

- Some 250 million smallholder and subsistence farmers make up the agricultural factor across Africa, contributing up to 70 per cent of the food supply. However, the majority are without the resources and support they need to reach their agricultural potential.
 - They are also the custodians of ecosystems and biodiversity that are critical for sustainable food production, enhanced nutrition security and improved livelihoods.
 - And despite the importance they have in approaching food systems holistically, smallholder farmers in Africa face a big challenge: they systematically record lower average productivity and average incomes compared to larger food producers.
 - In the wake of the impact of the COVID-19, which has been exacerbated by the Ukraine war, nations across the continent have been turning to technology as a way to revamp the productivity of African smallholders. It is the only way to go.
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to displacements of people in search of ways to subsist, which in turn may lead to unrest and conflict.

- It is important to remember that the inter-linkages between conflict, food insecurity and malnutrition in Africa can easily trigger a vicious cycle. It is therefore our responsibility to take the necessary steps to prevent such cycle from being unleashed.
 - Global emergencies,
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- A key element in promoting this resilience is ensuring access to sustainable financing for the agricultural sector in Africa. Therefore, access to finance is the game changer.
 - Financial services for smallholder farmers and rural medium, small and micro enterprises are critical to achieving financial inclusion goals and, consequently, food security. The banking sector sees the potential growth that derives from extending financial services to these unbanked clients, but they need to adapt their traditional approaches to capitalize on opportunities in rural areas. Multilateral Financial Institutions and banks need long-term strategic commitment, to think beyond product development only, and to promote changes in credit assessment, staffing and operating models in order to adapt to the specific needs of rural areas and smallholder farmers.
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- We, therefore, welcome the news of the approval of \$1.5 billion by the African Development Bank to provide critical financing to farmers in Africa. The African Development Bank's \$1.5 billion **African Emergency Food Production Facility** is an unprecedented comprehensive initiative to support smallholder farmers in filling the food shortfall in Africa. The
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