

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 31 August 2021 13:45 GMT +03:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	ACCELERATING FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA THROUGH AGRI-FOOD MSMEs
CONVENED BY	PAN AFRICAN AGRIBUSINESS AND AGROINDUSTRY CONSORTIUM/AGRA/AUDA-NEPAD
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/42087/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	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

189

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18 19 19-30 86 31-50 71 51-65 10 66-80 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

113 Male 76 Female Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

93	Agriculture/crops	8	Education		Health care
2	Fish and aquaculture	10	Communication	1	Nutrition
	Livestock	17	Food processing		National or local government
1	Agro-forestry	1	Food retail, markets		Utilities
6	Environment and ecology	4	Food industry		Industrial
11	Trade and commerce	4	Financial Services	21	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

57	Small/medium enterprise/artisan	4	Workers and trade union
	Large national business	1	Member of Parliament
1	Multi-national corporation	1	Local authority
8	Small-scale farmer	1	Government and national institution
1	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
2	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
10	Local Non-Governmental Organization	2	International financial institution
23	International Non-Governmental Organization	10	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People		Consumer group
3	Science and academia	27	Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The dialogue adopted the UNFSS Principles of Engagement throughout the planning and actual implementation of the dialogue. Purposeful and respectful interactions were conducted between various African Agri-Food Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The 189 (113 males 76 females) participants were drawn from 32 countries including United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Italy, France Belgium, Ireland, Malawi, Kenya, Eswatini, Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Sierra Leon, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Somali, Guinea, India, Gambia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Liberia, Morocco, South Sudan and DRC Congo. This varied audience ensured the dialogue embraced multi-stakeholder inclusivity. The dialogue processes was supported by evidence generated from diagnostic and landscape analysis of African Agri MSMEs sector, survey targeting both MSMEs and supporter of MSEMES. These enriched the dialogue and complemented others works on Food Systems transformation in Africa recognizing that food systems are complex, and are closely connected to, and significantly impact, human and animal health, land, water, climate, biodiversity, the economy and other systems. The creativity in the dialogue process included carefully selected discussants, multi-level discourse at both plenary and at chatroom levels in various cohort sessions that combined some action tracks. Both AU common position and RECs perspectives were presented to help with contextualizing the discussions. This multi-faceted approach promoted trust and motivated participants.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogue participants were of varied age groups, gender and were drawn from different stakeholder groups –micro, small, medium enterprises, and their supporters. The key speakers for the plenary session also represented diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to: UN bodies (FAO), AGRA, Financial institutions, International and Regional NGOs (including youth enterprises), African Union and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). This allowed for inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement processes and approaches to bring in diverse perspectives on accelerating food systems transformation in Africa through Agri-Food MSMSEs. The facilitated dialogue that involved both plenary presentations and cohort group discussions (in breakout sessions), provided opportunity for participants to freely contribute to the discussions and share their ideas/opinions/questions through the chats, and also voice their ideas in the breakout sessions. The bringing together of multi-stakeholders to interact and learn was key to fostering new knowledge and developing game changing solutions, while complementing and linking with the work of others such as Africa Union thinktanks work on Africa's common position on UNFSS, FAO studies on Agribusiness in Africa and impacts of Covid-19 UNFSS Agri-SME Agenda on UNFSS (global Survey) and RAI Africa's Agri- MSMEs Integrated Study (analytics and online survey). Dialogue participants mainly regulators and policy makers, investors, financial institutions, business development service providers, business incubators, as well technical experts were allowed to join the three cohorts based on their preferences, whereas discussants who were experts in different areas took the lead on deliberating on MSMEs issues and proposed game changing solutions and accelerator interventions in the five action areas, followed by facilitated discussions on what the future food systems would be like if these changes are implemented. The interplay among AU organs, RECs, Member states, NSAs and Private sector (Small and big players (like a regional Equity Bank of Kenya

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

By observing the principles of engagement, Dialogues purposively brings together a diversity of stakeholders, including voices that are rarely heard, e.g. micro enterprises who apparently control over 70% of food systems and provide an important opportunity for participants to interact, learn and innovate, and take action towards a better future for food systems.

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

This dialogue theme was “Accelerating Food Systems Transformation in Africa through Agri-Food MSMSEs”. The focus was synergies to accelerate Food system transformation based on the five action tracks and cross cutting issues of this MSMEs sector aimed at contributing to the articulation of an Africa’s Common Position on UNFSS and cross- fertilizing Member States positions on critical food systems by identifying and voicing concrete gaps and ideas on how MSMEs can work together to fast-track growth of their businesses in ways that accelerate Food Systems Transformation in Africa. Specifically, the dialogue mobilized MSMEs from different sectors and across the continent to generate current perspectives, aspirations and ambitions, and map the general trends, institutional, structural and policy bottlenecks impeding the functionality and viability of MSMEs in Africa; and in addition recommended key promising and emerging solutions that will fast-track required changes in the Food Systems in Africa.

Among the identified bottlenecks were: Financing of MSMEs and access to credit - while the demand for agri-financing is very wide, identification of bankable MSMEs is difficult; infrastructure and governance issues of MSMEs; Entrepreneurial and business skills gap; inadequate access to research and innovation facilities and technologies (i.e. Production, Processing, Packaging, Storage & Distribution); uncondusive business environment for MSMEs to compete and thrive (existing legal, regulatory, policies and taxation frameworks that are counterproductive to growth of agri-MSMEs); vulnerabilities due to impacts of climate change and Covid-19; vested interests within the MSMEs curtailing innovation; disadvantaged women and youth in growing their businesses due to lack of collateral; unsupportive food standards & their harmonization; inability to leverage on ICT and digital transformation to access markets and very high rates of youth unemployment and financing mechanisms which are not youth-friendly.

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

- a. MSMEs are important at every stage of the food value chain and for every commodity type. Therefore, MSMEs should be included in any public or private sector efforts to increase the availability, accessibility, and affordability of nutritious foods.
- b. In transforming the food systems in Africa, MSMEs must not only look beyond innovation/ game changing solutions but think, speak and act as one voice. Their ability to accelerate food systems transformation is directly dependent on how they become successful in working together as collaborators in competition. A mindset-shift by MSMEs in the 'way of thinking and doing' business is sine qua non
- c. The MSME financing landscape has and continues to shift especially with climate change financing with opportunities for African producers and entrepreneurs such as the Green Climate Fund. Aggregation of smaller enterprise groups through associations/cooperatives presents as a more 'bankable' units for accessing such capital.
- d. MSMEs are facing myriad challenges such as weak food control systems, limited consumer's purchasing power, lack of harmonized food regulations in the region and poor private-public partnerships. By providing simple, relevant and harmonized food standards, codes of practice and guidelines; Codex can play a crucial role in helping MSMEs to access markets and trade be it national, regional or international.
- e. The integration of Infrastructure development, urban planning and rural development provide opportunities to ensure consumers have access to affordable nutritious foods, support informal food vendors' livelihoods, and reduce food loss.
- f. There is urgent need to localize food chains hence not entirely dependent outside components as recently exposed by covid-19 pandemic. This will build resilience to shocks and stresses, promote local consumptions and local industries while maintaining quality and food safety standards. Member states can learn from each other and harmonize policies and practice across the system, while maintaining integrity of local food systems.
- g. United Nations Agencies (FAO and the WTO) should provide governments with the means to establish a framework to facilitate trade on the basis of internationally agreed food standards such as through the joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission where governments establish science-based food standards.
- h. Engagement is required to resolve trade frictions that inevitably arise, and to keep trade rules up to date with current challenges. To participate and engage internationally countries need to invest adequately in food safety and food control; as well as develop domestic capacity to effectively coordinate between all stakeholders.
- i. There is need to feel the weight of the African Union Member States policy on enabling MSME Banking facilities. Countries need to be more deliberate at the national level; and each member state should focus on how to improve the productivity of the farmers and the MSMEs, by ensuring that the capacities of the development banks/ financial institutions are functioning as expected.
- j. Many enterprises have slowed down due to lack of appropriate technologies and infrastructure (i.e. Production, processing, storage, and distribution). Therefore, the African Member State governments should be deliberate to ensure that there are appropriate and specific technologies and facilities for each category of enterprise.
- k. Local Governments do not have sound data on local food systems even if local markets contain traditional produce, much of it is of high nutrient value and resilient to climate change stress.
- l. The dialogues will not end with the UNFSS; Africa will continue to capture real progress in implementation of the game changing solutions using indicators appropriate for measuring food systems sustainability, among them key measures for the natural environment and resilience. Mainstreaming new indicators in the CAADP Malabo biennial review template will be necessary to track implementation of the game changing solutions and domesticate them into practice towards the transformation agenda
- m. Post UNFSS 2021, AGRA commits to progress working on policy actions and policy frameworks, aiming for systems change and positive and lasting transformation of the food systems.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Proposed interventions Outcomes

- Expanded markets Expanded trade volumes within the regions
- Entrenched regulation Uniform quality standards maintained across the region and Africa
- ICT & E-commerce engrained Inter country and SME trade opened up within the region
- Policy interventions • Fair trade policies and practices entrenched
 - Currency exchange barriers removed
 - Production and quality standards agreed
- Within region trade • Uniform regional trading rules put in place, applied and enforced
 - Trade quotas agreed and entrenched between member states
 - Export food types and diversity agreed and increased
 - Food production to fit the importer requirements quantities agreed and increased

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

a. Africa is yet to have social dynamics integrated into the continent's sustainable consumption discourse as the voice and agency of women and youth not being realized Involvement of youth to own, control and be accountable to the Food Systems process. However, the youth need to clearly state and demonstrate what they can do.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **MSMEs Dialogue Report.**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/MSMEs-Dialogue-Feedback-Report.pdf>