

## AFRICA MINISTERS COMMUNIQUE ON STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS FOR IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY, INCLUSIVITY AND RESILIENCE

### PRE-UN FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT 2021 INDEPENDENT DIALOGUEAFRIC

The **UN Food Systems Summit** under the theme “*Transforming food systems is crucial for delivering all the Sustainable Development Goals,*” is scheduled to take place in October 2021. The UN Food System Summit **2021** advances “a people-centred and based on human rights and social justice agenda”. The Summit is expected to launch bold new actions, solutions, and strategies to deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), each of which relies on healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable food systems. The COVID-19 pandemic was a wakeup call to the glaring fragility and inequalities of the global, regional and national agri-food systems making the resolve for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems extremely urgent. To build sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems, there is need to examine existing systems and policies. Government leaders and policy makers, the private sector, civil society, universities, research institutions, and smallholder farmers and other value chain actors have a stake in shaping pathways for resilient and sustainable national food systems aligned with SDGs and Africa’s *Agenda 2063*.

Accordingly, the Government of the Republic of Malawi, hosted a Ministerial Dialogue towards the UN Food Systems Summit for selected Member States: Arab Republic of Egypt, Kingdom of Morocco, Republic of Angola, Republic of Benin, Republic of Cameroon, Republic of Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Gambia, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Kenya, Republic of Liberia, Republic of Mali, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Namibia, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Sierra Leone, Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Republic of South Sudan, Republic of Sudan, Republic of Uganda, Republic of Zambia, and Republic of Zimbabwe on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The event also was attended by African Union Commission, The European Union Commission, The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, United States Department of Agriculture and the World Bank.

### **Objectives of the Ministerial Food Systems Summit Dialogue**

1. Provide a platform for agri-food sector stakeholders for dialogue to generate solutions and actions to inform the deliberations during the UN Food Systems Summit 2021

2. To explore engagement opportunities and chart a common pathway for strengthening Africa's Food Systems, considering the diversity of food systems on the continent.

#### **WE THE MINISTERS INVOLVED WITH DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF AFRICAN FOOD SYSTEMS:**

1. **NOTE** that Africa is home to nearly 1.4 billion or about 17% of world population. The vast majority of these people live in rural Africa deriving their livelihoods from the land basically agriculture and related resources. With sixty percent of Africa's population dependent on agriculture, clearly, a vibrant agricultural sector must be part of the solution to create inclusive development in the continent.
2. **NOTE** that vibrant Agri-food-systems and institutions engaged in production to consumption of food, are key to delivery of the continent's development agenda, *Africa We Want*, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. **RECOGNIZE** that urbanisation and modernisation of the continent's food systems generates risks and opportunities, and create the need to institute appropriate measures to be collectively addressed for sustainable and resilient food systems that meet Africa's food and nutrition needs.
4. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that Africa has to build human, financial and infrastructure capacity to mitigate natural and man-made disasters including pandemics, locusts, floods, drought, and other climate change and related risks that contribute to the fragility of agri-food systems.
5. **NOTE** that the increasing appetite for Africa's arable land to produce for global food security is an important trend and the potential threat posed by climate change to an already fragile agri-food systems call for measured agriculture development policy.
6. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the need to strengthen the link between university and government as a precursor for evidence-based decision making and the need for allocation of resource towards Food and Nutrition Security.

#### **WE FURTHER**

1. **NOTE** that Africa produces its food from two main types of systems: smallholder based highly diversified production systems and “progressive” semi-to-extensive production systems that are increasingly owned and managed by urban elite.
2. **NOTE** that it is the smallholder farmers that feed and employ the vast majority of Africans with women accounting for up to 70% of the labour force.
3. **NOTE** the primacy of Africa’s smallholder agriculture to underpin sustainable and equitable food systems that support food and nutrition security for all, for the present generation and posterity, is unequivocal and must be integral in discussions on global food systems.
4. **RECOGNIZE** that for Africa to realize its full agricultural potential to bolster its food systems there is need for significant investments in key productivity enhancing innovations to harness science solutions for growth.
5. **RECOGNIZE** that only a fraction of smallholder farmers has requisite entrepreneurial ability, productive assets and skills potential for value addition. Skilling such populations, and in general, improving the labour productivity is critical for African agriculture to play a greater role in meeting local to global food demand, in a competitive and cost-effective and competitive manner.
6. **RECOGNIZE** that there is need for an interdisciplinary focus on the factors that contribute to the fragility of the agri-food systems in Africa including but not limited to epidemics, emerging and re-emerging diseases.
7. **RECOGNIZE** that a more holistic human capital development is required to build the agricultural workforce, from production, to research and innovations as well as entrepreneurship. African Universities are pivotal in the design and implementation of human capital development programmes.
8. **RECOGNIZE** the need to develop the outreach function of universities which encompass extension and the link between universities and smallholder farmers.

We the Ministers attending the *Strengthening Food systems for improved productivity, inclusivity and resilience* UNFSSS dialogue are aware that current trends and

transformations being observed in Africa's food systems are outcomes of policies and public investment patterns of prior decades, and note that the future will be shaped and transformed by today's investment and policy actions.

**We hereby AGREE TO:**

1. **COMMIT** to Strengthen production fundamentals such as research and innovation to direct how we leverage our production resources, generate relevant technologies, test (incubation), transfer and protection of Intellectual Property Right of these technologies; guide health and climate induced threat surveillance and inform policy design and accountability.
2. **COMMIT** to Institute industrial policies that promote private investment and job growth in local non-farm sectors, essential to attract investment in agri-food systems.
3. **COMMIT** to Invest strongly in the education value chain, from universities to vocational colleges to leveraging on secondary and primary education to upgrade the skill levels of young people entering the labour force.
4. **COMMIT to** work collaboratively with African Universities and other actors in and outside Africa to marshal the needed response capacity to strengthen Africa's Food Systems and for scaling out best practices including but not limited to: increased value addition, reduction in high post-harvest losses, and preservation of nutrient content of indigenous African foods – crops, livestock, fish and promotion of the nutritional value and health benefits for addressing poverty and malnutrition;
5. **COMMIT to** foster global partnerships to develop more sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems that consider the needs of smallholder farmers and youth.

**We further AGREE TO**

1. **COMMIT to** pursue the requisite partnerships to operationalise the Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEE) initiative, Strengthening Youth Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (SASTIE) and for Building Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity (BASTIC) as encapsulated in the African Ministers Communique of 05 December 2019 in Cape Coast Ghana.

2. **COMMIT to** actively engage in the European Union- African Union Partnership on Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture Initiative, Africa Union-European Union Research and Innovation Partnership on Climate Change, Green Circular Economy and Sustainable Energy, Global Research Alliance on Agriculture Greenhouse Gases (GRA) and other continental and global initiatives.

**We endorse the Statement by African Vice-Chancellors to the UNFSS and,**

1. **COMMIT to** support a multi-stakeholder platform to strengthen capacity and knowledge generation and adoption. The *Capacity Strengthening Platform for African Food Systems* will address issues of capacity generation, knowledge and adoption of changed technologies. The platform will include the universities, the public, private and civil sectors, producers and consumers and to be inclusive of women and youth.
2. **COMMIT to** implement the Actions agreed upon during the UNFFS 2021

**We, as Ministers involved with different segments of African Food Systems APPEAL TO the United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS) to:**

1. **RECOGNIZE** that, Africa's burgeoning market is an opportunity for agriculture and food systems transformation but that challenges particularly poverty and malnutrition especially among rural households primarily smallholders in Africa remain high.
2. **SUPPORT** the efforts of Africa to invest in and transform its food systems and develop the capacity needed to develop, implement and sustain a sustainable inclusive food system.
3. **RECOGNIZE** that, agriculture, food product development and food accessibility need to be at the core of investment together with the knowledge and technologies to energize the transformation.
4. **RECOGNIZE** that, co-developing, co-ownership and joint implementation of UNFSS agreed game-changers for food systems transformation on the Continent must be inclusive and provide equitable opportunities.

5. **STRENGTHEN** commitment to Africa's Agenda 2063, STISA 2024 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA).
6. **URGE** the international community to support an African multi-stakeholder Capacity Strengthening Platform for Sustainable Inclusive African Food Systems (*Capacity Strengthening Platform for African Food Systems*).

### Signed by

Name	Designation	Country
1. Hon. António Francisco de	Minister of Agriculture and Fishery	Angola
2. Hon. Prof. Eléonore Ladekan Yayi	Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Benin
3. Hon. Dr. Ir. Deo Guide RUREMA	Minister of Environment, Livestock and Agriculture	Burundi
4. Hon. Gabriel Mbairobe	Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development	Cameroon
5. Hon. Muhindo Nzangi Butondo	Minister of Higher Education	DRC
6. Hon. Owusu Afriyie Akoto	Minister of Food and Agriculture	Ghana
7. Hon. Peter Gatirau Munya	Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperative	Kenya
8. Hon. Jeanine Milly Cooper	Minister of Agriculture	Liberia
9. Hon. Lobin C. Low	Minister of Agriculture	Malawi
10. Hon. Mahmoud Ould Mohamed	Minister of Agriculture	Mali
11. Hon. Dr. Itah Kandjii- Murangi	Minister for Higher Education Training and Innovation	Namibia
12. Hon. Dr. Abu Bakarr Karim	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry	Sierra Leone
13. Hon. Said Hussein Iid	Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation	Somalia
14. Hon. Ms. Josephine Lagu Yanga	Minister of Agriculture and Food Security	South Sudan
15. Hon. Prof. Intisar Soghayroun Elzein Soghayroun	Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Sudan
16. Hon. Frank Tumwebaze	Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water and Forests	Uganda
17. Hon. Prof. Amon Murwira	Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education	Zimbabwe