RIGHT TO FOOD IN AFRICA
FROM POLICY TO PLATE

WHH/Tchikondi 2024

POLICY BRIEF • OCTOBER 2026

MAKING THE KAMPALA AGENDA WORK FOR THE RIGHT TO FOOD

From CAADP Commitments to Country-Level Action

The adoption of the Kampala Declaration and the CAADP Kampala Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2035 by African Heads of State marks a new phase in Africa's efforts to transform its agrifood systems. By moving beyond a narrow focus on agricultural production towards more sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems, the Kampala Agenda has significant potential to advance the realization of the right to food across Africa. Its success, however, will ultimately depend on how it is implemented at country level. The domestication of the Kampala commitments into National Agrifood Systems Investment Plans (NASIPs), which is now getting underway, offers a critical opportunity to translate continental ambition into concrete policies, investments and accountability mechanisms that respond to national realities and the needs of those most affected by hunger, poverty and inequality. A Right to Food approach can help ensure that this process puts people at the centre of agrifood-system transformation.

WHY CAADP DOMESTICATION NEEDS A RIGHT TO FOOD LENS

African food systems leave many people unable to realize their right to adequate food. In 2025, an estimated 67% of Africa's population—more than one billion people—could not afford a healthy diet.[1] Food insecurity is unevenly distributed, with higher prevalence in rural than urban areas and among women than men.[2]

The CAADP Kampala Strategy and Action Plan references the Right to Food Guidelines and identifies inclusivity, transparency, and mutual accountability as guiding principles.[3] Increasing production, trade and investment does not by itself ensure access to adequate food for those most affected by hunger and poverty. National implementation must therefore ensure that those most affected by food insecurity and exclusion benefit from food systems transformation, meaningfully influence decisions, and can hold governments accountable through transparent reporting and effective remedies. A right to food approach can help translate the CAADP Kampala commitments into concrete national measures.

The Right to Food Guidelines, adopted by 170 UN member states in 2004, provide practical guidance for states for translating these principles into domestic policy frameworks.[4] This brief identifies four dimensions for embedding a right to food approach in National Agrifood Systems Investment Plans (NASIPs): **Rights, Resources, Representation and Accountability.**

1 **FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2026).** The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026 – Understanding and addressing the high cost of a healthy diet. Rome, p. 28, Table 2.6. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd8306en

2 Ibid., pp. 19–21, Figures 2.6 and 2.7.

3 **African Union (2025).** CAADP Strategy and Action Plan: 2026–2035 (Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa), p. 15, "CAADP's Guiding Principles", and p. 31, Strategic Objective 4, intervention 1. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/44705-doc-OSC68108_E_Original_CAADP_Stratedy_and_Action_Plan.pdf

4 **FAO (2004).** Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, adopted by the FAO Council in November 2004.

DIMENSION 1: RIGHTS

Is the Right to Food recognized in legal and policy frameworks?

The Kampala Agenda adopts a holistic approach to food systems transformation, recognizing the importance of and interlinkages between agriculture, nutrition, social protection, access to resources such as land and water, health, trade, and climate policies.

The CAADP Kampala Implementation Guidelines call for mapping existing laws and policies and assessing coherence, gaps and risks before developing the National Agrifood Systems Investment Plans (NASIPs).[5] A right to food lens should guide this process: do laws protect rights and prevent discrimination, and could planned investments undermine access to food, land or livelihoods? International experts under the leadership of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have developed a Right to Food monitoring framework that is currently being piloted and can support this assessment from the design stage.

Physical and economic access of individuals and communities at all times to adequate food is a core element of the right to food. A key question will therefore be how national CAADP implementation plans translate increased agrifood production into improved physical and economic access to adequate, nutritious, and safe food. In many African countries, global shocks, rising input costs, and weather extremes have made healthy diets less affordable[6], highlighting the need for policies addressing food prices and purchasing power.

Brändler / Welthungerhilfe

DIMENSION 2: RESOURCES

Are sufficient public resources allocated to deliver on the CAADP Kampala commitments?

The agrifood sector is the backbone of most African economies. Recognizing its vital role, AU Member States, already under the preceding Maputo and Malabo Declarations, committed to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture. Yet more than two decades later, most countries remain well below the benchmark. Kenya and Malawi were among those countries that are off-track in the last reporting cycle.[7] This persistent underinvestment highlights the gap between political promises and actual financing. In Kenya, the NASIP 2026–2030 lacks a sufficiently detailed fiscal roadmap for progressively increasing public expenditure to meet the CAADP commitment of allocating at least 10% of annual public expenditure to agrifood systems[8]. It does not clearly establish annual budgetary milestones, financing commitments, and accountability mechanisms at national and county levels to bridge the gap between current allocations and the 10% target. Domestication should not become a planning exercise that is not backed by the necessary resources.

Furthermore, in decentralized systems, implementation must be broken down to the subnational level, involve local governments and communities in planning, implementation, and monitoring, and allocate adequate and predictable financing at these levels.

But it is not just a matter of how much is invested; it is also a matter of which areas and initiatives receive funding. From a Right to Food perspective, the following areas that should be prioritized for investment.

Climate resilient agriculture

With the Kampala CAADP Declaration, Africa's heads of state stressed the need to promote resilient and sustainable food systems. Climate change, land degradation, and declining soil fertility are increasingly affecting productivity, while the disruption of trade routes due to geopolitical conflicts and war causes fertilizer shortages and skyrocketing energy prices. The contribution of agroecological practices to soil health, biodiversity, improved nutrition, and resilience of local food systems is increasingly recognized. However, to bring successful approaches to scale, they need to be prioritized for investment,[9] embedded into national budgets and supported by training and extension services, research programs, and financing mechanisms. Kenya's NASIP, for instance, makes only marginal reference to agroecological approaches, despite the existence of Kenya's National Agroecology Strategy for Food Systems Transformation 2024–2033.

Small-scale producers, women, and youth

Investments should prioritize smallholders, who produce much of the food consumed in countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, but remain excluded from profitable value chains and regional markets due to limited access to finance, value addition, infrastructure, and trade opportunities.

5 **African Union Development Agency (2025).** CAADP Kampala Implementation Guidelines (2026–2035). https://www.auda-nepad.org/publication/caadp-kampala-implementation-guidelines-2026-2035.

6 **FAO et al. (2026).** The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026, pp. 76–77, Box 3.4.

7 **African Union Commission and African Union Development Agency (2026).** The Fifth Biennial Review Report on the Implementation of the Malabo Declaration. Addis Ababa, pp. 29–30. https://au.int/sites/default/files/English%20-%20The%205th%20CAADP%20Biennial%20Review%20Report.pdf

8 **African Union (2025).** CAADP Strategy and Action Plan: 2026–2035, p. 25, Strategic Objective 2.

The CAADP Strategy and Action Plan acknowledges that empowering women and youth in agriculture is key for the overall transformation of Africa's agrifood sector and suggests earmarking five percent of the agriculture budget for measures targeting women and youth to increase their agricultural productivity. This target needs to be incorporated into the national implementation frameworks.

Social protection

The Kampala Agenda sparks a lot of ambition and interest around enabling agrifood investments. However, private investors will invest where returns are expected. People living in marginalized areas and facing unfavourable circumstances (e.g., those without secure land titles or with limited labour capacity) are unlikely to benefit from this. Appropriate levels of public spending on nutrition, agriculture and climate resilience need to be protected and social protection systems must not be scaled back but rather anchored legally and institutionally.

High debt-service costs and revenue losses reduce the fiscal space to address basic human rights such as food security and social protection. African governments should strengthen fiscal transparency, while international partners should support global rules for corporate taxation and debt solutions that protect essential public spending.

DIMENSION 3: REPRESENTATION

Who gets to decide what the national food system should look like?

The Kampala Agenda recognizes civil society organizations and community groups as advocates for inclusive development and the representation of vulnerable populations in decision-making.[10]

Kenya's NASIP references vulnerable groups but does not clearly specify mechanisms for their participation in design and implementation. Rights-holders, including small-scale producers, women, youth, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples, must be able to influence priorities and budgets before they are finalized and participate throughout implementation and review.

There are promising entry points. In Ethiopia, Kenya, and Malawi, Right to Food Coalitions, as well as the *My Food is Zimbabwean Alliance* in Zimbabwe participate in NASIP Technical Working Groups. In Malawi, the Right to Food in Africa programme, supported by Welthungerhilfe, is promoting Food Systems Dialogue Platforms in two districts to enable local actors to define priorities and advocate for their inclusion in planning and budgeting.

Participation should not depend on donor funding or administrative goodwill. Mechanisms need legal and institutional anchoring, clear mandates, and adequate operating budgets. The problem of entire regions and population groups being excluded from monitoring due to a lack of data must be addressed.

DIMENSION 4: ACCOUNTABILITY

How do governments and citizens know whether CAADP implementation is improving the right to food for all?

The Kampala Agenda recognizes accountability as central to implementation and encourages civil society and community groups to advocate for oversight of national investment plans.[11] Continental peer review must be complemented by accountability to rights-holders: governments must demonstrate whether NASIPs improve access to adequate food, particularly for those most affected by food insecurity.

Parliaments should scrutinize implementation and public spending. Governments should convene annual Joint Sector / System Reviews as genuine multi-stakeholder processes, enabling farmers' organizations, civil society, and affected communities to assess progress and identify corrective action. Reviews should provide opportunities to question findings and influence follow-up decisions, rather than consist solely of written reports.

Monitoring should track outcomes for rights-holders and their participation in NASIP programmes, using indicators disaggregated by gender, age, location, and socio-economic status. Data gaps and weak subnational reporting must be addressed, so that population groups such as pastoralists and entire areas are not excluded from assessment. Governments should publish annual progress reports against national targets, alongside budget allocations and actual expenditure, in accessible formats.

Furthermore, NASIP programmes must include accessible grievance mechanisms through which individuals and communities can challenge rights violations and obtain effective remedies. Rights-holders must be able to participate in reviews and raise complaints without fear of retaliation.

HOW AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS PROMOTE THE RIGHT TO FOOD IN CAADP DOMESTICATION

Civil society organizations, researchers and media in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe are joining forces in coalitions to strengthen advocacy for the right to food. These coalitions promote government transparency, public accountability, and the participation of marginalized groups in policymaking. As members of Non-State Actors Groups, they work to raise public awareness of CAADP implementation strategies and ensure that National Agrifood Systems Investment Plans (NASIPs) address the needs of vulnerable groups and involve them in planning, implementation, and monitoring.

This policy brief draws on the experiences of *Right to Food Coalitions* in Kenya, Malawi, and Ethiopia and the *My Food is Zimbabwean Alliance*. It is supported by the *Right to Food in Africa – From Policy to Plate* programme, sponsored by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

9 **Bezner Kerr, et al. (2021).** Can agroecology improve food security and nutrition? A review. Global Food Security, 29, Article 100540. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2021.100540

10 **African Union (2025).** CAADP Strategy and Action Plan: 2026–2035, p. 14.

11 **African Union (2025).** CAADP Strategy and Action Plan: 2026–2035, pp. 14–15.

CALL FOR ACTION

Making the Kampala CAADP Agenda work for the right to food requires national governments and development partners to act on four priorities.

1. RIGHTS

Make the Right to Food part of national CAADP implementation plans

Governments should use the Right to Food monitoring framework to assess how laws, policies, programmes, budgets, and institutions contribute to or impede the right to food, particularly for marginalized groups. NASIPs should address gaps. Governments should establish coordination structures across sectors and national and subnational levels.

Prioritize people facing food insecurity and discrimination

Governments and development partners should prioritize smallholders, pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples, urban poor communities, women and youth facing food insecurity and discrimination. Governments must respect and protect rights to land, seeds, and natural resources in line with international instruments,[12] and make social protection a legal entitlement regardless of the government in power.

2. RESOURCES

Align budgets with commitments

Governments must integrate NASIPs into budgeting and expenditure frameworks, transparently track resources and allocate at least 10% of annual public expenditure to agrifood systems. Governments must ensure that private sector investments align with CAADP priorities and right to food principles.

Prioritize investments in sustainable agrifood systems

Investments should diversify production and consumption, including nutritious traditional and Indigenous African crops, integrate agroecological approaches throughout relevant flagship programmes, and provide dedicated support for farmer-managed seed systems, agroforestry, and ecosystem restoration.

Take measures to allow fiscal space and align development cooperation

Donor countries should support a UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, advocate for a more equitable debt architecture and support debt solutions enabling African governments to maintain essential public services and invest in sustainable and equitable food systems. Donors and development partners must align cooperation with the Kampala Agenda, whose goals must take precedence over donor countries' national interests.

3. REPRESENTATION

Institutionalize meaningful participation

National and subnational governments must inform the public about NASIP objectives, timelines, and outcomes. Rights-holders and their organizations should meaningfully participate in design, implementation and monitoring, including policy and budget formulation before decisions are finalized, supported by capacity strengthening and adequate resources.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

Establish a rights-based CAADP accountability framework

Governments should establish a transparent, rights-based accountability framework, translate CAADP indicators into measurable national targets, and publicly report progress annually. Parliaments, civil society, and affected communities should have meaningful oversight roles. Governments should strengthen subnational data systems and ensure accessible grievance and remedy mechanisms enabling vulnerable groups to raise concerns and seek redress safely.

CONTACTS

ETHIOPIA
Tefera Degu
Right to Food Coalition Ethiopia, Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organisations (CEHRO)
teferacehro@gmail.com

KENYA
Winnie Ogutu
Right to Food Coalition Kenya, The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA)
winnie.ogutu@tisa.or.ke

MALAWI
Yamikani Chokhotho
Right to Food Coalition Malawi, Centre for Social Accountability & Transparency (CSAT)
yamikanichokhotho@csatmw.org

ZIMBABWE
Nyasha Nyatondo
My Food is Zimbabwean Alliance, Community Technology Development Organisation (CTDO)
nyasha@ctdo.org.zw

GERMANY
Andrea Sonntag
Program Coordinator 'Right to Food in Africa – From Policy to Plate', Welthungerhilfe
Andrea.Sonntag@whh.de

12 Instruments include the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT).

Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Lilongwe, Harare and Bonn, October 2026

PUBLISHED BY