

COMMUNIQUÉ

COMMEMORATION OF THE 11TH AFRICA DAY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

1. The 11th Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security (ADFNS) was commemorated virtually on 30th October 2020 under the theme “*Resilient Food Systems toward Healthy Diets for the Vulnerable during Emergencies: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic*”.
2. The focus of the 11th ADFNS is to uncover the underlying benefits and potential that investment in resilient food systems can create with special focus on situations dictated by emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. The event was led by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme of the United Nations (WFP), the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), Nutrition International (NI), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), African Development Bank (AfDB), HarvestPlus, International Potato Center (CIP), Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) led by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).
4. The celebration of the 11th ADFNS was preceded by a Technical Dialogue on 29th October 2020 with four parallel sessions focusing on the following thematic areas:
 - i. Building and sustaining resilient food systems in Africa;
 - ii. Scaling-up towards mitigating and preventing chronic malnutrition during and after the Covid-19 pandemic;
 - iii. Leveraging evidence-based innovative interventions to create impact in food and nutrition security; and
 - iv. Promoting traditional and indigenous knowledge to enrich Africa’s diets and food systems.
5. The Technical Dialogue sessions involved sharing experiences and lessons learnt on solutions that have been tried to address different aspects of food insecurity and malnutrition through evidence based pragmatic food system-based approaches. Governments, policy stakeholders and the private sector contributed to the deliberations towards developing key relevant messages that can support progress.

6. The Technical Dialogue sessions were made possible by contributions from all the collaborating partners, as well as some technical partners from regional agricultural research institutions, including, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA), West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF), Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (CSIR), African Forum For Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS), HarvestPlus, International Potato Center (CIP), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).
7. The 2-day structured commemoration of the ADFNS attracted over 400 participants representing a broad range of stakeholder organizations, including representatives of national governments, regional organizations, international, multilateral and bilateral organizations, civil society, private sector and media organizations.
8. The ceremonial event on 30th October 2020 was graced with strong key messages from H.E. Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, Nutrition Champion and Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, H.E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko, AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD, Representative of Development Partners and Ms. Mariama Cisse Mohamed, Representative of the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs.
9. Also speaking at the event were: Professor Shaukat Abdulrazak, Director, Division for Africa, Technical Cooperation Department of IAEA; Mr. Stanlake Samkange, WFP Senior Director for Strategic Partnership; Mr. Mohamed Malick Fall, UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa; and Dr. Abebe Haile-Gabriel, FAO Assistant Director General for Africa.
10. The high-level participants in attendance endorsed the key messages arising from the event.

KEY MESSAGES

The Covid-19 pandemic and the need to mitigate its effects on food systems and nutrition:

1. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the already strained health and distribution systems, and socio-economic needs of the continent.
2. The Covid-19 pandemic necessitates transforming our food systems in a way that supports more diverse sustainable healthy diets with strong food safety and ecosystem resilience considerations. There is need to mitigate against dietary transition that depends on ultra-processed foods not supporting nutrition and health outcomes.

3. AU Member State Governments are encouraged to adopt and adapt appropriate technologies, innovations and systems that have been proven to be effective for managing the impact of the COVID-19 and other shocks on food security. To this end, Governments are encouraged to domesticate the relevant regional and continental frameworks for advanced application of science in food systems, notably the AU-Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), the AfCFTA and the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa.

Improved and increased consumption of nutrient-rich diets, especially by vulnerable people:

4. In order to improve consumption of micro-nutrient-rich diets, it is a necessity that existing successful interventions backed by evidence generated on the continent, are scaled up to maximize impact and reach the most vulnerable populations.
5. Place special emphasis on promoting indigenous and neglected local foods for healthier diets, in line with strengthening local short food value chains that will deliver healthy diets.
6. Better nutrition is an important aspect of managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments should intensify supplementation of programmes in the health sector and include fortified and biofortified foods in COVID-19 social safety net response.

Early warning and continuous monitoring of programmes and intervention performance:

7. Build capacities to anticipate and act on food system risks and opportunities by among others, strengthening the Africa Foresight Academy and galvanizing the community of foresight practice to advance the application of foresight techniques.
8. Led by the AU Commission, continental and international partners should double efforts for strengthening existing data collection tools that enable making information accurate, reliable and valid for making a compelling case for investing more in nutrition and food systems.

Coordination of cross-sectoral collaboration at all levels:

9. Support cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration to foster synergy that will support the needed food system transformation to provide nutrient dense food baskets accessible to the majority of Africa's population.
10. National food security and nutrition programmes will be effective only if the needed coordination mechanisms, systems and capacities are supported through pooled resources by governments, donor organizations and the private sector.

Enabled environment for private sector investment in nutrition

11. Governments and development partners should create enabling policy environment for encouraging more private sector investment in promoting, production and supply of affordable healthy and fortified foods in order to become more available, accessible, and affordable.

Done virtually on 30th October 2020