



AGRF 2021 SUMMIT
Pathways to recovery and resilient food systems



Republic of Kenya
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock,
Fisheries and Co-operatives

VOICES

FROM THE AGRF 2021 SUMMIT



TOKYO
**NUTRITION
FOR GROWTH**
SUMMIT 2021

Food, Health, & Prosperity for All

**ACTING FOR HEALTHY
PEOPLE AND PLANET**



INTRODUCTION

The AGRF 2021 Summit was, as it is each year, a critical gathering of global and African voices on the vital topic of sustainable and resilient food systems.



On day 3 of the 2021 Summit, the theme was **Healthy People & Planet**. With an estimated 3 billion people worldwide currently struggling to access a healthy diet, the discussions on this day were there to identify innovations and strategies to help Africa improve access, availability and affordability of food.

The complexity of the challenge became clearer with every session but ideal solutions were derived by the end of the day. Initiatives were shared, diverse voices heard, and commitments made across the six sessions of the day.

Most prominently, the day's conversations agreed that Africa has the capacity to produce enough and highly nutritious food for its people, and that as next steps, there is a need for investments in technologies and skills for agricultural production and processing.

The active engagement of governments and private sector players in the transformation of Africa's agricultural food systems was described as critical for achieving the continent's nutritional goals.

But most importantly, the different sessions circled around behaviour change, particularly in food preferences, with an insistence in the promotion of diversity in consumption as a way of striking the balance needed for healthy growth.

Meanwhile the health of the planet remains vital for future food and nutrition security and several conversations addressed the need for investments in the promotion of environmental protection through such techniques as agroecology, sustainable intensification and the use of climate-smart inputs.



HEALTHY FOOD FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

7 KEY SESSIONS





SESSION 1

Presidential Summit – Improving the resilience of Africa’s food systems

The presidential summit presents the highest level of engagement around food and nutrition security at every year’s AGRF. This year’s session had the participation of five country presidents, one vice president and several heads of development institutions. The session addressed the need for investments that promote resilience in Africa’s food systems, a gap that was exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, as the nutrition needs of people were hindered by inadequate supplies of critical food items.

To address the nutritional needs of school going children, countries were urged to actively engage with the UN Food Systems School meals Coalition, which has seen 388 million school going children receive meals since the pandemic started.

Kenya’s President Uhuru Kenyatta, rallied for engagement with the African Union and the World Food Program as well as other stakeholders to ramp up financial support for the school feeding plans **“to achieve better outcomes for school children globally”**.

President Kenyatta also fronted his government’s food and nutrition security investments for emulation, noting that the initiative has attained key nutritional goals by encouraging food and crop diversification leading to increased production and consumption of indigenous vegetables and starches.

Other activities include policies requiring the fortification of staple food items with key minerals and other micronutrients as well as promoting nutrition sensitive agriculture through expanded extension services.

“We also started the distribution of materials to start 1 million kitchen gardens, especially in urban areas... to ensure that the urban working people are food secure in their respective areas,” he said.

Other strategies proposed for making Africa food and nutrition secure included the promotion of a local production of most food items. Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame said Africa will achieve more success by **“importing less food because we are capable of growing more of what we consume”**, sentiments that were shared by Malawi’s head Lazarus Chakwera.

“We must adopt local home-grown solutions that incorporate the vast experiences of our people... [including] the production of locally affordable food that enhance [nutritional] diversity,” said H.E Chakwera.





SESSION 1 continued

Other presidents Hage Geingob of Namibia and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda as well as Tanzania's Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango reiterated that most of the nourishing food times that are not grown in some African countries could easily be sourced from within the continent, by advancing the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In summary, the session outlined seven key agenda that must be pursued to achieve the inclusive agricultural and food system transformation that will keep the continent well-nourished.

- **Commit to meeting the 2030 SDGs** – SDG 2 especially is a key indicator of success in food and nutrition security
- **Invest in school feeding plans** – Africa has hundreds of millions of children enrolled in schools and whose nutritional needs could be well supplemented through school-feeding programs
- **Invest in resilience building plans** – The Covid-19 pandemic showed that Africa cannot continue depending on imports to sustain its nutritional needs
- **Address climate change** – Deforestation and other activities that are leading to climate change in turn lead either a reduction in food or a decline in the diversity of available food, worsening the continent's nutritional outcomes.
- **Promotion of modern agricultural technologies** – To increase Africa's food production in line with the continent's nutritional needs, modern technologies and strategies must be adopted including: irrigation, sustainable intensification and agroecology, amongst others.
- **Market development** – African governments must commit to actualizing the AfCFTA, which will allow the free circulation of food trade within the continent, driving the availability of diverse food options.
- **Agricultural financing** – The inclusive agricultural transformation that is needed to sustain Africa's nutritional needs has to be well-financed, to support such activities as mechanization, the development of post-harvest handling infrastructure and extension service provision. This will be achieved with the participation of both public and private sector actors.





SESSION 2

Delivering Healthy Diets for People and Planet



Changing dietary habits are harming both people and planet.

While the world looks at ways to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Zero Hunger by 2030, it needs to focus on a shift towards diets that prioritize nutrition, and based on production technologies that do not adversely affect the climate and environment.

At present, some of the food that is consumed on the continent is produced, processed and consumed in ways that damage human health and the environment. As a result, it is not uncommon to find populations that have enough food but still suffer malnourishment due to an imbalance in the nutrients consumed. In total, malnutrition costs Africa \$400million every year.

Meanwhile, food loss and food waste continue to take a heavy toll on the environment, by either unnecessary land expansion activities in production, or thorough a direct contribution to greenhouse gas emissions – food waste contributes 6% of the global emissions.

The discussions at this session covered critical points, with the panel admitting the need for strategies that pursue the SDGs in the context of climate change, food and nutrition security, increasing resource constraints, an aging farming population, and much more. For success, the following were recommended as important considerations:

- A shift away from broadacre, monocultural cropping, to more diverse and nutritious production
- Significant changes to the structure of landholdings, technologies and their use, capabilities of men and women, and the distribution and dynamics of the population and labour force
- Growing a wider range of species to minimise the risks posed by pests, disease, climate variation and market fluctuations
- A focus on the need for coherent and cross-sector policies that work towards achieving goals across health, climate, finance, environment and social development – all as levers for food systems transformation.
- Dr. Gunhild A. Stordalen, Founder and Executive Chair of EAT Forum said:

“How we go about producing and consuming food in our world over the coming decades will basically determine the future of humanity on this planet.”

[Watch the session](#)



SESSION 3

Africa's Solutions towards safe and nutritious food for all

Last year, around 282 million people in Africa were affected by hunger, 46 more than in 2019, according to FAO data. The situation was aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic, unprecedented occurrences like the locust attacks in East Africa, and the perils of climate change all of which destabilized the continent's food systems, leading to a worsening nutrition situation for the continent. At this session, deliberations were made around the strategies for

creating resilient food systems that provide adequate nutrition for all. Three approaches stood out:

- The use of technologies to improve the nutrition value of food – fortification, which is the addition of key nutrients during food processing is important for averting malnutrition by essentially making balanced diets of popular food options in different areas. In the same way, biofortification technologies allow the injection of vital nutrients into food crops during growth.
- Advocacy for changes in food choice – People living in different parts of Africa have different dietary ascriptions that are common to their region or communities. Sometimes, the popular food choices many not have sufficient nutrients of each kind, creating a need for public education on the best dietary choices. This session highlighted the fact that the readily-available traditional African foods are usually abundant with nutrients, but gaps arise in the combination of menu items or the preparation methods. Educating consumers on the best techniques for food preparation was indicated as important for gaining the full benefits of food.
- Ms. Lauren Landis, Representative and Country Director, World Food Programme, Kenya Country Office, noted that this would be a gradual process, saying:

“You cannot change people's diets overnight. Start small and encourage people to make small changes gradually.”

- Lowering the cost of a healthy diet by focusing on efficiency along the value chain, from supporting farmers to produce quality crops that reduce the cost of processing, to shortening food supply chains, and lowering the preparation time for staples such as bean flour.

The session identified innovations and strategies that are helping Africa to improve the availability, accessibility, affordability, and desirability of nutrient-rich, sustainably produced foods. These included:

Panellists also discussed incentives for commercial food companies and retailers to market sustainable healthy foods. Ideas discussed included: Working with advocacy campaigns; introducing government incentives (like reducing tax on healthy foods); consumer education campaigns and nutrition-led food labelling, to promote informed dietary choices requires

nutrition-guiding food labels for consumers; and finally, the promotion of nutrition education and school feeding programs.

[Watch the session](#)





SESSION 4

Getting to Zero: Leveraging Innovation in Africa's Input Systems to Build Resilience and Enhance Sustainable Productivity

The lockdowns, limitation of movement and border closure directives to control the Covid-19 pandemic exposed gaps in Africa's input systems, as farmers struggled to access seed, fertilizer, agrochemicals and extension support. In this period of recovery, it is prudent that solutions are sought to plug the dependence on imported inputs, by, among other strategies, boosting local production capacities to enhance farmer's choices. The use of trained agrodealers and village-based advisors also ensures that farmers have proximity to production advice and support.

The session additionally highlighted the importance of food systems in moving towards net zero emissions, showcased scalable innovations that can accelerate Africa's path to sustainable productivity, and enabled farmers and farmer organisations to articulate their pain points in accessing markets brought about by local and regional considerations on the use of inputs.

Speakers in the session noted the critical need for Africa to move to meet its commitment of reaching 50kg of nutrients per hectare, as set by the African heads of state in 2006.

Dr. Martin Fregene, Director, Agriculture & Agro-Industry, African Development Bank (AfDB), said: **"Africa's input gap is extremely huge and needs concerted efforts to close."**

While the session pondered different ways for ensuring that farmers have access to meaningful production technologies, it also promoted a review of our food choices as a way of relieving the pressure on the environment from deforestation, which leads to biodiversity loss and climate change.

The promotion of insect consumption to meet protein needs and the use of insects for animal feed stood prominently with one speaker noting that already 3000 insect species are consumed globally (550 in Africa alone over a population of over 300 million people). The mainstreaming of insect-based diets was discussed as a cost-effective way of advancing Africa's food systems.

"A lot of insects have higher protein than other sources of protein. They also have Omega 3, antioxidants, and minerals hence we advocate for their use even in our Food Systems,"

said Dr. Segenet Kelemu, Director General & CEO of the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE).

[Watch the session](#)



SESSION 5

Regional dialogues



A series of regional sessions addressed the regional and national priorities for food and nutrition transformation, part of the key agenda planned for the UN Food Systems Summit.

Among the key challenges identified in different sessions included the high costs of crop production, trade barriers and inadequate infrastructure limiting the movement of food across the region, inadequate capacity to respond to shocks, insufficient production and processing technologies, low production incentives as a result of underdeveloped markets and limited financial capabilities of producers.

All these challenges were seen to lead to a situation where consumers either have inadequate food to eat or the amount they have does not sufficiently address their nutritional requirements.

The solutions identified included investments in input and output technologies, infrastructure, market development, financial and gender inclusion and agricultural extension.

See below the highlights of the different regional sessions:

East

Key challenges:

1. Crop production is still very expensive
2. Trade barriers hinder effective movement of goods across the region
3. Lack of adequate physical and digital infrastructure

“What to do is already known. What we need is to ensure we focus on tangible action on the ground.”

- Hon. Christophe Bazivamo, Deputy Secretary, General Productive & Social Sectors, East African Community

Proposed innovations & next steps:

- Investment in digital infrastructure
- Enhancement of post-harvest management, including aflatoxins and warehousing systems
- Ensure every village has electricity to boost agri-processing and value addition capacity, post-harvest handling and management
- Institutional arrangement – Tanzania Pesticides and Plant Health Authority to promote food safety and standards
- Expand irrigation
- Trade facilitation mechanism to operationalize AfCFTA e.g. simplified trade regimes especially for SMEs
- Enhance infrastructure in the region including transport infrastructure to connect the region as well as to link rural areas to markets
- Invest in agricultural technologies and innovations to boost production
- Invest and empower, youth, women, and marginalised populations
- Facilitate access to affordable and flexible financing, agricultural inputs, impart agribusiness skills and make land accessible

[Watch the East session](#)





SESSION 5 continued



West

Key challenges

1. Vulnerabilities of the population to shocks and changes. The covid 19 crisis and the security crisis that is upon the people of West Africa (political insecurities, conflict, terrorism, climate change).
2. Huge food harvest loss
3. Food Systems do not manage to feed the West African population
4. Transformation systems are not always in sync with the production along with energy cost
5. Recognising that the innovation ecosystems is complex and requires very sound governance. Partnerships are essential.

“Food System Transformation is about lives not about statistics. It is about people. We want to see an agriculture that is transformative and inclusive of all sections of the population. Anything that we do should happen at the level of the communities. Communities are the actors of change.”

– Dr. Abdou Tenkouano, Executive Director, CORAF

Proposed innovations & next steps:

- Focus on the enormous potential of the land
- Engage the poor to help them be financially sustainable
- Inspiration, partnerships, fellowships
- Capacity building across the food systems
- Food must be diversified, sufficient and of quality

South

The national dialogues revealed that the food systems challenges facing Mozambique and Malawi were similar, and common among the SADC countries. The key challenges include:

- poor farming practices
- low productivity due to poor quality seeds
- monoculture
- low investment in agriculture
- weak coordination within and between institutions
- inadequate processing for value addition
- poor road networks
- post-harvest losses
- poor investment in digitalised early warning systems.

Mozambique and Malawi have both put strategies in place, and it was agreed that with a fast-growing population, effective regional policies were needed, with better co-ordination needed between and within countries in SADC.

“All the problems of low crop productivity in Africa are a result of low investment in agriculture”

- Dr. Rodwell Mzonde, Director of Agriculture Planning Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Malawi

[Watch the West session](#)

[Watch the South session](#)



SESSION 5 continued



Central

Key challenge:

Insufficient budget allocation for agricultural sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

“More than 30% of the population suffer from famine. We must transform the food systems to respond to the immense food needs of the people”

- Mme. Julie Kasa-Kanga Tshilombo, Coordonnatrice Adjointe de la Coordination des Ressources Extérieures et du Suivi des Projets
Présidence de la République, Democratic Republic of Congo

Proposed innovations & next steps:

- Create cooperatives for women especially in the processing sector
- Develop a climate-smart agricultural forum to engage young tertiary students
- Produce forest-derived products, such as mushrooms, on farms to reduce impact on the natural environment
- Access water through boreholes
- Improve the road network
- Improve access to power for industrialisation.
- Set up youth and women’s working groups in the Food Systems Committee

“Agriculture is the oxygen of the world because every day we must eat. We want to see everyone involved, from farm to fork. Cooperation must be fully integrated in the process of transforming the food system”

- Mr. Divine Ntiokam, Managing Director,
Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN)

North

Key challenges

1. Variability of the climate is affecting many farming communities in North Africa
2. Water insecurity scarcity and stewardship was recorded as the top priority in Morocco and North Africa
3. COVID-19 undermined the already fragile food systems in Morocco and in North Africa
4. There is still a huge financing gap to support climate adaptation in North Africa

“Water scarcity and the threat of climate change are putting a heavy toll on the region’s food systems”

- Mr. Redouane Arrach - Director of Strategy and Statistics,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development,
Water and Forestry of Morocco

Proposed innovations & next steps:

1. Islamic Finance can play a huge role in reducing the financing gap for smallholder farmers in North Africa
2. Renewable energy especially solar can increase agri-food systems productivity and post-harvest management
3. Huge investments in climate adaptation in the North Africa region
4. Strategic and collaborative partnerships with the private sector can aid to cocreate solutions for North Africa’s food systems.[nutritional] diversity,”

[Watch the Central session](#)

[Watch the North session](#)



SESSION 6

Elders Council

In a session that is popular at every AGRF Summit, key African voices came together for the 2021 Elders Council, sharing their experiences and providing advice on food systems transformation in Africa. The discussions therein addressed some of the gaps in Africa's food systems with provocative dialogue on the urgency of solutions for food and nutrition insecurity.

Notably, the, discussed and agreed that African countries should focus on increasing production to prevent shortages, and to accelerate the implementation of the AfCTA as a way of agitating the markets to provoke an increase in the local production and distribution of nutritious food. Key to this conversation was a recommendation to follow in Malawi's footsteps by abolishing protectionism and be inspired by Vietnam and Indonesia, who attribute their success in agriculture to soil science.

The elders also attributed success in creating safe and nutritious food for all, to:

- Strong credit financing systems for farmers
- Seeking out and form partnerships with countries that are able to underwrite infrastructure development
- Legally allowing women to own land and prove their resilience as farmers, a task that needs commitment in the removal of the barriers that limit the contribution of women to agricultural development.
- Creating agricultural policies that are consistent and not influenced by regime change, with ministries working together and not in silos
- Avoiding conflict, with peace being a precondition for success in agriculture.
- More government investments in agriculture, which accounts for a quarter of Africa's GDP.



This was an important session that brought together:



H.E. Hailemariam Dessalegn, Former PM of Ethiopia, AGRA Board Chairperson and AGRF Partners Group Chair



H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chair, Africa Food Prize Committee



H.E. Dr Jakaya M. Kikwete, Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania



H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of Liberia



H.E. Lionel Zinsou, Former Prime Minister of Benin, Founder and Managing Partner, SouthBridge.

[Watch the session](#)





SESSION 7

Chef Chats



As key members of food systems, chefs play an important role as advocates of nutritious food. It is for this reason that the SDG2 Advocacy Hub is running the Chefs' Manifesto as a campaign, which engages over 1,000 chefs from 90 countries in the promotion of a better food system for all.

With the objectives of the Chef's Manifesto aligning with the AGRF's agenda for Africa, three sessions of the 2021 AGRF summit were set out to connect the consumption side of food with the production side. The workshops were designed to foster the consumption of nutritious food that is accessible and affordable, promote the uptake of African cuisines, advocate for diverse diets and to celebrate the use of African ingredients and products.

The key outcomes of the Chef Chats were:

Food loss and waste can be managed to feed the world – Farmers around the world produce enough food to feed the planet one and half times, yet we still millions of people don't get the nutrients they need. Investing in the tools and techniques for managing food loss and waste could lead to food being availed to more people.

Current food production systems are not sustainable – The rapid exhaustion of natural resources to produce more food for the growing population is exerting extreme pressure on the environment. We need to find ways of producing the food we need without aggravating the environment.

Nutrition education is needed to transform people's eating habits— People living below the poverty line in Africa have access to many kinds of cheap food, but which are not sufficient in nutritional diversity as a result of either poor dietary combinations or preparation techniques. It is important to invest in plans that will teach people on the best food choices for nutritional success.

Promotion of local ingredients key to nutrition security - Africa's food systems must be redefined to promote local foods. Investments and partnerships must be made to encourage the production and consumption of indigenous food items that are high in nutritional value. Local culinary schools can drive the transition to local foods through curriculum that encourage the use of local ingredients to develop local cuisines.

The three sessions drove to the conclusion that using the above-listed strategies for promoting local foods, will in turn lead to an increase in demand for sustainable commercial value to farmers – a cycle that is needed for inclusive food systems transformation.



CONCLUSION

The discussions around how to produce nutritious food for all formed a key part of the AGRF 2021 Summit, and everyone agreed that this is a critical priority on which we are moving far too slowly.



During the wrap-up Insights session, speakers agreed that there were lots of words on paper, but not enough action, and that talking about Africa, rather than

its 54 individual countries, was forcing leaders to try and find a single solution for all, when what are needed are millions of smaller solutions that are diversified at every stage of the food system.

Examples of the importance of focusing on specific areas of the value chain included the idea that if there was, say, a bumper crop of tomatoes one year, the right infrastructure would prevent huge numbers of tomatoes being wasted and instead being turned into ketchup, or tinned, with farmers receiving a portion of the added value.

Leaders and African voices agreed that agriculture has the potential to be the biggest positive contributor to tackling global warming, but this won't be realised if smallholder farmers are not given a seat at the table and listened to by policymakers.

In conclusion, voice from the AGRF 2021 Summit agreed that sustainability needs to be at the core of policymaking and business thinking. If what we're planning doesn't positively contribute to food systems that lead to healthy people and planet, we shouldn't even be thinking about doing it.



ABOUT VOICES FROM THE AGRF

Voices from the AGRF is a series of abstracts produced to capture the progress, key actions and recommendations from Africa and beyond towards a food secure Africa.



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