

Toward Developing Agriculture in Nigeria: The Role of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and United States Agency International Development (USAID)

Endurance Aherobo Erhiegiuren ¹ and Theophilus Miebi Gbigbi ^{2,*}

¹ *Department of Agricultural Education, College of Education, Warri, Delta State, Nigeria.*

² *Department of Agricultural Economics, Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria.*

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Abstract

The study explores the role of international agricultural organizations in developing agriculture in Nigeria with a special focus on the role of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The study adopted a sort of desktop review using information from secondary sources such as journal articles, and publications by USAID and IFPRI among others. A cursory review was specifically made of the concept of agricultural development, the trajectory of agricultural development policies and programs over the years and constraints to their effective implementation, and an overview of the role of international organizations towards agricultural development. The study findings showed that the Nigerian has formulated a plethora of agricultural policies and programs which till now had not translated to the attainment of the food self-sufficiency goal of the federal government. It is also revealed from the study that international agricultural organizations have in several ways played a dominant role in developing agriculture in Nigeria. Specifically, IFPRI and USAID played key roles in the agricultural development of the nation in such areas as strengthening agricultural-sector policies and strategies, poverty and unemployment reduction initiatives, tackling food insecurity issues, strengthening various agricultural commodities value chains, setting multi-million dollar agricultural projects in selected states, among others. Some implications of these foreign aids were also identified. The study recommended among other measures that while partnering with foreign agencies for development aid or assistance, the enabling environment for them to thrive should be provided by the Nigerian government, and above all, the government should ensure such international organizations seek and explore practical operative mechanisms that can reduce to the barest minimum their continued involvement in the Nigerian agricultural policies and programs formulation and implementation.

Keywords: Agriculture; Development; International organizations; USAID; IFPRI

1. Introduction

The significance of agriculture to the development of any economy in the world cannot be over-emphasized. Agriculture plays many roles in the processes of economic growth and development which can be summarized under four headings: (1) providing more food and raw materials, (2) serving as a market for the products of the industrial sector, (3) supplying savings to other sectors of the economy, and (4) providing productive employment. Meanwhile, Otitoju (n d) states that "the role of agriculture in economic development is crucial because the majority of the population of developing countries earn their living from agriculture and accordingly Gbigbi (2021) mentioned the role agriculture played in economic development of developing economies to include among others: contribution to national income, source of food supply, source of foreign exchange for the country, helping in phasing out economic depression and improving the welfare of the rural dwellers.

* Corresponding author: Theophilus Miebi Gbigbi

As a key economic sector in Nigeria, Jayne et al. (2017) report that agriculture represents about 23 percent of real GDP and its share in employment is considerably at 51 percent (2018/19 household survey), a ratio which is estimated to have risen substantially. According to Kilimvi, (2023), agriculture's contribution to GDP in Nigeria has been incredible, accounting for about 26.95% of total GDP. These are justification for the fact that the performance of an economy especially in terms of growth in per capita income is dependent, among other things, on a well-developed agricultural sector (Iyang et al. 2020).

Udumezue and Osegbue, (2018) penned that "a fully developed economy, especially in the agricultural sector, means an increase in the production of export crops with an improvement in the quantity and grades of such export crops. Consequently, achieving sustainable agricultural development should be a major policy thrust of any nation especially developing nations. Ovwigho et al (2024); Udumezue and Osegbue, 2018) state that "agricultural development can promote the economic development of underdeveloped countries in four ways:

The supply of food available for domestic consumption and releasing labour needed for industrial employment.

- By enlarging the size of the domestic market for the manufacturing sector.
- By increasing the supply of domestic savings and
- By providing foreign exchange earned by the agricultural export.

Commenting on the current state of Nigeria's agriculture and agribusiness sector, Oyaniran (2020) states that agriculture is broadly divided into four sectors in Nigeria – crop production, fishing, livestock, and forestry with crop production being the largest segment accounting for about 87.6% of the sector's total output. Livestock, fishing, and forestry follow successively at 8.1%, 3.2%, and 1.1% respectively. He further maintained that agriculture remains the largest sector in Nigeria contributing an average of 24% to the nation's GDP over the past seven years (2013 – 2019) and in addition employs more than 36% of the country's labour force, a feat which ranks the sector as the largest employer of labour in the country.

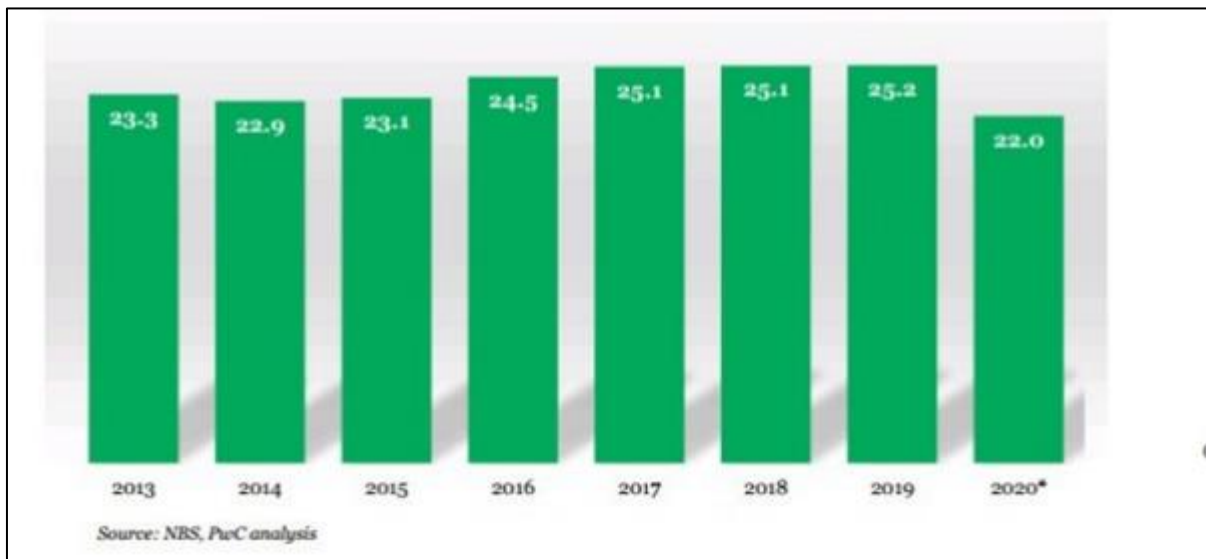


Figure 1 Agriculture's contribution to GDP%

As viable as the Nigerian agricultural sector as the pivot for food and nutrition security, rapid industrialization, employment generation, sustained economic growth, and poverty reduction as asserted by Olomola and Nwafor (2018), the sector is still yet to receive the needed attention by the government as evidenced from poor budgetary allocations to the segment over the years. Food and nutrition insecurity, unemployment, and an upsurge in poverty rate remain unabated. For instance, using the September 2018 to October 2019 household survey of expenditures, Jung (2023) reports that the cost of achieving 2251 calories per day (age-weighted caloric need for food security) is about 82,000 naira per person per year. Accordingly, based on this survey, about 40 percent of the Nigerian population is identified as food insecure. It has also been reported that between 2000 to 2019, there was a spike in rural poverty from 28.3% to 52.1% while urban poverty though minimal, also rose by 2% from 16.2% to 18% (NBS 2019).

In light of the above, Nigeria has been on the search for ways out of her dilemma of food crisis, poverty, and unemployment and this search has attracted the attention of several international agencies. Thus, this study sought to explore the role of international organizations in Nigerian agricultural development with specific emphasis on the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

2. Methodology

The study adopted a review using relevant information from secondary sources such as journal articles, reports of academic conference proceedings, technical notes, and publications by USAID and IFPRI.

2.1. Concept of Agricultural Development

According to Udumezue and Osegbue, (2018), agricultural development is a multi-sectional activity that supports and promotes positive change in rural and urban areas with the main objective of improving the material and social welfare of the people. As penned by Kindangen et al (2023), agricultural development is a process that continuously creates social change and economic growth based on agricultural business oriented to changes in agricultural production processes, farmers' behavior, farming patterns, the relationships between costs and receipts, and management in business. BJYU'S (2023), defined agricultural development as the process that creates the conditions for accelerated agronomic potentials. These conditions include the accumulation of knowledge, availability of technology and the allocation of inputs and outputs.

Agricultural development is often seen as synonymous with rural development as rural areas cannot develop without agriculture because about 90% of the rural dwellers are engaged in agricultural practices as their major source of income. Rural development has been conceptualized from different perspectives due to continuous evolution in the perceived mechanisms and goals of development. Katundu, (2020) stated that during the 1960s and early 1970s, rural development was conceptualized within the context of intensive industrialization, which characterized many development initiatives. Since then, various definitions of the concept have emerged. For instance, economists championed by international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a long time have defined rural development as the process of improving the economic and social life of the rural poor such as small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless (World Bank, 2018). The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defined rural development as "improvement in the overall rural community conditions, including economic and other quality of life considerations such as environment, health, infrastructure and housing (Katundu, 2020)".

Ovharhe and Gbigbi (2016) also penned that rural development is generally considered as "the actions and initiatives taken by governments and their respective development partners to improve livelihood conditions in non-urban areas, countryside, and villages". In a nutshell, rural development entails both the economic improvement of people as well as greater social transformation. These definitions suggest that rural development is a process of change and not an overnight activity, and its goal is to empower the rural poor. The definitions also show that rural development is a multi-stakeholder and multi-institution process. All these fallouts from the definitions of rural development are well encapsulated in the process of agricultural development. This implies, therefore, that institutions such as international agricultural organizations have a significant role to play in agricultural development.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the world has been changing rapidly leading to the evolvement of major issues surrounding agriculture. Accordingly, agricultural development goals have moved far beyond traditional ones such as food production and availability, agricultural productivity, farmers' income (particularly those of smallholders), and employment (Shenggen and Otsuka, 2021) and such new goals include poverty reduction, adequate nutrition, functioning food value chains (FVCs), environmental sustainability, climate adaptation and mitigation, and gender equality and equity. Thus, what is mainly stressed in both national and international discourse is not just agricultural development but sustainable agricultural development.

Sustainable agricultural development has been defined as a new approach to agricultural production that promotes the economic and social benefits for the generations without compromising the capacity of the future generation to fulfill their proper agricultural demands and without injuring the ecological base (Emmanuel, et al 2020). Sustainable agricultural development has also been defined by the High-Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), as "agricultural development that contributes to improving resource efficiency, strengthening resilience and securing social equity/responsibility of agriculture and food systems to ensure food security and nutrition for all, now and in the future (HLPE, 2016).

2.2. A Brief on Agricultural Development Trajectory in Nigeria

The agricultural development trajectory in Nigeria, according to Olomola and Nwafor (2018) is replete with an intriguing plethora of policies and programs with an undulating sequence of implementation, especially since the 1980s following the cessation of the regular development planning activities in the country. In the mid-1980s when planning was abandoned and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced, agricultural policies, programs, and projects featured in the various development plans.

In retrospect, some key government innovative programs aimed at developing agriculture in Nigeria are enshrined as follows (Ovwigho et al 2024; Adeyemi, et al 2023).

- **The National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP):** This was initiated in 1972 during the regime of General Yakubu Gowon with the focus on bringing about a significant increase in the subsistence production of maize, cassava, rice, and wheat in designated states of the country.
- **Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) (1974-1986):** As an offshoot of the concept of integrated agricultural and rural development, the perception of the program involves the provision of infrastructural facilities such as roads, schools, water supply in the rural areas at the right time in required quantity to farmers. The ADP is the implementation organ of the state Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Daneji, 2011). As noted by Omonijo, et al (2014), average yields for all the major crops in Nigeria increased since the inception of the ADPs compared with the period before their establishment.
- **River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA):** This was launched by the federal government in 1976 during General Olusegun Obasanjo's regime to enhance the economic potentials of the water bodies with a focus on irrigation and fisheries using hydroelectric power generation and domestic water which was later extended to include production and infrastructural development by establishing twelve River Basin Development Authorities across the country. RBDAs' objectives were to be achieved through surface water impoundment by constructing dams that would enable all-year-round farming activities in the country (George, 2019).
- **Operation Feed the Nation (OFN):** Designed by the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976 to actively increase food production in Nigeria by creating awareness about the importance of agriculture, mobilizing the nation towards self-sufficiency in food production by encouraging everybody to be actively involved and participating in farming irrespective of your discipline thereby making Nigerians be directly or indirectly feeding themselves.
- **The Green Revolution Programme (GR):** Launched by President Shehu Shagari in 1980 in replacement of OFN with a focus on increasing food production and raw materials to ensure food security, and self-sufficiency in basic staples and aspired to enhance production of livestock and fish to meet both home and export needs (Abubakar et al, 2021).
- **The Directorate for Food Road and Rural Infrastructures (DFFRI):** This was established in 1986 by the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida to improve the quality of infrastructure and the living standard of the rural people.
- **Better Life Programme (BLP):** Initiated by the wife of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1987. The main focus of this program according to Ozoani (2019), was on making rural women self-reliant, and relevant to their family and the society at large.
- **National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA):** This was established in 1992. Among the objectives are to assist and promote better use of rural lands and their resources in Nigeria and to target and assist in achieving food security through self-reliance and sufficiency.
- **Family Support Programme (FSP):** This metamorphosed from the Better Life for Rural People Programme (BLP) in 1994 with the same objectives which later became the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) under the new administration of late General Sanni Abacha.
- **National Fadama Development Project (NFDPP):** A World Bank-assisted project that was first designed in the 1990s to promote a simple but improved irrigation innovation at a low cost of implementation. Presently, the program is in phase III (Alawode and Oluwatayo, 2019; Christian, 2020).
- **National Special Programme on Food Security (NSPFS):** This was launched in January 2002 in all the thirty-six states of the federation during the civilian regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo. The objectives include increasing the rate of food production and eliminating rural poverty, to assist the farmers in increasing their output, productivity, and income among others.
- **Root and Tuber Expansion Programme (RTEP):** Launched on 16th April 2003 under the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo to tackle the challenge of food production and rural poverty. The target audience was smallholder farmers having less than two hectares of land per household with special attention on women who play significant roles in rural food production, processing, and marketing.

- **Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA):** Under this initiative which was formulated and implemented between 2011 and 2015, funding priorities, implementation strategies, and agricultural policy direction changed (Olomola and Nwafor, 2018). Six major components constitute the ATA and they include: (i) the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) which was designed to improve farmers' access to modern agricultural inputs at subsidized rates; (ii) the Staple Crop Processing Zone (SCPZ) based on the comparative advantage of each region and aimed at forming clusters in major food production for rice, sorghum, cassava, fisheries and horticulture (iii) Agricultural Commodity Value Chain Development (ACVCD) which focused on developing key commodities in both crop and livestock sub-sector in different agro-ecological zones; (iv) Agricultural Marketing and Trade Development Corporations (AMTDCs) to enhance farmers' access to markets; (v) the Agricultural Extension Transformation Agenda (AETA) to improve dissemination of information and adoption of innovations and (vi) the Nigerian Incentive-based Risk-Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) to de-risk lending to agriculture and tackle the bottlenecks that affect agricultural commodity value chains and the agricultural financing value chain.
- **The Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP):** The Agriculture Promotion Policy was initiated in June 2016 to consolidate the successes of the ATA, close the policy gaps, and reposition the sector for greater investment and increased diversification to accelerate economic recovery, reduce poverty, enhance food security, expanding and improving quality export, and ensuring that essential infrastructures and farm inputs are available for farmers at all levels (FMARD, 2016; NANTS, 2018).
- **The Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI):** This is a multipartite arrangement that commenced in December 2016 on the outcome of a partnership between the Nigerian Government and Morocco of which the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), FMARD, Fertilizer Producers and Suppliers Association of Nigeria (FEPSAN) represented Nigeria for its implementation. Under the initiative, some abandoned fertilizer blending plants in various locations in the country have been fully reactivated and functional.

Other policies and programs aimed towards developing agriculture in Nigeria include the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP), Food Security Council (FSC), Intensification of export drive by prioritizing the production of a variety of commodities such as beans, cocoa, cashew, cassava (starch, chips and ethanol), ginger, sesame, oil palm, yam, horticulture (fruits and vegetables), beef and cotton for export; Intensification of the commitment to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP); Preparation of new National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP); Intensification of legislative backing for Input Sector Reform; Agriculture Sector Food Security and Nutrition Strategy among others.

2.3. Challenges to the Effectiveness of Agricultural Policies and Programs in Nigeria

As laudable as most of the agricultural policy and program initiatives of the Nigerian government, they are often plagued with a lot of constraints. Gbigbi (2018) summarized these constraints to include: political instability, inconsistency in policies, narrow base of policy formulation, poor implementation of policies, and weak institutional framework for policy coordination. Expanding further, it is observed there is a subjectively rational choice of the political actors and a lack of political will to fulfill all the tenets of the policies so made. This implies policy initiatives are conduit pipes of siphoning or diverting public funds to private pockets (Aluko, 2020). Again, most empowerment schemes do not reach the target audience but are hijacked by men at the helm of political and administrative affairs (Akpan et al, 2015; Aluko, 2017).

John, et al (2017) affirmed that there are weak agricultural policies that cannot stand the test of time. Consequently, policies are short-lived, especially at the expiration of the political leader's tenure that initiates the policy. There is a marked overlap in the roles, responsibilities, and functions of two or more policies, programs, or projects due to role conflict. Udah, et al (2015) asserts that "the political will to execute agricultural projects that will have a wide and meaningful impact on the country is at a low ebb". Moreover, it is noted that the majority of programs and policies have a regional focus, although not all regions have the same framework. A good example of such a program is the FADAMA I – III program (Takeshima and Liverpool-Tasie, 2015; Adeyemo, et al 2016).

The frequent farmers-herdsmen clashes that have caused many farmlands to be deserted is another major challenge rendering agricultural policies non-implementable in such areas (Aluko, 2017). More so, Aluko and Aremu (2017) mentioned that the placing of a high premium on crude oil as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy rather than the agricultural sector has the potential to lift a large percentage of the workforce in the rural and urban areas out of unemployment and poverty is another reason for the failure of agricultural policies in Nigeria.

In an attempt to understand the main barriers that prevent Nigeria's agriculture sector from becoming an engine for economic transformation, job growth, and food security, Downie, (2017) reports that the Center for Strategic &

International Studies (CSIS) visited Nigeria in the summer of 2016 to interview a range of agricultural experts. Information from these interviews and analysis of the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) and previous Nigerian policy documents identify the following as major roadblocks to a more productive agricultural sector in Nigeria:

- **Uncompetitive environment for agribusiness:** This manifests in the form of unreliable power supply, dilapidated irrigation systems, overcrowded ports, and poor roads. In addition to these infrastructure deficits are governance flaws as reflected by an abundance of bureaucracy, corruption, overlapping responsibilities between the three tiers of government, and unclear policies.
- **Poor inputs:** Lack of fertilizers, availability of poor quality/counterfeit seeds, and low rates of access to mechanical farm tools, among others remain a major challenge for farmers.
- **Poor market access:** Farmers do not have access to the market for their products in too many parts of Nigeria due to underdeveloped value chains. Lack of adequate processing and storage facilities implies many farmers face the choice of selling immediately after harvest when prices are at their lowest or allowing their produce to spoil. Export markets remain underdeveloped partly because Nigerian agricultural goods are uncompetitive and do not meet international phytosanitary standards.
- **Access to credits:** Despite several government initiatives to promote more lending to the agricultural sector, Nigerian banks are wary of extending loans to farmers. In the survey conducted by NOI Polls, (2016), 35 percent of farmers cited access to credit as the main barrier to their operations and the figure was 59 percent in the South-South geopolitical zone. Moreover, loans to the agriculture sector account for only 1.4 percent of total bank lending (Ugwuede, 2016).
- **Lukewarm political commitment:** It is no longer strange that too often, Nigerian governments have offered rhetorical support for agriculture as a tool of economic diversification but failed to execute policies or provide budgets to match their ambitions.
- **Neglected agricultural research systems:** Nigeria's agricultural research system has stagnated and become disconnected from the priorities of Nigerian farmers. Flaherty and Abdullahi (2014), state categorically that "the system has been starved of federal funding and become overtly reliant on foreign donor funds".

The above obstacles to the Nigerian agricultural sector are corroborated by Oyaniran (2020) who mentioned these challenges to include: resource shortages; violent conflict; outdated system of agriculture; absence of value addition and supply-chain linkages; insufficient supply to meet population growth and food demand and lack of access to finance.

2.4. International Agricultural Organizations' Involvement in Agricultural Development in Nigeria

The term "International Organizations" (IOs) refers to a wide variety of formal structures with both common elements as well as specific peculiarities which according to Amici and Cepiku (2020), call for clarification. Brechin and Ness (2013) point out that scholars have interchangeably used the terms "international organizations" and "intergovernmental organizations." Towing the same line of thought, Dijkzeul and Beigbeder (2003) hold that "sometimes the term international organizations is used to include multinational corporations, bilateral organizations, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs)". At other times, only UN organizations are covered by the term international organizations. Most commonly, as penned by Brechin and Ness (2013), the term international organizations are used to refer to "all forms of non-state actors working at international or global levels". Given this, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) can be considered a subset of the international organizations' category together with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

According to Mbah (2019), what first comes to mind when we speak of international bodies are organizations within the United Nations system. Be that as it may, the term, according to her, "refers to a plethora of organizations, inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental, whose origin may be local, national, regional, or global but whose outreach is "international".

There are many international organizations whose universe is considerably heterogeneous due to their relevant differences in size, geographical scope, tasks, and functions. Davies and Woodward (2014) stated that although the exact number of international organizations can be questionable, all scholars agreed on the fact that since the Second World War, the number of international organizations increased steadily with an exceptional rise in the twentieth century. Among the main reasons for this, according to Karns, et al (2010) is the growth of the state system favored by the decolonization process. A second relevant reason is the need to give adequate answers to the emerging global challenges coming from the financial, agricultural, health, security, and environmental sectors. To this end, a catalog of international organizations includes United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), The European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), Organization of

Asian Countries (OAC), among others. Some of these international organizations are various arms of the United Nations. These bodies have different interests, while some have specialized service concerns such as the World Health Organization. Others according to Mbah, (2019) may have a political affiliation or economic interest such as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and still, a number of them are created to protect regional interest such as the European Union and Africa Union.

2.5. Role of International Organizations in the World System

Dealing with global issues such as health, security, food security and nutrition, poverty, unemployment, and environmental issues, increases state interdependence and opens the vast debate about the increasing role of international organizations in the world system (Amici and Cepiku, 2020). The role of any organization according to Mbah (2019) is dependent on the aim or purpose behind the formation of such a body. There is always an interesting area that attracts member states. The realities on the ground today show that international bodies play diverse roles which range from intrastate, and intraregional to international roles.

Udalla (2015) highlighted the general roles of international organizations to include: acting as a forum for interaction among the member states and aiding cooperation, assistance in solving problems that are beyond state capacity, acting as instruments for furthering foreign policy interests for states, etc. They are also involved in organizing states around their common interests and in pointing out the benefits of cooperation. He also maintained that large regional bodies such as the EU, have worked extensively to promote economic cooperation. Others such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of African Unity (presently African Union), have controlled and managed conflict in their regions.

In addition, international organizations have also provided member states training, capacity development, and a variety of direct services to support victims of violence and to help develop national institutions to be better positioned to address this scourge (Mayanja, 2009). Also, they play a growing role as standard-setting bodies in supporting regulatory cooperation. Even organization like the United Nations has as its prime goal since its inception the maintaining of peace and international security as well as the promotion of international economic and social development, respect for human rights for all people, and the rule of law.

In addition to the aforesaid, several international agricultural organizations have significantly contributed to the advancement of agriculture, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. A cursory look at the literature reveals the following as some examples of such international agricultural organizations: World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), International Alliance against Hunger (IAAH), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Others as mentioned by ICAR (2023) are the Africa Rice Center (ARC), Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT), Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) among others. The role of some of these organizations in Nigeria, especially as it relates to agricultural development cannot be over-emphasized.

With the current emphasis on diversification of the Nigerian economy from an oil-based economy to an agricultural and technological economy, Nigeria was among the 26 developing countries on the study list of the World Bank in 2010 on issues that centered on food prices, food insecurity and poverty (Ashe, 2019). This was partly responsible for the World Bank irrigation projects in northern Nigeria in 2014 and its approval of \$200 million in March 2017 for the promotion of agricultural production and improvement of quality of lives in rural communities through small-scale credit facilities (World Bank Group, 2019; CGAP, 2017).

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) deserves special recognition due to its greater involvement in the nation's food industry than other foreign organizations. The organization has initiated several programs and projects to address the challenge of global food insecurity and Nigeria has benefitted from most of them. FAO, in collaboration with the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD), sponsored the international conference on food security in December 2002 held in Abuja to seek urgent measures to check Africa's severe food crisis (Olomola, 2008). Also, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, FAO launched the National Special Programme for Food Security (NSPFS) in Nigeria in 2003 (Egwuatu, 2010; MDG, 2016). Under the umbrella of the Global Partnership for Development, the World Trade Organization (WTO), FAO and the World Bank have collaborated with some other foreign agencies to promote

agriculture and food production in Nigeria. To facilitate the process of channeling resources from the oil sector to the agricultural sector, the World Bank initiated the Agricultural Development Projects (ADPs) in Nigeria otherwise known as Integrated Rural Development Projects in addition to her support for River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) (Ashe, 2019).

Other international bodies such as the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) have also played a noticeable role in the search for new strategies for issues of food production and food security in Nigeria. The organization contributed enormously to the formation of the Africa Soybean Network in the country. It has also contributed to innovation in food crops production such as maize, cassava, banana, and groundnut.

On a general note, international bodies, in their bid to improve living standards, strive to raise levels of nutrition, production, processing, marketing, and distribution of all foods and agricultural products from farms, forests, and fisheries. They also combat animal diseases promote the development of marine and inland fisheries and encourage the sustainable management of forest resources. They initiate programs meant to improve seed production and distribution in less developed countries (LDCs) and assist countries in the supply and use of fertilizers (Ashe, 2019).

2.6. Special Case for International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was established in 1975 to recognize the need for an independent research institute with socioeconomic policies for agricultural development. Its mission as it was re-stated in 1996 is (a) to identify and analyze alternative national and international policies for meeting food needs on a sustainable basis, with particular regard for low-income countries and poor people, and for the sound management of the natural resource base that supports agriculture; (b) to make the results of its research available to all those in a position to apply or use them; and (c) to help strengthen institutions conducting research on food policies and institutions in a position to apply such research results in developing countries (CGIAR, 1998).

IFPRI, further developed a global vision, a mission, a business vision, and a research strategy. Thus, IFPRI aims “to organize and undertake research that will generate international public goods – knowledge relevant/or decision makers both inside and outside the countries where the research is undertaken and expected to result in large benefits to the society...”

It is worth mentioning that IFPRI is one of many organizations involved in food policy research for developing countries with its research activities complementary to and do not replicate the efforts of others. IFPRI’s strategic research aims to foster a climate-resilient and sustainable food supply; promote healthy diets and nutrition for all; build inclusive and efficient markets, trade systems, and food industries; transform agricultural and rural economies; and strengthen institutions and governance (Aragie et al, 2023).

2.7. IFPRI’s Contribution to Agricultural Development in Nigeria

The Nigeria Strategy Support Programme (NSSP) of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) supports the Agricultural Policy Support Facility (APSF), an initiative to strengthen evidence-based policy-making in Nigeria in the areas of rural and agricultural development. In collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), APSF supports the implementation of Nigeria’s national development plans by strengthening agricultural-sector policies and strategies (Phillip et al, 2008).

In pursuit of its mandate of strategic research, IFPRI examined some constraints to increasing agricultural productivity. The report as penned by Phillip et al, (2008) in Brief No. 4, presents sector-wide and commodity-specific constraints to increasing agricultural productivity. Identified under the sector-wide constraints include poor agricultural pricing policies, low fertilizer use, low access to agricultural credit, land tenure insecurity, land degradation, poverty, and gender issues, low and unstable investment in agricultural research, and poor market access and marketing efficiency. Livestock production restrictions and staple crop constraints are listed under the commodity-specific constraints. To sustain and boost the inflow of investment into Nigerian agriculture, it was recommended among other measures, that agricultural policies must endure and even outlive the governments that formulated them and improved private investments in agricultural research and development (R&D) must be encouraged.

Furthermore, the Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP) of IFPRI presents a brief that assesses the amount, growth, and efficiency of public spending required for Nigeria to reach the agricultural growth target it has set to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG 1) of poverty reduction (Xinshen et al, 2010). Accordingly, MDG 1, then becomes achievable if Nigeria meets its 10 percent annual agricultural growth target, supported by a 5.6 percent growth

of total factor productivity (TFP), and for this to be possible, the Nigerian government has to take the most important step to improve investment efficiency to support accelerated agricultural growth effectively.

More so, IFPRI researchers conducted a study of 10 African nations south of the Sahara, Nigeria inclusive to determine how agricultural growth can contribute to poverty reduction and how public investment can foster this desired growth. A major finding from the study is that producing more staple crops such as maize, pulses, and roots and more livestock products tends to reduce poverty further than producing more export crops such as coffee or cut flowers (Xinshen et al, 2012). Policy recommendations for developing agriculture in Africa south of the Sahara include: focusing on accelerating agricultural growth, promoting growth in large agricultural subsectors, promoting growth in several farming subsectors, and considering market opportunities when promoting agricultural growth among others.

Again, the Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP), established through the collaborative effort of IFPRI and USAID in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development helped to forge and implement the country's rural development strategies. Consequently, in 2013, an extensive analysis of the rice import tariff in Nigeria by NSSP, Policy Options for Accelerated Growth and Competitiveness of the Domestic Rice Economy in Nigeria, found that higher tariffs did not stimulate local production or help the country reach self-sufficiency in rice production. NSSP has helped Nigeria make headway in increasing investment toward inclusive agriculture-led growth. In 2013, Nigeria was admitted into the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition – an initiative of the G8 commitment to catalyze private-sector investment in African agriculture. With the effort of NSSP, development partners under Nigeria's New Alliance Cooperation Framework have committed to investing about US\$500 million into Nigeria's agriculture sector from 2013 to 2016 (IFPRI, 2017).

Added to the giant strides of IFPRI towards developing agriculture in Nigeria is the Nigeria presentation of IFPRI's 2023 Global Food Policy Report & launch of the CGIAR Research Initiative on Fragility, Conflict & Migration (FCM) in Abuja, Nigeria on May 11, 2023. Among key insights, challenges, concerns and questions exchanged among speakers during the event was the need to move from traditional responses to systemic and sustainable approaches which entails developing policies, programs, and tools for more resilient and equitable food systems. Concerns were raised about the sustainability of more productive food systems and the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration to achieve food security goals. The importance of practical policies, meaningful collaboration, and the inclusion of local farmers in decision-making processes was also highlighted coupled with the need for research partnerships and a globalized agenda to address socio-economic difficulties caused by various crises (Carrillo et al, 2023).

2.8. Special Case for United States Agency International Development (USAID)

The United States government funds and oversees USAID, an entity with more authority than the Executive Office of the President because it is regarded as an autonomous federal government agency. USAID was created following the passage of the Foreign Assistance Act into law by Congress in 1961 via Executive Order 10973, thereby merging the existing government departments and agencies working in foreign non-military aid under one umbrella (Ursu, 2022). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is responsible for the management, distribution, and execution of a little more than half of all long-term foreign assistance given by the American government to developing nations.

2.9. Role of USAID in Agricultural Development in Nigeria

USAID has a long and proud history of assistance to Nigeria since 1960. At that time, the U.S. Government awarded grants to four major U.S state universities (Michigan State, Wisconsin State, Kansas State, and Colorado State) to build colleges of agriculture in four Nigerian universities: The University of Ibadan, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and the University of Ife. A catalog of USAID efforts toward developing agriculture revealed that the United States Government, through USAID has facilitated \$205M in debt and equity investments for Nigerian agribusinesses in the past five years (Jaiyeola, 2023). It also provided partial risk guarantees that support up to \$120m in loans to agricultural, health, and renewable energy businesses.

Another notable contribution of USAID to the development of Nigerian agriculture is the launching of The Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project. The goal of the project is to promote inclusive agricultural productivity growth, improved nutritional outcomes, and enhanced livelihood resilience for men and women through an improved policy-enabling environment. The project's three main integrated aims are as follows: (i) to increase Nigerian analysts' ability to conduct pertinent evidence-based policy analysis and disseminate the results broadly to build the country's capacity for more evidence-based policy processes in agriculture. (ii) to promote and foster informed policy dialogue among all stakeholders in the agricultural sector through an inclusive, transparent, and sustainable process at the country level, building blocks for a well-integrated and developed national policy system. (iii) to support federal and

state government efforts to improve their capacities to plan and implement effective policy analyses and programs, and demand and absorb policy research in their policy process. The project is a five-year \$12.5 million initiative (Mavrotas and Liverpoole-Tasie, n.d).

Furthermore, to ensure that the 4-year goals of the Nigeria Agriculture Transformation Agenda (ATA) are achieved and even more importantly to set in place a structure, process, and habitat of thought and analysis that will lead to better-designed, delivered, and measured agriculture programs in Nigeria that will lead to greater agriculture productivity and food security over the long run, USAID and FMARD in May 2012, asked IFPRI and DAI, the main contractor responsible for the implementation of Africa Lead to map the key institutions/organizations which will drive the ATA and to identify their capacity development needs (USAID, 2012). The assessment reports brought about robust recommendations that encompass a wide range of actions that need to be taken to bridge the gap between what is in the way of effective policy-making, organizational structure, human resources, and systems, and what needs to be done to achieve the goals of the ATA.

Another major role of USAID in improving agriculture in Nigeria is in the area of “Harvest Plus: Biofortification”. Since the founding of “Harvest Plus, a joint venture by IFPRI and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), USAID has been an important partner in addressing “hidden hunger”- malnutrition caused by micronutrient deficiencies- by breeding high levels of micronutrients into staple crops through a process called bio-fortification (IFPRI, 2017). Harvest Plus has successfully improved access to bio-fortified crops, improving nutrition for more than 20 million people. For instance, in Nigeria, 2.5 million people have adopted vitamin A-fortified cassava. Also, USAID has been at the forefront of championing evidence-based regional agricultural policies and mutual accountability. For instance, in 2003, the African Union, out of the vision to accelerate Africa’s growth through agriculture-led development, launched the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) – a policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security and nutrition, economic growth, and prosperity for all of Africa by addressing key policy and capacity issues affecting the agriculture sector.

Another aspect of the evidence-based regional agricultural policies and mutual accountability is the African Leaders’ adoption of the Malabo Declaration in 2014 which outlines seven commitments for transforming agricultural growth and development on the continent. Moreover, USAID has been a part of a broader donor network supporting the growth of CAADP and investing in strategic priorities outlined by countries through the Feed the Future initiative (IFPRI, 2017).

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) entered into Contract AID-72062019-C-00001 with Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture (CNFA) to implement the five-year \$15.7 million Feed the Future Nigeria Agribusiness Investment Activity to viably and sustainably link thousands of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and producer organizations with high-performing commercial actors in the rice, maize, soybean aquaculture, and cowpea value chains. The activity’s overarching goal is to quantifiably enhance Nigeria’s environment for agribusiness investment (USAID, 2020). The activity engaged in the direct delivery of training to farmers and agribusiness MSMEs, to help them access input loans from various government intervention funds such as the Anchor Borrowers Program (ABP), and Agribusiness Small and Medium Enterprise Investment Scheme (AGSMEIS). As a result of being present at these trainings, 5,713 smallholder farmers (30% female, 9% youth) get approval for input loans worth US\$2.63m in aggregate (USAID, 2020). The activity, in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment (FMITI), synergized with a range of stakeholders to support the review of the existing Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) and the development of a new National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Plan (NATIP) among other achievements.

Another major contribution of USAID to the Nigerian agricultural scene could be deduced from the findings of an ex-post study of USAID’s Maximizing Agricultural Revenue and Key Enterprises in Targeted Sites II (MARKETS II) project in Nigeria. This \$64.9 million project, according to McNamara et al (2019), “facilitated business partnerships between smallholder farmers and end-buyers in the processing segment of seven value chains”. Accordingly, the project played a key role in scaling up agricultural technology interventions across aquaculture, cassava, cocoa, maize, rice, sorghum, and soybean value chain production systems to meet market demand, while contributing to more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agricultural growth.

While taking stock of USAID’s giant strides towards developing agriculture, USAID’s Legacy in Agricultural Development encapsulates them into nine key areas which are: Securing access to land and other natural resources; Mobilizing science and technology; Instituting agricultural education and training; Managing the market performance; Financing farmers and food systems; Appreciating rural enterprises; Getting policies right; Expanding agricultural trade opportunities and Working with the earth i.e. integrating environmental considerations into agriculture (USAID, 2016).

2.10. Criticisms Against International Organizations' Involvement in Developing Nations

As laudable as the role played by international organizations towards national and economic development of developing economies, their activities are fraught with some criticisms. Mbah, (2019) argued that the receipt of donations and aid from international organizations for developmental purposes in the real sense of it are not gifts. According to her, they are "Trojan Horses. They are debts wrapped and labeled as aids". Lea (2015) concisely describes the impact of foreign aid thus:

"Foreign aid is quite a comprehensive and encompassing term. Most people don't realize that loans are usually embedded in aid packages, either directly or as a condition of foreign aid donations being given in the first place. An overload of debt combined with punishing interest rates creates the condition of economic subservience to the creditor nations and institutions and ties down, perpetually, most of the Third World Countries to underdevelopment, dependency, and poverty".

While commenting on USAID, a U.S. libertarian advocate of Austrian economics, Perkins states that it is erroneous to think of USAID, the Agency of International Development, as a charitable organization. He made it categorically clear that most of the U.S. foreign aid, like that of most countries, is out there to serve the interest of U.S. corporations and now multi-national corporations (Mbah, 2019). It now becomes glaring that no matter how much aid we receive from International Organizations, Nigeria continues to struggle with poverty and economic crises associated with a huge debt burden.

Another negative implication associated with international aid is that the release of development funding by international organizations is often predicated on the condition that whatever project is to be executed will be strictly under the supervision and expertise of foreigners. The implication of this is that apart from crippling the local industries and enterprises, these expatriates, being paid heavily from the developmental grant are indirectly siphoning the granted fund to the nation and at the same time sustaining the unemployment of indigenous qualified skilled personnel.

More so, there is over-dependency on foreign aid in such a way that creativity, enterprise, and productivity are grossly restricted coupled with erosion and replacement of culture through policy formation and implementation which could be negative or positive (Mbah, 2019).

3. Conclusion

The fact that agricultural development marks the starting point of the process of economic transformation and growth underscores the involvement of international agricultural organizations in the agricultural development of developing economies. The study therefore examined the role of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in agricultural development in Nigeria. The methodology adopted is a review using extensive information from secondary sources. Specifically, the concept of agricultural development and a brief overview of agricultural development programs and policies of the Nigerian government including challenges to their effective implementation was explored. The study findings revealed that the Nigerian government has come a very long way in agricultural development policies and program formulation.

Nevertheless, the nation's food production remains insufficient. By looking into findings, USAID and IFPRI contributed significantly to Nigeria's agricultural development. These could be seen in such areas as strengthening agricultural-sector policies and strategies, poverty reduction initiatives, tackling food insecurity, and reinforcing the commodity value chain.

The following recommendations are made.

The beneficial projects of USAID IFPRI and other relevant international agricultural organizations should be extended to every geographical zone of the country to ensure the benefits accruing from such projects are not skewed towards only some sections of the country.

The government should provide an enabling environment for international agricultural organizations to thrive while discharging their legitimate responsibilities of helping to boost the farm sector. The problem of insecurity should be dealt with in this regard.

The Nigerian government should as a necessary condition ensure that while signing any development agreement with international organizations to help develop her agricultural sector, adequate provision should be made to accommodate

our indigenous qualified skilled personnel at the implementation stage of such projects. By so doing, employment will be provided for the citizens.

Although USAID, IFPRI, and other foreign organizations are providing support to help her agriculture sector grow, the right steps should be followed to ensure that this aid doesn't worsen the situation in the country. In other words, the exploitative tendencies of some of these foreign agencies should be seriously guarded against.

Other viable areas of the agricultural value chain yet to be exploited by these foreign agencies should be considered for funding and while doing this, international organizations should continue to seek and explore practical operative mechanisms that can reduce to the barest minimum the involvement of the developed economies on the Nigerian agricultural policies and programs.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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