

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 9 March 2021 09:00 GMT +00:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Strengthening African Agricultural Research for Development Systems - One Africa Voice
CONVENED BY	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa and Partners
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/6450/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Ghana

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

531

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

54

19-30

344

31-50

133

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

341 Male

190 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops
Fish and aquaculture
Livestock
Agro-forestry
Environment and ecology
57 Trade and commerce

106 Education
Communication
Food processing
Food retail, markets
Food industry
Financial Services

Health care
Nutrition
49 National or local government
Utilities
Industrial
319 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan
Large national business
Multi-national corporation
Small-scale farmer
38 Medium-scale farmer
Large-scale farmer
Local Non-Governmental Organization
68 International Non-Governmental Organization
Indigenous People
319 Science and academia

Workers and trade union
Member of Parliament
Local authority
46 Government and national institution
Regional economic community
United Nations
International financial institution
57 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
Consumer group
3 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The organization of this dialogue was built on the recognized need of urgency for Africa to address its food system challenges to achieve the SDGs, particularly SDG2. In respecting the principle of multi-stakeholder inclusivity, participation in both webinars was not restricted, but opened to the key stakeholders in the food system fraternity. The announcement of the dialogue on the website of the FSSD gave opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to be informed about the dialogue. The main objective of the dialogue was to validate the draft One Africa Voice on AR&D Policy Brief that is expected to be fed into the UN FSS process through the Science Group of the Summit. A key feature of the dialogue was a parallel multi-channel breakout session which allowed participants to join four stakeholder groups including Youth and gender actors; Farmers, private sector and other non-state actors; Research, extension, and education actors; and Policy makers and investors. Each of these groups was facilitated to validate the policy brief, and this was done to enhance the principle of trust and multi-stakeholder inclusivity.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogue recognized that the issues of Africa food system are complex and diverse. The dialogue also recognized that to address these issues, different stakeholders need to be brought on board and remain active, and work to complement the efforts of each other. With this background, the dialogue was opened to any stakeholder who recognizes the urgent need to improve the food system in Africa. Furthermore, discussants at the dialogue were meticulously selected from a broad spectrum of actors in the food system that are involved, contribute, are affected, and also benefit from agricultural research and development on the continent.

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

Other Dialogue Convenors should take time to reflect on the principles of engagement during the planning stage of their dialogues. This will guide them in the planning and execution of the dialogues in terms of the selection of keynote speakers and panelists of their dialogues.

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 discussion on the Africa food system centered on the main challenges and concrete steps that need to be taken by Africa countries to improve the continent's food system.

As far as Action Track 1 is concerned, participants identified that productivity levels for both crops and livestock are at lowest levels compounded by high post-harvest losses (about 14%) and hence more than 237 million Africans suffer from chronic malnutrition and high incidence of foodborne illnesses leading to over 130,000 deaths and 91 million acute illnesses. The challenges related to Action Track 2 were identified as poor diets being the leading global health risk and accounting for 11 million premature deaths globally, and its irreversible effects of child undernutrition. Also, in Africa, 33% of adults are overweight, with a further 11% tending towards obesity. Furthermore, levels of diet-related non-communicable diseases are rising because of rapid urbanization, and rapidly changing food systems. Diets have become the leading contributor to global environmental degradation, affecting land, water, biodiversity, climate, and air quality. With respect to Action Track 3, participants noted that, agriculture uses 34% of all land on the planet, withdraws 70% of fresh water, and is responsible for 68% of total biodiversity loss (70% on land and 50% in freshwater). Also, growth in production is mainly achieved through the expansion of the cultivated area which resulted in the conversion of 12 million ha of forests to cropland. Beside these challenges, Africa identified as the most vulnerable to climate change despite its marginal (2-3%) contribution to the emission of greenhouse gasses. Socio-cultural drivers underpinning inequalities among and within African societies and structural barriers for several groups, particularly women and youth, including land rights, access to financial services, among others were identified as the main issues confronting Action Track 4. The main challenges that were identified to militate against Action Track 5 in Africa include the recurrent crises and stresses that leave Africans to struggle to recover and inability to improve well-being. Similarly, the likelihood for Africa food systems to face complex challenges to deliver sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for all in the next decade and the Covid-19 pandemic is delivering new severe shocks to food systems, impacting demand and supply potentially leaving an additional 132 million people undernourished worldwide. Minimal changes in technology uptake, productivity, climate protection, post-harvest storage, processing, and marketing innovation are found to be the main challenge to Action Track 6 in Africa.

Based on these challenges, the following recommendations were made by participants in the collective effort to enhance the Africa food system towards the achievement of the SDGs, most importantly, SDG 2.

1. Increase public investment.
2. Build appropriate capacity (infrastructure, equipment, and expertise) at local level
3. Build and strengthen solidarity and collective actions through partnerships
4. Enhance the capacity of farmers and consumers to contribute to research and innovation, and to policy formulation
5. Harness the potential of the youth, women, and persons with disability to participate in the food system equitably and gainfully.
6. Create a regional pool for financial resources to be accessed by institutions and governments
7. Co-creation of technologies and innovations with farmers.

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 including

Getting the narratives right on the priorities and incentives

The major issues are related to policy, governance, and investment. According to FAO's Agriculture Orientation Index for Government Expenditure, between 2001 and 2018, SSA has fared the worst when it comes to allocation of public investment to agriculture – it revolves around 3.3% without showing notable improvement over the period. This is notwithstanding the CAADP's commitment to allocate at least 10% of the national budgets to agriculture. The underinvestment in STI shows that policymakers are not convinced about the returns (economic, strategic, and political) accruing from investment in food and agriculture versus other sectors. The fact that Africans can afford to pay USD 50 billion in importing food shows that the resources exist. What is lacking is the political will to invest in the systems that support national food systems to make them more self-sufficient in food. This is also a reflection of weaknesses in the governance of food and agriculture.

Exploring what is emerging and how it can be considered as an opportunity

Action track 3 calls for improvement in the sustainability of agri-food systems, in terms of protecting, managing, and restoring ecosystems to "produce more from less". Clearly, it does not bode well for Africa to continue the practice of deforestation to expand agricultural land. A full contribution of the linkages of climate change in agriculture to food systems, markets and energy should also be explored. Naturally, nature-positive solutions are context-specific and based on bottom-up and territorial processes, and can be strengthened by science, technology, and innovation as well as by enabling policy environments and improved governance systems. Africa can have a comparative advantage and make a significant contribution in this regard. Practically, supporting farmers to differentiate products and develop means of accessing markets will not only boost agroecological production patterns but also create demand for sustainable production systems.

Bridging the missing middle point between the global-scale scientific options and the local and national level capacities to innovate and share

Agricultural commodities produced under different contexts and regimes meet at the local marketplaces – often resulting in displacements of less-competitive products and systems. In the face of large and rising food imports, African local products are often on the displacement side of the equation. This is attributed to the fragmentation and inefficiencies in the "missing middle" that increase the production and marketing costs of African food products. Bridging the missing middle entails building capacities for innovation from the bottom up. Women constitute a large part of food production, thus supporting the self-organized groups with structural assets can increase women's participation in decision-making.

Embracing a systems approach and catalyzing non-State Actors (private sector, farmers, NGOs)

Improving a food system necessarily calls for a systems approach which in turn entails devising an institutional mechanism for the relevant actors to work systemically. Concerning AR4D, Innovation platforms that bring together stakeholders with a common interest to leverage skills, research technologies, competencies, markets, financing, social capital, and other resources are critical for economies of scale in the deployment of technologies and innovations. Adopting foresight methodologies will also contribute to valorization of strategic products such as cocoa, cashew nuts among others while supporting financiers in developing credit-friendly products for the producers. Market-driven approaches should be promoted and strengthened, given that they can serve as reinforcement of agroecological production patterns.

Creating an enabling policy environment for Raising the Productivity of Africa's Food Systems

Governments and their higher-level structures at the regional and continental level (i.e. RECs and the AUC) should take responsibility for directing this transformation and provide opportunities for closer engagement with all actors in the food system. The policy environment is the most critical factor that will underpin the continent's transform. The policy environment should assure that activities and services across the entire spectrum of the food system function to accelerate progress to the achievement of SDG 2 (zero hunger).

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Five (5) main topics were discussed during the dialogue regarding actions that need to be taken urgently to turn around and enhance the food system of Africa. The topics which ranged from investment to youth and gender include Increasing Investment in AR4D in Africa; Building appropriate capacities in terms of infrastructure, equipment, and human (experts); Building and strengthening solidarity and collective actions through partnerships; Enhancing capacities of farmers and consumers to contribute to AR4D; and Harnessing the potential of the youth equitably and gainfully participate in AR4D. The discussions on the first topic yielded recommendations including strengthened advocacy through the preparation and presentation to policy makers evidence on returns to investment in research and innovation. Also, getting beneficiaries and users of AR4D products to contribute towards research and innovation was recommended, and forging a stronger enforcement of agreed upon targets as well as providing incentives for private sector to invest in AR4D were further recommended during the discussion. Participants recommended that in order to build capacities appropriate for AR4D, there is the need to strengthen the capacities of farmers and SMEs to profitably adopt technologies, strengthen the capacities of African institutions to generate new knowledge and technologies and adapt those generated from elsewhere, and the strengthen the institutional and physical infrastructure for scaling up innovations in the food system. Devoting greater attention to regional approaches to AR4D through regional programmes and strengthening regional institutions for research, extension, education, farmers, youth, Agribusiness, Policy were found o be some of the approaches that need to be used to build and strengthen solidarity and collective actions through partnership. The discussion on the need to harness the potential of the youth to participate in AR4D recommended the shared responsibility and the need to invest in capacity development and business incubation for the youth in agriculture and food. Also, the urgent need to formulate and implement affirmative actions for youth in relation to access to knowledge, land, financial services, green jobs, and markets was highly recommended to be looked at in Africa's quest to harness the potential of its youth to participate in AR4D.

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

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Participants discussed the various means and approaches to enhance the food system in Africa during a breakout session. The breakout session was made up of groups including Youth and gender actors; Farmers, private sector, and other non-state actors; Research, extension, and education actors; and Policy makers and investors. The views were collated in a form of a poll and results collated as representation of the views expressed by participants in those groups. Though views expressed in the various groups were generally convergence, there were few divergence views that are worth mentioning. Policy makers and investors; and the Youth and gender actors had divergence views on how to Increase public investment in AR4D. while the policy makers highly recommended increased incentives for the private sector to invest in AR4D, the Youth and Gender group recommended stronger enforcement of agreed-upon targets as the means to increase investment in AR4D. Also, the youth/gender group and the farmers group had divergence view on how to harness the potentials of the youth to participate in AR4D equitably and gainfully. While the youth/gender group recommended increased investment in capacity development and business incubation for the youth in agriculture and food, the farmer group recommended the formulation and implementation of affirmative actions for youth in relation to access to knowledge, land, financial services, green jobs, and markets as the approach to achieve the objective.

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

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Concept Note**

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Link to Dialogue**
<https://faraafrica.community/fara-net>