

SECOND UTAFITI SERA FORUM ON EMPLOYMENT CREATION IN THE AGRO-PROCESSING SECTOR

Background Note

Employment Creation in Sugar Sector in Kenya: Challenging the Political Economy Dilemmas and the Role of Utafiti Sera (Research-Policy Community)

The Kenya sugar sector value chain has the potential to promote substantial wage employment but that has not been fully realized because of a number of blockages; among them are: political interference, low application of technology at the lower end of the value chain, weak institutional framework for supporting the industry, unhealthy competition arising from commodity imports, and existence of private interest groups that are able to influence policies that have negative effect on job creation. A study conducted by a team of researchers led by Prof Mitullah of the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) of University of Nairobi to examine the 'how' and 'why' of the constraints to employment creation of the sector has provided a number of recommendations that are relevant for policy discussions.

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) and the Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (CABE) are facilitating research policy engagement on the findings of the study using the Utafiti Sera approach. Utafiti Sera is a "platform" "process", "space", "forum", that provides opportunities for new ways of thinking and collaborating to address the challenges that hinder the use of research for policy engagement. It represents a community of researchers and policy actors that work together to ensure that appropriate policy actions and uptake occur either through programmes, legislation, policies or administrative and other actions around an issue for which research has provided evidence, in this case employment creation in the context of inclusive growth in Kenya.

On 7th June 2016, PASGR with support from the Knowledge Platform for Inclusive Development Policies (INCLUDE) launched Utafiti Sera on employment creation in the agro-processing sector. The first forum discussed key sub-sectors and policy issues that need to be addressed to promote employment creation. This forum, which is the second in the series of Utafiti Sera activities, is informed by the study conducted by the IDS team.

Objectives of the *Utafiti Sera* Forum

- To present policy relevant findings of the study to policy actors;
- To provide opportunity to a panel of experts to discuss how the findings of the study could be used to inform policy discussions on employment creation in the sector.

Organisation of the forum

The forum will adopt the following methodology:

- **Presentations:** these will include the presentation of findings as well as the opportunities and challenges of sugar production in Kenya.
- **Plenary discussions:** There will be plenary discussions to allow participants to reflect on the presentations, issues raised on the various thematic areas.

Plenary discussions will augment presentation sessions and give the participants an opportunity to ask questions and make contributions on the topics.

Round-table discussions: The forum will adopt a round-table arrangement that will allow for close interaction and deliberations on the transformation of the sugar sector and the prospects for policy. This will also include the way forward for the initiative and other *Utafiti Sera* activities for the year 2017.

Participants

About 35 key policy actors, practitioners, and researchers have been invited to the forum, including Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; National Economic and Social Council; County Representatives; Development Partners; Private Sector Organisations; Civil Society Organisations; and institutions involved in employment creation policies and research in Kenya.

Expected Outcomes of the Forum

1. Consolidate on the first *Utafiti Sera* forum on employment creation;
2. Draw activities that will lead into policy uptake on research evidence and follow-up action;
3. Better understanding on how *Utafiti Sera* can inform and influence policies and programmes in the sugar sector to promote employment;

About PASGR

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is an independent, non-partisan pan-African not-for-profit research organisation registered in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya with a vision to promote a vibrant African social science community that addresses governance and public policy issues in Africa. PASGR pursues its vision through three core programmes: Higher Education, Professional Development and Training and Research. The Research Programme works with African social scientists to produce high quality governance research that informs and influences public policy and ultimately transforms the living conditions of people in the countries where the studies are conducted. As part of PASGR's research-policy engagement processes, *Utafiti Sera* has been developed. *Utafiti Sera* is a framework about new ways of thinking and collaboration to bridge the gap between research evidence and policy action.

About CABA

The Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (CABA) is a knowledge sharing Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that was formally registered in Kenya in 2004. CABA seeks to improve the livelihoods of African smallholder farmers and youth by building their capacity in agribusiness, facilitating market and policy linkages as well as providing and extension and advisory services. The specific target group for CABA is growth-oriented women and youth agri-preneurs who require improved inputs and market for their products and services. CABA also seeks to provide products and services that can improve the livelihood of rural families beyond household food security.