

**UTAFITI SERA (RESEARCH-POLICY COMMUNITY)**

**FORUM ON**

**EMPLOYMENT CREATION IN AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-PROCESSING IN THE  
CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN NIGERIA  
AMAECHI HALL, ROCKVIEW ROYALE**

**Abuja, 31st January 2017**

**BACKGROUND NOTE**

Africa's economic growth in the last decade has been well above 5%. It is however intriguing that growth has not translated into high employment creation and income growth for majority of the citizens. Poverty and income inequalities are growing rapidly thereby making the current growth exclusive for a few people.<sup>1</sup> Broadly defined, inclusive growth is output growth that is sustained over decades, is broad-based across economic sectors, creates productive employment opportunities and reduces poverty.<sup>2</sup>

Nigeria has enjoyed relatively stable and modest economic growth rates in the past decade, having grown by an average of about 6% annually. Despite high economic growth, unemployment rate has remained high and rising. By 2016 national unemployment rate was 31.2% and youth unemployment rate was about 44%. While some analysts have attributed the unemployment crisis to lack of well-coordinated and sustained policies, others have pointed to the paucity of evidence-based research on which sound policies can be premised.

The constraints to wage employment, particularly in relation to agriculture and agro-processing have been examined by researchers. These sectors are of paramount importance as they are the main sources of structural transformation and growth; and possess great potential to generate wage employment and promote inclusive growth. The two sectors also have strong backward and forward linkages with other sectors of the economy.

In Nigeria, various governments have adopted policies to enhance employment creation potentials of the two sectors. These interventions have yielded mixed results. In terms of access to land, credit, inputs, market and other vital incentives, youth and women are yet to experience

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<sup>1</sup> See "Africa at work: Job creation and inclusive growth", McKinsey (2012); UNECA (2012); UNECA, 2010; AfDB, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Commission on Growth and Development 2008; Lanchovichina and Lundstrom, 2009.

the impact of such policy interventions. There is widespread disparity, exploitation and vulnerability in the nature of jobs created in the sector. Casualization, low and irregular wage and widespread informalization of employment contribute to social exclusion and poverty among employees in the various agriculture value chains. Even where attempts were made by governments to correct the anomalies, the incentive structures get easily hijacked and appropriated by powerful interests. As a result, the potential of the sector to promote productivity, decent employment and inclusion is not realized.

The question for policy analysis is how can the agriculture sector be enabled to provide increasing decent employment for inclusive growth in Nigeria? Evidence based policy making has a contribution to make. A study that examined the blockages of employment creation potentials of the sector in the context of inclusive growth provides policy relevant findings and recommendations for discussions and uptake. The study was facilitated by the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) with financial support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Department for International Development (DfID) and conducted by a team of researchers in Nigeria. The study and syntheses of the findings of other studies on employment creation potentials of the agriculture and agro-processing sectors will be the subject of policy discussions in this forum.

In this regard, the PASGR is facilitating the application of 'Utafiti Sera'; a mechanism that provides opportunities for new ways of thinking and collaborating to address the challenges that hinder the use of research evidence to policy action. Utafiti Sera represents a community of researchers and policy actors that work together to ensure that appropriate policy actions and uptake occur either through programmes, legislation, policies or administrative and other actions around an issue for which research has provided evidence, in this case, employment creation in the context of inclusive growth in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of 'Utafiti Sera'**

- i. Establish and sustain a vibrant research-policy community on employment creation in Nigeria through well planned programme activities;
- ii. Generate new research evidence and synthesize existing relevant research evidence on employment creation in agriculture and agro-processing sectors, and make it available to policy actors and practitioners using policy briefs, newspaper articles, video documentary, among other forms of communication; and
- iii. Engage key policy actors and practitioners through direct contact, policy advocacy and the use of issue champions during breakfast meetings, policy debates and workshops.

The Nigeria Institute for Legislative Studies is the host institution for Utafiti Sera in Nigeria. In collaboration with the PASGR and the Dutch Platform on Inclusive Development (INCLUDE), NILS is organizing a one-day forum on Research-Policy Community on Employment Creation in agriculture and agro-processing in Nigeria, on January 31, 2017, in Abuja. The one-day forum is part of activities to be organized within the whole process of Utafiti Sera on employment creation in Nigeria. NILS acknowledges the support of INCLUDE and PASGR in facilitating this community of practice.

### **Purpose of this Forum**

The one-day forum aims to provide an opportunity for researchers, policy makers and practitioners to discuss productive wage employment issues in agriculture and agro-processing issues in Nigeria that need policy attention. Specifically, the forum will discuss:

1. Framework for transforming domestic private investment in rice and cotton value chain to promote wage employment and specifically targeting erstwhile importers into local producers.
2. Legislative mechanisms to encourage decent employment creation including narrowing gender disparity in the rice and cotton value chain.
3. Policy and institutional framework for enhancing youth employment in agri-business.

During the forum, PASGR will also present activities that have been planned for the year which members of the Utafiti Sera community will be requested to support to ensure the programme's success.

### **Approach**

The forum will adopt the following approach:

- Presentations: these will include employment creation policy experiences within the country related to the three aims enumerated above.
- Break-up Sessions: After plenary presentations, participants will break into three groups to discuss and propose step-by-step policy actions on:
  - i. Consolidation of institutions and resources in the agriculture sector for employment creation
  - ii. Gender inclusiveness in wage employment in agriculture value chain
  - iii. Reduction in the importation of agriculture products and turning importers to producers for employment creation

### **Participants**

Participants attending this forum include key policy actors, practitioners, and researchers. Stakeholders from public sector agencies such as Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; Ministry of Industry and trade; as well as relevant committees on agriculture, poverty and national development planning from the Legislative arm of government will also be in attendance. Other participants are: Development Partners; Private Sector Organizations in the cotton and rice value chain; Civil Society Organizations; Bankers; and Farmers' association.

### **Expected Outcomes of the Forum**

1. Utafiti Sera on employment creation established and members identified for early buy-in and ownership of its objectives;
2. Activities that will culminate into policy uptake on research evidence and follow-up action drawn;
3. Better understanding on how Utafiti Sera can inform and influence policy design and programming of employment creation in Nigeria and specifically on agriculture and agro-processing.

### **About PASGR**

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is an independent, non-partisan, pan-African non-for-profit organization established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya. Currently engaged in more than 12 African countries, PASGR works to enhance research excellence in governance and public policy that contributes to the overall wellbeing of women and men. Our vision is a 'vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues'. PASGR's three core programmes bring together the right mix of universities, research institutions, government policy actors, researchers and academics to establish and sustain partnerships at national/regional and international levels for advancing research, higher education and training; facilitate the creation of policy and research

communities; enhance the institutionalization of a research culture in Africa's universities and research organizations; and coordinate a collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy with universities in Africa.

### **About NILS**

The National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS) is an organ of the National Assembly established by an Act of Parliament and signed into law on March 2nd 2011 following the passage of the same by the Senate and the House of Representatives. The pioneer and current Director General of the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS) is Dr. Ladi Hamalai, MFR. NILS builds on the successes of the Policy Analysis and Research Project (PARP), established in 2003. It has amongst other duties, a mandate of assisting the legislature in making informed policies through research and training. As part of its effort to fulfil this obligation, the Institute, in collaboration with the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is organizing a one-day forum on Research-Policy Community on Employment Creation in agriculture and agro-processing in the Context of Inclusive Growth in Nigeria, on January 31, 2017, in Abuja. This one-day forum is within the whole process of "Utafiti Sera" on employment creation in Nigeria.