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Kenya's Agricultural Sector Reforms

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Report Highlights:

Kenya's legislature passed significant agricultural reforms in 2012. The Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food Authority (ALFA) Bill passed December 18, following a series of new agricultural research, livestock, fisheries and crops legislation passed throughout the year. The purpose of the new legislation is to transform Kenya's agricultural sector into a commercially-oriented and internationally competitive industry. The new structure will help Kenya modernize agricultural production, improve service delivery, and harmonize the regulatory and legal framework of government programs. President Kibaki is expected to sign the legislation in January 2013.

Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Food Authority (ALFA)

ALFA will merge the 24 state corporations associated with agriculture into a single entity: the Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Food Authority. This consolidation will remove overlapping regulatory, licensing, processing, and marketing functions. It will also consolidate the number of ministries in the agricultural sector, although the final structure is still in the process of development. Kenya's new constitution of August 2010 requires it to have a maximum of 22 ministries across all government, half of the current number, so consolidation of agriculture-related ministries was essential. The new legislation also follows the new Kenyan constitution guidelines for devolution of power and transparency in the distribution of government funds.

In summary, the 2012 legislative changes will:

- Harmonize and update over 131 pieces of legislation that govern the agricultural sector into four. The past laws were in some cases obsolete, for example, the past Agriculture Act was enacted in the early 1900s.
- Establish an overarching regulatory body, the Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Food Authority (ALFA), to oversee operations of Kenya's agricultural sector including licensing and law enforcement.
- Register farmers to enable the country to better provide services such as training and extension.
- Create a checks and balance system that allows Kenya meet its international obligations with respect to the integrity the standards and other requirements under international agreements.
- Provide the national government with the authority to issue policy guidelines on agricultural issues that local entities must implement in order to ensure national standards and policies that are consistent country-wide.

This new legislation should be signed by President Kibaki January 2013, but it will not be fully implemented until after the Kenyan elections of March 2013. The ALFA Bill and related legislation fits into the Kenyan government's strategic policy initiatives issued over the past nine years. Related plans and policies include:

- Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture (SRA), 2004-2015.
- Kenya Vision 2030: First Medium-Term Plan, 2008-2012. Note: A consolidated agricultural reform bill is one of the flagship projects under Kenya Vision that was addressed by ALFA.
- Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS), 2010-2020. Note: The ASDS is a revised SRA incorporating Vision 2030 objectives. ASDS outlines agricultural policy goals and provides guidance to the public and private sector's efforts in overcoming the outstanding challenges facing Kenya's agricultural sector.

FAS Nairobi will provide updates as the new ALFA legislation is implemented in 2013.

