

Policies for the Emergence of Family Farming in the DRC

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Summary

Policies to Emergence of the Family Agriculture in DRC: The development of the domestic agriculture in DRC rests one major issue for contribute to food security and fight against the poverty, which is essentially rural. Congolese families should be increasingly awareness of the importance of investing in domestic agriculture. It is indeed, one case of short, middle and long-term effect. In more of all sectors, agriculture is one of sectors where the family does not need much means for undertake. For guarantee the policy sustainable of the emergency of the domestic agriculture and the harmonious of socio-economic development, we suggest the human resources investment and financial in medium rural that should not be limited at some training of a few elites. It will be measured according to men and women's capacity who are in family how to manage; to organize; to innovate; to assume responsibilities and finally to be adapted to the land concession system, at the scientific research progress, mechanization and the method in agricultural transformation. It needs the staff competence who should devote time for the frame of the farmer families and of the update in oeuvre of the accounting agricultural in the household. At this it is added the adaptation of the change of climate, the rehabilitation of the agricultural desert roads; the use of energy (to conditioning, conservation, transformation...) and of selected varieties; the valorization of shallows; the storage; the associative and cooperative movement; the specialization; the professionalization; the saving; the agricultural credit; the mobilization of capital by allocation of 10% of the national budget for agriculture and the enthusiasm of farmers to invest into domestic agriculture under the model of agricultural modern integrating breeding to crops.

Keywords: Policies; emergence; agricultural; family; modern

Introduction

Family farming is of paramount importance for socio-economic development in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is a sector that is primarily a driver of job and income creation for the family. The exploitation of the land through crops and livestock alone contribute to about 70% of jobs for rural families in the DRC.

In addition, family farming is a vector of stable solidarity growth for the family. It is the essential foundation for ensuring safe and accessible nutritious food for all family members. Nevertheless, there is an urgent need to encourage agribusiness vocations for the emergence of family farming.

Congolese families must become more and more aware of the importance of investing in family farming. It is indeed a profitable business in the short, medium and long term. In addition, of all sectors, agriculture is one of the sectors where the family does not need too many means to undertake.

However, the bulk of family farming in DRC is still subsistence – still relies on machetes, hoes and hope for rain-fed and shifting slash-and-burn agriculture.

According to the National Agricultural Investment Program (PNIA) 2012, the investment made, is in complete inadequacy with the level of agriculture / livestock developed. Farming families generally have no plan to lead emerging family farming.

What to do? Policies adapted to strengthening the capacities of families from farmers to crops integrated into livestock and the rehabilitation of agricultural service roads would emerge Family Farming in the DRC.

For the realization of this study, the main objective is the promotion of family farming in order to propose the adapted and sustainable agricultural policies to be adopted for the emergence of Family Farming.

Documentary methods, observations and survey techniques as well as the analysis of statistical data in relation to the potentialities and constraints related to agriculture will be adopted to propose policies adapted and sustainable to the emergence of family farming.

Apart from the introduction, conclusion and suggestions, this work is divided into three chapters. The first describes the study environment and methods, the second chapter deals with the potentialities and constraints of Agriculture in the DRC, the third chapter discusses and proposes the appropriate sustainable agricultural policies to adopt for the emergence of Family Farming in the DRC.

Study Environment and Methods

Study environment

The Republic of Congo is a vast State Territory located in the center of Central Africa. With an area of 2.345.410 km². It is crossed by two time zones, with a one-hour difference between the eastern and western parts.

It extends from 50° 30' north latitude to 13° 50' south latitude and from 12° 15' to 31° 15' longitude on the wet and warm forest basin at an altitude of 300 to 700m which corresponds to most of the Congo River basin and on the eastern plateaus reaching a maximum altitude of 5,119 m at the Ruwenzori massif and the minimum altitude is 400 m in the western zones of the Lakes Tumba and Mai-Ndombe. To the west, the Mayumbe (Ex-Cristal) mountains, parallel to the Atlantic, separate the interior plain from the coastal plain, with a highest point at 1,050 m.

It straddles the equator. It is characterized by a particular climatic diversity conditioned by precipitation, humidity, winds and altitude. One third of the country occupies the northern part of Ecuador and 2/3 the southern part.

The consequence of this situation is that the dry season in the north of the country corresponds to the rainy season in the south and vice versa. It rains all year round in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Two seasons are therefore observed in the country:

- The dry or winter season of the tropics is characterized by the absence of rain. In the north of Ecuador, this season runs from December to May, and in the southern hemisphere, from May to September. During this season, the lowest temperatures are recorded.
- The rainy season or the summer season of the tropics. Heavy rainfall is between 1,000 and 1,500 mm and can reach 2,000 mm per year. They extend from May to November and September to May on both sides of Ecuador; according to the National Agency for Investment Promotion (ANAPI-DRC, 2023).

It is bounded:

- To the north, by the Central African Republic and Sudan;
- To the south, by Zambia and Angola;

- To the east, by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania;
- To the west, by the Republic of Congo.

This is a considerable asset on several levels, including investments.

The agricultural sector is of the traditional type, dominated by food crops (cassava, maize, rice, groundnuts and plantains) and perennial crops (oil palm, coffee, cocoa, tea, rubber and cinchona). The rearing of small livestock (poultry, goats, pigs and sheep) and large livestock (cattle) is practiced.

Methods

The data were collected mainly through surveys and documentary analyses of available reports of family farming activities practiced throughout the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This made it possible to define the basic concepts of the study and to collect information from the library and internet on family farming in the DRC. Our search mainly concerned the various reports produced by the Ministry of Agriculture as well as Non-Governmental Organizations aimed at promoting the development of agriculture.

Faced with the absence of previous statistics on agricultural production, the materialization of this study required observation and investigation of the practice of family farming in the field. To this end, our approach has been gradual.

In addition, to immerse ourselves more in the reality of family farming, an individual interview approach using a closed or open questionnaire (Annex I) was used among the 2,600 farmers in 26 provinces of the DRC in order to increase the effort to obtain the data that were analyzed and expressed as a percentage.

Outcomes and Discussions

Agricultural potential in the DRC

The DRC is one of the few African countries that have enormous potential for the development of sustainable agriculture (in 75 million hectares of potential arable land of which less than 10 million hectares would be exploited (TECSULT-AECOM, 2009; Chausse, et al., 2012).

A diversity of climates, an important hydrographic network, a huge potential in terms of fishing and farming. In addition, there is real potential for the development of several export crops that are highly competitive on the international market and generate significant income, including oil palm, coffee, cocoa, tea, rubber and cinchona.

However, these many resources are exploited by rural families using traditional methods and can still be used, including subsistence and perennial agriculture, livestock and livestock farming, non-timber forest resources and fisheries resources.

However, the availability of land and the enormous water resources available to the country with the shallows and watershed of the Congo River make it possible to maintain the hope of better food self-sufficiency insistently demanded by the Congolese (Peemans, 2014).

The World Bank, in its report entitled Resilience of an African giant, particularly emphasizes this aspect of the problem: "Of all sources of growth, the agricultural sector has the greatest potential for poverty reduction. (Chausse et al. 2012).

In this context and for a long time, the agricultural sector has been considered as an interesting development perspective that could contribute to the socio-economic take-off of the country. It must be noted that these hopes have been dashed.

According to Landa, 2018, the characteristics of agricultural activities observed are far from valuing existing agricultural potential, producing wealth to reduce poverty and food insecurity and constituting a development engine for the surveyed population. As a re-

sult, the emergence of family farming in the DRC is a paradox.

To overcome this, the strengthening of the capacities of the families of agricultural producers (farmers, breeders, fishermen, fish farmers, market gardeners) through training, extension of inputs and the resulting agricultural technical progress and increased productivity are the best guarantees for a strategy to develop these agricultural potentialities for the emergence of family farming expressed by all the families surveyed.

Types of Agriculture

Agriculture in the DRC is based on two types of farming: traditional and modern.

Traditional agricultural holding

The traditional farm is of the family type and is mainly interested in food crops, of which it generates more than 80% of the national production. It is characterised by small farms on small individual areas.

It uses rudimentary tools, archaic means and techniques of production and a workforce consisting mainly of household members. It does not use synthetic fertilizers or improved and selected plant material, but it does use seeds, cuttings and suckers from all sources, usually degenerate or traditional varieties.

Production systems are extensive, low-productivity based on slash-and-burn cultivation. They are mainly focused on rainfed food production in rural areas, and on vegetable crops in peri-urban areas.

On this farm, women do most of the agricultural work and are the guarantors of food security. Production is primarily intended for self-consumption and the surplus goes to the market. This is observed in all the families surveyed.

The farming system is not very productive and production is mainly increased by increasing the area under cultivation. In forest areas, this extension is to the detriment of the forest. The system of slash-and-burn shifting cultivation is widespread in this type of agriculture. The families surveyed have to constantly change their land after two or three years of exploitation. It is therefore an extensive agriculture, consuming land and destroying the forest and the soil.

The main food crops recorded are: cassava (72% of national agricultural production); corn; sugar cane; plantain; peanut; rice; sweet potato; beans; potatoes; cowpea; sorghum, sesame, millet and soybeans.

Modern farming

Modern farming is a system that concerns farmers with modern means of production, especially large agro-industrial companies intensively cultivating large areas with high yields. It is carried out at less than 20% of national production.

It mainly affects crops intended for export (coffee, rubber, cocoa, tea, cinchona, oil palm) and local industry (sugar cane, cotton, tobacco). It also concerns large livestock breeding estates.

These large plantations, ranches and agro-industrial units use modern production techniques including salaried labour, tractors for the mechanization of agricultural work, machinery and various equipment for the processing of agricultural products, efficient agricultural inputs (chemical fertilizers, pesticides, improved plant and animal material). They use irrigation, drainage and consume electrical energy.

The majority of these farms are abandoned as a result of the Zairianization policy of 1973, the looting of 1991 and 1993 and successive wars. The speculations they exploited mainly included cash crops (sugar cane, coffee, tea, oil palm, rubber, cocoa, cinchona, etc.) and harness crops.

Currently, we are witnessing a timid recovery of large agricultural farms. For the main industrial crops grown in the DRC, oil palm should be highlighted; coffee; cocoa and tobacco.

The distribution of arable land and grasslands for livestock farming does not yet obey very strict rules in the DRC, despite the existence of a dual source of land ownership rights, modern law (Bakajika Law) and ancestral customs, which recognize the authority and preponderance of the rights of traditional land chiefs over the modern state.

This dual right is the cause of land conflicts aggravated by the inalienable and sacred nature of ancestral land which, according to Congolese customs, cannot be sold or ceded permanently.

The modern farmer, always having to seek to cover his costs and make a profit, is very receptive to agronomic innovations (resulting from agronomic research) allowing better yields. It achieves these objectives through its own funds or bank loans.

During our investigations, the absence or ineffectiveness of national development services ensures in practice the supervision of peasants either by faith-based and cooperative organizations, or by a few private companies supporting the few actors present in rural areas. Where these actions have succeeded, traditional agriculture has given way to group farming, which is an intermediate phase between traditional and modern agriculture and results from the awareness of the best farmers of the richness of the soil. This form of agriculture is due not only to the action of the Government (rural development projects, agricultural commissions) but also to the assistance of several missionaries and private operators.

Group farming is similar to traditional agriculture by the speculations exploited, the extent put into production, the labor used (family labor). But unlike traditional agriculture, it masters modern techniques: rational spacing, use of selected varieties, use of fertilizers and pesticides, animal feed, etc.

According to our investigations, group farming is the model called to ensure the emergence of family farming through the dissemination of modern agricultural techniques and to stimulate traditional rural families.

Observed constraints and policies to adopt to the emergence of family farming in the DRC

The constraints observed and the policies to be adopted were collected from 2,600 agricultural households in 26 provinces of the DRC and are classified in the table below.

<i>Constraints</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Policies to be adopted</i>
Low productivity	2 210	85	- Mastery of the production, processing and distribution chains of the agricultural sector; - Integration of livestock into crops; - Adaptation to climate change; - Use of productive selected varieties; - Valorization of the shallows.
Insufficient budget allocation or unfavourable macroeconomic environment	1 950	75	- Increase of the national budget by at least 10 per cent in the agricultural sector; - Improvement of the macroeconomic environment.
Difficulties in accessing agricultural credit	2 080	80	Creation of savings bank or agricultural bank in rural areas.
Insufficiently organized institutional framework	1 820	70	Recycling or capacity building of institutional framework.

Dualist land tenure torn between legal and traditional	2 470	95	Agrarian reform.
Degradation and low level of access to basic infrastructure	2 210	85	Rehabilitation of basic infrastructure (agricultural feeder roads).
Lack of organization of farmers and rural exodus	1 820	70	Creation of entrepreneurship, agricultural organizations or associations and cooperatives to make agriculture remunerative and attractive.
Lack of farm accounting, supervision of farmers, market information and adapted agricultural policy	2 340	90	Animation, awareness-raising, farmers' awareness and innovation through the extension of inputs, agricultural techniques, dissemination of market information and the implementation of farm accounting as well as an adapted agricultural policy.
Low level of valorization, processing and preservation of agricultural products as well as purchasing power	2 080	80	- Industrialization of family farming; - Installation of storage infrastructures; - Diversification of agricultural activities.
Inadequate supply of agricultural research and extension services	2 470	95	Revitalization of agricultural research and extension services.
Low level of training or experience of farmers	1 950	75	- Human capacity-building; - Reform of the education system.

Table 1: Observed constraints and policies to adopt to the emergence of family farming (Total agricultural household surveyed: 2,600).

The constraints observed in the table above are particularly alarmist, it should be recognized that the situation has not really improved, and the DRC has not managed to develop its agronomic potential. The country, which has significant natural resources, is unable to benefit its population from this agricultural wealth.

Despite the agricultural potential, however, the Congolese agricultural sector faces many technical, economic and institutional constraints, namely:

- Low productivity in the plant and animal sectors (85%);
- A budget allocation that is still insufficient (75%);
- An insufficiently organized institutional framework (70%) with a lack of strategic action plans, specialized and qualified human resources, technical and material, both at central level and at provincial and local levels;
- A dualist land tenure system torn between the legal and the traditional (95%);
- The deterioration of living conditions in rural areas, thus causing a high and selective exodus that drains the most dynamic agricultural workers to the cities (70%);
- A macroeconomic environment that is not conducive to productive investment (75%), despite the presence of quality land, a favourable climate and high demand;
- The low financing capacity of agricultural operators and difficulties in accessing agricultural credit (80%);
- Degradation and low level of access to road infrastructure or agricultural desert roads (85%);
- The absence of farm accounting and supervision of farmers (90%);
- The lack of organization of producers in agricultural sectors (70%);
- The inadequacy of the supply of agricultural research and extension services compared to the demand for advisory support from farmers' organizations (95%);
- Low level of access to market information (90%);

- Weak domestic demand due to low consumer purchasing power due to poverty (80%);
- The low level of valuation of production (80%) affects very negatively the Congolese family agricultural sector;
- The low level of training or experience of farmers (75%).

In addition, the vast majority of the rural population engaged in family farming throughout the country remains condemned to subsistence farming, characterized by extremely low productivity, exorbitant marketing costs and almost inaccessible markets.

Another important dimension of the problem is related to the fact that family farming in the DRC continues to occupy the majority of the workforce (more than 70 percent of the population according to TECSULT-AECOM, 2009) is poor.

Nevertheless, underdeveloped distribution networks, poor road conditions and erratic water supplies are difficult obstacles for even the most skilled farmers. In addition, many of these potential farmers who practice family farming have little training or experience.

We have mangoes, oranges, papaya, tangerines, guavas, tomatoes, banana, etc. During their season, the quantities produced are always greater than the demand, and the abundance on the market causes prices to fall.

The unsold surplus of this overproduction then infects and infests in our garbage cans. The sad thing is that the same scenario repeats itself every year, and no one seems to find and implement real solutions to process and preserve these fruits.

The consequences are: reduced production leading to food insecurity, increased imports of basic necessities, decline in cash crops or export crops (coffee, palm oil, cotton, cocoa, rubber, tobacco).

All these consequences according to our analyses, contribute to the non-emergence of family farming, which keeps the population in the practice of self-subsistence cultures and makes it vulnerable. And yet, agriculture appears to be the main economic sector of the country in terms of GDP and employment with increasing importance (National Report, 2009).

Given the importance of family farming in strengthening food security and reducing poverty, its emergence occupies a fundamental place in the Multisectoral Program for the Recovery of the Congolese Economy (Ragasa et al. 2012).

Since the country's independence, and most often with the assistance of international financial partners, many agricultural development plans and programmes have been formulated. When they were put in place, each of these plans referred to agriculture as a "priority of priorities". This political slogan, as noted by Nkwembe and Guy (2006), has, however, remained hollow and without practical content, in terms of concrete decisions for its materialization and sufficient and consequent budgetary allocations.

In fact, the agricultural sector seems to have never been the priority, and most programs have not produced the expected results. The objectives, rarely achieved and rarely or never evaluated, were mostly carried over to subsequent programmes, with little more success. It is also widely recognized that these multiple national and provincial sectoral policy documents are too general, without priorities and without realistic and simple follow-up possibilities.

Makala Nzengu (2009), analyses the reasons for failures: "Compared to what is happening elsewhere, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, priority in the development of the agricultural and rural sector is given to emergency operations, without a real medium- and long-term policy. Thus, the approach remained for a long time based on short-term, poorly initiated and budget-hungry projects that ended up becoming permanent administrative structures, with no real impact on the ground.

Historically, agricultural development policies in Congo have been demanding vis-à-vis family farming: its possible inertia represented a blocking factor, whereas it was supposed to contribute to the take-off of the economy and the financing of the country's development.

It is currently accepted that in the DRC in largely rural economies, growth, demand for goods and services, savings and foreign exchange must come mainly from the agricultural sector. But its yield will be increasingly high, if the DRC adopts as policies for the

emergence of family farming: the development of human and financial resources and the practice of integrated agriculture. Without animal husbandry, agriculture is lame and without agriculture, livestock is blind.

Diversification by practicing livestock, if you already farm; or start farming, if you are already raising livestock. The two are complementary.

Those who want to embark on agribusiness, to choose a crop or livestock that you can later transform, if you do not master the entire chain, from the primary sector (*production*), secondary (*processing*) and the tertiary sector (*distribution*). The idea is to get you to think in terms of wealth creation; to understand that it is only industrialization (*or transformation*) that can lead us to create this wealth in family farming.

Smart diversification can therefore be concerned with adding value by transforming and packaging what you already produce. It is therefore important to rethink our agricultural policy, in order to combine demographic development and food security.

We must seriously think about providing food of sufficient quality and quantity to our populations from family farming. Designing a reform of the education system or adapted curricula and initiating children to deploy their intelligence to find solutions and solve the enigmas of our populations in agricultural activities is one of the solutions for the emergence of family farming.

The only agriculture that will make Africa independent is modern and integrated family agriculture. To do this, it will be a priority to target food production while ensuring the promotion of industrial and cash crops and the establishment of Poles of Family Agricultural Businesses.

This requires investment in human and financial resources in rural areas. It must not stop at the formation of a few elites. Human capital is paramount. It will be measured by the ability of men and women to organize, innovate, take responsibility and ultimately adapt to climate change. Thus, agricultural development is not only a question of natural or financial resources.

It is first and foremost a question of human capacity and organization. Strengthening the capacities of agricultural producers (farmers, breeders, fishermen, fish farmers, market gardeners) through training, extension of inputs and the resulting agricultural technical progress and increased productivity are the best guarantees for a policy of the emergence of family farming.

The strategic approach for the implementation of farm accounting; technical capacity building; and organizational organizations of farmers' organizations, civil society and the private sector will be based on the inclusion and accountability of all public and private actors involved in agricultural development: producers and/or suppliers of inputs, agricultural producers, managers of storage structures, processors, transporters, distributors, research and technological innovation institutions, extension institutions, financing institutions, operators of new information and communication technologies, as well as support for the organization of the rural world into self-managed structures and support for the promotion of appropriate technologies with a view to reducing hardship and increasing the income of rural families.

Sustainably promote agricultural value chains, first and foremost food sectors, and develop agribusiness to improve the incomes of farmers and other operators in the sector; develop and disseminate research products to users; improve agricultural governance, promote gender mainstreaming and strengthen human and institutional capacities; and reduce the vulnerability of the agricultural sector to change Climate; the improvement of agronomic research, as well as the dissemination of appropriate technologies (mechanization and agricultural processing processes to increase yields) and capacity building at all levels (competent personnel dedicated to mentoring farmers); the use of varieties selected by farmers and an associative and cooperative movement of rural people; The specialization, professionalization of family farming and the mobilization of capital, savings, energy and enthusiasm of farmers are fundamental pillars for the policy of profitability of family farming at both national and provincial level (Lebailly, P. et al., 2014).

Guarantees of success will be ensured by adapting the land concession system and taking into account cross-cutting issues such as institutional capacity building of public, private and civil society actors, implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation

measures, improved governance as well as agricultural research and advice. Thus, family farming is a strategic issue for the socio-economic development of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Badibanga & Ulimwengu 2013).

It also remains to ensure an increase in the allocation of the national budget to the sector, with priority given to productive investments over current operating expenditure, with a view to boosting productivity, and the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and making funds available effectively.

As a reminder, the Maputo Declaration adopted by the African Union in July 2003 committed signatory States, including the DRC, to increase, by 2008, their investments in the agricultural sector, up to at least 10% of their national budget (NAIP-DRC, 2012) is currently desirable.

Conclusion and suggestions

The development of family farming in the DRC remains a major challenge to contribute to food security and fight poverty, which is essentially rural. Congolese families must become more and more aware of the importance of investing in family farming. It is indeed a profitable business in the short, medium and long term.

In addition, of all sectors, agriculture is one of the sectors where we do not need too many resources to undertake.

Various diagnoses have already been carried out and converge on an identical observation which testifies to the absence of an agricultural policy. There is an urgent need for agricultural policies that promote family farming. Moreover, experience shows that, without a strong political will to give power back to rural people (including “purchasing power”), a sustainable revival of Congolese agriculture is not possible (“*No Will, No Way*”).

As Mpanzu (2013) points out, the need for a proactive agricultural policy is the essential basis for the envisaged recommendations to be used to really improve the situation of the agricultural sector. If the political prerequisites largely developed above are met, it seemed useful to us to highlight some recommendations that will, in our opinion, mitigate the problems that arise in the context of the revival of the emergence of family farming in the DRC.

To guarantee the sustainable policy of the emergence of family farming and a harmonious socio-economic development of farmers, we suggest:

- The dynamisation of investment in human and financial resources in rural areas, which must not stop at the training of a few elites. It will be measured against the strengthening of the capacities of men and women to organize, innovate, assume responsibilities and ultimately invest in integrated family farming (crops to livestock) and adapt to climate change;
- Adaptation to climate change and agricultural investment linked to the long-term land concession system through agrarian reform;
- The progress of scientific research, mechanization (modernization) and processes of production, processing, preservation, storage and distribution of agricultural products;
- Competent staff dedicated to the supervision and implementation of farm accounting in the farm household;
- The use of high-yielding hardy varieties by rural farmers in an associative or cooperative movement;
- The improvement of the macroeconomic environment, specialization, professionalization of family farming, mobilization of capital through the allocation of 10% to the national budget, savings, agricultural credits, energy (for packaging, processing, conservation) and the enthusiasm of farmers to invest in family farming.

Annex I. Questionnaire

1. Code:
2. Target group:

3. Village:
4. Territory:
5. Province:
6. Do you invest in family farming?
7. What are the constraints you observe so that your agriculture is not emerging?
8. What are the policies to adopt for the emergence of family farming in the DRC?

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