**Partner Event - Traditional Vegetables: Power on Africa’s Plate**

**Partner Event Number, Date and Time:**

7 September 2020  
09:30

**Partner Event Title and Organizers:**

Traditional Vegetables: Power on Africa’s Plate

**Key speakers/presenters:**

**Sognigbe N’Danikou**  
Scientist - Traditional Vegetables Conservation and Utilization  
World Vegetable Center

**Srinivasan Ramasamy**  
Lead Entomologist, Flagship Leader -- Safe and Sustainable Value Chains  
World Vegetable Center

**Ester Simfukwe**  
Coordinator - Legume Agronomist  
World Vegetable Center

**Gabriel Rugalema**  
Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa  
World Vegetable Center

**Maureen Mecozzi**  
Director, Communications  
World Vegetable Center

**Main themes/issues discussed**

**Sognigbe N’Danikou** introduced several traditional African vegetables (TAV)—amaranth, spider plant, okra, jute mallow, Ethiopian kale, African eggplant, roselle, vegetable cowpea—and discussed TAV collection, classification, conservation and breeding. Many traditional vegetables have been displaced in favor of high-energy staple crops; few have been registered in national crop variety catalogs, which prevents broad distribution and use. The World Vegetable Center has Africa’s largest vegetable collection, including 2,400 TAV accessions. WorldVeg distributes TAV seed through seed kits and online orders. WorldVeg African eggplant and amaranth lines have been successfully commercialized.

**Ester Simfukwe** stressed the importance of crop diversity in the field, which leads to food diversity on the plate. Nutrient-rich TAVs combat malnutrition and offer opportunities for
women and youth to prosper along the value chain, from primary production to processing and marketing.

Srinivasan Ramasamy explored ways to increase production and productivity of TAVs. WorldVeg screens TAV lines with resistance to pests and diseases, develops improved cultural practices to enhance harvests, and trials safe biocontrols for plant protection.

Gabriel Rugalema discussed “push-and-pull” factors to expand consumer demand for TAVs while improving supplies and markets. TAVs are authentically African but greater consumption is hampered by underdeveloped seed systems and supply chains.

Summary of key points

- Collect and conserve TAV germplasm now before it is lost.
- TAVs are an affordable source of essential dietary nutrients.
- Strengthen TAV seed systems to support wider distribution and use.
- Optimize safe TAV cultural practices to supply markets.
- Develop new TAV-based value chains to create jobs, generate income.
- Ensure production and distribution infrastructure can support TAV value chains.
- Promote TAVs to generate interest, increase consumption and demand.

Call to Action Key Points

- More investment in TAV research.
- Africa-wide collecting missions will help rescue African vegetable landraces and discover new breeding material.
- Develop key infrastructure to support production and use of TAVs: laboratories, rural roads, farmer support systems, distribution centers, cold chains.
- Create awareness of the economic and nutritional value of TAVs through public outreach activities.
- Institute policies to support TAV research, breeding, production, processing, distribution, and consumption.
- Support TAV primary production, processing and marketing to create employment opportunities.
- Develop, pilot and scale good agricultural practices for TAVs.
- Build new TAV-based vegetable value chains.