

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Thursday, 20 May 2021 10:00 GMT +00:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Development of Africa Manifesto and Plan of Action on Forgotten foods
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Dr Yemi Akinbamijo, Executive Director, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/11452/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/11452/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Independent
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	No borders

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

# 1. PARTICIPATION

## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

954

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

31

19-30

736

31-50

157

51-65

66-80

80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

652 Male

302 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

117 Trade and commerce

159 Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

59 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

619 Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

80 Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

68 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

485 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

59 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

57 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

205 Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

### HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

This dialogue aims to develop the Africa manifesto on forgotten foods. The manifesto will contribute to the global manifesto to be presented at the UN food systems summit. The subject of food a nutritional security in Africa is a major concern to all and sundry, as such the webinar attracted a lot of interest from the broad stakeholders group. Adequate publicity was created for the webinar; this facilitated good registration of participants. The discussion was conducted in basic language with minimal use of technical jargon. The opinion of all and sundry were taken into consideration in the development of the eventual manifesto document.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

To communicate the need for urgency, the dialogue was preceded by sufficient publicity and the circulation of an initial working paper to inform the public and the broad stakeholder group in Africa agriculture, food and nutrition. The complexity of the subject matter was considered during discussion. The issues of inclusivity were addressed by engaging from line actors from the different stakeholder groups as key speakers and discussant in the panel. The youth were adequately represented same as women. On the professional divide, a balance representation of farmers, researcher, extension as well as policy makers was ensured. The opinion of participants was taken in text messages in the chat box. All participants were also giving the opportunity to contribute to a poll to validate the key components of the manifesto document.

### DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

The essence of the dialogue is to collate the stakeholder's opinion in a balanced form. Hence, full representation and participation is required.

# 3. METHOD

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The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

**DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?**

**Yes**

**No**

# 4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

## MAJOR FOCUS

The dialogue on forgotten foods as a respite to sustainable food and nutritional security was organized to with the intention to foster a paradigm change in the production and consumption pattern for in Africa. The subject matter have strong bearing to the five action track of the food systems summit.

The Human Development Index is premised on the balanced attention to issues that drive individual as well as societal wellbeing. The issues of food and nutritional security are central in this goal and they require more inclusive perspectives than the conventional. The webinar takes a deeper perspective at the complete chain of issues and factors from production, through processing, marketing, distribution, quality control and safety, consumption patterns, food waste management, to recycling of nutrients and other elements of environmental sustainability.

The action track 1 looks into ensuring access to safe and nutritious food; the documented evidence of the nutritious nature of the forgotten and underutilized foods warrants the crave to bring back this food into the food systems. Secondly that action track two on shifting to a sustainable consumption pattern, is consistent with the need for Africa to eat what it can produce to reduce the economic burden of food importation, Africa currently expend US\$53 billion on food import per annual. Africa countries may also benefit economically from producing commodities that are well adapted to its natural resource base. This will reduce the cost of production owing to use of external inputs. The cultivation of well adapted food commodities will contribute to action track three on boosting the nature's positive production at sufficient scale. Africa countries are struggling with huge yield gap on most of the food commodities, largely because of poor comparative advantage on climate, soils and other natural resources issues. It is speculated that with advancing the production and consumption of the indigenous commodities; the agrarian livelihood that engages more than 60% of the labor force in Africa will improve, this is consistent with action track four on advancing equitable livelihoods and value distribution. The indigenous commodities will foster resilience and reduce vulnerability, apparently, the commodity that sustains the populations are often the forgotten foods which are largely ignored in terms of research and development investment. It is crucial for Africa to revisit its neglected and underutilized species within the context of food system. The term forgotten food refers to crop and livestock commodities that have been neglected or underutilized as they have been displaced by increasingly uniform diets fueled by mass-produced processed ingredients from the 'BIG FOUR' of wheat, maize, rice and soybean. These four accounts for about two-thirds of the world's food supply. The dialogue thus, identified the pathway to bring to the fore the subject of forgotten food and ensure its prominence in the continental food system. The need for awareness about the commodities and their nutritional advantages was identifies as the first action followed by the need to develop a new research and innovation system to ensure knowledge and technology development along the different commodities. It was opined that the research system will need to prioritize germplasm collection and conservation. It should also give attention to breeding and improvement. The issues of developing new food commodities that meets the need of the growing elites is important. The engagement of the policy makers for consistent action is vital. The stakeholders opined that active engagement of the private sector all along the development process is vital. Incentives should be created for agribusiness development around the various underutilized foods. Towing the pathways of sustainable intensification will be vital as the various endeavors develops and trigger the desired change. Efforts should be channeled to engage the growing youth population actively along the entire value chain to foster job creation and strong economic benefits from the upsurge in the production and use of the underutilized commodities.

### ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- ✓ Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

## MAIN FINDINGS

The dialogue came up with five main key finding/recommendations that need to be implemented to enhance the Africa food system. These five elements should form the pillars for the Africa manifesto. (1). Establish a dedicated and functional research system for holistic development of forgotten foods. (2). Incrementally build an appropriate innovation capacity (infrastructure, equipment and expertise) at local level to enable African research and education institutions develop solutions for increased productivity, resilience to shocks, value-added production and quality assurance for forgotten foods. (3). Establish partnerships and strategic alliances to foster engagement of youth and women for rapid integration of forgotten foods into the national food system and engagement for policy development. (4). Facilitate the engagement of private sector for investment into production, processing and marketing of forgotten foods and (5). Create a regional pool of financial resources to support research and coherent development efforts on forgotten foods. Such funds should be accessible by institutions and governments which have research topics aligned to regional priorities on forgotten foods.

In other to mitigate the danger of food shortage and nutritional insecurity that was orchestrated by various constraints and lately aggravated by climate change, COVID-19, increased desertification, etc. There is the need to invest in life-saving crops that are resilient and in wide diversity from a wider range of crops and cropping systems. This will require a major modification in the agricultural research and innovation approaches towards identified underutilized species in each region of Africa. These logical modifications include:

- i. Adoption of new metrics and indicators to show the value of forgotten foods.
- ii. Concerted efforts in participatory plant breeding to improve the adaptation of forgotten foods and forgotten foods to social, economic and ecological conditions, and nutritional value.
- iii. Granting required respect of rights of farmers through allowing them to locally use, save, exchange and sell their Forgotten Foods.
- iv. Development of sustainable seed systems, facilitating conservation, access, availability, use and exchange of high-quality seeds of forgotten foods by farmers.
- v. Introduction of the development of forgotten foods into education programs.
- vi. More advocacy and evidence-based policy change.
- vii. Better access to markets, support to short supply chains and alternative retail structures.
- viii. Enhance capacity development of NARES etc.
- ix. Novel research development and networking (e.g. molecular genetics, nutritional profiling, agronomic interventions, digital technologies and applications).
- x. Enhance awareness raising to ensure that the values of Forgotten Foods are recognized by all in society, including researchers and technical agents as well as urban communities and consumers, for their nutritional, cultural and environmental benefits.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

The discussion topics followed three interrelated sections of the webinar, one, the presentation of the technical paper on the manifesto, second the expert panel discussion and third, the broad stakeholders' poll on key decision pathway. The technical presentation highlighted the five pillars of the Africa manifesto viz., the establishment of a dedicated research system forgotten foods. Building the systemic capacity for innovation, the establishment of partnerships and strategic alliances, engagement of the private sector and creation of a regional pool of financial resources. The panel discussion highlighted the the central issues to be considered in ensuring the contributions of underutilized species to food and nutritional security in Africa. It explicated what is required to mobilize farmers, women and the youth all along the process. It further prescribed the agricultural innovation systems approach to and the best research to development partnership model. The likely funding mechanism for the process were also discussed. The result of the participants poll indicated that the five pillars are important to giving prominence to the underutilized food in the food system. The issues of publicity, research system development and engagement of youth were voted to be most important priorities. The poll indicated that the research system should give prominence to Market research for the commodity, germplasm collection and conservation and agronomic integration of the underutilized commodities in the food system. Eight nine percent of the participants agree that innovations systems approach is the best research for development model to be used; the research coordination should follow the FARA /SROs/NARI model with smart implementation of the subsidiarity principle. The resource mobilization efforts could explore funding from technology tax, support from industry corporate social responsibility fund and support from philanthropic endowments. Eighty-seven percent of poll participants agreed that incentives in terms of funds, policies and other support should be made available for the private sector to drive the process.

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## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Divergence in opinion among stakeholders were observed in the dialogue. First, the label “Forgotten Foods” was largely criticized by majority as untruthful and not representing the state of affairs. Questions like who forgot the food? And forgotten in what dimension. It was opined that label like “Underutilized food commodities” will be appealing since the commodities in question are still used in certain climes, although not optimally. The neglect is in terms of investment into research for improvement and product development.

The prospective funding mechanisms for the development of the underutilised species also attracted wide divergence of stakeholder’s opinion. While a segment opted for funding from taxes from industries and corporate businesses. A handful are averse to technology tax of one percent from farmers income when the environment is suitable for their profitability. Apparently, the promotion of the underutilized species may not be very successful if the funding is expected from foreign donor and development partners. The commodities were neglected in terms of research and development largely because they were not in the priority of the key donors. A handful of past initiatives in this direction also failed for lack of funding and other resources.

Subtle disagreement was observed on the issues of characterization of the forgotten food. A school of thoughts felt that since these commodities are still used in the rural settings, they should not fall into the category. Apparently, what constitute an underutilized commodity will form the first research action to be undertaking by the community of practice on underutilized food commodities.

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