Viewpoint: 200 million Africans are chronically malnourished and 5 million die of hunger each year. The continent can’t rely on agroecology alone

A report by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) indicates that despite a decade of pro-growth and food security policies and programmes such as the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), 200 million Africans are chronically malnourished and five million die of hunger annually.

Proponents of agroecology have always fronted it as the ultimate solution to the African food security problem. They champion indigenous approaches, resisting the industrialisation of African agriculture, and rejecting both the use of genetic engineering and the privatisation of living organisms.

But when locusts for instance invade a farm, would you advise farmers not to use pesticides, for example?

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A model of agroecology that limits farming inputs to solely indigenous materials is too restrictive to transform the sector.

It is prone to meet resistance from farmers. Such rigid paradigms shall at their best seek not to transform, but to trap farmers in unending poverty.

The urgent need to transform Africa’s agriculture has led to the rise of several advocacy groups. Others, however, in the name of advocating for holistic and sustainable models, are knowingly or unknowingly pushing Africa to traditional methods that have proved futile over the years.

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