

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Monday, 19 July 2021 09:30 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Neglected Species, Sustainable Food Systems: experiences from Africa & lessons for research methods
CONVENED BY	European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) / Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (FGF)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/32335/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/32335/</a>
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Italy, Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania

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

45

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

7

19-30

33

31-50

5

51-65

66-80

80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

22 Male

23 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

8 Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

1 Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

3 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

33 Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

2 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

6 Local Non-Governmental Organization

4 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

25 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

1 Member of Parliament

2 Local authority

Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

5 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The principles were briefly recalled at the beginning of the meeting, and clarified as part of the invitations to main speakers and participants, as well as in the way the dialogue-agenda and topics were selected

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

In particular, we embraced multi-stakeholder inclusivity by selecting the main speakers from different food systems groups; and the principles of evidence-based and complexity by basing the dialogue on the results of the SASS multi-disciplinary research project that involved many stakeholders from Kenya and Tanzania

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

The Principles are constructive so early sharing at the level on invitations and agenda-setting can help

# 3. METHOD

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 was titled 'Neglected Species, sustainable food systems: experiences from Africa & lessons for research methods' and its overarching theme was how to improve the sustainability of food systems through diversification using African indigenous vegetables as a case study and an exemplar of the opportunities/challenges for economic/social/environmental sustainability of the wider agri-food systems. After a short introduction and framing session, the Dialogue had three major focuses:

(i) The environmental value of diversification in agricultural production:

This focused on research findings from the SASS project about three local agri-food systems in Kenya and Tanzania ([ecdpm.org/sass](http://ecdpm.org/sass)). This focus area endeavored to shine light on whether this diversification of agricultural production, and specifically the better integration of African indigenous vegetables, can increase the environmental sustainability of agri-food systems in East Africa.

(ii) Health and nutrition challenges:

This focused on social sustainability and predominantly human health. There was a specific attention on women, as they are considered vulnerable within society but also, they play a central position within the food system as nutritional agents through their role as a pillar within the household.

(iii) The small-farmer as a driver of sustainability through rural-urban linkages in agri-food production and supply chain: This focused on the role of small farmers for improving economic sustainability and other sustainable development practices.

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

## MAIN FINDINGS

### (i) The environmental value of diversification in agricultural production:

- A multi- and interdisciplinary research approach is essential for a nuanced understanding of the agri-food system.
- Indigenous local vegetables are less demanding in resources when compared to staple crops.
- Local agri-biodiversity should be promoted as it improves ecosystem services, such as pollination.
- Indigenous local vegetables and staple crops can effectively be utilized and farmed together but synthetic pesticides associated with staple crops have negative impacts on the biodiversity, although this can be avoided or mitigated through the use of natural pesticides.
- African indigenous vegetables are predominately cultivated for self or family consumption in urban areas while market demand drives the dominance of staple crops in rural areas. A majority of farmers use natural and traditional practices, but larger farms have increasingly employed intensive farming practices.
- Pollinators' richness decreases as landscape increases intensity due to urbanization and large-scale commercial farming.
- The practice of breeding for uniformity has led to a spread of monoculture farming. There is a need to address this and establish farmer-orientated agricultural systems, particularly in relation to seed selection. Seed breeding for diversity needs to be promoted.

### (ii) Health and the nutrition challenges:

- Biodiversity within the agri-food system needs to be approached through a health and nutritional framing.
- Malnutrition, especially amongst children in East Africa, is still extremely high and urgently needs to be addressed. African indigenous vegetables can play a key role.
- Only 16 percent of the sample consumed a portion of African indigenous vegetables. There was a higher consumption of indigenous vegetables observed in urban areas when compared to rural areas.
- Empowering women through education can enhance their own health but can also have a positive feedback in the health of their offspring. This education can also reduce several forms of inequalities faced by women including gender, health, social, and economic inequalities.
- Policy exchange of experiences between different actors is extremely beneficial.

### (iii) The small-farmer as a driver of sustainability through rural-urban linkages in agri-food production and supply chain:

- In Kenya and Tanzania, there is a large range of farmer typology, varying with size of land and levels of commercialization. Income diversification and precarity leads to migration to urban centers and strengthening of rural-urban linkages. Created indexes for sustainable farming practices and waste management.
- Social organizations are common and play a key role in helping small farmers. They are associated with risk and profit sharing, improved access to credit and capital, improved income security, and increased access to education and training.
- Diversification of production and marketing channels needs to be recognized as important driver of economic development and biodiversity preservation.
- The conventional food system is in crisis – disconnected from the environment, society, and material realities of small farmers. There needs to be new business models and governance structures to reconnect producers and consumers.
- It was noted that it is not appropriate to use European categorisations of producers and consumers in the African context.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

The outcomes from the environmental value of diversification in agricultural production topic included:

- A four-step food systems approach should be utilized for a holistic understanding and improvement of food systems: firstly a food system analysis, followed by sustainability analysis, and then a look at the political economy of the system; all of which iteratively aimed at designing -with local stakeholders- realistic and context-based pathways towards more sustainability.
- Researchers need to focus and undertake studies on indigenous crops with a view to improving and developing the sustainability of local food systems, including via in-situ experiments on the resilience of the vegetables.
- Value chain specific multi-stakeholder platforms should be established in order to build consensus and strengthen coordination and governance along the whole chain.
- There is a need to subsidize the distribution of indigenous vegetable seeds to promote biodiversity.
- Quotas for indigenous vegetables and smallholders should be introduced in public procurement schemes.
- Pollinator-friendly practices and policies are needed to mitigate the impact of agricultural intensification and urbanization.
- Dietary diversity is essential for tackling both malnutrition and over-nutrition and for this diversification, indigenous vegetables will (and already are in the case of Kenya and Tanzania) play a central role.
- It is incumbent to progress towards a decentralized agri-food system where the farmer can play a participatory role in diversification.
- Biodiversity conservation and diversification within the agri-food system should be approached through a health and nutritional framing.
- Europe and Africa can mutually learn from their experiences: alongside cooperation projects between Europe and Africa, there needs to be a transformation and diversification within the food systems in Europe as well

### ACTION TRACKS

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### KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

- The outcomes from the health and the nutrition challenges topic included:
- African indigenous vegetables have more micronutrients when compared to the majority of common staple and cash crops. Further, they contain natural cancer prevention.
  - Intervention in and education of the wider population is needed to raise awareness of the link between food and health.
  - Competent authorities (e.g. health professionals, dietitians, researchers) should engage in targeted food education to improve the food habits of women and to better advise women on matters related to food and nutrition.
  - Policymakers should promote clear food labeling which outlines nutritional information to stimulate consumer knowledge.
  - There should be a promotion of diversification of diets due to the evidence that diversification aids with combatting under nutrition and hidden hunger.
  - The need to promote the exchange of best practices for social inclusion of women and improving women’s place in the food system.

ACTION TRACKS

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|---|--|
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KEYWORDS

- |   |                           |   |                         |
|---|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|   | Finance                   | ✓ | Policy                  |
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| ✓ | Women & Youth Empowerment |   | Trade-offs              |
|   |                           | ✓ | Environment and Climate |

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

The small-farmer as a driver of economic sustainability through rural-urban linkages in agri-food production and supply chain

- Policymakers need to take an integrated approach as environmentally sustainable practices can only be implemented and thrive if paired with socially and economically sustainable supports (e.g. active education policies and market-integration mechanisms targeting commercially orientated small farmers).
- Specifically, small farmers need educational opportunities to learn about good agricultural practices as well as the proper employment and disposal of chemical fertilizers.
- There needs to be increased waste management infrastructure to support local farmers.
- Policymakers need to promote indigenous vegetable production and sustainable practices.
- Digital technology should be utilized to support and connect consumers to producers.
- There is a need for policymakers and industry to develop a new integrated, cross-sectoral food policy.
- There needs to be a reconfiguration of the food system through the relations between the market, state, and farmers towards political and economic democratization of food.
- While reinforcing sustainable local food systems, policymakers and those working within the agri-food sector must be wary not to create local traps or elitist food communities.
- Democratization can come about through the introduction of food plans and food councils on local levels in order to ensure effective policy and social inclusion.

### ACTION TRACKS

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Over the course of the Dialogue, there was only a small point of divergence about the balance between the efforts to improve global governance and policies versus territoriali dynamics. Some participants stressed the centrality of tackling climate change at global level, others preferred to focus on the problems within food systems at local level.

ACTION TRACKS

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