling. The Joint Budget Support Review is only for donors providing general budget support. It happens twice a year (April and September) and deals with high-level policy matters that sector reviews cannot resolve. In April the review looks back on what has happened, while in September it looks forward at programmes for the subsequent year and the medium-term budgets.

Donors who only fund projects are only involved in discussions pertaining to what they fund. Before donors abandoned general budget support in 2012 and resorted to sector budget support in reaction to Rwanda's alleged fomenting of war in the DRC, non-general-budget-support donors could be invited to Joint Budget Support Reviews, but only as observers, at the discretion of the government. In this case, USAID, the IMF and the UN were invited 'just to give them a feel of the discussions we have'. Such invitations were extended for only limited periods of time and could be withdrawn after one or more meetings. In a sense these invitations served as a mechanism for coaxing project donors into becoming general budget support donors.

Donor interest in the dialogue is high because of the quality of discussions which focus on concrete policy issues within the broad context of the government's economic development and poverty reduction strategy

(EDPRS). Indicators that are monitored by both sides, and on the basis of which disbursement of resources is decided, facilitate progress reviews in different areas.

3.2. Participation by non-donor actors

As already indicated, the CAADP roundtable brought together an eclectic mix of actors, some of whom were already keenly interested in the sector, while others sought to participate in one way or another. As a result CAADP catalysed synergies and complementarities from which the sector has made some important gains. The gains arose from the disparate actors constituting the Agricultural Sector Working Group (ASWG), which consists of many sub-groups. The private sector sub-group, for example, brings together the Rwanda Development Board, the Private Sector Federation, the Ministry of Commerce and Trade, the Rwanda Agricultural Board and the National Agriculture Export Board. It is concerned primarily with efforts to attract private sector investment into the agricultural sector. At the time of the field research a forum was being planned to bring together its members with farmers' groups to discuss issues pertaining to value addition.

Membership of the ASWG also includes civil society groups. Their valued-added is the direct interaction between them and farmers and the mediating role they play between farmers and other actors, including the government and the private sector. This makes their participation at the policy level extremely important. Meanwhile farmers' groups, among them cooperatives, actively interact with extension personnel at lower levels of local government and, through the joint development forums (JDF), actively participate in the formulation of district development plans. This does not mean they are directly involved in CAADP processes. However, their influence on local governments translates into influence over the CAADP agenda through their participation in planning that feeds back to higher levels of the agricultural sector. Civil society actors influence decision making directly via interfacing with local leaders and government officials in the areas where they work, and indirectly through their membership in SWGs.

Nonetheless, their advocacy role is rather limited. The limitations originate in the decision by donors to channel financial resources through the government and not civil society groups, and in the government's attitude towards them. Civil society groups were never fans of general budget support because it reduced the resources available to them.³² For example, it rendered them unable to hire and retain skilled people of similar calibre to the public servants and government officials they seek to engage and influence. This has impacted negatively on their overall capacity for policy engagement.

The government's complex relationship with civil society groups and NGOs dates from its earliest

encounters with them after it seized power. As already pointed out, immediately after the genocide donors channelled their humanitarian support for Rwanda through international NGOs. In their work inside the country, the NGOs paid little attention to the views of the government. The then-new government viewed both this approach to humanitarian assistance and the behaviour of NGOs as undermining efforts by the state to re-establish social order and kick-start as well as take charge of and direct the country's reconstruction.³³ In late 1995 many international NGOs were ordered to leave the country. Subsequently the government established a robust regulatory framework within which local and international NGOs working in the country are required to operate.

Analysts of state-civil society relations in Rwanda are generally critical of the restrictions embedded in legislation regulating civil society activity and what they see as their co-optation by the government (Gready 2010; Maina and Kibalama 2006; Unsworth and Uvin 2002). It is also clear that those examining this relationship tend to look out for groups whose *modus operandi* include acting as watchdogs and being in active contestation with the state. In Rwanda, however, application of the contestation template to analysing state-civil society relations easily misses a crucial part of the local reality. As with political parties, so with civil society groups, the mode of interaction preferred by the government is collaboration and quiet discussion of differences around a table rather than through public rows. This preference is encapsulated in the words of a senior minister:

There are two debates on the role of civil society organisations in developing countries by international scholars. On one side civil society is seen as a counter power to government, and on the other, civil society is seen as an effective partner in the service delivery and development process. Rwanda favours the latter approach. (Maina and Kibalama 2006: 66)

The government's commitment to this approach is such that past attempts by civil society groups, especially human rights groups, to influence policy through adversarial engagement failed and from time to time led to circumstances in which civil society activists felt compelled or chose to flee the country (Waldorf 2011).

The weakness of civil society and the government's preference for the 'partnership' model of engagement have rendered public expression by the former of criticism of, or opposition to, government policies rather rare, although not totally absent.³⁴ In a similar vein, there is not much open expression on behalf of society of popular expectations of the state.³⁵ This reluctance to be vocal extends to donors, who since the end of the genocide have been generally careful not to intervene in ways that might prove to be disruptive.³⁶

Nonetheless, civil society activists assert that the non-confrontational approach to engagement with the

state is not evidence of abdication from advocacy: 'we do not engage in confrontational advocacy, but advocacy is not about confrontation'.³⁷ Describing the effectiveness of the collaborative approach, one activist emphasised how, in connection with the national budget-making process for example, civil society groups are provided with the budget framework papers for comments, which the government subsequently takes into account. He added: 'where you provide a position paper, they are likely to call you for a discussion'.³⁸ Meanwhile, even as they encourage collaboration, government officials also emphasise their willingness to respond robustly to what they may construe as unwarranted troublemaking by civil society groups: 'if they fight government policy, we fight them back'.³⁹

An additional feature of the civil society fraternity in Rwanda is their lack of skills and capacity, and associated constraints that curtail engagement with the state. One activist elaborated on the weakness: 'Influencing policy entails research but we are weak in that area. For example, we have wanted to comment on *imihigo*, land consolidation, *umuganda*,⁴⁰ but we don't have sufficient evidence on which to base our criticism'.⁴¹ It is therefore not surprising that many civil society groups have readily embraced service delivery roles on behalf of the state. For example, Imbaraga, Rwanda's largest farmers' cooperative, is a major distributor of subsidised farm inputs, fertilisers and seeds under the government's crop intensification programme.

Huggins (2012), an exponent of the adversarial model of state-civil society relations, has commented at length on the turn-around in relations between the government and civil society groups from adversarial to mainly collaborative:

The massive increase in state and donor funding to the agricultural sector has increased the material resources available to some civil society actors in the rural development and farming sectors but has further entangled them within state bureaucratic networks. For example, agronomists working for one of the largest farmers' organisations sometimes describe themselves as working 'for' government programmes such as CIP. Their methods of working... are completely intertwined with state designs and activities and interviews with them suggest little sense of independence from government in thought or deed. Agronomists working for NGOs essentially support state agronomists and are thoroughly incorporated into the state agricultural reform machinery. They have largely lost the ability to act as an effective advocacy organisation for smallholder farmers... (Huggins 2012: 26)

As with other observers who seek to apply to the Rwandan context templates of how civil society is supposed to relate to the state and find they do not fit, Huggins is not interested in what the unusual relationship between the state in Rwanda and civil society groups

working in the agricultural sector produces. Form triumphs over substance, regardless.

3.3. *Farmers and farmers' groups*

Even as the government maintains controls on civil society groups, since before CAADP it has attempted to provide opportunities for 'popular voice' on matters of collective interest, especially in the rural areas. However, a long history of obedience and submission to the state means that people have to be encouraged to make demands. The depth to which 'compliance with the powerful' (Newbury 2011: 229) was entrenched prior to the genocide is evident from the general reaction by the population during the early days of decentralisation, especially in rural areas, to exhortation by government officials to air their views and ask questions of their leaders. The exhortations were in a bid by the then-new government to undermine the culture of obedience that, according to some analysts, accounted for popular participation in the genocide (Kimonyo 2008). The very idea that people ought to question their leaders was alien to ordinary peasants. Officials who went on tours of the countryside to sensitise people and urge them to hold leaders directly to account reported peasants reacting with incredulity.⁴²

Nonetheless, new research⁴³ and observation⁴⁴ point to people expressing demands, a development that is not entirely unconnected to top-down encouragement.⁴⁵ In the midst of a civil society that avoids confrontation, has embraced collaboration with the state and plays key roles in service delivery on its behalf, the government has made efforts to consult them on policy matters through the opening up of 'invited spaces'⁴⁶ for engagement.⁴⁷ While critics⁴⁸ persist in portraying the country as enveloped in a climate of fear, it is clear that far from being the overall story, the fear some Rwandans feel and express with regard to the government is only part of a more complex and evolving reality.⁴⁹

4. The regional dimension

After the signing of the Maputo Declaration, it took time before decisions were made about how to implement the CAADP framework across a wide range of countries. From 2003–2005, CAADP was associated with numerous FAO-led country-level exercises whose intention was to identify bankable projects. These efforts led nowhere. Consequently, in 2005 and 2006 NEPAD began to seek ways to influence national policy processes. It was during this re-think that regional economic communities (RECs) were assigned roles as central players (Bruntrup 2011). By this time Rwanda had already identified agriculture as central to its economic evolution. It was against this background that, through its own NEPAD secretariat working with the Ministry of Agriculture and the NEPAD Secretariat in Pretoria, Rwanda was able to source the expertise from the African Union Secretariat in Addis Ababa to help align its own strategy for the

transformation of agriculture with the CAADP framework.⁵⁰

When eventually the roundtable was convened, COMESA was involved in its organisation as well as in paying for the necessary consultancy services. It seems as if subsequent to the roundtable very little has happened in terms of regional coordination on matters pertaining to agricultural policy as a result of countries having embraced CAADP, signed compacts and held roundtable discussions with stakeholders in the sector. There have been some contacts between Rwandan officials and those of other countries such as Uganda on matters to do with agricultural development, but these have not been directly linked to CAADP.

5. The impact of CAADP on agricultural policy and politics

Given Rwanda's own internally generated drive for success in agriculture, which had already manifested itself by the time it signed the compact, CAADP's impact on its agricultural policies and associated politics is open to debate. This is because, on the one hand, there have been several important programmes and initiatives in the sector, whose conception predates the country's signing of the compact. There is, for example, Vision 2020, drafted in 2000. From it derive all national and sectoral policies. The modernisation of agriculture and animal husbandry is one of its six pillars. Overall the vision is about achieving GDP per capita growth from USD200 in 2000 to USD900 by 2020;⁵¹ extending modern farming practices to at least 50 percent of the land under agriculture; attaining gender equality through the ending of cultural and traditional discrimination; and the creation of 3.2m off-farm jobs. Then there was the Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation whose first phase (PSTA I) ran from 2004–2008. During its implementation donors called upon the government of Rwanda to further 'define its strategy and formulate credible long-term plans'. It was in this context that CAADP supported the formulation, technical review and costing of Rwanda's investment plan based on the second Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (PSTA II), which was implemented over the period 2009–2012. Therefore, while CAADP influenced the costing of PSTA II, its development pre-dated the compact.

Alongside PSTA II the government formulated the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), which it implemented over the same period (2008–2012), and whose second phase started in mid-2013. The EDPRS was first conceived in 2006 as a second-generation poverty reduction strategy. It was evaluated in 2011, with the evaluation showing that 85 percent of its targets, several of them in the agricultural sector, had been achieved, and that the implementation rate for policy actions was to the tune of 96 percent (485 out of 504).

Also, Rwanda's aid policy, driven by the desire 'to assert genuine ownership and leadership in development activities', had already been formulated and was already guiding government-donor relations before the CAADP compact was signed. The policy has five objectives:

- Ensure transparency and accountability in the delivery of assistance
- Stop donors from promoting their own, often political, agendas at the expense of government ownership
- Increase the effectiveness of the assistance the country receives
- Set its own development objectives and policies
- Mobilise external support in forms that do not undermine its autonomy

Nonetheless, there are clear and tangible ways in which CAADP has contributed significantly to the positive evolution of Rwanda's agricultural sector since the signing of the compact. For the first time even donors that had traditionally not funded the agricultural sector, such as OPEC, came on board alongside DFID, USAID and the World Bank. Also, it seems as if, following the compact's signature, agriculture secured higher commitment than before from the government of Rwanda as a vital ingredient of its poverty reduction efforts. For example, the one-cow-per-family initiative started around that time. Furthermore, as a result of stepped-up donor interest and funding, agricultural products that used to be imported are now increasingly produced in Rwanda, such as rice following the introduction of the NERICA variety. Other crops that used to be considered minor and were produced on small scale are now major crops. For example, maize has become a vital cereal, contributing to the country's achievement of food security. A key achievement of the roundtable was the clear demonstration to both the government and its development partners of what investing in agriculture would achieve by way of poverty reduction and improved living standards. Another product of the roundtable, some degree of regional coordination and CAADP in general is the 'research into use' initiative funded by DFID to link farmers to markets and feeding into CAADP's research pillar. The NEPAD Secretariat chose Rwanda as its pilot site to feed into this research pillar.

Courtesy of CAADP-sourced expertise, Rwanda's strategy for the transformation of agriculture has been fully costed and aligned with the CAADP framework. CAADP has attracted additional funding for the agricultural sector by spurring donor interest in making a contribution. As a result of having attended the roundtable, they aligned their funding with the CAADP framework and not only pledged, but also disbursed

money. Increased investment has contributed to the increase in production and productivity. CAADP also catalysed increased participation in the sector by civil society organisations, the private sector and farming communities, although even here the government had already gotten these stakeholders on board through invitations to policy meetings and to comment on policy documents, despite their self-acknowledged weakness. It was also because of CAADP that a Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) node was established in the Ministry of Agriculture to monitor developments in Rwanda's agricultural sector and compare them with elsewhere.

Lastly, CAADP catalysed stepped-up monitoring and evaluation through regular meetings between the government and donors in the ASWG and Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp), and the development partners' retreat. Further, it led to much-enhanced mutual accountability whereby donors hold the government to account for resource use and the government holds donors to account for the commitments they have made. Both mechanisms of mutual accountability are linked to the flagship EDPRS. Furthermore, the post-compact period has seen enhanced donor coordination. Although coordination predates CAADP, the fact that the framework sought to promote coordination served to further emphasise its importance.

6. Conclusions

The government of Rwanda embraced CAADP as readily as it had embraced NEPAD before it. In both cases it was driven to a very large extent by the particular view the post-genocide leadership and especially President Kagame have about Africa and how it fits and should fit into the world, and in turn, Rwanda's place in it.⁵² CAADP did not awaken the government of Rwanda to the importance of agriculture in the country's pursuit of prosperity and development. On the contrary, even prior to the Maputo Declaration, the country's key policy documents contained significant references to agriculture as an important sector and to the imperative to place it at the centre of the country's development efforts. However, beyond policy declarations, relatively little had been done to focus attention in practice on this very important sector. Whether this was entirely the outcome of the government's wilful neglect of the sector in favour of leapfrogging into an industrial and service economy as some claim, or the outcome of the meagre resources at the government's disposal accompanied by competing demands and donor preference for funding the social rather than productive sectors, is a subject of continuing debate.

What is clear, however, is that by the time Rwanda signed the CAADP compact in 2007, the government had moved beyond mere policy declarations and embarked on initiatives geared at making the sector the foundation on which Rwanda's future economic prosperity and its pursuit of poverty eradication would be based. CAADP's promoters were preaching to the truly

converted and selling the framework to a willing and eager customer. To an extent, therefore, the attribution of Rwanda's advances in the sector to CAADP, besides the refinement and costing of the PSTA II and the enhanced donor interest following the high-level roundtable, is hardly a straightforward exercise. There are indeed initiatives by the government of Rwanda that at the time it signed the CAADP compact were already under implementation, such as the PSTA I, or in advanced stages of formulation and on the cusp of being rolled out, such as the EDPRS I. Whatever gains have come out of those – and there are many, as this paper shows – cannot be directly attributed to CAADP. However, in the case of the EDPRS I the fact that its implementation straddled the signature of the compact and the hosting of the roundtable suggests that CAADP was not entirely without influence. Nonetheless, identifying the influence with any degree of accuracy is difficult.

There are, however, areas where CAADP can be said with ample justification to have had some impact. For example, while before the roundtable civil society groups including the private sector participated in policy discussions in an un-institutionalised fashion, this is no longer the case. Now they do so as members of the ASWG, and here CAADP's influence stems from such 'popular participation' in decision making being recommended under the framework. Also, as pointed out, because of increased donor activity in the sector it became necessary to formally institute a donor coordination mechanism, which has not only enabled the government to hold donors to account, but the donors to do the same with the government as a recipient of development assistance. Further, it is also the case now that whenever the agricultural sector budget comes up for discussion, reference is often made to the CAADP recommendation of ten percent of the national budget.

The reported achievement of this target seems to be a source of pride, although, ambitious as always, the government says it is already aiming to achieve a new target of 15 percent of the national budget. Therefore, while CAADP cannot be said to have revolutionised Rwanda's agricultural sector, it has facilitated the sector's positioning as a key component of the country's development and poverty reduction efforts. Perhaps most important at a very general level, CAADP's influence can be inferred from the fact that, according to a key informant, 'since the government embraced CAADP, everything that has happened in the agricultural sector has been in line with CAADP. In that case one can say CAADP has influenced the workings of the government of Rwanda in the agricultural sector'.⁵³

END NOTE

- ¹ Independent Researcher and Honorary Research Fellow, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester
- ² The crop intensification programme (CIP) is a multi-component initiative that entails smallholder farmers pooling (consolidating) their plots into

- large ones to take advantage of economies of scale in the use of new seeds and the application of fertilisers and other technologies. The consolidation does not go as far as farmers losing ownership over the consolidated plots. Rather, farmers remain the owners of their individual plot.
- Such as the one-cow-per family initiative, community health insurance (*mutuelle de santé*) and land redistribution and titling.
- See, for example, Prunier 1997.
- Interview with former and current government advisors and key economic policy technocrats, May 2012.
- For details of these wars, see Prunier 2009a; Prunier 2009b; Africa Rights 1998.
- Interviews with senior officials, 2006 and 2007.
- See, for example, CIDA 2005.
- Some key donor agencies make no mention at all of agricultural development in their country assistance plans; see, for example, UNDP 2007.
- The others were human resources; infrastructure to reduce the costs of doing business in production; and the financial sector.
- See Ansoms 2008; Liversage 2003: 11; Pottier 2002.
- See also Uvin 1998.
- Interview with policy advisor, Office of the President, August 2012.
- Golooba-Mutebi and Booth 2013. The political parties have to adhere to strong rules designed to prevent the resurgence of ethnicity as a political platform. The limits are a recurrent basis of criticism of the government, including by the donor community. However, critics disregard the role popular consultation played in the process that led to the framing and enactment of the 2003 Constitution. Interviews with members of the Commission that conducted the consultations reveal that Rwandans blamed the genocide partly on divisions fomented by political parties and therefore opposed a possible return to multi-party politics. However, the new government opted to place limits on political-party activity rather than proscribe parties outright. The decision was in line with the Arusha Accords under which a multi-party system was envisaged. (Interviews, May 2007 and December 2012).
- The emphasis the government places on the rule of law and anti-corruption, and the reputation it has established for impartial law enforcement, is also a key source of legitimacy. Generally in Rwanda it is taken for granted that whoever commits an offence will be punished regardless of status, political leaning or station in life. The prosecution and jailing of senior and otherwise well-connected officials, civilian and military, for a wide range of offences reinforces this view.
- Golooba-Mutebi and Booth 2013.
- Five of the eight parties are in formal coalition with the Rwanda Patriotic Front, while two are what in a conventional (adversarial) multi-party political system would pass for 'the opposition' and, consequently, occupy 'opposition benches'. Currently, however, there is no official opposition. All parties with representatives in parliament have members serving in different positions in the government. Two organisations (The Democratic Green Party of Rwanda and FD-Inkingi) have so far been denied permission to register as political parties on the grounds that they do not fulfil the mandatory conditions under the law. The leader of FD-Inkingi and that of one of the three factions of PS-Imberakuri have been sentenced to prison terms for various offences.
- Each political party has four representatives. Complete consensus has to be arrived at before the issue under discussion goes to parliament.
- See, for example, several chapters in Strauss and Waldorf 2011.
- See, for example, Kwibuka 2013.
- Interview with a former official in the NEPAD office.
- Within Rwanda itself, the pursuit of 'homegrown solutions' to the country's challenges is evident in the formulation and application of such neo-traditional initiatives as *imihigo* (performance contracts), *ubudehe* (self-help) and *itorero* (leadership training).
- Interview with former official of the NEPAD office, May 2012.
- Interview, May 2012.
- Ibid.
- See, for example, Henley 2012.
- Interview, Ministry of Finance, May 2012.
- Interview, Ministry of Finance, May 2012.
- Ibid.
- See, for example, Waldorf 2011.
- Ibid.
- See, for example, Putzel and Golooba-Mutebi 2009.
- Interview with a senior government official whose work entailed dealing directly with NGOs immediately after the genocide, 2007.
- See, for example, Golooba-Mutebi 2011a.
- See also Gready 2010. In a way this has kept a lead on social expectations and prevented them from rising higher than the state can ably respond to, given its limited means.
- On donor-government relations and the donors' much criticised perceived reluctance to rock the boat, see Hayman 2011.

- 37 Interview, May 2012.
- 38 Interview, May 2012.
- 39 Interview, May 2012.
- 40 Mandatory monthly communal work.
- 41 Interview, May 2012.
- 42 In one instance a man stood up and told one official that such exhortations amounted to inciting the population against the government (Conversation with Protais Musoni, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister and former Bourgmestre, Permanent Secretary and Minister of Local Government, 2004).
- 43 See, for example, Lichtenstein 2012; Chambers and Golooba-Mutebi 2011.
- 44 Golooba-Mutebi 2011a; Golooba-Mutebi 2010a; Golooba-Mutebi 2010b.
- 45 See also Asiimwe 2008.
- 46 On the concept of 'invited space', see Brock 2004.
- 47 Interviews, August 2011.
- 48 See, for example, Purdekova 2011; Beswick 2010.
- 49 For an examination of the complexity of the situation, see Golooba-Mutebi 2011b.
- 50 Interview with key Rwandan actor in CAADP- and NEPAD-related matters, May 2012.
- 51 In 2012 the target was adjusted to USD1,240.
- 52 Self-reliance, dignity, liberation from foreign domination and more generally the need for Rwanda – and Africa – to assert itself in its relations with foreign countries and actors are key themes in public speeches by politicians in Rwanda, President Kagame especially. See, for example, Kagire 2011; Kagire and Ndoli 2011; Kanyesigye and Mugisha 2011.
- 53 Interview, May 2012.

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