



## Fourth Ndizotheka Eminent Speaker's Series Event

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### Report

#### 1. Introduction

On 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020, MwAPATA Institute in collaboration with the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) hosted its 4<sup>th</sup> Ndizotheka Eminent Speaker Series event. The Eminent Speaker Series aim at promoting a positive mindset on Malawi's development possibilities. It welcomes speakers from a diverse range of disciplines and backgrounds seeking to impact and transform Malawi's development landscape. The events are promoting candid and honest public interaction/dialogue with distinguished thinkers both within Malawi and beyond to generate implementable solutions for accelerating Malawi's socio-economic transformation.

The 4<sup>th</sup> event featured Mr. Bomba, the Head of Ethiopian Agriculture Transformation Agency (ATA), Ethiopia. The theme for the event was *"Agricultural Transformation for Wealth Creation"*. Dr. Daimon Kambewa, an Associate Professor at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) served as a discussant. This was virtual event conducted via zoom with live streaming via Facebook. The event attracted at least 76 participants online on zoom and Facebook from various local and international institutions. The discussion was simultaneously followed by an online zoom discussion chat (chat) (See Annex 1)

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Eminent Speaker: Mr. Khalid Bomba is the founding Chief Executive Officer of the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), an independent government body modeled on the Nidal Agencies, which were integral during the take-off phase on many Asian countries during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The ATA is tasked with catalyzing the transformation of Ethiopia's agriculture sector using an innovative combination of mandate areas which seek to enhance the capacity of other government organizations and private sector actors to deliver sustainable results. Since its creation in 2010, the organization has initiated over 40 different projects many of which have gone to scale and reached millions of farmers across Ethiopia.

Prior to joining the ATA, Khalid held senior level and executive positions in a diverse set of public, private and development institutions such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and JP Morgan. Mr. Khalid received his BA from Swarthmore College, an MSc from oxford University and a second MSc from the London School of Economics.

Discussant: Dr. Daimon Kambewa, Associate Professor for the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Lilongwe Malawi. Dr. Kambewa is an agrarian transformation scholar, spirited by anthropology. He studies the society, community and agricultural landscapes but focuses his work on kinship and the family unit. He draws on political ecology, agro-ecology, extension to examine socio-cultural and political drivers at play in agricultural transformation.

His research themes include customary land tenure systems, agri-ecology and livelihoods, ethnoveterinary medicine and indigenous knowledge, agriculture extension policy and rural development strategies. His work informs policy and rural development practice (locally and internationally) to be tandem with people's ways of life and society at large. He has published extensively with his scholarly writing profile

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including 3 books, 4 chapters and 18 journal articles. In his lab, Dr. Daimon has successfully supervised more than 20 postgraduate students at MSc and PhD levels

## 2. Agenda

- Remarks by Mr. William Chadza, Acting Executive Director, MwAPATA Institute.
- Remarks by Dr. Thomas Munthali, Director General, National Planning Commission (NPC).
- Remarks by Prof. Lewis Dzimbiri, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR).
- Eminent Speech by Mr. Khalid Bomba, Chief Executive Officer, Ethiopia Agricultural Transformation Agency (Through Zoom).
- Discussion by Dr. Daimon Kambewa (Associate Professor, LUANAR).
- Closing remarks by Mr. Readwell Musopole, Acting Director for Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture Planning.
- Moderator: Mr. Matthews Malata

## 3. Highlight's from the Eminent Speech

The Eminent Speaker presented about “Agriculture Transformation for Wealth Creation”. In his speech, he discussed the strides taken by Agriculture Transformation Agency in transforming the agriculture sector in Ethiopia and how their success story can be replicated in other countries. In his presentation, the presenter focused on 3 main areas: (1) the origins of ATA, (2) Achievements and success factors for ATA and (3) Relevance for other countries.

### (1) The origins of ATA

ATA was conceived at the request of the Prime Minister, Meles, for a study which would investigate institutional mechanisms to spur agricultural development in Ethiopia. The study's key findings highlighted on two critical issues: (1) Lack of an

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integrated approach to engage the substantial funding and resources committed to Ethiopia's agriculture sector and (2) Lack of a robust mechanism to link development assistance to government priorities. The study recommended that an Acceleration Unit be instituted to coordinate and drive implementation of the key areas and it further detailed information of the Acceleration Unit. The recommended Acceleration Unit was modelled on "Nodal Agencies", which have been successfully used to drive delivery.

Thus The Ethiopian ATA was subsequently set up as an independent agency with four mandate areas: (1) Identify systemic constraints of agricultural development and recommend solutions for sustainability and structural transformation by conducting studies, (2) Recommend and follow-up the implementation of specific recommended solutions as projects, (3) Provide implementation support and capacity building to others for the recommended solutions from studies and (4) Conduct linkages and coordination among agricultural and related institutions and projects in order to ensure the effectiveness of agricultural development activities, focused on two complementary approaches; Systemic Interventions Support the identification and implementation of interventions to address systemic bottlenecks through the Agricultural Transformation Agenda and Geographic programs Coordinate agricultural and related projects in specific geographies to catalyze agricultural transformation.

## (2) Achievements and success factors for ATA

Following the background of ATA, Mr. Bomba presented the achievement and success factors for ATA. In his remarks, Mr. Bomba stated that ATA has achieved significant progress, proving the model's ability to catalyze agricultural transformation. He stated that on top of the macro-level achievements, the Ethiopian ATA has also achieved tangible outcomes by mandate area citing studies, projects, implementation support and linkages and coordination as some of the main achievements. He further stated

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that The ATA's success lies in its unique combination of capabilities in one embedded and standalone public sector institution. These combination of capabilities is catalysts that has allowed the Ethiopian ATA to address the specific issues constraining agricultural transformation. He further added that ATA's success has been driven by its ability to be an adaptive and learning organization that is responsive to changing needs.

### (3) Relevance for other countries

Mr. Bomba said that after analyzing the success factors and enabling conditions of the Ethiopian ATA, it has proven that replication is possible. He then highlighted the underlining critical factors for the success of Ethiopian ATA. These include:

- Hands on engagement and support from the head of state
- Flexibility to adapt its business model and ways of working based on learning
- Being targeted and focused in the areas that it works it
- Ability to bring new capabilities into the sector
- Building an esprit de corps among its staff

He further stated the key enabling conditions required which include;

- Basic building blocks for agricultural transformation in the country
- Broad base of partners.
- Ability to secure flexible funding arrangements, including for core funding.
- Providing an attractive proposition for international caliber talent.
- External support to intervene with senior policymakers during critical moments.

“It is possible to meet each of these factors given sufficient commitment, the right approach, and a suitable country context” said Mr. Bomba as he concluded by highlighting how an ATA-like structure would be used to drive agriculture

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transformation in other countries. In his remarks he stated that there would be need for contextualization of the institutional structure and aligning the priorities of the national ATA-like structure to the country.

#### 4. Highlights from the Discussant

The discussant Dr. Daimon Kambewa hinted on the lessons learnt from the eminent speaker and how they can be applied to Malawi. In his presentation he discussed three issues (1) Lesson from Ethiopia's ATA, (2) Demonstrating how Ethiopia's model can apply to Malawi and (3) whether Malawi require an ATA like that of Ethiopia or not.

##### 1. Lessons from Ethiopia

In discussing the lessons from Ethiopia, the discussant talked about 8 lessons learned from Ethiopia. These include: political will; having a clear implementation strategy; identifying viable players; Research; professionalism across the agriculture sector; having an agency which will sustain the political will and the need for mindset change.

##### 2. Demonstration of how Ethiopia model apply to Malawi

Speaking on the application of the Ethiopian model to Malawi, the discussant said political will is key. He said there is a clear divide between policy makers and researchers, hence there is need to bridge this gap. "there should be continue collaboration between the researchers and policy makers and not just in few occasions" said Dr. Kambewa as he proposed a way improve the nation's policy and practice.

Secondary, he said there is poor implementation of policy has been another bottleneck for agriculture transformation. In his words, politicians only implement their mere interest and not what is written in the policies. He said there is a need to shift from this tendency and start implementing things which have been planned.

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He then said that there should be a clear strategy for implementing policies. He said such strategies should ensure coordination and collaboration of different sectors. On this point he acknowledged that Malawi has a multisector approach to implementing policy, but it is not implemented.

Adding to this he spoke on the role of research as another attribute that need to be considered in applying Ethiopia's ATA model. Speaking on this, he said there should be interactions between policy makers and researchers. He further said research should move from basic research to a high-level research which generate evidence to inform policy.

He also said there is need for capable personnel in the agriculture sector. According to Dr. Kambewa, there is need to emphasize on professionalism in both government and non-government agriculture agency. He said such professionalism should be extended across all levels from capital hill to the lowest level.

### 3. Does Malawi require ATA like Ethiopia?

In address this question, Dr. Kambewa provided two answers. 1. Yes. He said Malawi needs an Agriculture transformation agency, however it should be an authority for agriculture transformation in Malawi. He went on to say this should be done if the existing structures have proven that they cannot be profession in providing agriculture services. 2. No. He said Malawi doesn't need such an agency if the existing structures can be professional and implement strategies as the ATA in Ethiopia. He further said there is no need for such agency if the existing structures can shift from welfare approach which looks at people as vulnerable to business approach which focuses on worth creation. He concluded by saying Malawi does not need ATA if the structures available can change themselves to embrace the strategies implemented by ATA in Ethiopia.

### 5. Plenary Session

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After the two key presentations, the floor was open for discussion and questions where key issues were raised. The keys ranged from role of political will in agriculture transformation, farmer linkages to markets, citizens and private sector inclusion, technology dissemination, youth involvement and sources of funding.

Following the discussion, it was clear that there is a lot that Malawi can adopt from Ethiopia's ATA. One of the key issues was use research and data in addressing problems. Responding to question relating to use of research and data in responding to national issues Mr. Bumba said it helps to address the right issues once and for all which ensures efficient use of resources.

Responding to some of the issues raised by the audience, Dr. Kambewa said the best way to move Malawi from welfare approach to business approach in transforming agriculture is to believe in people's capabilities. He said there is a need to rule out a lazy society and focus on a business model. "People have the capabilities to develop and provide solutions to their problems, so believe in the capability of people to do development", said Dr. Kambewa.

### Closing Remarks

In closing, Mr. Readwell Musopole the acting director of Planning in the ministry of agriculture thanked everyone for participating with specific mention to Mr. Bomba for his well insightful presentation. He also thanked Dr. Kambewa initiating the discussion. He concluded by agreeing with Mr. Bomba on the use of data and research in decision making. He said there is need to change priorities in the agriculture sector and outline what should come first to ensure sufficient use of resources.

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## Annex 1: Zoom Chat discussion

Elizabeth.Sibale: Malawi has a lot to learn from the Ethiopian model. I can see mindset change should be priority. We should be open to new ideas and approaches to move forward

Dr Albert Changaya: There is need for political will in addition to mindset change for agricultural transformation to be effective

*Riz Khan - ATI Malawi: I agree with Dr Sibale, but we also need to be a lot more collaborative across board we have tendency to work in isolation and yet we all have the same agenda and focus*

Elizabeth Sibale: The technocrats have a duty to present best bet models to our politicians who in most cases are not aware of developments in these areas.

Sangwani Gondwe: Multi stakeholder partnerships are important platforms for learning and knowledge sharing

Doreen Chanje: In our Malawi context, we may already have all or majority of the separate elements that were necessary for ATA. We may therefore not need to go through the entire process that ATA followed...we can therefore leapfrog and show impact in a very short time

Elizabeth.Sibale: This welfare approach is taking a large share of resources for development.

Mariam Kadzamira: Research for advising policy is key. It would be interesting to learn from Ethiopia on the funding mechanisms for that research. Often researchers are limited by their funders - who end up setting the agenda.

Yanira Ntupanyama: Brilliant discussant. Ethiopia gave support to the farmers so that they can even manufacture and process. Right in the village they have a vet pharmacy with vet assistants, the support system in general for agric production. The cooperatives are way advanced that they are able to employ.

*Mariam Kadzamira: @Yanira Ntupanyama - I think that was the game changer for transformation to take place. We need to take that point to heart*

*Yanira Ntupanyama: @ imagine the cooperatives manufacture fertilizer none can exploit the farmers. They took the model of Asian countries that are successful. China and Malaysia and they don't stop learning. continuity and performance is key*

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Dr Albert Changaya: Researchers need to interact with farmers for them to develop high level research, and not just wait to get the issues from Extension workers

Adwell Zembele: It will be interesting to learn how smallholder farmers in Ethiopia are organized. The presenter talked of linking farmers to markets. How is this done? This is critical for farmers to effectively respond to market demands especially given the small land size holdings for farmers in Malawi.

Dr Albert Changaya: Lack of markets to a great extent hampers production from the many able bodied farmers.

Thomas Bello: One solution for sharing research outputs including data is to have a digital repository using an open source system called Invenio developed by CERN (Switzerland) and incorporate a research data repository called Zenodo. The system can be installed on a server and made accessible to the outside world.

RICHARD KAJOMBO: Kajombo from EPD The presenter indicated that commercialization of smallholder farmers was critical in Ethiopia, what role did level of technology play in smallholder agricultural production in Ethiopia? Was there a change in the level of technology used by smallholder farmers in the ATA. In one of the slides you highlighted reduced postharvest losses and improved efficiency in agriculture, what was the pathway for improved efficiency and productivity among smallholder farmers in Ethiopian?

Dr Albert Changaya: Starting with the market is a very good approach

Doreen Chanje: Question to Mr Bomba: Can you provide insight into how the private sector is involved in delivering on the ATA strategy.

Sangwani Gondwe: producing to satisfy the needs of the market is indeed very crucial and would lead to successful market linkage and that's where stimulating private sector investment and involvement is very important

1WW3rLYIsn3ry9NzT\_901SAAAAABFBbmRyb2IkU2hhcmVfODM3: networks are so key to transformation. It would appear that most agriculture stakeholders work in isolation. we need a System that can strengthen collaboration. Dr Yobbe Lungu

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Riz Khan - ATI Malawi: I might have missed it in the presentation (if anyone picked it up please share?)  
is the ATA funded through the national budget and do they generate any funds internally?  
through services provided or the likes?

Arnold Wendroff: What form of mechanization has been suggested? I have suggested the use of handcarts for transporting farm inputs and harvest etc, as opposed to head loading. How is effective farming possible when all farm transport is on women and girl's heads? Arnold Wendroff, PhD

Adwell Zembele: Question to the Discussant: How does he look at the research that is being done? Does he think enough is being done in involving farmers in generating new knowledge? The problem I see with some research work is when researchers generate new knowledge independently and expect farmers to adopt the resultant technologies. It would be important if researchers generate new knowledge together with the farmers where possible. What is his view?

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