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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

South Africa assumes the Presidency of the G20 from 1 December 2024 to 30 November 2025, noting the unique opportunity that this presents to the country in terms of championing aspects that are critical to global food security and nutrition, sustainable development, and inclusive growth.

The agricultural sector remains the mainstay in addressing these challenges, as it serves as a foundation for economic stability, social equity, and environmental sustainability. In this context, South Africa's G20 Agriculture Working Group (AGW) Issue Note highlights four key priorities:

- Promotion of policies and investments that drive inclusive market participation towards improved food and nutrition security
- Empowering Youth and Women in Agrifood Systems
- Fostering Innovation and Technology Transfer in Agriculture and Agro-processing
- Building climate resilience for sustainable agricultural production.

These priorities reflect the pressing needs within South Africa and resonate with global concerns, offering a roadmap for collective action among G20 members.

The focus on these priorities aligns with South Africa's Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan (AAMP), a co-created social compact of the agricultural sector. The priorities further align with the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, the Africa Common Position on Food Systems and the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), underscoring the importance of addressing systemic inequalities, enhancing food security, and driving economic growth in a manner that is inclusive and sustainable.

As the global community continues to grapple with the impacts of climate change, economic disparities, and demographic shifts, South Africa's leadership at the G20 provides a crucial platform for advocating for transformative policies and initiatives.

This issue note aims to facilitate discussions among G20 members, fostering collaboration and commitment to advancing these shared objectives for the benefit of all nations. Considering South Africa's technological advancements,

the chairmanship will also be used to promote and demonstrate scientific leadership in Africa and beyond.

2. PRIORITIES AND DELIVERABLES

2.1 PRIORITY 1: PROMOTION OF POLICIES AND INVESTMENTS THAT DRIVE INCLUSIVE MARKET PARTICIPATION TOWARDS IMPROVED FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

As the world faces growing concerns over food insecurity, poverty, and inequality, particularly in the wake of recent global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing climate change, the promotion of inclusive market participation and support for low-income and resource-poor farmers, processors, and traders becomes vital. These groups often form the backbone of agricultural systems in many developing countries, yet they face significant barriers to accessing markets, resources, and technology. By focusing on empowering these farmers, particularly young people, women, and persons with disabilities, the G20 can promote rural development, reduce systemic inequalities, and foster inclusive economic growth. This approach aligns with global efforts to achieve the SDGs, particularly those related to ending poverty and hunger, promoting gender and age equality, and ensuring sustainable economic growth.

The globalisation of trade, migration, and the speed of international travel have been a boon to humankind. Broadly speaking, livelihoods have been improved with accessibility to technology, food, and food products, among others, improved, with positive impacts for international trade and food security. The global nature of food supply chains has, however, also made it very easy for pathogens, pests and diseases to be spread with significant ease to the devastation of societies and their environments. Population growth has also brought humanity in closer contact with animals with resultant exposure to zoonoses, with some progressing to pandemic levels. This brings into sharp focus the need for improved preparedness to secure the gains but also modernise our supervision of the international agrifood trade system.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What barriers currently hinder young farmers, women and men, from participating in agricultural markets, and how can they be addressed?

2. How can investments be directed to effectively support low-income and resource-poor farmers?
3. What role can public-private partnerships play in driving inclusive market participation?
4. How can we measure and monitor the success of these initiatives in promoting rural development and reducing inequalities?
5. What strategies can be employed to ensure that investments, including climate finance, reach marginalised communities and contribute to long-term sustainability?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Agreement on targeted policies and investments, including climate finance, to support inclusive market participation and the empowerment of young farmers, rural women, and marginalised groups (e.g., Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, etc.).
- Development of innovative financing mechanisms tailored to the needs of low-income and resource-poor farmers.
- Establishment of partnerships between governments, financial institutions, and private sector actors to promote inclusive market participation.
- Implementation of policy instruments focused on inclusive market participation of smallholder family farmers, young farmers, rural women, and marginalised groups in the context of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty through country-led matchmaking.

2.2 PRIORITY 2: EMPOWERING YOUTH AND WOMEN IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

Youth unemployment and gender inequality are contemporary challenges in many countries, including South Africa. Fostering the participation of youth in agriculture is not only a matter of social justice but also of economic necessity.

There is an urgent need for youth and women engagement and empowerment in agri-food systems transformation processes. By integrating these often-marginalised groups into the agricultural sector through targeted initiatives, the G20 can help unlock their potential as drivers of innovation, productivity, and sustainability. This focus on youth and women further contributes to building more resilient and diversified food systems, which are essential in the face of global challenges such as climate change and population growth.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What barriers limit the participation of youth and women in agrifood systems, and how can they be addressed?
2. How can education and training programs be tailored to meet the specific needs of youth and women in agriculture?
3. What strategies can be employed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across the agrifood value chain?
4. How can access to land, finance, and technology be improved for youth and women farmers?
5. What role can mentorship programmes and networking opportunities play in fostering leadership and entrepreneurship among youth and women?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Identification of barriers and challenges facing youth and women in agrifood systems and formulation of targeted interventions.
- Development of tailored education, training, and support programs to empower youth and women in agriculture.
- Promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment across the agrifood value chain.

2.3 PRIORITY 3: FOSTERING INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IN AGRICULTURE AND AGRO PROCESSING

Fostering innovation and technology transfer in agriculture and agro-processing can enhance the productivity, sustainability, resilience, and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. As the global population continues to increase, limiting resource scarcity and the impacts of climate change become more pronounced, and the need for innovative solutions in agriculture has never been more heightened.

Taking advantage of the young-aged group (youthful or emerging) in the African continent, the digital technologies are setting us apart from the rest of the world. By promoting the adoption of technological advances, such as digital technologies, precision farming techniques, and AI-enabled systems to boost

food chain productivity and facilitating knowledge exchange, the G20 can help bridge the technological gap between developed and developing countries.

This will not only improve resource efficiency and productivity but also create new opportunities for economic growth and job creation in rural communities, particularly benefiting youth and women entrepreneurs and farmers. Countries can benefit significantly from adopting digital technologies that can enhance disaster preparedness, improve resilience of food and agricultural production systems, optimise renewable energy integration, and support effective water resource management.

Noting that investment in research and development is linked to bio-economic growth, it is important that the G20 platform takes heed of the need to increase investments to benefit the developing countries in particular.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the main barriers to technology adoption in agriculture, and how can they be overcome?
2. How can G20 members collaborate to facilitate the transfer of appropriate, gender-responsive technologies to smallholder farmers and rural communities?
3. What strategies can be employed to ensure that innovations benefit smallholder farmers and contribute to sustainable development goals?
4. What role can public-private partnerships play in driving agricultural innovation and technology transfer?
5. How can intellectual property rights be balanced with the need for technology dissemination and accessibility?
6. What strategies can be employed to ensure that innovations benefit smallholder farmers and contribute to SDGs?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Identification of barriers to technology adoption and formulation of inclusive, gender- and age-responsive strategies to address them.
- Establishment of collaborative frameworks for technology transfer and innovation diffusion.
- Public-private partnerships will offer a way to translate shared science solutions into useful tools for technology end users.

- Development of inclusive, gender- and age-responsive policies and incentives to promote innovation and technology transfer in agriculture.
- Implementation of policy instruments focused on expanding the access of youth, rural women and marginalised groups to knowledge and advisory services in the context of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty through country-led matchmaking.
- Farmer participatory research involving experimentation with farmers in their own fields and sharing of findings and new techniques developed from participatory research with other farmers. Partnerships with farmers are key to ensuring the transfer of knowledge and technology in real time. New knowledge is a part of any new technology, and without sufficient training the technology will not achieve its full potential.

2.4 PRIORITY 4: BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

In the face of a changing climate and the global risks and vulnerabilities associated with the increasing frequencies of meteorological hazards and disasters such as drought, floods, and heatwaves, as well as the mounting evidence that these disasters have a disproportionate impact on the poor, women, and other vulnerable groups, there is a need for G20 countries to identify opportunities to collaborate and cooperate in reducing the adverse impacts of climate change on agriculture. Building climate resilience requires identifying adaptation strategies tailored to specific locations, commodities, and socio-economic contexts. The sector also needs to reduce its global carbon footprint in a way that will not disrupt food production, and this requires real innovative solutions. A collaborative effort by all stakeholders in shaping the future of agriculture may require relooking into climate financing mechanisms that can enable farmers to improve agricultural productivity and reduce food insecurity.

South Africa's priorities for 2025 will be aligned with the African continent by building the resilience of food and agricultural production systems, promoting disaster risk reduction measures, while safeguarding food security in line with the UN SDGs.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the main enablers that can improve agricultural productivity without elevating greenhouse gas emissions in the sector?

2. How can climate financing be accelerated in the agricultural sector?
3. How can the vulnerable farmers in rural areas be supported with climate financing, technologies, and equipment that can improve their resilience to climate change?
4. How best can G20 members collaborate to promote the exchange of climate change research, data, and climate smart technologies for sustainable agriculture production?
5. How do G20 countries mobilise to increase access to resources including climate smart and resilient technologies to build capacity of other countries especially developing nations or populations, particularly small-scale producers, youth, women, disadvantaged, and marginalised groups, that need capacity to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change?

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Identification of enablers that can improve the resilience of agriculture in the changing climate.
- Establishment of national and international climate financing mechanisms that are specific to the agricultural sector and reach small farmers and vulnerable populations.
- Development of climate-resilient policies, approaches and inclusive strategies that put climate actions at the heart of all agricultural activities.
- Implementation of inclusive climate change policy instruments in the context of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty through country-led matchmaking.
- Establishment of information networks and exchange programme to share and exchange technologies, experiences and lessons learnt.
- Increased access to technology and capacity building programmes, research, climate-smart technologies, knowledge and technical skills, and funding mechanisms by the most vulnerable countries and people to the impacts of climate change on agriculture.