



4th Ndizotheka Eminent Speaker Series hints on Agriculture Transformation for Wealth Creation

Mr. Khalid Bomba Head of Ethiopian Agriculture Transformation Agency (ATA) shared his thoughts through zoom at the 4th Ndizotheka Eminent Speaker Series event which took place on 11th November 2020. Mr. Bomba highlighted on 3 key areas in his presentation under the series theme “Agricultural Transformation for Wealth Creation”. The key areas included (1) the origins of ATA, (2) Achievements and success factors for ATA and (3) Relevance for other countries. “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 shared the ATA’s success factors and their underlining conditions which would enable replication of ATA’s achievements. Among other things there is need for (1) hands on engagement and support from head of state, (2) flexibility to adapt its business model and ways of working based on learning, (3) Being targeted and focused in the areas that it works it, (4) Ability to bring new capabilities into the sector and (5) Building an esprit de corps among its staff. He further, stated the underlining conditions for the success of these factors and these include; (1) Building an esprit de corps among its staff, (2) Building an esprit de corps among its staff, (3) Ability to secure flexible funding arrangements, including for core funding, (4) Providing an attractive proposition for international calibre talent, and (5) External support to intervene with senior policymakers during critical moments.

Supporting the presentation as a discussant, Dr. Daimon Kambewa who is an Associate Professor at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources

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(LUANAR) in Malawi discussed the lessons learnt from Ethiopia, demonstrated how Ethiopia model apply to Malawi and then answered the question to whether Malawi need an ATA as it is in Ethiopia. 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.

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. Bomba said it helps to address the right issues once and for all which ensures efficient use of resources.

The 4th Eminent Speaker Series which attracted over 76 people online (zoom and Facebook pages) and 50 physical attendees was organized by MwAPATA Institute in collaboration with the National Planning Commission and the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The aim of The Eminent Speaker Series is to promote 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.

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