



AFRICA COMMON POSITION ON FOOD SYSTEMS

Regional Submission to the UN Food Systems Summit



RATIONALE AND SCOPE

1. Within the context of the United Nations Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, the World will come together at an extra-Ordinary Global Summit in September 2021 under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, preceded by the pre-Summit in July 2021. The UN Food Systems Summit aims to bring new and more action in fostering game-changing solutions to transform food systems across the globe. A resilient and inclusive food systems impact directly all the 17 SDGs of Agenda 2030 and in the Africa's case, transformed, resilient and healthy food systems is central to achieving the 20 goals of Agenda 2063.
2. The United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), and particularly the National and Independent Dialogues leading up to the Summit, offer opportunities for Africa and the World to examine and identify context specific solutions to the challenges hindering achievement of set food systems related goals and targets in various development frameworks, including the SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the CAADP-Malabo Decision.
3. The Africa common position on Food Systems provides a synthesis of member states' expressed views, perspectives and priorities as well as ambitions on key issues shaping Africa's and the global food systems. In 2003, Africa adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a continental policy framework for agricultural transformation to increase food security and nutrition and reduce poverty. In 2014 Africa renewed this commitment to agriculture transformation under the African Union (AU) CAADP Malabo declaration on agricultural growth and transformation with an expanded set of goals and targets to be achieved by 2025. The CAADP-Malabo goals and targets were also aligned to 10 Year Implementation plan of Africa's Agenda 2063 as well as to the UN SDGs. The vision for the 10 years of the CAADP Malabo declaration is to position agriculture at the centre of driving inclusive growth and economic development to ensure wealth creation, food and nutrition security, economic opportunities for poverty alleviation and prosperity, as well as ensuring resilience and sustainability. Through the CAADP agenda, African leaders envisioned a food systems approach to attain agricultural-led economic transformation. AU Member States assess progress in the implementation of their CAADP-Malabo commitments every two years through the CAADP biennial review exercise and report. The latest biennial review report of 2019 indicated that Africa was not on track to achieve the CAADP goals and targets by 2025. As such, Africa is searching for solutions that will help to accelerate the pace of implementation of the CAADP-Malabo declaration. Therefore, the UNFSS has come at an opportune moment when the continent is also looking for game-changing solutions to transform its food systems to attain its goals in the CAADP Malabo declaration.
4. The Africa common position on food systems has emerged out of wide consultative and iterative processes with AU Member States' perspectives, aspirations, priorities and experiences as the primary basis of the position – appreciating and as much as possible embracing the diversity and differences in priorities and identified pathways. Even more important is that the national and sub-national food systems engagements have provided experiences, views and ambitions of the frontline and grass root players and stakeholders who normally do not feature in dialogues and development decisions of this nature. Consultations and input from specialized agencies and constituencies including universities, thinktanks, research institutions, and policy networks all ensured that the perspectives and views were, as much as possible, anchored on science and evidence as well as lessons from decades of concerted work on food security, nutrition, and food systems transformation.

5. The ultimate objective of the Africa common position is to create awareness, build consensus on shared vision and critically galvanise necessary individual and collective set of actions including policy alignment and increased investments towards building and sustaining resilient, viable and inclusive food systems. Specifically, the Africa Common Position aims at: (i) providing an overview of Africa's food systems; (ii) presenting challenges and opportunities in Africa's food systems, recognising food systems as a cross-cutting development issue; (iii) examining the drivers and levers of Africa's food systems and thereby highlighting Africa's game changing solutions along identified priorities areas. Africa expects the momentum created by the UNFSS to result in mobilizing and galvanizing implementation of its priorities in Agenda 2063, CAADP-Malabo declaration, the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and other AU continental development frameworks.
6. The common position has also benefited from the wealth of information generated from robust conversations and inputs from Africa Regional Economic Communities; civil society organizations, farmers' organizations, including groups of women and youth; the private sector; academia; African multilateral institutions; and UN agencies.
7. The common position has gone through review and endorsement by the AU Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (ARDWE). The preparation of the Africa common position is led by the AUC Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE), and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), with technical support from several technical and multilateral agencies.

OVERVIEW OF AFRICA'S FOOD SYSTEMS

Intensified production-driven global processed food markets

8. Africa's food systems are rapidly evolving towards intensified production-driven systems. National, continental and global megatrends are shaping these patterns, including i) the rise of the African middle class; ii) rapid urbanization and consequent shifts in food demand and downstream modernization of the food systems; iii) a rapid shift in the labour force from farming to non-farm jobs; and iv) rising competition over African farmland. Other mega trends include climate change, technology advances especially digitalisation and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Africa's AfCFTA will certainly also be a factor in influencing how the food systems evolve over the coming decade and beyond.
9. In 2019, Africa expended US\$43 billion on food imports, and it is projected raise to US\$90 billion annually by 2030, pointing to two contrasting realities, namely existing opportunities for African agriculture and farmers, and on the other hand, growing unsustainable food supply dependence on foreign sources. Overall, the continent's per capita food production declined partly because the region's population has been increasing and food production has not been matching up, leading to a widening gap between production and the attendant consumption.
10. Africa's food retail is dramatically shifting to the 'supermarket' mode which include the largely informal Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) food stores and food vending. It is estimated that 80 percent of food consumed in Africa passes through the hands of an SME. They are a contextual representation of the changing African reality. The expansion of global food industry, markets and trade with the movement of corporate retailers from developed economies to less developed ones, and a shift from urban centres to small and rural towns is also a feature in recent trend in Africa's food industry and food markets. This is bound to intensify as the continent's urbanization path intensifies and consumption patterns and preferences change, including a rise in the youth-driven consumption of processed foods. African smallholder producers, processing entities and traders, as mentioned, who are SMEs and informal must compete with international agribusinesses, despite lacking in key enablers such as access to technologies, inadequate financing services including insurance, the fragmentation in the food markets and the generally low levers of income, on one side, and high levels of risks and uncertainty, on the other.

11. One key feature of African food systems is the role of women. Women play critical roles across African food systems from production, processing, selling, and as consumers. Women comprise more than 50 percent of the agricultural workforce in the region and are also the predominant labour providers in agribusinesses and agro-industries. Yet, in many parts of Africa, women continue to face significant social and economic discrimination. They often lack access to productive resources, agricultural inputs, information, finance, services, markets, and social protection. Africa recognises that closing the gender productivity gap would yield production gains of between 2 and 11 percent in most countries.

State of food and nutrition security in Africa

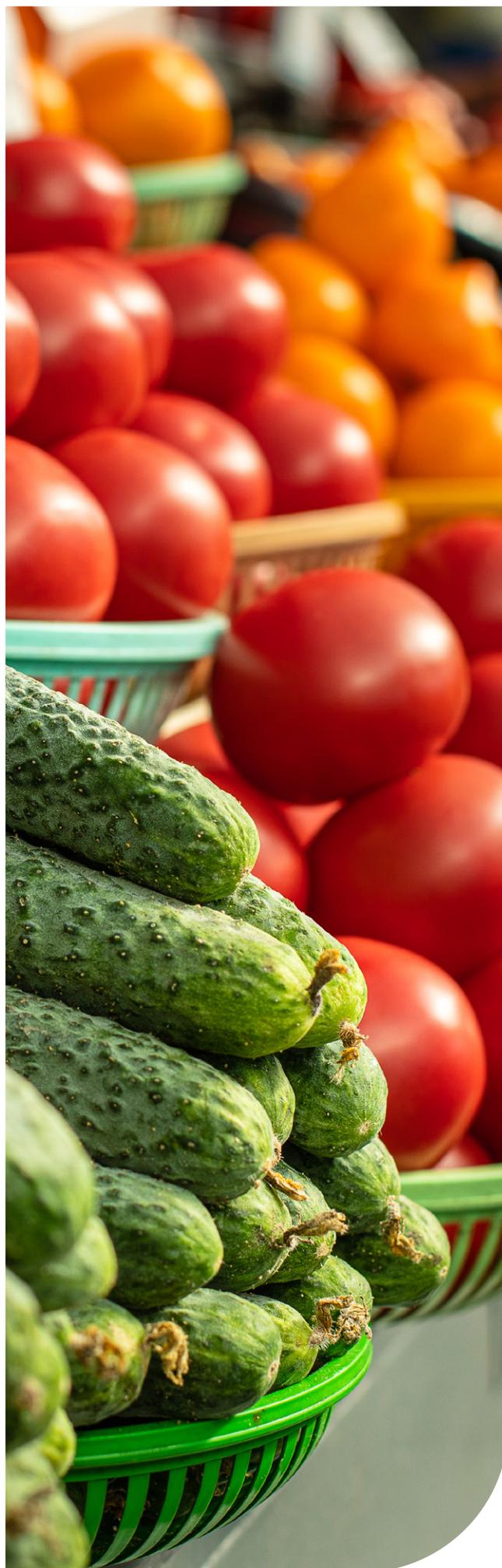
12. Globally, significant traction has been achieved by reducing hunger and poverty and improving food and nutrition security. However, with over 795 million people still suffering hunger and some two billion people suffering from micronutrient deficiencies and/or other forms of over-nourishment, the issue remains of great concern. In Africa, progress against hunger had been made but has been declining since 2014 with about 256 million people in the continent remaining hungry in 2018, representing an increase of some 44 million people from the 2014. The AU CAADP biennial review report of 2019 revealed that Africa was not on track to meet its goal of ending hunger by 2025, noting a deterioration in food and nutrition security on the continent since the inaugural report in 2017.
13. Africa on average imports about 40 percent of its food under unfair terms of trade that have eliminated tariff protection at frontiers. Accordingly, African countries have neither a regional nor a continental market that is stable which, therefore, persistently keeps smallholder farmers in the continent in perpetual 'poverty'. In this regard, achieving intra-continental food security will begin by correcting these imbalances within the continent, and this could be the first and significant achievement that AfCFTA could deliver. This could allow locally grown food crops essential level of protection as well as develop and build-up intra-Africa regional markets.
14. Expanding Africa's food basket will serve both nutrition and resilience objectives. In this regard, there must be intentional investments towards increased productivity and production in traditional and indigenous crops. These are normally low-cost nutritionally important in food systems. They are often managed by women and include vegetables, grain legumes, root crops and climate resilient crops such as sorghums, millets and cassava, all of which have for a long time suffered massive under-investments. The fisheries and aquaculture sub-sectors provide affordable, nutritious food to millions of Africans and have to be promoted as key sectors contributing to nutrition-delivering food systems as well as offering income (job and entrepreneurship) opportunities for local populations.

Africa's one trillion-dollar business is in agriculture and agribusiness

15. African Agriculture is projected to generate a US\$1 trillion agribusiness by 2030. Africa's food imports are projected to soar to US\$90 billion by 2030. This trend has implications on several areas, including undermining economic growth of small-scale food producers and Africa remains in the unfavourable balance of trade and trade deficits.
16. With a 60 percent global share of arable land, Africa is in a strategic position to cement global leadership in agriculture and agribusiness and become the food and agribusiness centre of the world. But realizing this dream requires appropriate and strategic investments supported by an enabling policy environment.
17. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) offers the continent a promise of US\$2.5 trillion in combined GDP. Agribusiness is expected to significantly contribute to this growth. To realize this growth in agribusiness will require a concerted effort to increase production and value addition as well as to ensure adequate quality infrastructure and food safety standards to supply and grow local and regional markets.
18. Africa's current agro-industrialization models pathways need urgent re-examination and re-alignment, through necessary reforms and action in key policy and investment as well as science-innovation and human capital areas. This also includes energy and communication and transport infrastructure, trade facilitation, financial and insurance services. Advancing the AfCFTA and Africa-Industrialisation side-by-side is key in creating a critical-mass of much-needed jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for local populations. This should focus on incentivising local food- and agro-industrial growth along food systems values chains through tailored trade-agriculture policies to advance, among others, (a) commercialization of smallholder agriculture through enhanced access to technological and management innovations including digitalization and machine learning; (b) expansion in commodity range including traditional-indigenous food crops, livestock, fisheries – aquaculture and marine food products; (c) effective integration of farmers and frontline SEMs into expanded domestic, trans-national and regional supply and demand value chains. Africa will need to balance technological innovations and labour-intensive practices to increase productivity and enhance globally competitive agro-industrial performance, within continental frameworks promoting cross-sectoral and integrated growth across identified economic growth corridors while prioritizing home-growth technological and management innovations.

Resilience in Africa's food systems

19. For the last two and half decades, climate change has received attention as a disruptive challenge to Africa's food systems and constitutes a significant threat to food security and poverty reduction efforts on the continent. The continent's food systems and those directly dependent on them are still vulnerable to environmental degradation and climate change shocks such as droughts and floods, which are projected to increase in both frequency and intensity. These extreme weather events have a high cost and threaten crops, livestock, and people, thereby risking millions of Africans' food security. Environmental degradation due to destructive use of both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, inappropriate development, and inadequate waste management has further reduced the resilience of Africa's natural productive ecosystems to continue to provide goods and services that support our food systems.





CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF AFRICAN FOOD SYSTEMS

20. African food systems continue to face several challenges, including extreme weather events and climate change; limited adoption of yield-increasing technologies; dependency on rain-fed agriculture and low levels of irrigation; and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and the spread of fall armyworm in parts of the continent.

The search for resilient food systems in the face of a changing climate

21. Climate change presents significant challenges to African food production and threatens recent progress in increasing productivity and reducing poverty and hunger. The combination of rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns are projected to result in a broad range of impacts, including increases in the frequency of weather volatility and extreme weather events, rising sea levels, changes in the incidence of agricultural pests and diseases, and adverse effects on crop productivity. Climate change is expected to leave more than 38 million more people at risk of hunger in Africa.
22. Twenty five percent of Green House Gas Emissions (GHE) come from Food Systems. With the growing threat to food security and food systems, policies and practices that promote adaptation and mitigation measures to rapidly changing climate conditions will be required to address climate change impacts on African food systems. The climate change - food systems nexus should be continually examined to mainstream locally nuanced policy and investment interventions, fostering improved climate-adapted agricultural technologies for climate-smart practices and approaches; resilient and increased productivity; and value addition processes.

23. Furthermore, while these climate-smart practices show promise in terms of higher productivity and improvements to food security, their adoption by smallholder farmers and producers is constrained by factors such as insecure tenure rights, inadequate access to finance, limited climate-adapted crops and livestock systems, access to markets and risk-management tools. Significant investments in research, innovation, and technology, together with institutional and physical infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of small-scale producers is needed to overcome these barriers. Aquaculture, a low carbon emission avenue for low-cost production of protein and highly nutritious food, is to be encouraged and taken to scale.

Chronic and systemic vulnerability among the poor and marginalized

24. The COVID-19 pandemic has helped expose the intensive in poverty and inequality with most households balancing delicately efforts to put food on the table meal after meal. The COVID-19 control measures, especially the lockdown implied immediate inability for many householders to put food on the table. The largely non-existent social protection measures mean levels of fragility and weakness that continue to leave significant portion of the continent's populations highly vulnerable in the light of socio-economic and natural shocks including slowly occurring disruptions. Additional to addressing issues of poverty and inequality, resilient and inclusive food systems will require targeted food safety nets, food reserves and social protection programmes to protect livelihoods in the face of risks related to climate variability, conflicts, and other shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overcoming a persistent slow rate of adoption of improved productivity-production innovations

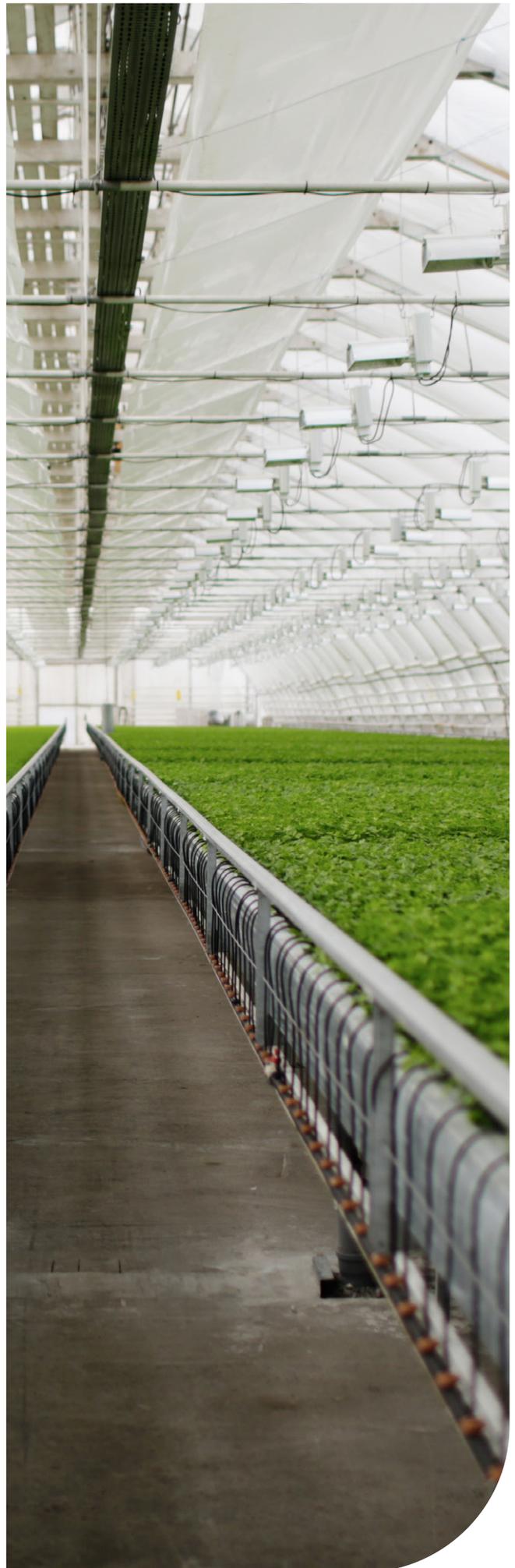
25. Access to improved technologies and innovation across the entire food systems value chains remains too low and, in many instances, making Africa's agriculture and food industry uncompetitive in the global markets. To-date, the adoption rate of improved technologies in Africa stands at about 35 percent. While this shows an improvement from 20 percent ten years ago, it is still far less than the potential. Only an estimated 33 percent per cent of arable land is grown for improved crop varieties on the continent. For instance, African seed systems are still struggling to produce and distribute high-quality varieties in sufficient quantities to reach a critical mass of smallholder farmers. Similarly, Africa's aquaculture industry is challenged by a lack of access to quality seed and feed for increased production. Public research and development systems lead the way while appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks are put in place to enable the private sector to play a driving role in the development of competitive supply chains. Future strategies need to focus on enabling private sector-based systems through adequate institutional, policy, and regulatory arrangements, including using government procurement to stimulate private sector investment and the emergence of competitive SMEs. Given that most food producers in Africa are either informal or small-scale producers, there is also a need to ensure equitable access to improved technologies and inputs and to stimulate investment within this sector. Concrete interventions include the creation of Regional Technology Delivery Infrastructure (RTDI); a Compact of national, sub-regional, and international research organizations; private sector seed companies; and governments to facilitate an agro-ecosystem based rapid diffusion of new varieties that surmount the barriers of political borders.

Tenure and access rights to basic natural resources

26. There is compelling evidence that secure tenure and access rights to basic natural resources (land, water and water bodies, forestry) contributes to productive and environmentally beneficial agricultural investments which also fosters climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. Lack of tenure and access rights to land, water and forests has constrained business and practices essential for building and sustaining resilient food systems for frontline players majority of them, SMEs, informal as well as characteristically women and youth. The African Union adopted a Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa (July 2009), and many African governments have engaged in legislative and regulatory as well as administrative and institutional land governance reforms also addressing land-water rights of vulnerable groups such as women and rural populations.

Mechanization as well as technological and management innovations across food systems value chains

27. Level of mechanisation of Africa's food systems – from production through to processing and value-addition is still very low. Food producers across Africa have 10 times fewer mechanized tools and technological innovations per farm area than farmers in other developing regions, and access has not grown as quickly as in other regions. Also, the development of agricultural equipment markets remains impeded by constraints related to importing or manufacturing capacities. Opportunities for mechanization must be harnessed at each stage of the food systems value chain and this will come through deliberate policy and investment incentives as well as necessary management and technical skills training. The enterprise will have to be viable and hence able to pay for the cost of mechanisation.



28. Irrigation use is also low in Africa. Expanded investments in irrigation must be coupled with policies for the improved management and sustainable use of available water resources to maximize agricultural output per unit of water used. By adopting high-efficiency irrigation technologies or by improving water management, water-use efficiency can be increased – consistent with climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Digital and biotechnologies and the transformation of food systems

29. While Africa has witnessed tremendous growth in the adoption and use of information and communication technologies, digital innovations need to move beyond large-scale food producer and agro-industry systems to benefit also small-scale production and processing systems. Digital innovations will enhance access to extension services, markets, and financial services by smallholder producers, processors and retailers.

30. Biotechnology, including improved breeds and seed varieties, has not been widely embraced across Africa and is inadequately addressed in food production policy frameworks. Increased support for the adoption of biotechnology, particularly among smallholders, requires accelerated action and conducive enabling environment. Scientists are designing and developing livestock breeds and crop varieties with higher yields, additional nutrients (e.g. in biofortified crop seeds, roots and cultivars), increased disease resistance, and enhanced tastes through crop biotechnology and genomics. The power of modern agricultural biotechnology and genomics in transforming African food systems into a force of economic growth, creating wealth in the rural space and beyond, and feeding an African population expected to reach 2.2 billion people by 2050 cannot be ignored.

31. A specific area of biotechnology worth special attention is the innovative research in biofortification and industrial food fortification. Industrial food fortification is adding nutrients – which do not naturally occur or occur at minimal levels in the food.

Aquatic (or blue) foods in Africa's food systems

32. Aquatic foods provide an essential yet often under-valued contribution to Africa's food systems and contribute significantly to livelihoods, food security, and nutrition. The African continent is adjacent to some of the highly productive large marine ecosystems and endowed with networks of productive rivers and lakes that provide abundant opportunities for aquatic food production systems and blue economy development in the continent. The total fish production is estimated at about 12.5 million metric-tonnes, which constitute about six percent of global fish production. The fish sector currently contributes 1.26 percent of the GDP, and per capita, fish consumption is about 9.6 kg which is less than half the global average (20.5 kg).

33. The fish sector creates employment for about 12 million people with women constituting about 27 percent of the total employment. African fisheries and aquaculture play significant roles in international and regional trade. Africa imports about US\$5 billion worth of fish annually and export about US\$7 billion.

34. Artisanal producers account for more than 60 percent of Africa's fish production; over 90 million fisherfolk depend on fishing as main part of a diversified livelihood strategy. Despite the importance of blue foods to Africa's food systems, aquatic ecosystems and their capacity to produce food and other ecosystem services are under threat from climate change, harmful activities, and degradation and contamination of aquatic ecosystems.

35. Key actions that need urgent attention include leveraging existing continental frameworks to promote coherence and best practices in fisheries, aquaculture governance, and blue growth initiatives; combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; conservation biodiversity; environmental governance; improving skills of value chain actors – especially women and youth – in post-harvest technology; and increasing Africa's role in global regimes including Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). Moreover, the continent has Africa Blue Economy Strategy; a policy framework and reform strategy for fisheries and aquaculture in Africa. This framework strengthens African aquatic food systems through enhancing the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to food security, livelihoods, and wealth creation.

Energy deficit in African food systems

36. With average electricity consumption per person in sub-Saharan is 500 kWh in relation to 13,000 kWh per person in the USA and 6,500 kWh per person in Europe, expanding access to clean and affordable energy is an imperative in transformation of the food systems towards resilient, viable and inclusive systems. Bold decisions and actions are necessary within national and sub-national structures as well as enabling regional and continental initiatives on immediate and significant expansion in investments in the generation and distribution of clean energy sources. This is about infrastructure as much as it is about management skills and development of viable energy markets along the food systems supply-demand value chains.

37. Africa will need to critically examine policies to incentivise off-grid and mini-grid solutions to meet energy needs of farmers, agro-industries, and households in remote areas. Expanding access to alternative energy sources, such as solar, wind, and biogas, can help boost food security in Africa by accelerating sustainable agricultural development, improving water security, and people-centred economic growth.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and implications on Africa's Food Systems

38. The imperative and urgency to drive change that will enable communities to realize zero hunger for their populations by 2025 cannot be over emphasized. COVID-19 has only underlined the apparent urgency for policy and investment choices, bringing about increased access to nutritious food and addressing structural weaknesses and vulnerability, including poverty and inequality, which are part of the problems blocking access to nutritious diets for all.

39. Additional to the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa continue to face major underlying issues which are impacting adversely on a food system that is resilient and making it possible for all populations to have access to health and nutritious diets. These including the inherently extreme environmental conditions of the Sahel region, the desert locust outbreak in east Africa as well as the perverse high levels of poverty and inequality.



LEVERS AND DRIVERS IN TRANSFORMING AFRICA'S FOOD SYSTEMS

40. Global and continental trends and transitions including technological innovations, climate change, Africa's demographics including the factor of a youthful population, the AfCFTA and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic will certainly impact efforts to transform Africa and global food systems. Within Africa's specific context, following drivers and levers will play key roles in championing accelerated transformation of the continent's food systems:

i. Sustained, broad-based economic growth

41. Africa's real per capita GDP has increased by over one third on average, between 2000 and 2014, with faster growth of up to 100 percent or more in some countries. Africa aims to foster the mutually reinforcing inter-dependences between healthy, resilient, and inclusive food systems, on one hand, and broad-based economic growth, on the other. Many countries across Africa have seen sustained growth in the agricultural sector, about 4.7 per cent per year on average between 2000 and 2018. Africa is committed to policy and investment interventions to stimulate and incentivise the fight against hunger and malnutrition, while enhancing competitive economic growth and resilience in the interactions between the economy, environment and food systems. The successful transformation of African food systems anchored closely on all economic sectors is key in building and sustaining viable, resilient and inclusive food systems. Which additional to providing accessible healthy (nutritious and safe) diets, will provide as direct source of incomes (jobs and entrepreneurship) for significant portions of the local populations.

ii. Harnessing Africa's demography and the Youth dynamics in transformation of the food systems

42. Africa's demographics is characterised by a high annual population growth rate, a median age of below 30 years old, with growing numbers remaining unemployed, and the largely rural, even with expanding urbanisation and as the rural-urban divide gets blurred. Urbanization in Africa is expected to reach 65 percent by 2050. While there were only two African cities with more than a million inhabitants in 1950, the number of cities jumped to 50 in 2010 and is expected to double by 2025.
43. Additional to the growing numbers, expanding middle class populations implies growing markets. Both the quantity and quality of the emerging lifestyle and food needs, including change in diets are important considerations in the pull-push effects in championing food systems transformation
44. Youth are getting better organized in their approach to tackle policy issues in agriculture at national level. Established national networks are now moving to form a unified network/ consortium of African youth-led organizations in agriculture and climate change through which policy negotiations at the continental level can be accessed and addressed.
45. Youth in Africa are extensively engaged at the policy initiation and development stages in Africa. Emphasis is now being directed to ensure that they also take part in the execution and implementation of these policies, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation processes. This will foster the youth's interpretation of collective ownership, control and accountability.

iii. Global food markets and trade and implications for the AfCFTA and Africa's local and trans-national food markets and trade

46. Africa is experiencing a widening food import gap. This growing external deficit in agriculture and food is a sign of demand growing faster than production. This high dependence on food imports is exposing the continent to high volatility that agricultural markets typically experience. Globalization and the growth of the large-scale food industry, including supermarkets and expansion of mass processing and marketing including behaviour changes will significantly drive changes in dietary patterns and associated food systems features. These are closely linked with urbanization, as changing environments and preferences interact to influence diets and nutrition. Diet habits are changing across Africa with implications for food systems. To be sure, there is a widespread increase in consumption of refined foods, such as refined grains, highly processed foods, and non-traditional staple foods. The consumption of sugar, salt, fats, and oils is also on the rise. While there has been some shift towards high-quality diets, the consumption of poor-quality diets—the number one risk factor in the global burden of disease—remains prevalent in African countries. These diet changes and their impacts on nutrition are strongly linked to increasing burdens of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.
47. Agri-food accounts for a substantial share of Africa's trade with around 16 per cent and 17 per cent of the value of Africa's total exports and imports, respectively. Since 2000 Africa has turned into a net agri-food importer. Moreover, the bulk of Africa's imports and exports are oriented towards the rest of the world. 81 per cent of Africa's imports of agri-food come from outside the continent, and 78 per cent of Africa's exports are directed to the rest of the world. In this context, it is hoped that the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement, which officially entered into force on 1 January 2021, could help to change the picture by fostering intra-African trade in agri-food.

iv. Rise of the staples processing sector

48. The rapid transformation of traditional staples' value chains driven by fast-paced urbanization and rising incomes is the most dramatic change facing African smallholders. Rapid urbanization and rising incomes are growing Africa's middle-class, which is fuelling higher demand for agricultural products and local foods. Changing diets associated with rising incomes and urbanization are boosting demand for processed foods, such as couscous, millet flour, and cassava flakes. Increasingly, consumers across Africa are demanding foods that are processed with higher quality and ready-to-cook or eat with ease of preparation. Furthermore, Africa's total urban food market is projected to reach US\$150 billion by 2030, and smallholder farmers could capture as much as US\$30 billion of that total.
49. These trends are spurring the rapid rise of an emerging and dynamic processing sector. The rise of the processing sector is accompanied by a lengthening of agricultural staples' value chains. From traditionally short chains, which are limited to home-based processing and confined predominantly to rural areas, the changing value chains now primarily supply small towns and large urban centres with a range of branded ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products. Urban-based value chains are fuelled by the introduction of new processes, sometimes mechanized, that involve producing and distributing traditional foods outside of the household setting through specialized enterprises.

50. The emerging processing sector provides new employment opportunities in value addition, distribution, packaging, and marketing across food value chains, as well as increased incomes for farmers. However, the small and medium enterprises undertaking these new activities face significant challenges. Rising numbers of firms combined with low levels of innovation will lead to a situation with an abundance of small firms with persistently low productivity and profitability and limited ability to drive agricultural transformation. Strengthening the links between producers and processors is a critical intervention to facilitate firm growth and benefit smallholder farmers.

v. Rising demand for animal source foods

51. Animal agriculture is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors across the African continent. It plays a significant role in Africa's food systems, supporting the livelihoods of an estimated 268 million people in several countries and making an important contribution to food security and nutrition. It offers solutions to some of Africa's most pressing challenges, including food and nutrition security, employment, climate adaptation, and gender equality. Africans are eating more animal products as their population grows and their incomes rise. In 2013, the average person on the continent annually consumed around 20kg of meat and 45kg of milk—by 2050 this is projected to increase to more than 25kg of meat and 65kg of milk. Africa's domestic livestock sector has been expanding as a response. Animal agriculture already contributes between 30 and 80 percent of agricultural GDP across Africa, and in some countries, it is the fastest-growing agricultural sub-sector. In response to the growing demand, producers and other actors will make significant investments in the livestock value chains and the impacts on livelihoods, public health, and environment will be unprecedented. To meet the increasing demand for animal-sourced products, more needs to be done to elevate the role of the livestock sector through context-specific technology development and adoption, as well as targeted policy innovations for a sustainable increase in production and productivity.
52. The private sector is already playing a major role in accelerating the development of promising technologies and solutions in the food and agriculture sector. Innovation funds, often in the form of grants, are now being used to create innovative activity platforms by providing incentives to improve collaboration and the quality of services offered. From 2016 to 2018, US\$19 million was invested in agriculture technology in Africa, and agri-tech start-ups grew by 110 percent—an indication of a growing African agri-tech industry. Placing digitalization at the centre of food system transformation strategies and policies will be key to harnessing its cross-cutting innovative power.



AFRICA'S GAME-CHANGING SOLUTIONS

53. Africa has consulted widely across the various stakeholders and the following game-changing solutions have emerged as critical in transforming its food systems. These reflect key action areas embracing national, regional and continental interventions with necessary thematic and sector coherence, alignment and inter-dependences. The solutions are about (a) strengthening and aligning implementation capacities including public service delivery as well as (b) stimulating and incentivising policy and investment interventions into identified thematic and sector priorities. The solutions aim to address the desired immediate results while at the same time paying attention to necessary transformative and systemic change, primarily along set Agenda 2063 and SDG goals and targets.

To catalyse rapid expansion in agricultural and food productivity and production

54. Access to basic means of production by especially frontline players in the food systems value chain – most of whom SMEs, women and operating informally:
- i. Backed by necessary analysis and context specific realities, foster relevant policy and investment choices to enable increased access to production and productivity enhancing technologies and resources including data and information; as well as technologies and innovations such as improved seed and breeding materials, irrigation and other mechanisation equipment, biotechnology.
 - ii. Promote digitalization in agriculture to reduce transaction costs, empower farmers by having real-time access to information on aspects such as inputs, prices and markets, weather and land use information and other information which all go to improving farm-level decision-making and accountability in resource allocation and use.
 - iii. Appropriate land and water security of tenure and access right regimes will be critical enabler for transformative interventions towards resilient and inclusive food systems. Same attention needs to be given to accessible, affordable and safe energy sources – essentially renewable energy.
 - iv. Access to information and associated management training will not just improve planning and execution but build into the systems improved capacity for risk identification and management and handling of uncertainties.
55. Boosting nature-positive production and processing-value addition, at scale: Under this area, Africa is committed to:
- i. Invest in productivity enhancing technologies and practices, including improved seeds, feeds and animal breeds adapted to the changing climate and appropriate storage and post-harvest management provisions and capabilities.
 - ii. Review and reignite attention and action for policy and investment choices to catalyse and support technological and management measures and practices that foster climate smart and biodiversity-ecosystems resilience practices across the entire Agro and food systems.
 - iii. Identify and incentivise agricultural and food production and processing practices which while increasing productivity, reducing the carbon footprint; e.g. reducing emissions and post-harvest losses and increasing carbon capture.
 - iv. Facilitate trans-national and regional solutions for expanded and sustainable harvesting-production, use and management of Africa's aquatic (marine and inland waters) resources and associated productive ecosystems that support them.

- v. Promote Africa's sustainable blue economy development at national and regional levels to harness the potential of blue foods, and boost resilience of Africa's productive aquatic resources and ecosystems.
- vi. Align national strategies to AfCFTA and develop agro-industrial clusters and regional agricultural value chains that focus on value addition in integrated markets that are healthy and sustainable diets-driven.

Boosting Investment financing for Africa's food systems transformation agenda

56. One key guiding principle in this regard is the AU's ambition to increase domestic public-private investment financing for Africa's economic growth and development agenda. Foreign finance should progressively move towards direct investments taking the form of financing for capital infrastructure, technology transfer and market share. In this regard, the following is identified on the game changing solutions:
- i. Incentivise public-private investment financing on specific agricultural and food systems enable infrastructure including rural roads, ICT including access to mobile technologies and internet as well as water articulation and energy generation and distribution.
 - ii. Request the African Development Bank (AfDB) in collaboration with AUC and AUDA-NEPAD to rally and manage an Africa Food Systems investment financing mechanism dedicated to financing national and trans-national capital infrastructure aimed at augmenting national and regional capabilities to transform the food systems towards resilient, viable and competitive and inclusivity.
 - iii. Facilitate analytical support and tools to member states to realise targeted allocation of public financing to food systems development within the context of the CAADP-Malabo target of minimum 10 percent of public expenditure to agriculture. Focus will be on enabling and catalytic affordable financing to support emerging and start-up SMEs, especially youth and women, regarding access to technological and management innovations, market and product development, access to energy and water as well as development of local value-adding (food processing) capabilities.
 - iv. Mechanism at continental level which will leverage and broker dedicated financing facility for food systems development including the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), to mobilize green and blue economy financing including concessionary sovereign loans and grants to address shortfalls in public expenditures, to scale successful agricultural technologies, and to provide competitive research and development financing to Africa's national, sub-regional and international food systems research programmes.

Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all: Under this area, Africa is committed to:

- 57. Promote biofortification of staple foods and industrial fortification of complementary foods to deliver better diets for all.
- 58. Facilitate the expansion of cash transfer programmes and use expanding cash transfer platforms to reach families with nutrition services and programmes that focus on producing nutritious foods.
- 59. Promote and enforce food safety standards in both formal and non-formal food markets to protect consumers.
- 60. Expand domesticated school feeding programmes to improve nutrition for school children and create markets for locally produced foods to increase farmer incomes.

- 61. Design and implement innovative Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) campaigns and nutrition education to improve food and feeding practices for children and society at large, and to influence food supply and food environments.
- 62. Adopt and implement coherent nutritious food policies and strategies that are evidence-based, along with enhanced institutional capacities and capabilities for accelerated transformation of sustainable food and nutrition systems.
- 63. Identify, renew, and implement longer-term actions across multiple systems—food, health, water and sanitation, education and social protection—in the food system to facilitate sustained access to affordable and nutritious foods, essential nutrition services and positive nutrition practices in all contexts; and to promote diversification, including in nutritious indigenous foods.
- 64. Adopt policy and fiscal measures across government ministries to support food affordability (i.e. subsidies for healthy and sustainable foods, expansion of social protection programmes, taxation for unhealthy foods, and procurement policies for healthy school meals).
- 65. Implement long-term inclusive strategies that foster multifaceted investment in agriculture, agribusiness, and agro-industries; and ensure food safety, micronutrient content, and sustained food quality and standards that enable micro and medium agri-SMEs to compete in domestic, regional and international value-added food markets.
- 66. Promotion of national, regional, and continental food information systems to share information on the availability of food and food prices at all levels, and how it could be accessed.
- 67. Ensure adequate regional strategic emergency food reserves and storage facilities
- 68. Incentivise national and trans-national trade corridors for food commodities and services and ensure dedicated attention to regional food markets and trade in all AfCFTA provisions and protocols.

Strengthening and harnessing Africa's growing local food markets

- 69. Shifting to sustainable consumption patterns: Under this area, Africa is committed to:
 - i. Dedicated national and regional R&D capacities for enhanced sustainable production, processing as well as marketing and consumption of traditional and indigenous food crops, including nuts, fruits, vegetables, and tubers.
 - ii. Technological and skills capabilities among SMEs in the food systems value chains to meet food safety and standards regulatory protocols in the light of both healthy and safe diets as well as trade and market standards.
 - iii. Examine and provide for informed policy and investment choices, including decent income provisions, which incentivise expansion in local food markets linked to encouraging local production systems and capabilities.
- 70. Advancing equitable livelihoods and value distribution: Under this area, Africa is committed to:
 - i. Strengthen and align specific policy and investment incentives to economically empower women and youth SMEs through improved and predictable security of tenure and access rights over land, water, and productive resources.
 - ii. Strengthen National and Regional capacities for increased (numbers and quality) management training and mentoring for SMEs in the food systems value chains. Training should include business development, marketing and identifying as well as attracting and managing investments, identifying risks and trade-off and building necessary risk management capabilities.

- iii. Incentivise establishment of viable groups and cooperatives at all segments of food value chains.
71. Building resilience to shock, and stress: Under this area, Africa is committed to:
- i. Facilitate and support locally appropriate and targeted social and food safety net programmes to strengthen communities and household capacities to adapt, mitigate and recover from shocks and stresses as well as other socio-economic disruptions.
 - ii. Promote production of traditional and indigenous foods, not only to enhance sustainable access to nutritious food, but also to broaden the capacities for food system resilience.
 - iii. Stimulate and incentivise relevant policy choices and increased Investments in climate data and knowledge systems to support early warning systems for food security and climate change related disasters.
 - iv. Encourage partnerships and investments to overcome water scarcity challenges in the continent.
 - v. Facilitate and support as necessary investments and policy choices for enhanced risk insurance capacities and measures such as weather-indexed crop and livestock insurance schemes.
 - vi. Expanding social protection programmes and linking them to nutrition and food access.
72. Facilitating and building local implementation capacities at all levels with focus on frontline players and decentralised structures:
- i. Undertake necessary policy, investments and training to enable and strengthen integrated institutional capacities for systems approaches and informed policy design, enhanced accountability in resource allocation and use as well as designing and managing, inter-ministerial collaboration structures for optimal efficient and effective execution and deliver. Critical aspects in this regard includes strengthening and aligning public service delivery with streamlined and clear accountability in the execution of public sector/government responsibilities as investor, implementation and enabler as well as catalysing and enabling necessary public-private blended initiatives which enhance implementation capabilities while also creating jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for local populations across all segments of the food systems from production to consumption as well as on the supply and demand value chains.
 - ii. Apply more “systems thinking”, in a broad spectrum of areas including policies, regulations, business models and culture, food supply chains, and involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders.
 - iii. Apply a people-centred, place-based, cross-sectoral, multi-level, multi-stakeholder, and flexible territorial approach to development; and promote integration and synergies between policies and actions: develop a territorial strategy, adopt a foresight approach, and support collective action.
 - iv. Enhance continental accountability for food systems transformation through the CAADP biennial review mechanism and agricultural joint sector reviews.
 - v. Empower citizens to participate in program design at local level and in accountability platforms to monitor program implementation.
 - vi. Ensuring good governance and considering establishing national governing bodies to improve coordination among stakeholders.
 - vii. Encourage public investment in cold chains to reduce food losses.
 - viii. Mainstreaming awareness campaigns of healthy diets, food fortification, greenhouse production, rationalizing population growth, and early diagnosis of malnutrition and similar diseases.
- ix. Engage the youth meaningfully in food system transformation. Youth should be mainstreamed in policies devised to advance food systems. Youth should be attracted to food systems by technology and innovations.
 - x. Engaging Global Action – complementarities and synergies in pursuit of the greater public goods.
 - xi. Through game changing action areas presented above, Africa remains committed to engage and collaborate with various bilateral and multilateral initiatives and processes including the UN, G7 and G20 to ensure agreed global level reforms and actions in the interest of the greater global public goods and services.
 - xii. Africa also expects that the rest of the world will play their part – enabling to Africa attaining her own goals and targets as well as Africa playing her role in addressing and realising agreed goals and targets at global level in the pursuit of our shared purpose and goals for resilient, viable and inclusive food systems and the impacts across the SDG goals. In this light, Africa expect that through relevant institutions, agencies and instruments, the world will expand and accelerate initiatives on:
 - a) Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures based on the Paris climate agreement.
 - b) More transparent and equitable negotiations, coherence and alignment on markets and trade terms, provisions including support legal frameworks with regard to the global food trade and markets.
 - c) Support to and broad set of action to incentivise and enable accelerated drive in (i) technology transfer and associated intellectual property rights, (ii) market share as well as (iii) increased investments in relevant capital infrastructure and tradeable services.





POST-SUMMIT ROLLOUT PLAN

73. The Africa Common Position on Food Systems has also gone further to examine and present how the Africa Common Position will be transformed into action to support and augment, within Africa's regional and continental solutions, necessary implementation and implementation support, in the post-Summit drive.
74. The Continental-Regional level Implementation support mechanism is designed based on the following guiding principles:
 - i. Implementation support will function within and integral to existing development frameworks with Agenda 2063 and CAADP-Malabo as the primary entry points with other related continental framework which include the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTFA) agreement and the Science, Technology and Innovations Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) at continental levels as well as National Development Plans (NDPs) and sector plans and strategies including National Agriculture and Food Security investment Plans (NAIPs), Social Protection Plans, Value-addition and agro-industry plans, among others.
 - ii. Embrace and integrate into national and sub-national structures with institutional mandate for implementation, while paying attention to innovative mechanisms for mutually enabling inter-ministerial, cross-government implementation in pursuit of systems approaches.
 - iii. Examine and identify incentives as well as trade-offs within national efforts which could foster regional and continental solutions.
 - iv. Build to support the development and nurturing of shared social capital as a resource to augment risk taking, economics of scale as well as learning.
75. Implementation and implementation support will involve a series of country-tailor-made iterative segments namely:
 - a) **Domestication and aligning into national interests, priorities and realities:** Involving (i) confirming and socialization of national goals and commitments in the pursuit of resilient and inclusive food systems, and (ii) analysis of relevant existing national and sector policies and legislation to situate policy and investment choices to drive execution. Identified gaps and strengths will constitute primary areas for action. In this context, the development of the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 will also be informed by the analysis and implementation considerations for the food systems goals. The formulation of the AU-CAADP Business Plan (2022-2025) will also be informed by the solutions in this common position.
 - b) **Access to decision making and implementation support information, tools and guidelines:** Development and adoption of multi-sectoral systems approaches and decision-making tools and guidelines. Strengthening and aligning supportive data management systems and linkages to homegrown science, technology, and innovations will come into focus under this component.
 - c) **Facilitating and brokering technical and investment partnerships** to augment implementation capabilities. This includes technical and management expertise and experience, strategic skills and resources as well as technology transfer and shared responsibilities on common goals – e.g. climate change, food markets and trade, social security, etc...

- d) **Monitoring, progress and performance assessment as well as learning and adaptation:** This will be done based on clearly identified target milestones and associated indicators and standardised indicator profiles. New efforts will be about re-enforcing the already running CAADP-Malabo Biennial Review exercise and Report as well as building into existing national and regional joint sector reviews.
76. **African Union Food Systems Implementation support mechanism** emphasize focus on policy and investment choices to transform local capacities and build resilient and inclusive food systems. This implies a focus on IMPLEMENTATION, thereby providing continental programmatic scope and tool to foster basic conditions for success, which include:
- a) **Empowering systemic local ownership and responsibility:** All initiatives, including bilateral and multilateral collaborations on building resilient and inclusive food systems, must be pursued integral to existing national structures and plans beginning with National Development Plans. At the regional and continental level, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) – Malabo Declaration, Agenda 2063 and other sector plans such as Climate Change, Healthcare and Education Plans remain the frameworks within which food security and nutrition should be pursued.
- b) **Mobilisation and enabling community participation:** Enabling frontline and grassroots players and stakeholder through information support and training, access to appropriate forms of investment capital, facilitation and support on aspects such as standards, packaging and marketing. Active and directly involvement of communities is key part of the conditions for sustainable success. A focus on sub-national, decentralised governments including community and traditional leaders is important in this regard
- c) **Coordination and partnership alignment with Africa's political frameworks:** Transforming Africa food systems will require some fundamental change in practice and mind-set of the way we work – moving to from the individual sector/issue comfort zones to operate in the “nexus space” where what matters most is not the individual issues, but how the issues and factors interact, i.e. interdependences towards a result that is greater than the sum of the parts. What and who plays in the “nexus space” is equally important – public and non-state actors, local, national, regional continental and global interests, across the various segments of the food systems value chains – including research; advisory services; education and skills development, processing and value-adding, markets and trade, infrastructure and financial services, water and energy security, to name a few. This multidimensional and interdependent nature of these interventions needs strong coordination, coherence, alignment and accountability across implicated stakeholders and interests, horizontally and vertically.
- d) **Systems, multi-dimensional approaches:** Fostering integrated systems approaches, thereby enhancing cross-sector, multi-level and trans-national policy and investment coherence and alignment. Sector issues such as conflicts, social protection policies and measures, fragility, changing climate, water and energy security, as well as trade and markets have a direct impact on food systems resilience and inclusiveness.
- e) **Harnessing Public-Private blended capabilities:** through appropriate and locally relevant policy and investment interventions aimed at catalysing enabling environment supportive to integrated development-Business drive.
77. The AU Food Systems Implementation Support Mechanism will foster home grown processes to engage the G20 efforts, providing:
- i. Existing frameworks on which G20 initiatives and programmes could build on and accelerate the locally driven transformation and value-for-money delivery on key fronts that will impact directly on resilient and inclusive food systems – including social protection and economic inclusion to reduce poverty; reduction in food loss and waste and extensive local food industries and globally competitive markets.
 - ii. Implementation frameworks which inherently integrate clear accountability in resource deployment against clearly pre-determined set of targets and indicators.

The Africa Food Systems Implementation support mechanism is, hence, intentional to foster and strengthen realistic and within context multi-sectoral and multi-partnership coordination across subnational-national, regional and continental priorities, frameworks and strategies. Support to functional national coordination platforms or structures as integral part of the local capacity to delivery sustained results. Under the CAADP, these platforms are established to support the implementation of a national agriculture investment plan (NAIP). At continental level, the CAADP Partnership Platform provides a framework to align priorities and interests beyond just agriculture, farming and food security.





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