

AFSA

ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

Summary Report



OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMPLIFYING AGROECOLOGY

**A REVIEW OF POLICIES, FRAMEWORKS AND MECHANISMS RELATED
TO FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS IN AFRICA**



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The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa brings together small-scale food producers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, farmers' networks, faith groups, consumer associations, youth associations, civil societies and activists from across the continent of Africa to create a united and louder voice for food sovereignty.

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Introduction

This report presents a review of international and regional policies related to food sovereignty (FS) and agroecology (AE) in Africa. The review was undertaken to facilitate the provision of high quality policy support to AFSA members to influence policy makers in the region to develop and implement AE and FS strategies. The report also identifies existing bottlenecks and policy gaps inhibiting advancement of FS and AE in the region. It further recommends strategies to inform the work of AFSA and its partners going forward to influence policy and advance community voices on the transition to agroecology in Africa. Policy makers can also use the following findings to inform policy review and change processes.

Findings

1. Agricultural intensification combined with the growing homogenization of the global food system is not addressing food security challenges.

Approximately 153 million people, representing about 26% of the population above 15 years of age in Sub-Saharan Africa, suffered from severe food insecurity in 2014/15 (FAO, 2017). This situation is likely to worsen as climate change is expected to reduce yields from rain-fed crops in parts of sub-Saharan Africa by 50 per cent as early as 2020, resulting in an additional 24 million undernourished children (WFP, 2015). Roughly 28% of rural Africa's farmers'

cultivation land is also considered to be degrading over time (Barbier & Hochard, 2016). This will increase pressure on limited arable land to feed Africa's growing urban population projected to increase by almost half by 2025, and 70% by 2050 (United Nations, 2016).

2. There is a need for a fundamental shift from conventional, monoculture-based and high external input dependent agriculture to sustainable regenerative production systems.

Food systems must be holistic and recognize that farmers are more than just producers, but are also managers of an agroecological system which provides a number of public goods including water, energy, soil and biodiversity (UNCTAD, 2013). While industrial farming claims to have raised yields, it has done so at great cost, with extensive soil damage, huge biodiversity loss, and negative impacts on food sovereignty. By contrast, agroecology offers a wide range of sustainable benefits far beyond yields. Agroecology applies ecological principles to the design and management of agro-ecosystems. Its practices diversify farms and farming landscapes, increase biodiversity, nurture soil health, and stimulate interactions between different species, such that the farm provides for its own soil organic matter, pest regulation and weed control, without resort to external chemical inputs. Agroecology has consistently proven capable of sustainably increasing productivity and ensuring adequate nutrition through diverse diets. It has far greater potential

for fighting hunger and poverty, particularly when there are economic and climate shocks. Evidence is particularly convincing on the ability of agroecology to deliver strong and stable yields by building environmental and climate resilience (IPES-Food 2016).

3. The change needed to restore sustainability to food systems can occur only with a deep understanding of what a holistic, ecological food system is.

A one-size-fits-all approach will not end hunger in Africa by 2030. In a complex, diverse and increasing unpredictable farming environment, solutions must be context-specific, addressing complexity and embracing diversity. Any proposed solutions to increase agricultural productivity in the Africa region must be based on an understanding of existing diverse food systems (maize, sorghum, rice, cassava, yam, millet) and the development of particular solutions for each farming system. Attempts to grow crops that are not suited to the prevailing ecological conditions will often result in low yields or crop failure, with consequent adverse effects on food security.

4. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) provides a supportive policy environment to promote agroecology and sustainable food systems.

These new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which universally apply to all countries, will mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities, and tackle climate change while protecting the environment. The

SDGs tie food sovereignty and food security together, promoting biodiverse sustainable agriculture, using clean energy, and calling for a reduction in chemical pollution. For example, Target 2.4 calls on member states to *'ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters, and that progressively improve land and soil quality by 2030.'* The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is supported by other international agreements that also provide advocacy opportunities for amplifying agroecology (*Paris Agreement on Climate Change; ITPGRFA; Rome Declaration on Nutrition; Framework for Action on Food Security in Protracted Crisis; CBD; VGRtF, VGLT and VGSSF*)

5. Existing regional policy frameworks, if implemented with an agroecology lens, can support the promotion of FS and agroecological farming systems.

For example, to fulfil the *Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods* objective to end hunger by 2025 and enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability, 10% or more of agricultural spending must be targeted towards addressing the holistic needs of smallholder farmers. The *AU Guiding Principles on Large Scale*

Land Based Investments places tenure rights of smallholder farmers at the centre. *The African Regional Nutrition Strategy (2016-2025)* promotes diverse diets. The *Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement* ensures policy coherence and protects local markets from unfair trade. The *AU Agenda 2063 for long-term development* embraces AE and FS as essential for development given the importance of agriculture in the region.

6. The sub-regional bodies do not lack pro-AE and FS policies either. What is lacking is policy coherence with regional and international guidance.

The following sub-regional policies, declarations and strategies have the potential to scale up AE in the region: *WAEMU Community Development Programme for the Transformation of Agriculture; the Common Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP); EAC Vision 2050 on Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development; EAC Agricultural and Rural Development Policy; SADC Protocol on Forestry of 2002; SADC Regional Water Policy of 2015; SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap; SADC Protocol on Gender and Development; and the CEN-CAD Rabat Declaration on Combating Desertification*. Any sub-regional processes must be monitored to ensure coherence with international and regional guidance. For example, the *COMESA Seed Trade Harmonized Regulations* must be reviewed to ensure that the process aligns with the provisions of the *African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; African Model Legislation*

for the Protection of the Rights of Local Communities, Farmers and Breeders, and for the Regulation of Access to Biological Resources; Article 6 and 9 of the ITPGRFA on sustainable use and farmers rights and Target 2.7 of the SDGs.

7. Political will and commitment by governments is crucial to promote AE and FS.

It is clear from the study that even though the international and regional policies provide encouraging guidance to promote AE, success depends on state action and implementation. For example, the successes in West Africa came as a result of the governments' political commitment to agriculture. In Burkina Faso this political will is reflected in its prioritization of agriculture in allocating its \$480 million award from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (Wiggins, S. and Leturque, H. 2010.)

Conclusions

The author identified structural adjustment programs (SAPs), and the influence of multinational companies such as Monsanto, Syngenta and Yara pushing for intensification of the use of chemical fertilizers, hybrid seeds and pesticides as key factors inhibiting the advancement of AE and FS policies in the region. Neoliberal policies influenced how regional agreements such as the Maputo Declaration on 10% of GDP investment towards agriculture were implemented at the country level. For example the Zambia government implemented the Farmer

Input Subsidy Fertilizers Programme (FISP) to promote maize production. This concentration on maize has created monocultures and neglected the production of other high nutrient crops such as sorghum, millet, beans, rice, wheat, and barley.

There is an urgent need to rethink the best agricultural practices that do not have adverse effects on the environment (partly because the environment is an important asset for farming) and are accessible to and effective for farmers, and lead both to improvements in food productivity and have positive side-effects on environmental goods and services. The broader context in which food production systems operate and the constraints smallholder farmers face have to be taken into account; in particular, land degradation, insecurity of land tenure (emphasis on women farmers), competition for land, loss of biodiversity, natural resources management and climate change.

Recommendations

1. Identify gaps in all regulatory frameworks on food systems not in alignment with the transition to agroecology, the 2030 Agenda on SDGs and related international obligations. Promote stakeholder engagement in the review processes to work to ensure that policies remove obstacles and biases such as chemical input subsidies; support agroecological approaches to restore soil biodiversity and soil health; strengthen security of land tenure for small-scale farmers.

2. Actively engage in international and regional forums on agriculture, food security, rural development and climate change to push forward the AE and FS agenda.

These include meetings of the ITPGRFA, CBD, UNFCCC, Sendai Framework on DRR, High Level Panel of Experts to review SDGs, and CFS/CSM. At the regional level, it is important to engage at conferences on Land Policy in Africa, Expert Group Meetings on SDGs, Africa Economic Conferences, and Symposiums on Food and Nutrition Security.

3. Recognise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a key supportive framework for AE and FS. The 2030 Agenda recognises that sustainable management of natural resources is relevant to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals, and acknowledges the crucial role of biodiversity and ecosystem services for the well being of people and planet.

4. Monitor the policy review processes and encourage them to be truly participative, iterative and transparent process to ensure that those whose lives will be affected, particularly women, are included in creating the policies that govern their livelihoods.

5. Engage with key stakeholders such as within UNECA and sub-regional secretariats, and chairs of thematic areas (*particularly on natural resources, gender, governance, regional integration and trade*) that are leading discussion on agriculture and food security issues.

6. Encourage the Pan-African Farmers' Organization (PAFO) to prioritize Agroecology and Food Sovereignty in its post 2017 strategy.

7. Encourage the development of cross sector integrated NAFSIPs indicators covering issues of land governance, gender, agroecology, financial inclusion, market access, farmers rights to seeds, delivery of public services to promote sustainable agriculture, social protection and fair trade.

8. Build the capacity of civil society to engage in consultative policy review processes at national level, and monitor national implementation of SDGs, CBD Aichi Targets and Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and to promote eco-friendly agricultural policies.

9. Develop simple communication materials on SDG targets and indicators in support of agroecological approaches - to raise awareness, and build the capacity of local networks to effectively engage with policymakers.

10. Recognize and commend countries with active agroecology food sovereignty policy processes, particularly within SADC, EAC and WAEMU regions.

Who is AFSA?

AFSA is a broad alliance of civil society actors who are part of the struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology in Africa. It is a network of networks, currently with 30 active members in more than 50 African countries. These include African food producer networks, African NGO networks, indigenous people's organizations, faith based organizations, women and youth groups, consumer movements, and international organizations that support the stance of AFSA.

What Is AFSA's Mission?

The core purpose of AFSA is to influence policies and to promote African solutions for food sovereignty. AFSA serves as a continental platform for consolidation of issues pertaining to food sovereignty and together marshal a single and louder voice on issues that matter to Africa, tabling clear and workable solutions.

What Does AFSA Do?

We are galvanizing the food sovereignty movement and building momentum to influence the transition to agroecology across Africa, specifically by:

- Amplifying agroecology
- Enhancing Farmer-Managed Seed Systems
- Strengthening land tenure governance
- Strengthening communications

Strategic Priorities for 2017-18-19

Agroecology: to galvanize the agroecology movement in Africa, and influence decision makers to recognize agroecology as the sustainable future of African farming.

Land: to provide rural communities in Africa a strong voice on land rights.

Seed: to support farmer-managed seed systems, influencing seed policy, recognizing women's central role, changing the narrative to recognize FMSS as the essential and fundamental base of Africa's food system.

Communications: to inform and influence policy outcomes on seed and food sovereignty, land rights, and the transition to agroecology.

AFSA's Theory of Change

Building the Movement

- To build the advocacy capacity of our members to influence regional policies towards seed sovereignty, agroecological practice and fair land use.
- To strengthen our institutional capacity to deliver the strategy.
- To improve network communications, within and outside the alliance.
- Secure resources to deliver the strategy and strengthen AFSA's governance, operational systems, policies and procedures.

Policy Advocacy

- To provide opportunities for our members voices to be heard at the highest levels.
- Participate and advocate at high-level regional and global meetings.
- Organize annual regional forums on agroecology.
- Develop advocacy materials e.g. policy briefs on Seed, Agroecology, Land.
- Produce a documentary on Agroecology in Africa.

Raising Consumer Awareness

- Recruit consumers as agents of change, strengthening the links between consumer choice, food safety, nutrition and health and food sovereignty.

Evidence

- Undertake research to support the advocacy evidence base with compelling data and analysis.
- Develop and share accessible publications to bring the evidence to light.

Learn more at www.afafrica.org

AFSA'S THEORY OF CHANGE



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AFSA

Our partners:

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