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The Case of Rwanda: Strengthening the Agricultural Sector in Africa Ahead of The 2050 Population Boom

The goal of this oral presentation is to stress the need for technological innovation in sub-Saharan African nations, as well as stronger governance practices and regulations in the region. This will be done by using Rwanda as a case-study when it comes to agriculture, food security and nutrition. In Rwanda, the federal government increased the percent allocated to agriculture from 3% in 2006 to 11% in 2013. Unfortunately, this increase in the amount spent on agriculture has not resulted in wide-scale food production. Research has shown that this can be attributed to the fact that there is a lack of technological advancements that can enable supply to meet demand, and perhaps promote a “socially inclusive participation” in commercial farming. Thus, households participate more in subsistence farming since it poses less risks to the family’s source of income, as compared to commercial farming. Such a phenomenon has been extremely problematic since these household crops tend to lack the adequate nutritional context that exists in the market. According to the most recent reports by the United States Agency on International Development, malnutrition in Rwanda remains unacceptably high at 44% percent for children under 2 years old.

This oral presentation juxtaposes the current situation in Rwanda with other successes in The Global South that have been a result of technological innovation and stronger government policies. The Global Security Index reveals that in Rwanda, 71.7% of income is spent on food. This is not only extremely high, but it actually limits the extent to which individuals and families can take care of other pressing needs in their basket of goods. This oral presentation seeks to highlight is that the case in Rwanda is common in numerous African countries. Whether it is with the three million people who are food insecure in South Sudan (UNICEF) or even the sixteen percent of Ghanaians in the country’s northern region (World Food Programme), technological innovation and stronger governance must be at the forefront of Africa’s plan towards achieving SDG #2.

My presentation seeks to make the case that because Africa’s population is set to double to 2.5 billion by 2050, the time to act is now. By making African nations more food secure and improving both the distribution and access to nutritious food for the growing population, state and non-state actors would be able to take a preventive approach when it comes to avoiding inequalities. This is a cost-effective approach that needs to be taken in order to obstruct the next major famine crisis, but also as a tool for preserving the right to life and stimulating transnational economies in Africa.