SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION: A FRAMEWORK FOR AFRICA

Abstract:

Agriculture is crucial to Africa’s development, but the sector is performing well below its potential. Today, about 60 percent of Africa’s population depends on agriculture for jobs and livelihoods, yet its contribution to the gross domestic product was a paltry 21 percent in 2016. While Africa has the highest area of uncultivated arable land (202 million ha) in the world, which is about 50 percent of the global total, its productivity lags far behind other developing regions. Yields are only 56 percent of the international average (AfDB, 2016; Jerome, 2017). Crop yields must increase substantially over the coming decades to keep pace with food demand driven by population growth and rapid urbanization in Africa. Mechanization directly and indirectly affects yield gap: it reduces both harvest and post-harvest losses and is the low-hanging fruit that can bridge the gap between actual and potential yield in Africa. Reducing the yield gap is essential if Africa is to reach its goal of Zero Hunger by 2025.