Building resilience and enhancing nutrition in Africa's food systems

Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition



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January 2025

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This Executive Summary sets out the key messages from the Global Panel's 2025 report *Building Resilience and Enhancing Nutrition in Africa's Food Systems.* This was produced in collaboration with the Governments of Malawi, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia and provides important recommendations and advice for leaders at the most senior levels in African countries and international organisations. It is also of direct relevance to decision makers, professionals, experts, actors in the private sector and researchers with interests in food systems and diets.

Many of the individuals will be directly concerned with the production, processing, trade, regulation, supply, and consumption of food. However, others may work in wider areas of policy and business, for example relating to public health and wellbeing, education and equity, economic development and investment, urbanisation, globalisation and demography. Finally, it is also of direct relevance to decision makers concerned with the many and diverse threats and crises facing food systems today – environmental, financial, geopolitical and societal.

The report and this executive summary set out practical steps which are essential for strengthening the resilience of African food systems and their transformation, and for enhancing nutrition.

The Global Panel is grateful to Irish Aid for financial support for this project.

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This report is based on research funded by the Irish Government. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the funder.

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This publication is a product of the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition and was authored by the Project's Lead Expert Group, supported by the Panel Secretariat. This publication was peer reviewed. The findings, interpretations, conclusions, advice, and recommendations expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect the views of the organisations or the governments the Global Panel members represent.

ISBN: 978-1-0687853-2-0

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Executive summary

1. Introduction: The resilience of food systems and their transformation

It is now widely recognised that food systems in Africa, and other parts of the developing world need to urgently transform – with the goal of delivering universal access to sustainable, healthy diets for all. That was a key message in the Global Panel's 2020 Foresight report: Future Food Systems: For people, our planet and prosperity.[1] Since then, leaders in countries across the world have committed to change, most notably at the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, and more recently at COP28 in Dubai. The growing political momentum reflects the realisation that these diets remain inaccessible to over 3 billion people globally, and more than 1 billion in Africa, with the ensuing hunger and malnutrition acting as a brake on many policy agendas.[2] These relate, for example, to supporting the physical and mental development of children, promoting the health of populations, addressing entrenched inequalities, and engendering economic growth in developing countries.

Despite the manifest political will, it is widely accepted that progress in transforming food systems remains too slow. In response, the Global Panel, with funding from Irish Aid, has undertaken a one-year programme of work in Africa. The aim was to work in partnership with local experts and stakeholders from three very different countries, and to take an in-depth look at one critical aspect of the transformation – the resilience of their food systems, and the measures needed to strengthen this. The partner countries were Sierra Leone, Malawi, and Ethiopia.

By focusing on social, political, and economic realities on the ground, the project reported here is very different from work previously undertaken by the Global Panel. The aims were twofold: to explore the gap between the resilience of national food systems and the threats they face today and over the next 10-20 years; and, for the experts in those countries, working with international experts, to develop plans for strengthening resilience – both of their food systems, and of the transformation process that they are undergoing.

The primary focus here is to inform government decisions in the three countries, and across Africa. But there are also important messages for other stakeholders in Africa and internationally: donors and development organisations, international organisations concerned with trade and finance, the private sector and civil society.

Key messages

To achieve sustained transformation, much greater priority needs to be given to strengthening the resilience of food systems across the continent as they are challenged to cope in a more uncertain and volatile world. The view of experts involved in the work reported here, is that in the future, some food systems in fragile settings may be at risk of collapse as they continue to be impacted by a 'cascade of crises'. This would pose very serious consequences for the populations concerned – in terms of hunger and malnutrition, social stability, and migration.

Despite these challenges to its food systems, Africa has very significant strengths to draw on to realise its substantial potential. The first lies in its growing youthful populations who can innovate and drive change. New opportunities to strengthen resilience and create jobs are offered by the development and roll-out of innovative technologies such as digital and genomic tools to help provide producers with the means of transforming their food systems – to make them more resilient, so that they deliver sustainable, healthy diets for all. Such measures could contribute substantially to implementing the forthcoming Kampala Declaration (see Box 1).

There is also considerable potential to increase the opportunities for women within African food systems. Too often they are disadvantaged over their male counterparts.

This report has identified major opportunities for strengthening food-system resilience while also potentially benefiting the health of populations and the environment. Agro-ecological management practices are one example. Opportunities in other parts of food systems include: strengthening multi-level governance and rethinking trade policy to better support their resilience; and promoting private sector investment in food systems transformation. These examples show that not all interventions require substantial government financial resources to take forward.

All relevant stakeholders are exhorted to work together to strengthen the resilience of Africa's food systems. Action needs to be rolled out at scale to be truly impactful, but severe resource constraints, and debt crises threaten to limit action at scale across the continent. All relevant parties need to come together to meet this challenge, including the public and private sectors, civil society, donors and other international organisations.

Box 1: The broad political context within which policy change in Africa's agrifood system will be implemented, is about to change

The 4th CAADP Biennial Review (2024) concluded that the continent remains off-track to meet the Malabo Declaration goals by 2025. With the Malabo Action Plan reaching its end in 2025, agreement has now been reached on the Kampala Declaration which will be adopted in January 2025. It reflects an important new policy direction for the continent.

Nations are being urged to create resilient, inclusive, and sustainable agri-food systems through embracing a collective shift toward transformative solutions that address food security, climate resilience, adaption to unforeseen challenges including pandemics and extreme weather, and economic growth. This should be viewed as part of wider action to strengthen the resilience of food systems more generally.

It is hoped that the conclusions of this report, drawing on the realities of three African countries, will offer important and timely insights for low- and middle-income countries in Africa and beyond.

2. Challenges to African food systems

African food systems are coming under increasing pressure from three directions:

- **They are being challenged by a 'cascade of crises'.** These include conflict, (near and distant), human pandemics, pests and diseases of crops and livestock, the risk of financial instability due to national debt crises, and environmental stresses. Some threats are set to intensify in the decades ahead: this report asserts that whatever the expectation of future delivery of Nationally Determined Contributions, it would be prudent for African food systems to be strengthened to be resilient not just to 1.5°C warming, but to at least two degrees (above pre-industrial levels).[i] The assertion that the 21st century may be entering an 'age of disruption' is of particular relevance to African countries where small-scale farming dominates.

- **Africa's food systems must evolve to meet the demands of its growing populations.** These are projected to rise from just over 1.5 billion in 2024 to over 1.8 billion in 2035, and 2.5 billion by 2050.[3,4] These increases will add considerably to the pressures on Africa's food systems – not just from the greater numbers, but also from shifting diets as populations become wealthier. Increases in per-capita consumption of meat and other foods with relatively high environmental footprints are likely. At the same time, African food systems will also need to cope with a major expansion of its urban populations. These are projected to reach 1.2 billion by 2050 – an additional 600 million people.[5]

- **African countries are heavily constrained by mounting debt crises and many competing priorities.** These, and the other pressures mentioned above, point to the need for assistance from other stakeholders – within countries and internationally – working closely with African governments.

Governments may add to the risks facing their food systems by underestimating the scale and complexity of future threats. If not carefully managed, these could combine, with each amplifying the impacts of others. Bold action is required to strengthen resilience, which will inevitably come with political and economic costs. However, the risks and long-term costs of inaction, including widespread food insecurity, economic instability, and diminished public trust are far greater. Proactive investment is a critical safeguard for the future.

3. Strengthening food-system resilience in Sierra Leone, Malawi and Ethiopia

All three countries have high ambition to transform their food systems to deliver universal access to sustainable and affordable healthy diets. However, their efforts to deliver on that goal are threatened by multiple interacting crises. At the same time pressures on their food systems, including land and resource use, are set to increase substantially from population growth, as mentioned above.

The approach adopted by each of the three countries for this analysis was distinct, reflecting their different perspectives, and very different local circumstances. Further detail is set out in Box 2. [ii]

- **Each of the countries has placed possible measures to strengthen food-system resilience into the context of their existing flagship programmes.** This has the immediate advantage that those programmes generally enjoy support at the highest level of government, and already involve different government departments, thereby providing a ready-made platform for collaboration to strengthen food-system resilience. Also, the wider perspectives in this project around diets and nutrition, have helped to inform how the ambitions of those programmes can be broadened to encompass the demand side and to give greater emphasis to the provision of sustainable, healthy diets.

- **Experts in each of the three countries took a view of which future threats and risks were the most important (see below).** However, the wider work of this project has exposed a much broader range of risks that need to be considered.

- **The need to roll out actions at scale amid severe resource constraints was a recurring theme.** This was seen as a considerable challenge with no easy solutions. A number of proposals relating to other stakeholders were identified (see below).

- **National/sub-national partnerships were seen as important.** However, it was accepted that there were potential difficulties around these that needed to be carefully considered.

i See Chapter 3 of the full report for a discussion of this point.

ii A detailed account of the findings for each of the countries may be found in Chapters 4 – 6 of the full report.

Box 2.1: Key findings from Sierra Leone

The situation today: The country is one of the poorest in the world, ranked 181 out of 191 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) and with a GDP per capita of US$635 in 2023.[6,7] National surveys have shown how the country's food and nutrition security is deteriorating: food insecurity increased by about 12% over ten years, from 45% in 2010, to 57% in 2020.[8] In 2024, 82% of the population were food insecure among which 18% of households were severely food insecure.[9] The demands on the food system will intensify as the population grows – from around 7.65 million today, to over 12.5 million by 2050.[10]

The Feed Salone Program, championed by President Bio, recognises the critical importance of the agricultural sector in the country's economy.[11] It aims to reduce dependence on rice imports, encourage investment in other crops and reduce malnutrition and hunger. But further action is needed to deliver universal access to affordable and sustainable, healthy diets that are essential to the country's future, and to strengthen resilience in the face of worsening threats.

Threats: Five categories of threats were identified which could undermine resilience-building and transformation processes in Sierra Leone's food system. These are socioeconomic factors (particularly associated with high levels of poverty), food system activities (e.g. high costs of agricultural inputs and labour), the policy environment (these are particularly diverse – examples relate to access to insurance and concessional loans, trade barriers and high taxation), production capacity (e.g. relating to low private sector investment) and diverse environmental factors (e.g. climate change, deforestation, land degradation and pests and diseases).

Plans: Sierra Leone's vision in building and transforming sustainable food systems requires concerted efforts by all actors including government, the private sector, and development partners. Seven strategic measures are set out in this report, ranging from strengthening multi-level governance of food systems, to closing the nutrition security/nutrition resilience gap, and promoting ethical private sector investment in food systems transformation. Specific actions are also provided for the short – (1-4 years), medium – (5-9 years) and long term (10+ years). However, substantial resources need to be mobilised to enable plans to be rolled out at scale. Feed Salone alone will cost US$1.6 billion to implement fully by 2028.

Box 2.2: Key findings from Malawi

The situation today: In the current lean period (October-March) an estimated 5.7 million people are acutely food insecure, up from 1.5 million in the same period in 2021/22.[12] Malawi's population is projected to grow from 20.3 million in 2024 to an estimated 33.6 million in 2050.[13]

The transformation agenda of Malawi's food system is closely linked to Malawi's vision towards 2063, aiming at attaining an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation. This vision is operationalised in 10-year phases, the first of which pursues two key milestones: graduate the country to lower middle-income rank, and meet most of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including ending hunger, ensuring food security and improving nutrition by 2030.

These goals align with Malawi's Food System Transformation Initiatives (FSTI), which is seen as a catalyst to achieving Malawi's vision. Food-systems transformation is considered vitally important to delivering on these ambitions: ensuring resilience of both its food systems and the transformation process itself are priorities.

As of now, food and nutrition security is a major concern. The 2023/24 national crop production estimates were recorded at their lowest, with widespread food and nutrition insecurity affecting close to four million of the population.[14] 80% of farmers are smallholders, depending on the rains in a single growing season. Moreover, inadequate sustainable agricultural practices are creating challenges, given the cost and scale of land and soil degradation, and environmental problems being built up for the future. Persistent hunger threatens macro-economic and social stability, and security.

Threats: Important factors affecting food-system resilience were identified as: climate change and high costs of farm inputs and implements, which particularly affect smallholder farmers; and institutional and governance factors relating to ineffective policy implementation. A particular concern is macroeconomic instability characterised by low economic growth, high inflation, and devaluation of the Kwacha, which have had direct negative impact on food systems transformation initiatives. At the household level, repeated dips in food production due in part to fluctuating hydrological conditions continue to paralyse the capacity of households to obtain better livelihoods.

Plans: The proposals set out in this report include prioritising the implementation of five action tracks within the Food Systems Transformation Initiative. These focus on; a) safe and nutritious food, b) shifting to healthy and sustainable consumption patterns, c) boosting nature positive food production, d) advancing equitable livelihoods and e) building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress. Further, action aims to strengthen governance to engender better progress in food-system transformation. These actions are to be operationalised at short-term (1-4 years); medium-term (5-9 years) and long-term (10+ years) timescales.

Box 2.3: Key findings from Ethiopia

The situation today: Ethiopia is subject to a particularly diverse set of threats and challenges. They include extreme poverty, limited resource availability, rising living costs, internal conflicts, and climate-related factors. All affect society both at community and individual levels. The population is projected to rise from around 130 million today, to nearly double by 2050, adding considerable pressures on the food system.[15,16]

The focus of the work reported here concerns strategies to strengthen the resilience of Ethiopia's food system, specifically by building resilience into the implementation of the country's Seqota Declaration.[17] This Government-led Declaration focuses on food and nutrition security, multisectoral collaboration, food systems resilience, and environmental sustainability while aligning with national policies and strategies. A key goal is to eliminate child stunting by 2030.

Threats: The resilience of the country's food production is particularly affected by climate change, environmental sensitivity, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, and water management issues, as well as economic vulnerability. Additionally, gender inequality, financial exclusion, social and cultural barriers, and absence of mainstream disaster risk management present further risks to the resilience of the Seqota Declaration.

Plans: Thirteen broad opportunities were identified to transform the Declaration into a cohesive strategy for enhancing resilience in Ethiopia's agro-ecological production systems in the face of complex challenges. These range from climate – and nutrition-smart approaches, to strategies designed to align humanitarian support with development and peace-building efforts; and strengthening and expanding implementation of nutrition interventions at the grassroots level. As in the other two countries, integrated efforts were seen to be key: the approach proposed here emphasises collaboration and community engagement, as well as innovative solutions.

4. Key messages for African governments

It is essential that efforts to strengthen resilience of food systems are integrated into plans for their transformation. While there is considerable investment and ambition targeted at agricultural production and agro-processing across the continent, much of this remains largely disconnected from the sustainable, healthy diets agenda. This is a substantial missed opportunity. The outcome is that where nutritious foods which contribute to a healthy diet are available, they are at prices which are unaffordable for over one billion people in Africa. There is now a growing commitment by African leaders to transform their food systems to address these concerns. However, efforts to implement transformation pathways risk being constantly derailed – as governments divert both economic and political resources to cope with short-term disruptions to food and nutrition supply, and price spikes.

Measures to strengthen resilience need to take a broad view: resisting threats as they develop, recovering after disturbances, and proactively reorienting to prevent problems from emerging.

They should also consider five important dimensions of resilience. These broadly align with different classes of stakeholder who may need to act:

- **Production resilience based on agro-ecological conditions.** Agro-ecosystems with rich biodiversity, healthy soils, abundant water, and landscape heterogeneity typically fare better during shocks such as droughts and/or pest outbreaks; and they typically recover faster.
- **Value chain resilience based on economic characteristics and infrastructure.** This dimension relates to the value chain that links producers and consumers – it has both economic and infrastructural elements.
- **Consumer and household resilience based on livelihoods and assets.** Evidence drawn from livelihoods data show families who have substantial human and financial capital are more robust and better able to recover and reorient their livelihoods to cope with many kinds of shocks.
- **Community resilience based on social capital and civil engagement.** A substantial amount of food-system resilience is mobilised at a community level, for example, involving neighbours and community groups rallying during times of need to help each other. Communities with well-developed social and built infrastructure, functioning civil society organisations, lower crime rates, and access to services have better capacity to mobilise collective responses to challenges.
- **Institutional resilience based on governance and safety nets.** Formal institutions include governments, but also the development and donor communities. When problems extend beyond the scope of a household or community, or even a nation state, these institutions can mobilise proactive and reactive responses. Another key element of institutional resilience is the ability to anticipate threats and challenges on the horizon, and to plan for them.

This suggested approach will provide a practical framework on which to 'hang' actions, and a means to identify where proposed actions are uneven in their coverage (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed explanation). It can also be used to consider how actions may interact and have secondary impacts on others, to evaluate trade-offs and to consider unintended consequences.

Box 3 provides a checklist for African governments planning to strengthen the resilience of their food systems.

Box 3: Guidance for policy makers strengthening the resilience of their food systems

1. A comprehensive understanding of the threats that a food system could face in the future is an essential starting point. This should include: planning for unexpected events, going beyond past experiences (notably due to changing climate), considering how some threats might have impacts which may seem beyond credible (e.g. COVID-19), and also how threats may interact.

2. The cost effectiveness of different policies and actions need to be explored – as well as the risks and costs of inaction. The aim is to find policies and actions that work under most future outcomes (scenarios). Evaluating benefits that go beyond food systems is also likely to be important – e.g. relating to health and healthcare costs, worker productivity, and addressing societal inequalities.

3. Looking right across food systems – from producer to consumer – is essential. All parts of the system need to work together, and be integrated with sectoral strategies (notably across water-energy-food)

4. All relevant parts of government need to be persuaded and incentivised to play their part. Direction and strategic oversight at the highest levels of government is essential to bring different interests together. Strengthening the resilience of food systems needs to be recognised as a government-wide priority and embedded within wider governmental priorities. Relevant departments need to appreciate how their own policy areas would benefit; and they need to be involved in developing and agreeing a cross-governmental strategy with clear actions and deliverables for each.

5. Linking a cross-government strategy (to strengthen resilience) to wider government flagship programmes can help to leverage political and other resources. However, it is important that those flagship programmes do not over-constrain any resilience strategy.

6. Strengthening access to nutritious foods is important and needs to be explicitly addressed – food security with a focus on staples is important but not sufficient. The ultimate goal should be universal access to sustainable, healthy diets, with diversification of food systems to include nutritious under-utilised crops.

7. It is important to assure access to sustainable and affordable energy to power food systems transformation. Inadequate access to energy and power affects all segments along the food systems value chain, and is a major contributor to food-system inefficiencies.

8. Individual policy choices need to be informed by the best available science and evidence. And they need to be thought through to assess unintended consequences, and trade-offs.

9. Developing pathways to build resilience into food systems needs to include processes to monitor progress and ensure accountability. This is crucial to the development of more resilient food systems and engendering trust and confidence in decision makers.

10. Consideration should be given to fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration. This is essential and can help remove obstacles to building resilience.

5. Key messages for other stakeholders – in Africa and internationally

It is not feasible for African governments, such as in Ethiopia, Malawi and Sierra Leone, to fully address the diversity and scale of future threats to their food systems alone. This is in large part because of severe resource constraints amidst growing national debt crises. Assistance is needed from other stakeholders as set out below.

5.1 The donor community

There is a strong case for the donor community to consider how it can better support African countries to build resilience into their food systems and their transformation pathways, and so help to secure universal access to sustainable, healthy diets. The following are the views expressed by African experts involved in the work reported here.

- **Donors should consider allocating a major increase in resources to strengthen food-system resilience, and to roll out programmes at scale.** Increased funding is needed to meet the severity of future threats to food systems, and the danger of their future collapse. Also, in Malawi and Sierra Leone, for example, many experts involved in the work of this project considered that there are too many small projects which fail to have sufficient aggregate impact to create the rapid and widespread change that is needed across multiple sectors.

- **Better coordination and cooperation between donors is desirable.** This would engender the roll-out at scale advocated above and help to avoid overlapping programmes.

- **Donor support to transform food systems and make them more resilient needs to place more emphasis on the longer-term.** This is not to discourage shorter-term projects. However, transforming food systems is a long-term challenge, and needs to take an equally long-term view of threats and risks to food systems.

- **The balance between donor support for vulnerable populations at times of crisis (e.g. through social safety nets), versus support to make food systems more resilient, needs to be carefully considered.** Both have their place. However, achieving greater resilience would engender self-reliance, and better access to sustainable, healthy diets for all in the longer term.

5.2 The private sector

Private businesses need to be at the heart of any strategy to strengthen food-system resilience. Governments and businesses need to work together without delay to develop joint strategies to strengthen the resilience of food systems. This needs to be a priority and will add considerable value to the benefit of both. Strategies should consider the following:

- **Ensuring that a stable policy and regulatory environment is in place which supports micro-, small- and medium-enterprises (MSMEs) along food value chains, as well as physical security and security in land tenure:** all are important factors influencing investment decisions at both large and small scales.

- **Priorities should be agreed for research and capacity building which promote the development and roll out of new and novel technologies, for example in digital applications.** These should include increasing the capacity of smallholders and MSMEs to access and utilise new innovations.

- **Regulation should be considered as a possible stimulus for change – for example by creating a level playing field for smaller businesses to operate.** Individual firms, and particularly MSMEs, may be reluctant to be 'first movers', where that might involve additional costs and investments which their competitors would not incur.

- **Government policies and incentives should be considered to 'nudge' or encourage companies to strengthen resilience in ways that have societal, as well as commercial benefits.** The complexity of food systems means that businesses may have many options to act to strengthen resilience – involving different winners and losers, and different implications for society (as opposed to profits).

- **The informal food sector needs to be encouraged and better supported.** It has critical roles to play in supporting food security, and in improving access to dietary diversity, particularly in times of crisis. Informal food markets (typically open air) help poorer consumers access fruits, vegetables, dairy and meat products. They also offer important opportunities for livelihoods and income generation, particularly for women on low incomes, and young people – these in turn, contribute to their resilience.

5.3 The international community

Climate-related finance and policy:

Agreement was reached at COP29 for the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG). This aims to increase annual international support for developing countries from US$100 billion to US$300 billion (by 2035). It also exhorts all actors to work together to scale up climate finance to developing countries, from public and private sources, to US$ 1.3 trillion per year by 2035. This is to be welcomed, but there remain substantial areas of concern.

First, it is essential that food systems, their transformation, and their adaptation to climate change, are given high priority in the allocation of funds. This is consistent with the widespread recognition of the critical importance of food systems to multiple policy agendas beyond food and nutrition. Second, identifying and planning new adaptation measures, and rolling out existing measures at scale needs to proceed urgently as the effects of climate change continue to intensify. This argues the need for any increased funding to be made available quickly and efficiently. Adaptation measures are particularly important for LMICs which are disproportionately affected by climate change, and least able to resource adaptation.

The new focus on food systems at UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD COPs is to be welcomed, as are the many commitments to transform food systems made by nations at these different international fora – as well as at the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. However, there remains a substantial gap between the rhetoric at such events, and the reality in many countries, where the pace of change is slow. This is concerning since such a transformation is essential: to enable vulnerable populations to be resilient to climate change; for food systems to become more sustainable; and to deliver access to healthy diets that are essential for physical health, wellbeing and future prosperity.

Trade

International trade policy needs to better support the resilience of food systems – not just in Africa, but globally. Trade has a critical role to play in keeping vulnerable populations fed at times of crisis. Yet at times of geopolitical uncertainty, an over reliance on imports creates vulnerabilities, partly because trade mechanisms are not designed for these goals.

Strategies, such as the African Union's Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth, together with its successor the Kampala Declaration, and the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCTA) should be better facilitated. The trade balance of the three countries

considered in this report (and others in Africa) are negative, thereby acting to increase their indebtedness. Trade in manufactured goods, especially food products, between and among African countries should be better supported – for too long African countries have principally traded in raw materials. New national agro-industrial policies are needed that are synchronised with regional and global trade policies. Overall, the pursuit of agro-industrialisation which emphasises agro-ecological approaches, and crop diversity to promote sustainable, healthy diets, has the potential to address multiple challenges to building climate resilience in food systems transformations, from production to consumption.

Relations with other countries and power blocs – the European Union

Dialogue between African Countries and the European Union (EU) should be developed further, to discuss how EU policies link with the resilience of food systems in Africa. Food systems in Africa and Europe are closely intertwined, notably through trade, and EU support for food agencies and scientific collaboration. Also, EU policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy, have long impacted African food systems. The 'Green Deal' and other 'greening' policies are also having a substantial impact, for example on deforestation regulation, the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and the imposition of stringent standards.

Europe has a strong interest in ensuring that African food systems are resilient. This is not only in view of its present trade with Africa, but also due to its humanitarian policies, as well as wider implications for politically sensitive areas of policy, for example on economic and political stability. The dialogue between African countries and the EU on food systems should consider the following objectives:

- **Develop a better understanding of the possible negative and positive effects of EU policy development on vulnerable countries.** The aim would be to integrate those considerations into the design of new policies.
- **Use the interchange about those policies as a vehicle to include more voices from vulnerable countries and populations.** A particular goal should be to access knowledge and understanding of local circumstances to evaluate the possible impacts of policies on vulnerable populations.
- **Ensure that the EU's pollution and environmental footprint is not externalised at Africa's expense.**
- **Foster further support for research and innovation specific to food systems in African countries.**

In addition, The African Union Commission could usefully support African member states to estimate national carbon stocks with a view to negotiating fair carbon trade with European countries. African countries could use their carbon stocks as collateral for loans related to 'green food systems projects'.



5.4 The research community

Suggested research priorities are as follows:

- Researchers should adopt a gender, youth and social inclusion framing for research and engage with groups concerned with promoting equity.
- Encouraging researchers to engage in participatory and community-based research to co-develop locally relevant resilience programming.
- Developing a better understanding of how regenerative, climate smart agricultural practices can be incentivised among smallholder farmers.
- Developing a better understanding of how novel technologies can be applied in ways that enhance resilience at the agro-ecological level.
- Food systems governance issues – for example, in relation to multi-stakeholder networks and communication channels to build inclusion and agency for local voices (farmer groups, extension staff, and market trader associations).
- The use of trade agreements and regulation (global and regional) as a means to strengthen the resilience of food systems, and to ensure secure access to sustainable, healthy diets, and the foods that are essential for those.
- The development of digital technologies and other novel approaches: consideration needs to be given to issues concerning intellectual property to ensure all relevant actors in the food system are able to access such developments.

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ISBN: 978-1-0687853-2-0

January 2025

Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
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This report is based on research funded by the Irish Government. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the funder.