



Family farmers for sustainable food systems

A synthesis of reports by
African farmers' regional networks
on models of
food production, consumption and markets

EuropAfrica – Towards Food Sovereignty is a campaign that connects African farmers' platforms and European civil society organisations to reflect and act together on major current issues concerning food and agricultural policies, trade and development cooperation. EuropAfrica aims to raise awareness and advocate on shared issues and to promote sustainable small-scale family farming and local agri-food systems that bring consumers and producers closer together. The campaign supports the realisation of food sovereignty, i.e. the right for people and communities to define their own food and agricultural policies, both in Africa and in Europe, without impeding the food sovereignty of others.



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Family farmers for sustainable food systems: a synthesis of reports by African farmers' regional networks on models of food production, consumption and markets.

The reports are:

- Mamadou Goïta, *Système de production, de transformation et de commercialisation des produits en Afrique de l'Ouest: une illustration avec le cas du mil dans la région de Sikasso au Mali*. ROPPA, 2013.
- Patrice Abessolo Amougou, *Systèmes alimentaire durables dans l'Afrique de l'Ouest, de l'Est et Centrale*. PROPAC, 2013.
- Shem Mecheo, *Models of production and consumption and local markets: building on the experiences of African family farmers in their struggles to realize food sovereignty*. EAFF, 2013.

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Summary

Family farming is the basis for modern food provision in Africa, today and tomorrow. Its multi-functionality and sustainable productive potential is supported by extensive research evidence. Family farming and small-scale food production generates food and well-being for the majority of the population and the wealth of the region, and conserves its natural resources. It can ensure employment for young people within their territories, thus promoting social peace and attenuating migration. Innovative family farming, backed by appropriate research, supportive investments and adequate protection, can out-perform industrial commodity production. It provides the basis for the food sovereignty of communities, countries and sub-regions of Africa.

Key findings

1. Investing in family farming and small-scale food production will improve food provision, social and environmental sustainability and safeguard livelihoods for the majority.
2. Guaranteeing rights of access to and control over productive resources- land, water, agricultural biodiversity - is essential to support family farming and small-scale food production and resilient food systems.
3. Sustainable sources of credit, social protection measures and grain reserves and livestock resources are needed to strengthen the resilience of family farming and local food systems.
4. Strengthening and building agricultural and food markets, which are within the control of family farmers and small-scale food producers, support socially and environmentally sustainable production, and provide accessible quality food for consumers, is essential.
5. Participatory research in support of, and determined by, family farmers and small-scale food producers is required to enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of food provision.
6. The public sector has an essential role to play by tailoring national investment frameworks, policies and programmes to support the needs of family farmers. With effective and decisive engagement in policy processes and practical implementation, family farmers and small-scale food producers will become architects of their own futures and those of their societies.
7. To build a sustainable food system for the future, research and data collection need to prioritise the means by which the majority of people access food and thus to actively seek information on the informal and mostly 'invisible' production, processing and trade within the food system.

Contents

1) Background	1
1.1) Context	1
1.2) African farmers' networks engagement	2
2) Perspectives	5
2.1) Data	5
2.2) Meanings	5
3) Local food networks in Cameroon, Kenya and Mali	11
3.1) Production	11
3.2) Consumption	14
3.3) Processing and storage	15
3.4) Marketing	16
4) Constraints and proposals on investments	19
4.1) Models of production	19
4.2) Productive resources	20
4.3) Financial resources	22
4.4) Markets	22
4.5) Research and capacity building	24
4.6) Public sector policies/programmes and family farmer participation	25
5) Key findings	27
5.1) Models of production	27
5.2) Productive resources	27
5.3) Financial resources	28
5.4) Markets	28
5.5) Research and capacity building	28
5.6) Public sector policies/programmes and family farmer participation	29
5.7) Perspectives	29
6) Bibliography	31
7) Annexes	35

Acronyms

AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CILSS	Comité permanent Inter-états de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel
CFS	UN Committee on World Food Security
CSM	Civil Society Mechanism of the UN Committee on World Food Security
EAFF	Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation
ECOWAS ...	Economic Community Of West African States
EPAs	Economic Partnership Agreements
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FONGS	Fédération des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales du Sénégal
GAFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Program
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IAASTD	International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAFO	Pan-African Farmers' Organisation
PROPAC	Plateforme Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale
ROPFA	Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
SACAU	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine
UMAGRI	Union Maghrébine des Agriculteurs
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1) Background

1.1) Context

The food price crisis - interlinked with energy, climate, environmental and financial crises - has sounded a wake-up call. There is today a general recognition on the part of governments and institutions of the imperative of food security, the need to increase investment in agriculture, to strengthen domestic food production especially in food deficit countries, to address risk and resilience issues such as climate change and price volatility. But very different strategies are being proposed to meet these goals.

Most governments and institutions recognise, at least in words, the need to support small-scale producers as key actors in achieving food security. Some link food security to climate change and poverty reduction. They acknowledge the role of sustainable family farming – as compared with industrial agriculture – in creating employment, stimulating local economies and providing environmental services.¹ Others, however, place the accent on increased productivity using industrial technologies as the key factor in attaining food security. They tend to view family farming as an archaic mode of production, incapable of feeding Africa's population, that needs to be 'modernised' through a transition to market-led industrial agri-food systems in which some – but by no means most – small-scale producers could participate through contractual arrangements.²

This ignores the evidence that African family farmers are already meeting up to 80% of Africa's food needs, despite the fact that they are receiving little or no policy and programme support. This blindness is compounded by a tendency to separate out investment from the issue of what agricultural models are most suited to meet food security, environmental, poverty reduction objectives. Yet an increasing body of reports, like those of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and the International Assessment on Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD),³ document the fact that small-scale producers adopting agro-ecological approaches are capable of delivering sufficient food for the growing population as well as ensuring improved equity and a restored environment.

The issue of agricultural investment is a key one in Africa and how and where these investments are directed is of considerable concern to African family farmers and their organisations. From CAADP to the renewed Committee on World Food Security, enhanced investment for food security is at the top of the agenda. Although there is now a commitment on the part of multilateral institutions and of a number of donors to give greater priority to supporting family farmers, a number of questions need to be explored in depth in order to ensure that the support proposed

African farmers and states cooperate

In 2011 leaders of the African Farmers' Regional Networks met formally with representatives of the Africa Group of countries in the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) to discuss their position on key agricultural and food issues. For the first time in the history of the FAO, the government representatives decided, as a Group, to co-organise an event during the UN Committee on World Food Security in October 2011 with the representatives of the Pan-African Farmers' Organisation (PAFO) to present their priorities for agricultural investment. The outcome of these discussions contributed to a shift in the priorities proposed by the governments during the CFS towards a focus on, and support for, investment by family farmers, which were adopted.

¹ See, for example, the EC policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges. http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM_PDF_COM_2010_0127_EN.PDF

² See, for example, the "New Vision for Agriculture" of the World Economic Forum www3.weforum.org/docs/IP/AM11/CO/WEF_AgricultureNewVision_Roadmap_2011.pdf and the SAGCOT proposal for Tanzania www.africacorridors.com/sagcot/

³ See IAASTD documents at www.iaastd.net See report on agroecology and the right to food by Oliver De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, at www.srfood.org/images/stories/pdf/officialreports/20110308_a-hrc-16-49_agroecology_en.pdf

is what is wanted by, and is potentially beneficial to, Africa's family farmers and their sustainable food systems. The questions that need to be asked are "what investment for what systems of production, for what products, for what markets, and to whose benefit?"⁴

1.2) African farmers' networks engagement

The African Regional Farmers' Networks of West, Central and East Africa, ROPPA (Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest), PROPAC (Plateforme Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale) and EAFF (Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation) are actively engaged in the process of determining priorities for agricultural investment. In 2011, they organised a workshop in Mfou, Cameroon. The Synthesis Report from this was instrumental in

Food sovereignty

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

Six pillars of food sovereignty:

- focuses on food for people
- values food providers
- localises food systems
- puts control locally
- builds knowledge and skills
- works with nature

from the *Declaration of Nyéléni* and the *Nyéléni Synthesis report*. Sélingué, Mali. Nyéléni 2007: Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2007
www.nyeleni.org/spip.php?article290 and
www.nyeleni.org/IMG/pdf/31Mar2007NyeleniSynthesisReport-en.pdf

Niamey Call for the Food Sovereignty of West Africa

The Declaration highlights, among other things, that:

- the agricultural sector of the sub-region is the basis of the well-being of the majority of the population, the wealth of the region, the conservation of its natural resources, the future of its young people, of its societies and social peace; and
- the achievement of the sub-region's food sovereignty is the pedestal on which to build the internal market that will solve the recurring problems of food insecurity, rural poverty, massive exodus of young people, the desertification of soils and degradation of natural resources.

In this context, the Declaration calls for:

- the continuation of the process of multi-actor dialogue initiated at Niamey around food sovereignty and agricultural development in West Africa;
- the participatory formulation and implementation of a sub-regional charter of food sovereignty, under the aegis of ECOWAS and with the cooperation of UEMOA and CILSS;
- the definition and the application of a trade policy and protection measures corresponding to the objectives of the food sovereignty;
- the adaptation and the effective application of the principles of food sovereignty and the charter to agricultural and trade policies and measures of protection;
- respect for the commitments freely assumed by the African Heads of State in Maputo to direct at least 10 % of the national budget to financing agriculture (including livestock, fishing and forestry).

ROPPA's 2006 *Niamey Call for the Food Sovereignty of West Africa*, was prepared by farmer leaders from 13 countries, parliamentarians, agriculture and trade officials and regional authorities (ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS), supported by europAfrica and other CSOs,
www.roppa.info/spip.php?article93

⁴ Title of a conference organised by the National Council of Rural Dialogue and Cooperation of Senegal (CNCR) on 9 March 2013.

underpinning their collective positions including in global dialogues and processes on agricultural investment in FAO and the CFS.⁵

The results of the Mfou workshop were also fed into the Regional Civil Society Consultation for Africa held in Brazzaville, Congo on 21-22 April 2012 in conjunction with the FAO Regional Conference. An excerpt from the final declaration of this consultation is presented in Annex 1.

The Mfou workshop was designed to start a process of reflection during 2011/12 to sharpen and deepen the strategies and methodologies by which the national, regional and continental organisations of family farmers and other small-scale producers could have an effective influence on policy, especially agricultural investment. The workshop examined the current state of play of investments in African agriculture from the perspective of African farmers; it discussed key principles for investments that will strengthen family farming and sustainable food systems; and proposed actions to influence decisions. The main conclusions are presented in Annex 2.

It was decided that each region would further deepen their understanding of the investments needed by family farming in order that it could be better developed. Studies in each region were commissioned by the networks to draw together existing information about the model of food production and consumption and domestic markets that require supporting and protecting, and hence priority for investment by family farmers themselves. This 'Synthesis Report' draws on these studies and is intended to strengthen the farmers' organisations and PAFO in its interface with development partners, governments, regional bodies, including the African Union, and in its advocacy in relevant forums on agricultural investment.

⁵ EAFF, PROPAC and ROPPA, Agricultural Investment for strengthening family farming and sustainable food systems in Africa. Mfou, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 2011. Available at: www.europafrika.info/en/publications/agricultural-investment-strengthening-family-farming-and-sustainable-food-systems-in-africa

2) Perspectives

2.1) Data

Throughout the research and preparation of this study the problem was encountered that data only exists for part of the world's food system. Over and over again it was found that statistics only exist about **commodity and export crops, livestock and fisheries** including well established, formalised value chains for food products, but not about the crops grown, animals raised and fish harvested, in other food systems, that are processed, traded and consumed in both urban and rural areas in the region, and which make up the majority of the diet of many people in the region. There is information about the commercial commodity and export markets and large scale traders, but not about the forms of market and structures of exchange and trade, which are the most important for family farmers and small-scale producers and processors who provide food for most people in the region. This production, processing and trade could be termed 'informal' or 'invisible'.

To some degree the disparity in the information available is intrinsic to the nature of the contrasting markets. The commodity market is bound up in the same systems of governance, finance and commerce from which official statistics are derived, while informal production and trade is not: it is 'invisible'. Information derives from what is recorded. However it also embodies an assumption by those who administer agriculture and data collection about what is important and worthy of study and research.⁶ If they prioritise the industrialised, commodified food system, small-scale, food systems will be relegated to studies about food *in*security, completely blind to the many vibrant food systems that produce healthy, nutritious and tasty food, support livelihoods and sustain the environment. The economic force and value of such systems is ignored and its specific, autonomous mode of functioning is essentially unknown.

To build a sustainable food system for the future, research and data collection need to prioritise the means by which the majority of people access food and thus to actively seek information on the informal and mostly 'invisible' production, processing and trade within the food system.

2.2) Meanings

2.2.1) Agriculture

The term 'agriculture' is used in this report in a broad sense to refer to multifunctional systems of food and non-food production, gathering and harvesting in both rural and urban areas, through arable farming, livestock raising, pastoralism, fisheries, aquaculture, gardening and collection of forest products. Similarly 'farmers' and 'family farmers' is meant as a term that includes the women and men, peasant and other family farmers, gardeners, livestock keepers and pastoralists, fisher peoples and artisanal fisherfolk, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and other small-scale food providers, in both rural and urban areas.

Agriculture, in the hands of family farmers, provides three key outputs:

- food for consumption and exchange
- livelihoods, through sale of food and other agricultural produce, enhanced through local value addition and stimulated rural economies.
- social and environmental sustainability, with better use of soils, water and agricultural biodiversity, and strong local institutions

The type of agriculture considered in this report prioritises and focuses on trade and food networks in which small-scale family farmers, livestock keepers and artisanal fishers are key actors.

⁶ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*. Yale University Press, 1998.

2.2.2) Food networks

A food network, sometimes called a food web,⁷ links people who grow, process, sell, buy and eat food. In the countries in this study, these food webs form a series of connections that are interlocking and complex, with a diverse range of foods from different sources. This is a social and economic concept building upon the agricultural biodiversity of the food catchment. It can be contrasted to the concept of value chains around single commodities.

Food networks are deeply ingrained in social institutions that serve rural and urban communities and provide a healthy diversity of foods.

2.2.3) Local

'Local' is a word that can be used to mean different things. At one end of the scale in an international setting the 'local market' can be synonymous with the national market; at the other, for a small-scale food producer local can mean as far as they are prepared to transport their produce to sell it.

It is sometimes implied that focussing on local involves an isolationist approach and a hostility to urban, regional, national and international markets. This is not the case.

In very practical terms, national markets are composed from local markets rather than there being a dichotomy. Many local markets focus around an urban centre and feed-in to a regional economy. Some local markets are cross-border and hence technically international. The market in Busia town which cuts across the Kenya-Uganda border is one example of this. More broadly a network of market centres in Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire form a cross-border market that the participants think of as local.

Increasing urbanisation can lead to urban hunger and rural depopulation. However it can also be an opportunity for urban-rural linkages and urban or peri-urban agriculture.⁸ These linkages can also help support livelihoods in the rural areas and, along with successful rural development, can help stem rural migration. An alternative pattern of urbanisation around many vibrant smaller towns and cities, acting as centres for each rural area, is still possible in Africa instead of the mega-city model.

What the focus on local does is to assert where the priority must lie. Key principles of the food sovereignty approach are to support vibrant local food systems that are under the control of the local population. A successful local food system is one that is able to provide food for people in the community, to ensure the livelihood of local food producers and to sustain the local environment.

Local food systems are always connected with wider systems, but it needs to be ensured that these are always connections that benefit the local people. For example, rather than seeing a divide between rural and urban food networks, a more meaningful discussion is to see how small scale producers can be supported in producing and processing food that meets the changing food habits of urban consumers, so that cities can be fed by small-scale producers in the region. Nadjirou Sall, Secretary General of FONGS-Action Paysanne (FONGS-Peasant Action) of Senegal says:

Definitions

resilience:

"The capacity of a social or ecological system to withstand perturbations from, for instance, climate or economic shocks and to rebuild and renew itself afterwards, without shifting into a qualitatively different state"

Stockholm Resilience Centre, *Strengthening agricultural biodiversity for smallholder livelihoods*. 2011

<http://bit.ly/Xx0ahM>

sustainability:

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

from the Brundtland Report: World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our common future*. UN, 1987.

www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf

agricultural biodiversity:

"Agricultural biodiversity encompasses the variety and variability of cultivated and 'wild' species – plants, animals, and micro-organisms – which are necessary to sustain key functions of the agro-ecosystem, its structure and processes for, and in support of, food production"

FAO, *Sustaining agricultural biodiversity and agro-ecosystem functions*. 1998

www.fao.org/sd/EPdirect/EPRe0080.htm

⁷ Caroline Cranbrook, *The real choice*. London: CPRE, 2006, p2. Available at: www.cpre.org.uk/resources/farming-and-food/local-foods/item/1912

⁸ "Food and cities" Nyéléni newsletter. (11) Sept 2012. Available at: www.nyeleni.org/DOWNLOADS/newsletters/Nyeleni_Newsletter_Num_11_EN.pdf

“« Le consommer local » est un faux débat. Selon moi, les gens consomment les produits locaux, mais ils veulent des produits rapides à préparer. ...C'est donc une préoccupation de la FONGS : comment satisfaire ce type de consommateur?”⁹

“ ‘Local food’ is a false debate. In my opinion, people will eat local food, but they want food that can be quickly prepared. ... It is a concern of FONGS – how can we satisfy this type of consumer?”

The local level is where we build our societies’ rules of living together, both in how we cooperate and build alliances, and how we compete.¹⁰ It also reflects the complexity of the world because this is where decisions and policies made at other levels are actually experienced by people as they impact upon their daily lives. When problems arise, often they arise far beyond the local level and require an answer on a wider scale.

Local is not simply a geographical concept, but something that combines geographic, economic, social and cultural dimensions. Local food systems are often built around shared culture and values, and upon trust. In a study of cross-border markets in Cameroon, it was noted that traders were prepared to let people buy on credit. Only 3-5% complained of non-payment, because most of the producers, traders and customers involved are well-known to each other – family, neighbours, regulars and friends – and trust, social conventions and informal sanctions tie the system together.¹¹

‘Local’ can mean different things in different contexts. Sometimes it refers to the range of daily activity, at others to the national economy as contrasted with the international; often it means the regional economy including urban-rural linkages. ‘Local’ is not simply a geographical concept, but one that combines geographic, economic, social and cultural dimensions in a complex matrix. Using the term ‘local’ helps focus on the need for food markets in a region to make good use of food produced in the region, to benefit the producers and consumers in that region, to remain within the control of people in the region and to sustain the environment of the region.

2.2.4) Family farmers

Agriculture in much of Africa is grounded in family farming. Africa has 33 million family farms of less than 2 hectares, which make up 80% of all farms in the continent.¹² Family farms exist in various forms in different countries, meeting distinct needs, but altogether across the continent family farming provides most of the food and most livelihoods in Africa, supporting resilient social structures in rural areas.

The family farm is a unit where the socio-economic links between the members are family connections, and the unit is linked with others in a social web. In today’s world, almost all family farms are connected to the market and sell some of their produce. However, a key distinction between family farmers and entrepreneurial and capitalist farmers who are fully embedded within the market, is that the resource base for the family farmers’ systems of production is largely un-commodified, including land, seeds, livestock, water, and of course labour, but also knowledge, skills, social networks and institutions. The control of the resource base gives family farmers an autonomy and resilience, and is essential to the viability of the family farming system of production.¹³

⁹ Grandval et al, “Comprendre la demande des villes pour valoriser les produits locaux” *Grain de sel: la revue d’inter-réseaux développement rural*. 58, April-June 2012, p6. Available at www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/GDS58_Vvalorisation_des_produits_locaux.pdf Quoted in Mamadou Goïta, *Système de production, de transformation et de commercialisation des produits en Afrique de L’Ouest : une illustration avec le cas du mil dans la région de Sikasso au Mali*. ROPPA, 2013.

¹⁰ Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa (ARGA), *Changeons l’Afrique: 15 propositions pour commencer*. ARGA, 2003, p15. Available at: http://base.afrique-gouvernance.net/docs/bip63_cpchangeonsafrique_050614.pdf Quoted in Mamadou Goïta, *Système de production, de transformation et de commercialisation des produits en Afrique de L’Ouest : une illustration avec le cas du mil dans la région de Sikasso au Mali*. ROPPA, 2013.

¹¹ Robert Nkendar, *The Informal Cross-Border Trade of agricultural commodities between Cameroon and its CEMAC’s Neighbours*. Paper for the NSF/AERC/IGC Conference, Mombassa, Kenya, on 4 December 2010; p20. Available at: www.theigc.org/sites/default/files/sessions/nkendar.pdf

¹² FAO, “The special challenge for sub-Saharan Africa” *High level expert forum: how to feed the world 2050*. Rome: FAO, 2009, p2. Available at: www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/docs/Issues_papers/HLEF2050_Africa.pdf

¹³ Jan Douwe van der Ploeg, *The peasant mode of production revisited*. 2005. Available at: www.jandouwevanderploeg.com/EN/publications/articles/the-peasant-mode-of-production-revisited/

Another defining aspect of family farming is that labour is not just another variable among others that can be sacrificed to increase profit.¹⁴ The family farm exists to support the welfare and livelihoods of the members, both through the production of food to be consumed within the household, supporting food security, and also through sale of produce and value addition. The family farm is oriented toward maximising value, in a sustainable manner that will maintain the resource base for the future.

Family farmers are the basis of Africa's food system, and developing, as well as protecting, the resource base of family farmers is essential to achieving a sustainable food system in Africa.

2.2.5) *Markets and value chains*

Family farmers may sell their produce in local markets, sell directly to consumers and distribute through the informal and often invisible trade networks that lie outside of the commercial commodity markets (see 2.1) above). Most informal trade takes the family farming and other small-scale models of production as their base. Some are as structured and elaborate as the commercial commodity markets, and are based on social institutions, shared cultures and values and regulation enforced by social custom and social sanctions. This trade stretches across regions to urban centres and across national borders. It can include efforts by producers to add value to their products by storing or processing them before marketing them.

Family farmers may also seek to sell into the commercial commodity market. Just as the informal trade is based in a family farming model of production, the commercial commodity markets are based on an industrial model of production. The 'value chain' of the commercial commodity markets represents a fully commodified structure of production where the market controls the resource base, including labour, as well as the outputs of production.

The value chain stretches through the stages of industrial agricultural production, with input suppliers 'upstream' of food producers, and traders, processors and retailers 'downstream' before ultimately reaching the consumer. All these players compete to capture as much value as possible. Each player's chances of succeeding depend upon their market power – their ability to determine prices through their control of supply and demand.¹⁵ The industrial food system is characterised by large numbers of producers and consumers, and a few large agribusiness suppliers, traders, processors and retailers who wield immense control.¹⁶ As the resource based is commodified, they control the costs of production as well as the prices paid for agricultural produce. An underlying struggle within the value chain approach is affecting what is 'valued'. A value chain that does not recognise the value of sustaining a biodiverse environment including healthy soils, the need to add value locally or of the social value of decent livelihoods and of fair access to food will undermine and destroy sustainable food systems.

Within the value chain, family farmers seek to use various techniques to increase their market power and take more value for themselves. These include forming cooperatives or other joint organisations for purchasing, production and marketing, developing processing capacity so as to be able to sell 'value added' products, and lobbying for policies and services that support small-scale production.

However it is also vital for family farmers to support and strengthen the informal and often invisible trade structures outside of the dominant value chain approach, including through lobbying for policies and services that recognise and favour the currently invisible trade. They provide the opportunities to add value and sustain livelihoods without entering into a commodified model of production that, in the long term, undermines the basis of family farming.

All family farmers are in markets of various types. The nature of these markets and the terms in which they participate in them affects both the distribution of their high quality food and their income.

¹⁴ *ibid.* Available at: www.jandouwevanderploeg.com/EN/publications/articles/the-peasant-mode-of-production-revisited/

¹⁵ Thomas Lines, *Market power, price formation and primary commodities*. Research paper no 10. Geneva: South Centre, 2006. Available at: www.southcentre.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=263

¹⁶ Sophia Murphy, *Concentrated market power and agricultural trade*. Berlin: Heinrich Boell Stiftung, 2006. Available at: www.iatp.org/files/451_2_89014.pdf

2.2.6) *Investment*

It is now widely recognised that farmers themselves are the source of by far the largest amount of investment in agriculture in developing countries.¹⁷ They contribute around 77% of all agricultural investment in developing countries and 85% in Africa.¹⁸ Farmers invest their monetary savings, but also make very significant investments through their own labour. Measurement of investment by FAO looks at on-farm agricultural capital stock, including:¹⁹

- land development: such as irrigation schemes, terracing and other anti-erosion measures, ongoing improvement of soil fertility
- livestock: such as enlargement of herds and selective breeding
- machinery and equipment: such as improvement of tools
- long-term crops: such as trees, vines and similar which provide returns over years rather than within a season
- structures for livestock: such as sheds, byres and stables.

Beyond this officially recognised investment, farmers also invest in development and sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise, development of seeds and in their contribution to wider environmental services.

This immense investment by farmers needs to be complemented by public investment in services such as infrastructure (like roads and flood defences), extension services, strategic financial support, and publically funded research driven by farmers own needs.

Investment by farmers is around 85% of all investment in agriculture in Africa. It dwarfs foreign direct investment, yet needs protection from FDI's negative impacts. The public sector has an essential role to play by tailoring national investment frameworks, policies and programmes to support the needs of family farmers.

2.2.7) *Innovation and modernisation*

Family farmers are some of the most innovative actors in agriculture and food production. They depend on an established resource base that needs to be sustained through generations in ways that will support their livelihoods (see above, section 2.2.4). They are truly innovative in the methods they use to improve their production and add value.

Family farmers have much traditional and indigenous knowledge, which they are continually developing and updating, through innovative practices and technologies. They wish to break existing conditions of drudgery and hardship and create a production environment that enables them to live dignified lives and which is attractive to their children. They are always keen to adopt and adapt innovations that meet their needs, reduce drudgery, secure autonomy and enhance the environment, including developing:

- seeds, crop varieties and livestock breeds, especially local varieties and breeds that are well suited to the environment and resilient to climate shocks
- agroecological methods and techniques, including agro-forestry
- small-scale systems of energy production for local use based on wind, sun, water, biogas, wood and other biomass
- small-scale food processing skills and capacity
- market mechanisms, particularly in the 'informal' trade outside of the commodified market

Technology does not reside solely in widgets, but also depends on knowledge and skills, and the knowledge-intensive model of farming embodied in family farming is suited to this. Of course there

¹⁷ FAO, *The state of food and agriculture 2012*. Rome: FAO, 2012, pp3-4. Available at: www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3028e/i3028e.pdf

¹⁸ Lowder et al, *Who invests in agriculture and how much?* ESA Working Paper No 12-09. Rome: FAO, 2012, p15. Available at www.fao.org/docrep/017/ap854e/ap854e.pdf

¹⁹ Lowder et al, *Who invests in agriculture and how much?* ESA Working Paper No 12-09. Rome: FAO, 2012, p7. Available at www.fao.org/docrep/017/ap854e/ap854e.pdf and High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, *Investing in smallholder agriculture for food and nutrition security: v0 draft*. Rome: CFS, draft for consultation 2012, p36. Available at: typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/Smallholders/HLPE_V0_draft-Investing_in_SH.pdf

is always need to share knowledge, build skills and spread the word about new developments. This can be through things such as community seed fairs, for the exchange both of seed varieties and the associated knowledge, or through 'farmer innovators' who take ideas from community to community.

Stereotypes that see family farming as backward and a relic of the past assume that therefore modernity and innovation lie only within entrepreneurial and industrial farming are mistaken. In fact much of the 'innovation' in industrial farming is either simple scale expansion and replacement of labour and jobs by technology, or the introduction of technologies that are dependent on expensive inputs, many of which are high risk in their use of pesticides and GMOs.

Support is needed for appropriate innovation both by the farmers' networks themselves and through public research and extension services. What is important is that farmers and local communities are able to control which innovations are needed, when, where and under what conditions.

Family farmers are great innovators. Technologies developed with family farmers and controlled by them, will benefit them.

3) Local food networks in Cameroon, Kenya and Mali

In order to help explore the support and investment that is needed to strengthen family farming and sustainable food systems in Africa, the three farmers' networks carried regional studies in West, Central and East Africa.²⁰ Each focussed on a national study, of Mali, Cameroon and Kenya respectively. In these countries, as across most countries in Africa and Asia, small-scale farmers produce 80% of the food supply.²¹

3.1) Production

The following section discusses crop and settled livestock farmers, fishers and pastoralists separately, but in practice this is often not so clear cut. For many family farmers several of these activities, along with non-farming work such as pottery, may be combined.

3.1.1) Crop and settled livestock farmers

In Kenya, the main staple crop is maize, but traditionally this is grown alongside a diversity of other crops. Farmers intercrop sesame and other plants with the maize. Cereals are usually planted together with legumes as legumes tend to improve on soil fertility through their property of nitrogen fixation. Mixed cropping and crop rotation are traditional, agroecological systems of improving soil fertility that farmers make use of, in addition to use of farmyard manure from the livestock they own.

Maize is grown both for families' own food, and for sale when there is a surplus. Sales of fruit and vegetables have been making up an increasing proportion of small-scale farmers' incomes, and livestock also makes a significant contribution (20-30%) to settled farmers' income mainly through the commercial dairy sector.²² Other crops grown for food, mainly by women, include fruits such as bananas and papaya, and vegetables such as amaranths, sweet potatoes, okra, cassava, collard and tomatoes.

The common types of livestock kept by settled farmers in Kenya include cows, donkey, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry and rabbits. They play a very vital role in local farms. They offer manure and improved food and nutrition in form of milk, meat, eggs and labour. Also selling these products brings cash income. Cattle and donkeys provide draft power and can help increase harvest by assisting in cultivation of larger fields. Livestock also play a central role in sustainable farming systems by recycling organic matter in form of manure.

In the context of climate change, many farmers in coastal Kenya are going back to using traditional maize varieties because they are hardy and better able to cope with unpredictable weather conditions and local pests. These traditional varieties, or landraces, are more genetically diverse than modern varieties so they can better withstand environmental stress.²³

²⁰ Mamadou Goïta, *Système de production, de transformation et de commercialisation des produits en Afrique de L'Ouest: une illustration avec le cas du mil dans la région de Sikasso au Mali*. ROPPA, 2013.

Patrice Abessolo Amougou, *Systèmes alimentaire durables dans l'Afrique de l'Ouest, de l'Est et Centrale*. PROPAC, 2013.

Shem Mecheo, *Models of production and consumption and local markets: building on the experiences of African family farmers in their struggles to realize food sovereignty*. EAFF, 2013.

²¹ IFAD, *Viewpoint: smallholders can feed the world*. Rome: IFAD, 2011. Available at: www.ifad.org/pub/viewpoint/smallholder.pdf Based upon FAO World Census of Agriculture.

²² Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa, *Guiding investments in sustainable agricultural markets in Africa*. ACTESA / COMESA, 2010, pp2-3. Available at: www.aec.msu.edu/fs2/gisama/GISAMA_PS_3.pdf Quoted in Shem Mecheo, *Models of production and consumption and local markets: building on the experiences of African family farmers in their struggles to realize food sovereignty*. EAFF, 2013.

²³ IIED, *Briefing: adapting agriculture with traditional knowledge*. London: IIED, 2011, p2. Available at: pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17111IIED.pdf Quoted in Shem Mecheo, *Models of production and consumption and local*

Family farmers rely on their own seeds season after season. After harvest they select the best seeds in terms of size, colour, shape and texture and they use these in the next season of planting. These seeds do not have to be purchased, are not restricted in their use by intellectual property rights and the quality is fully under the control of the farmer.

In Cameroon²⁴ it is also traditional to use mixed cropping, and combinations often found include:

- cassava, maize and yam
- maize, peanuts and okra
- cassava, maize and pepper
- cassava, okra and yam

These are often also combined with tomato and leafy vegetables. The mixed cropping has benefits for:

- production, which is maximised in a small area;
- ecological interactions, for instance the spread of parasites specific to one species is reduced and ground cover is provided that prevents the growth of weeds and minimises water runoff;
- risk management, as if one crop has problems, others may still produce
- plant nutrition, as the different species have different needs for microelements within the soil and are not competing
- human nutrition, as a diversity of foods is grown.

Farmers in Cameroon often buy seed for cereal crops, but use saved tubers and planting material for cassava, taro, sweet potato and yam and saved seeds for vegetables for home consumption such as okra, peppers and leafy vegetables. As in Kenya, family farmers use organic fertilisers of manure from their animals and compost, as well as mulching.

The Sikasso region of Mali is in the southern-most part of the country, and is a fertile area known as the Kenedougou or the 'région verte' of Mali. It is an important region for trade, centring around three groups of products:

- cotton;
- cereals – maize, millet, sorghum and rice;
- horticulture – potato, sweet potato, yam and cassava.

Just over half (57%) of the land used for cereals is given to millet production.

The production of millet is mainly done by family farmers, using manual labour along with tools such as ploughs, drills, hoes and carts. Millet needs less rain than cotton and maize and can be planted a little later. In preparation for planting, the ground is prepared using oxen and plough, something that usually takes three people. The seeding may then be done either with a seed drill, in a similar manner to the ploughing, or by hand, usually by women and children.

Farmers usually use compost as fertiliser for millet, a traditional approach that is agroecological, recycling nutrients within the ecosystem of the farms. This is very successful for millet, in contrast to some of the modern varieties of cotton and maize which are dependent on external inputs of chemical fertiliser. Most farmers also weed by hand, although some have been incorporated into programmes that supply chemical herbicides and pesticides, introducing these dangerous chemicals into an otherwise sustainable system. Weeding is the hardest part of the work, taking a couple of weeks for each field. Many farmers in the Sikasso region are linked in mutual support groups called N'golu, to work on each others fields. These groups also have important social and cultural benefits for communities, and at the end of the rainy season the workers in the group will hold a party with food, drink and dancing to traditional music.

Millet is harvested in October and November, with women and young people doing most of the work. Harvesting is done by hand, using knives. Women are also responsible for transporting the harvested millet to storage in family granaries.

markets: building on the experiences of African family farmers in their struggles to realize food sovereignty. EAFF, 2013.

²⁴ Christine Schilter, *L'Agriculture urbaine à Lomé: approches agronomique et socio-économique*. Paris: Karthala Editions, 1991. Quoted in Patrice Abessolo Amougou, *Systèmes alimentaire durables dans l'Afrique de l'Ouest, de l'Est et Centrale*. PROPAC, 2013.

Food production by family farmers of grains, roots, fruits and vegetables uses diverse methods, many of which are associated with what are now termed agroecological approaches. This includes mixed cropping, using farmers' seeds and using organic fertilisers.

3.1.2) *Fisheries and aquaculture*²⁵

Men and women of coastal and inland communities in the West African region have, for generations, derived their livelihood from fishing and related activities, providing an essential part of the protein diet of millions of people in the region. Many families engage in both fishing and farming. Fish drying and selling is an important activity of women all along the coast. There is a huge trade of marine fish within coastal countries and with neighbouring landlocked countries.

For the coastal countries in the region, the waters of the East Central Atlantic provide an abundance and diversity of fishery resources, thanks to the existence of an intense upwelling of nutrients from deep waters that enrich the fishery, the most productive in the whole of Africa. Estimates are that about 4m tonnes of fish are caught from this fishery, more than half of which is landed in the region. Within this species sardine, mackerel and other small pelagic fish are particularly important for local food provision, and much of these are landed by artisanal fishers for local marketing, processing and consumption.

Trade in processed fish products may take place within the same country, as when fish from coastal regions finds its way into the interior regions. It may also take place across borders. Thus, the Gambian smoked *bonga* finds its way to Ivory Coast, Ghana and Mali, while the Senegalese *kethiakh* finds a market in Guinea and Burkina Faso. However, the importance of artisanal fish trade within the West African region is underestimated and there is little information on it nor is it reflected in statistics, since most of such trade is not recorded. Few data are aggregated about the quantities traded, the number of people involved and the type of trade they engage in, the trade circuits, the products traded, or the problems processors and traders face in this work.

River fishing also provides an important source of food and income in the region. Mali has the largest catch of river fish in West Africa, taken from the Niger and Senegal rivers. This activity is dominated by artisanal fisheries from two main social groups: the "Bozos" and the "Somonos". They are called the "people of the water" because of their attachment to the river. Artisanal river fishing, processing and trade is an important source of livelihood for families in Mali; it provides hundreds of thousands jobs to men, women and youth all across Mali.

Many consumers in the region like the taste of river fish and since ancient times, there has been a famous road that goes from Mopti, on the river Niger in the centre of Mali, crossing the Dogon area, and then on to Burkina Faso and finally Ghana; it is called the "fish road". Big trucks filled with dried fish travel through cities and villages and eventually to the main markets in Burkina Faso and Ghana.

Women are particularly important in the processing and marketing. Some of this fish is consumed fresh in coastal and riverine areas, but this fish is also consumed in processed forms in countries across the whole region.

Small-scale artisanal fisheries are threatened both by large-scale fishing fleets, while opportunities for small-scale aquaculture are undermined by industrial aquaculture which captures fishery resources, water courses and farmland, displaces communities, and squeezes out local processing and markets.

To sustain access to fish products throughout the region will require greater recognition of the rights of artisanal fishers and small-scale fish farmers, and especially women processors, and improved trading opportunities through reduced tariffs for cross-border exchanges.

3.1.3) *Pastoralism*²⁶

Pastoralists are the mobile livestock keepers of the dryland areas, and they make up an estimated 50 million of the population across East and West Africa. Pastoralism is a system that has evolved over centuries to suit the fragile, unpredictable and inherently unstable ecology of the drylands.

²⁵ International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, *Report of the Study on Problems and Prospects of Artisanal Fish Trade in West Africa*. ICSF, 2002. Available at: aquaticcommons.org/256/1/rep_WAfrica_artisanal_fishtrade.pdf

²⁶ International Institute for Environment & Development, *Modern and mobile*. London: IIED, 2010. Available at: pubs.iied.org/pdfs/12565IIED.pdf

Pastoralists move their herds to always seek the best grazing available across the various soil types, vegetation types, changing seasons and unpredictable rainfall. It is a livelihood system that is dependent upon mobility across wide rangelands that may cross national borders, on the skilled knowledge of pastoralists, and a web of customary arrangements for the management of shared natural resources including with settled populations. Negative stereotypes of pastoralists as poor or contributing to overgrazing arise when this system breaks down – when pastoralists are restricted to a limited space or when customary arrangements no longer function. Relations between pastoralists and farmers can be synergetic, but evolutions since the introduction of cash crops under colonialism have progressively exacerbated conflicts between these people who share the same territories. Reconstructing these relations is a preoccupation of the national and regional peasant platforms in West Africa. Pastoralism contributes greatly to the economy. In Kenya it is worth \$800 million;²⁷ while in the majority of countries in the Sahel it contributes over 40% of GDP. Today's pastoralists have quickly taken advantage of mobile phone technology to allow them to find the best markets for their products. Studies show that it provides better economic returns than a sedentary ranching model of livestock production, as well as wider environmental benefits.²⁸ Pastoralists' livestock provide milk, blood, meat, skins and fibre. Their animals are an asset that is traded when cash resources are required.

Pastoralism is inherently suited to dealing with unpredictable conditions, so as climate change erodes patterns of rainfall and climate, it provides a particularly resilient system. Drought is one of the normal risks that pastoralism developed to deal with, and at times of crisis communities that were able to remain mobile are better able to survive.²⁹

Pastoralism has evolved to make the most effective use of drylands regions. It is a system that depends on mobility and access to rangelands, and this is often threatened.

3.2) Consumption

In all three countries, diet in rural areas still follows a traditional pattern³⁰ where a staple starchy food is eaten with a sauce, relish or soup of vegetables and legumes, and possibly also with a portion of meat or fish.

In Kenya three food groups form the basis of meals in rural areas. One group consists of energy foods such as maize, sweet potato, yams, bananas, cassava and arrow roots. The second group consists of legumes, such as *Dolichos lablab* (locally known as Njahi), bonavist beans, green grams, cowpeas and pigeon peas. The third group is the leafy vegetables, which are very important in village diet. For many people they provide much of the needed proteins, vitamins and minerals. Most of the information about them is in the memories of experienced local gardeners. There is danger that some or even all of this information about these vegetables will be lost as they are being replaced by introduced species.

In Cameroon the staple base is usually plantain as well as rice, and the sauce is highly spiced mix of vegetables with peanuts, pumpkin seeds or palm oil.

In Mali, millet is one of the staple bases of a meal. In many areas millet flour is used to make the staple food 'tô', and it is also used to make couscous, porridge, broth, pastry and pancakes as well as a beer called 'dolo'.

Traditionally, fish is an important part of the diet and the culture of the West African region. This is especially so for fresh fish in coastal and riverine areas, but it is also true for processed fish from artisanal fishers which is traded across the whole region.

In all three countries also, there have been striking changes in urban food habits. Urban dwellers, working in office jobs, no longer have the time to spend hours preparing and cooking food. They

²⁷ AU/IBAR, *Africa needs animals: policy briefing paper no 1*. Nairobi: AU/IBAR. Available at: sites.tufts.edu/capeipst/files/2011/03/AU-IBAR-1-Eng.pdf Quoted in Shem Mecheo, *Models of production and consumption and local markets: building on the experiences of African family farmers in their struggles to realize food sovereignty*. EAFF, 2013.

²⁸ International Institute for Environment & Development, *Modern and mobile*. London: IIED, 2010, p19. Available at: pubs.iied.org/pdfs/12565IIED.pdf

²⁹ International Institute for Environment & Development, *Modern and mobile*. London: IIED, 2010, p29-30. Available at: pubs.iied.org/pdfs/12565IIED.pdf

³⁰ Oniang'o et al, "Contemporary African food habits and their nutritional and health implications", *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 12 (3) 2003, pp332-333. Available at: apjcn.nhri.org.tw/server/apjcn/volume12/vol12.3/fullArticles/Oniango.pdf

want food that is quick and convenient. They are also exposed to much imported food. Imports are sometimes cheaper than local food, which can be because it is being sold at less than the cost of production due to unfair trade. Even when it is not cheaper, the packaging, marketing and associations of sophistication may make imports more appealing. In Kenya for instance, consumption of wheat-based products has increased in past decades,³¹ in Mali people are eating more wheat, rice and barley, and in Cameroon, people are buying baguettes rather than the traditional cassava 'batons'.

However there is also a demand among the urban population for local foods, that could be met by small-scale producers if they have the support to adapt their production to the changing dietary habits. Food is an important part of identity and people still prefer local food of their own culture if it is good quality and suited to the rhythms of urban life. Local food with short, more accountable supply chains, and produced using agroecological methods can also meet consumers wish for healthy, safe food free of chemical residues.

Adapting to urban needs can mean various things. For instance, for millet and other grains it is around supplying ready-prepared forms of staples that can then be quickly cooked by consumers at home. In Cameroon in the past decade, there was an influx of imported chicken into the market. While there were various factors behind this, including changes in EU regulations, one of the reasons consumers bought the imports was that they were sold as chicken pieces. These were much easier to cook quickly than local chicken, which are usually sold live and must be killed, plucked, gutted and cut. Providing already prepared chicken pieces could prove more popular and add value for local production.

Another route to reach urban consumers is through caterers. As well as the food consumed outside of the home at cafes, restaurants and street stalls, there is potential to inspire consumers who encounter new ideas about food from food served by caterers. The women's college of the national peasant platform of Niger has experimented with establishing its own catering service in the context of ROPPA's "Africa Can Feed Itself" campaign.

Meeting urban demand represents an opportunity for family farmers that could support the livelihoods of millions. Processing and storage are key to taking advantage of this opportunity.

Meeting the demand of urban consumers from local produce is a great opportunity for family farmers, provided they can adapt to the changing urban food habits.

3.3) Processing and storage

Storage and processing are key to reducing post-harvest losses, and are key both for production of food for the household, and for production for sale. Developing a thriving small-scale processing sector is also essential for building a local food network, so that local production can be processed into the foods needed to meet consumer's needs within the region.

Storage can be:

- household level, including traditional techniques such as making jams, pickling and drying
- in bulk in grain stores
- as part of the trading cycle, in sacks, as food is collected, transported to urban centres and retailed

Storage within the household helps ensure a supply of food throughout the year. Together with grain storage facilities, this can help family farmers develop resilience to price fluctuations, and indeed help manage prices. When farmers are unable to store harvested crops, or require urgent cash, they must sell immediately at the time of harvest, when prices are low. They then often need to buy the same foods during the hungry season, now at high prices. Storage helps to avoid this. If bulk stocks can be managed, by organised producers associations or at a municipal level, then the building up of stocks at harvest time can keep prices from dropping while the release of stocks during the hungry season can prevent prices from rising so much. This has a significant impact on access to food for the most vulnerable people in society.

³¹ Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa, *Guiding investments in sustainable agricultural markets in Africa*. ACTESA / COMESA, 2010, pp5-6. Available at: www.aec.msu.edu/fs2/qisama/GISAMA_PS_3.pdf Quoted in Shem Mecheo, *Models of production and consumption and local markets: building on the experiences of African family farmers in their struggles to realize food sovereignty*. EAFF, 2013.

Processing and storage are also important for sale and value addition of food in the market through:

- reducing losses and thus making a marketable surplus available
- conserving food for transport to market and retail, ensuring quality and safety
- providing food that is quick and easy to cook, particularly for urban consumers
- packaging food to appeal to consumers and build associations of quality, reliability and safety

In the case of millet, similarly to other grains, there are two basic stages of processing:³²

- primary processing, to turn the harvested grains into de-husked grains, broken grains and flour
- secondary further processing of the grains, for instance into rolled or pre-cooked forms, and
- tertiary processing making snack foods or drinks

Within the fishery sector, although some of the fish is consumed fresh, a sizeable proportion is processed in diverse ways – salted, dried, fermented and smoked – and traded within and between countries of the region, largely informally.³³

There is a big demand for processed products, and many small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) already exist in food processing, providing a good basis on which to build. The techniques needed are suited to enterprises that make use of some machinery and equipment but remain small-scale and 'craft' businesses.

Numerous processors' groups and cooperatives have been established, and with support can develop this sector. Many of these are specifically women's cooperatives. Traditionally in some cultures, women are involved in producing food but men have control of marketing and economic returns from cash crops. The support for women's engagement in processing enables them to take charge of, and benefit from, the opportunities for adding value to the sale of surplus production.

Developing the processing sector will need to involve coordination between processors and producers. Producers need to understand the requirements of processors in terms of quality, while processors should be able to offer a predictable and committed market for producers.

Food processing makes up a significant proportion of the small-scale processing and industrial sector of the economy. Strengthening food processing is thus important for building manufacturing, processing and marketing capacity of African countries' economies more broadly, developing skills and experience that can be used in other sectors.

Increasing capacity for storage and processing in family farms and their communities is a significant way of adding value locally and for stabilising prices.

3.4) Marketing

The market structure for millet in the Sikasso region of Mali provides an illustrative case of the existing markets and their potential.

There are three levels of market involved:

- local village markets
- market towns – larger centres in an area that gather in production from the surrounding villages
- urban markets – the regional cities and large towns (Dioïla, Sikasso, Koutiala, San, Bla, Ségou, Koro, Mopti, Kolokani, Kita) and the national capital, Bamako

The most important and largest market for family farmers' food production is the village market through direct sales from producer to consumer. This level hardly features in official data and policies as it is part of the informal trade, but it is crucial for local food networks and the means by which most people access food.

If food is to go into a longer market chain than the direct sales, then it is 'collected' at the village level for sale at the larger markets. This is done either by individual buyers or through a producers' organisation. The individual buyers are the lowest level of intermediary traders.

³² Laboratoire de Technologie Alimentaire et le Programme Economie des Filières de l'Institut d'Economie Rurale, *Etude diagnostique du secteur de la transformation des produits agricoles*. LTA/IER, 2005, p10. Available at: www.dicsahel.org/docs_eco/Etudediagnostiquedusecteurdelatransformationdesproduitsagricoles.pdf Quoted in Mamadou Goïta, *Système de production, de transformation et de commercialisation des produits en Afrique de L'Ouest : une illustration avec le cas du mil dans la région de Sikasso au Mali*. ROPPA, 2013.

³³ International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, *op cit* Available at: aquaticcommons.org/256/1/rep_WAfrica_artisanal_fishtrade.pdf

Typically they set up in the village market with a set of scales and buy up small amounts of grain from producers. Cooperatives are one option for trying to enable producers to engage collectively with the further levels of the market with more negotiating power than in the individual sales to the intermediaries.

In market towns, where the 'collected' food is consolidated, larger scale traders come to buy the food. These are either agents of big urban or rural wholesalers, or 'semi-wholesalers'. From here the food is transported to urban markets, with the carriers usually being employed by the urban wholesalers. As food is produced seasonally but sold constantly in urban markets, the wholesalers also operate storage facilities. The wholesalers then sell the food to a large number of retailers, who sell to urban consumers. Some retailers may also be supplied directly by rural producers with whom they may have longstanding relationships. Although wholesaler, semi-wholesaler and retailer are formal terms, in fact they may be the same trader and the roles can be interchangeable.

This trading chain ensures a secure food supply for affluent consumers in urban centres but at the expense of the poorest and of rural areas in particular. Traders make a profit from their stored stocks of food, and may charge exorbitantly during the hungry season – for instance, 100kg of millet sold during the hungry season may need to be paid back at harvest with at least 50% interest, i.e. 150kg millet. Current policies supporting this current structure of value chain allow the traders to profit at the expense of both producers and consumers – the majority of the population.

The initiatives of the producers organisations seek to establish alternative market structures. Within the Sikasso region, half a dozen cooperatives and producers unions exist that seek to establish better market relations for producers.

One example is the Faso Jigi collective, which has almost 5000 members, organised into 134 local collectives. At the start of the season, Faso Jigi establishes a purchase prices for various crops and provides an advance payment to each member of 60% on the amount that they agree to supply the collective. At harvest, the remaining 40% is paid to the member, minus interest on the advance. The harvest is transported to central stores and marketed collectively to rural wholesalers. The collective is democratically accountable to its members and has dealt with problems when they arise. As a large collective it has been able to access financing and credit, and benefits from staff dedicated to marketing.

A different type of initiative has been the establishment of a grain stock exchange, supported by the NGO AMASSA-Afrique Vert. The stock exchange takes place over two or three days in a year and it has been able to provide very real benefits that have been common to the founding of such exchanges across the world but from which the current speculative functioning of exchanges in the global North has become increasingly detached. The stock exchange brings sellers and buyers together, offers a transparent market where prices can be agreed fairly, a record of the exchanges agreed, and an establishment of standards. It remains at present a fledgling institution, but of great interest.

Another alternative institution within the market are the grain banks or reserves run by municipal authorities, established as a central government food security initiative. Producers are required to sell some of their harvest to the grain banks, which then store the food and sell it in the hungry season, keeping prices lower. The grain banks also provide the opportunity of an institutional buyer for producers cooperatives.

Similar initiatives exist in other countries. For instance, the Githunguri Dairy Farmers Co-operative Society has been able to have a large impact on the way the dairy sector operates in Kenya, while the certified organic sector offers another alternative market structure in the country.

Trade and markets are also important both for fishers and pastoralism, but the extent of this is often underestimated because of they are part of the informal trade that is often invisible. The Gambian smoked *bonga* fish finds its way to Ivory Coast, Ghana and Mali, while the Senegalese *kethiakh* finds a market in Guinea and Burkina Faso. However most of such trade is not recorded.³⁴ Pastoralists' livestock needs to be trekked from dryland areas to border markets and trucked on to urban centres. This can often involve cross-border travel, but in East Africa especially the formal border crossings are few and far between and often herders do not travel the extra long distances necessary to use them and instead cross informally. Again, as a result much of the trade remains unrecorded.

Markets are integral to the food networks of family farmers, although not necessarily through the market structures most often recognised by policy makers.

³⁴ International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, *op cit* Available at: aquaticcommons.org/256/1/rep_WAfrica_artisanal_fishtrade.pdf and IIED, *op cit*, p23-25. Available at: pubs.iied.org/pdfs/12565IIED.pdf

4) Constraints and proposals on investments

4.1) Models of production

The farming, grazing, fishing and aquaculture practices of family farmers, in particular women, pastoralists and artisanal fishers primarily produce food in ways that are more sustainable, resilient and adaptive to external shocks, such as climate change. Industrial monocultures, livestock factories, industrial fisheries and intensive aquaculture, in which local food is a by-product are unsustainable.

Family farming and sustainable smaller-scale production is threatened by industrial production of crops and livestock and intensive-input aquaculture, at all scales, as well as supertrawler fishing fleets. This industrial model of production is increasingly promoted in West, Central and East Africa by global capital. These practices are extended to smaller-scale production through projects and processes developed through the World Bank and similar institutions and through corporate private sector-driven programmes like Grow Africa. This model of production primarily produces goods and commodities, including animal feed, agrofuels and cellulose, for regional and global markets, ultimately controlled by few transnational corporations and are supported by public and private research institutions. They: harm small-scale farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk and indigenous peoples, the principal food providers in the region; damage the environment and productive resources (see 4.2) below); overuse water and contribute to climate change through intensive use of fossil fuel-based inputs, processing and transport. This model of production is protected by patents and trade rules and through the use of proprietary technologies and facilitates the capture of productive resources, labour and markets. The model transforms production from one in which local farm families and communities control production and their labour to one in which labour is contracted to perform tasks at rates of remuneration and in a quantity determined by a usually unfair external 'market'.

In contrast the model of production advocated by African farmers' regional networks, family farms producing food crops and livestock, pastoralism and artisanal fisheries, is more sustainable, multifunctional and productive³⁵. It produces food, clothing, housing materials and biomass for home energy, while improving soils, water quality and agricultural biodiversity. This model of production and harvesting is more easily controlled locally. It is knowledge-intensive, using the wisdom of both women and men, and sustains livelihoods. It cannot be appropriated or 'owned' by an individual; it defends the commons.

The models of production of family farmers, fishers and pastoralists are coherent systems and tend to be more sustainable, resilient, biodiverse and ecological. They can adapt dynamically, so long as they are not directly destabilised. When elements of the system are weakened and undermined, the system as a whole may break down and cease to be viable.

Investing in family farming and small-scale food production will improve food provision, social and environmental sustainability and safeguard livelihoods for the majority.

- As found necessary by the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), agricultural investments should be redirected toward support for the more ecological, biodiverse, adaptive and resilient models of production and harvesting that value family farmers, pastoralists and small-scale fishers and their institutions, improve livelihoods through local value addition and build on their knowledge and skills.

³⁵ See for instance: International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) reports, available at www.iaastd.net; Jonathan Ensor, *Biodiverse agriculture for a changing climate*. Practical Action, 2009. Available at: www.practicalaction.org/docs/advocacy/biodiverse-agriculture-for-a-changing-climate-full.pdf; MA Altieri and P. Koohafkan, *Enduring farms: Climate change, smallholders and traditional farming communities*. Penang: Third World Network, 2008. Available at: www.fao.org/nr/water/docs/Enduring_Farms.pdf; Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research, *Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*. Rome: FAO, 2011. Available at: www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/biodiversity_paia/PAI-FAO-book_lr.pdf

- In order to develop food systems, which are more resilient to shocks including climate change, support is needed to protect, rehabilitate and develop farmers' seeds and livestock breeds and locally-adapted fish/aquatic species.
- These seeds and livestock breeds should be improved through participatory research systems and on-farm management and not through the use of GMOs in agriculture, livestock production, fisheries and the food system. Biosafety legislation and policies should protect family farmers' ecological and biodiverse food production and healthy food supplies, respecting the precautionary principle.
- Improvements to the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries, both inland and marine, achieved through developing the FAO guidelines on small-scale fisheries, will realise food security and poverty eradication, increase socio-cultural diversity in the food system, and will guarantee decent employment and livelihoods and improve local and national economies.

4.2) Productive resources

Access to productive resources including land, water, seeds, agricultural biodiversity and energy, that are within the democratic control of local communities, is fundamental for family farmers.

Land is being threatened by widespread land grabs and by less overt patterns of trade that appropriate the use of land to serve the diet or the energy needs of the investing countries, often with the connivance of national elites, rather than meeting the food needs of local communities. Land is also at risk from industrial methods of production, using monocultures and high levels of chemical inputs, that degrade and erode the soil. Solutions to land issues need to be developed in response to the reality and context of each country and the needs of communities. As noted at the start of this report, they need to arise from the local level where we build the rules for living together in society. It is important to avoid the simplistic 'titling' of land that can lead to the privatisation of national heritage and an increase in conflicts. Starkly, at this point in time, a moratorium is needed on land grabs and the transfer of control of large areas of land to private foreign or domestic investors. In the longer term, legislation that guarantees access to land, forests and fisheries by the small-scale producers whose livelihoods depend on it needs to be put in place drawing on the AU Land Policy Framework and the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests adopted by the Committee on World Food Security in May 2012.

Access to **water** is one of the main constraints on production, especially for family farmers who are often dependent on rainfed agriculture. Industrial agriculture tends to be an intensive user of water. Water scarcity is an increasingly urgent issue across the world, and powerful interests are seeking to claim water supplies, from the inclusion of water assets in investment portfolios to large-scale irrigation schemes that pump water out of watersheds and rivers that communities depend upon, to the plantation that has the resources to drill a borehole lower than the wells of neighbouring family farmers whose water supply then dries up.³⁶ In the face of this water grab, there is need for investment and support for water conserving production methods, small-scale sustainable irrigation methods and rainwater harvesting that family farmers can use to improve their own water supplies. It is also important to reinvigorate and strengthen community-led systems and agreements for management of shared water resources.

Seeds, livestock breeds and other **agricultural biodiversity** face multiple threats in terms of the diversity available to small-scale producers as a result of corporate power using intellectual property regimes, commercial contracts, and technologies to restrict access and facilitate monopoly control over these essential genetic resources for food and agriculture. The development of proprietary technologies that impact negatively upon, or disrupt the genomes of, farmers' traditional and farmers' improved varieties of food crops and livestock breeds, including GMOs, further restrict access and sustainable use.

The diversity of traditional crop and animal species used by family farmers forms a natural 'genebank' that is an immense productive resource. Industrial agriculture works almost entirely with around 100 breeds of five species of livestock, and roughly 150 crops although focussing mostly on only four – maize, rice, soy and wheat. In contrast, family farming works with almost 8000 breeds of 40 species of livestock and, in recent years alone, has developed 1.9 million

³⁶ Sylvia Kay and Julia Franco, *The global water grab: a primer*. Amsterdam: TNI, 2012. Available at: www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/download/watergrabbingprimer-altcover2.pdf

varieties of 5000 crop species.³⁷ The range and resilience of species available is especially important in responding to climate change.

Many small-scale producers, depending on reducing availability of **biomass**, are **energy** poor and access to energy could make a big difference to many aspects of their lives, including food production, processing, trade and, of course, cooking. However solutions for this need to be found that are environmentally sustainable, particularly in the context of climate change, and that support local communities. Small-scale energy infrastructure and local energy services, such as micro-hydro, small scale-solar and wind projects, and biogas and improved firewood cooking stoves are an essential part of building a local food system that is controlled by people.

Small-scale marine **fisheries** are threatened by industrial overfishing. Giant supertrawler fleets from Europe and Asia capture a huge proportion of the fish from the ocean of the West African coast. Communities living from small-scale fisheries on the shores of Lake Victoria, for example, are also threatened by "water-use grabbing" when the governments concerned grant concessions to large-scale enterprises that deny local people their traditional access to the waters of the Lake. Similarly, opportunities small-scale **aquaculture** are undermined by industrial aquaculture. Little has been done to protect the livelihoods of the nearly 2 million small-scale fishers and processors of fish. In part this is due to their 'invisibility' due to the lack of information about the largely informal fishery, processing and market. However it is also because of an assumption that the artisanal fishery is an unimportant sector and a secondary activity for a household. The true nutritional value of fish from this sector and the economic weight of the trade in processed fish is not recognised, partly because much of the work is done by women. Small-scale artisanal fishers need recognition of their rights and regulation of the domestic and foreign industrial fishing fleet. Support for processing and trade is needed both in the form of infrastructure and facilities, but also in policy areas such as the removal of tariffs from intra-regional sale of local products.

For **pastoralists**, access to wide rangelands is essential for the pastoralist way of life to be viable. Assessments by outsiders that declare land to be 'empty' or 'underused' are blind to the effective use being made of the land by pastoralists and the livelihoods being supported. Enclosure of the highest quality fertile 'islands' within the drylands for settled agriculture is disruptive because these are the areas that pastoralists depend upon at times of drought. Shared and socially accepted systems of natural resource management are essential for pastoralism, and help avoid conflict between pastoralists and settled communities. 'Cattle corridors' that have existed for generations allowing pastoralists to move their herds from one area to another, but in recent decades have often ceased to be recognised. Re-establishment of these corridors is important, as are agreements on shared use of water. Greater regional integration offers opportunities for policies to better recognise cross-border pastoral systems, and the AU Pastoral Policy Framework offers scope for positive change.

Guaranteeing rights of access to and control over productive resources – land, water, agricultural biodiversity – is essential to support family farming and small-scale food production and resilient food systems.

- Land issues require urgent attention, taking into account the context of each country, but simplistic 'titling' of land, which can lead to the privatisation of the commons, national heritage and ancestral lands, will not secure access in the long-term, especially for young people.
- The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security need to be implemented at national levels in conformity with the African Union's Land Policy Framework and Guidelines.
- Land and water grabbing by private foreign or domestic investors, which transfer large areas of land and access to water resources out of local control needs to be prevented through moratoria, implemented nationally.
- Pastoralists' grazing land and migratory corridors require designation and protection.
- Exclusive fishing zones for priority use by small-scale fishers in seas, lakes and rivers need designation and protection.
- Access to, and control over, genetic resources for food and agriculture and wider agricultural biodiversity, is required by small-scale food providers, and the realisation of their Farmers' Rights, should take into account the purposes of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

³⁷ ETC Group, *Who will feed us?* ETC Group, 2009, p1. Available at: www.etcgroup.org/sites/www.etcgroup.org/files/ETC_Who_Will_Feed_Us.pdf

- Family farmers' sustainable and efficient use of local biomass and other renewable energy sources requires more support.

4.3) Financial resources

To enable family farmers to make investments it is essential that they have more control over the financial resources they themselves generate and can mobilise additional resources when necessary. Small-scale food producers and processors often struggle to access credit, and this is especially a problem for women. The lack of access to credit from reputable sources can trap family farmers into debt and exploitation.

Ensuring access to credit at facilitated conditions is thus essential. However more broadly there is a need to create sustainable financial systems that make it possible to maintain savings in the rural areas where they can generate new investments and virtuous saving-credit-investment cycles. Systems of decentralised finance based on local rural savings banks or cooperative banks should be supported, identifying the forms most suited to specific local realities.

When providers do offer credit and funding, it needs to be available to meet the priority needs of farmers and support local food networks. Funders may not recognise or understand farmers' needs, and they need to be open to adapting to what farmers themselves can tell them. Financial resources are needed for locally adapted and biodiverse seeds, diverse breeding stock, biopesticides, organic manures, appropriate equipment for tillage, irrigation and transport, and sustainable energy sources.

When farmers become organised into cooperatives for production, processing and marketing one of the benefits is also to improve their ability to access credit and funding.

In the face of shocks, social protection instruments can provide an effective safety net. These may include social assistance, social insurance and efforts at social inclusion. There can be controversy over social protection due to bad experiences of weak schemes, but well designed social protection schemes can be good for growth and improve food security. Social protection is a human right.

Livestock and grain reserves can have an important role in social security to support food sovereignty, especially if the latter can be supplied from local production of culturally appropriate crops. Crop and livestock insurance schemes have attracted interest as a private complement to publically provided social insurance, but in contexts of high poverty, high risk and high premiums they are of limited benefit and are often not widely taken up.³⁸

Sustainable sources of credit, social protection measures and grain reserves and livestock resources are needed to strengthen the resilience of family farming and local food systems.

- For the long-term support of family farming and the supply of inputs needed to realise their sustainable food systems (e.g. locally adapted and biodiverse seeds, diverse breeding stock, bio-pesticides, organic manures, appropriate equipment for tillage, irrigation, livestock keeping, aquaculture and transport, and sustainable energy provision), specified funds are needed at affordable costs.
- Access to credit at reasonable rates from private financial actors by family farmers and small-scale food providers requires a regulatory framework at national levels.
- Social protection instruments that can be an effective safety net for family farmers and other small-scale food producers should be set in place for times of need..
- Grain reserves, provided by local production, are needed to stabilise prices and as a social security tool, in order to support food sovereignty.

4.4) Markets

Family farmers engage with markets all the time, but are concerned about the type of markets they want to support and build.

Farmers need to be able to receive a decent remuneration for the component of their production that they sell in local markets that value their production. Through processing and timing of sale of

³⁸ High Level Panel of Experts, *Social protection for food security*. Rome: CFS: 2012, pp 12, 34-35.
www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-3-Food_security_and_climate_change-June_2012.pdf

stored crops, value addition can be achieved. How farmers engage in markets and the level of control they have over prices largely determines the sustainability of their income.

A basic constraint on family farmers' ability to market their surplus production is often simple lack of roads and other transport infrastructure to reach neighbouring and urban markets. Facilities and infrastructure at markets themselves may also need development. Public investment in infrastructure is a basic necessity.

As discussed earlier, when family farmers enter the commodified market they become part of a commodified chain, losing autonomy and control of the resource base, local markets and jobs. Control is handed to agribusiness, who hold market power through their ability to determine prices for both commercial inputs and produce. In Africa, the commodified market has for decades driven an export orientation, with the benefits often not reaching local people, and this continues to be perpetuated in the investment plans of institutions such as the African Development Bank and NEPAD. The recent experience of land grabs and the scramble for control of Africa's natural resources has epitomised growing corporate control and concentration of land holdings. Land grabbing also illustrates one aspect of financialisation of agriculture with the involvement of financial markets and speculation. Biofuels have highlighted another aspect in which whether agricultural production is used for food, fuel, animal feed, fibre or other use, is determined by external financial markets, with damaging impacts on food security.

One of the major challenges for family farmers is to persuade policy makers to assess the negative impacts of the commodified market – loss of livelihoods, jobs and farms, rural depopulation especially by young people, lower quality food, and food insecurity – and to recognise that these do not have to be inevitable. Outside of the commodified market family farmers seek to build markets that are within the democratic control of the people, that respect nature and promote livelihoods. If policy makers could recognise and strengthen the broad range of informal trade systems and structures that are, thus far, still strong within Africa, this could support creating an alternative to the commodified market that can better serve the needs of the people.

Of necessity family farmers do enter the commodified market. In this case the ability to organise and form cooperatives, networks and similar organisations is vital in order to assert whatever negotiating power they can, through their influence on supply and demand. The Githunguri Dairy Farmers Co-operative Society in Kenya, for instance, has had a big impact on the dairy sector in the country and is now the third largest dairy operation in the country while its milk brand, 'Fresha' is the largest selling in the capital, Nairobi. The rights of producers to organise and the existence of their organisations needs to be endorsed in legal and policy frameworks.

The issue of grain stores and reserves provides a good illustration of conflicting interests between the commodified and informal markets. Structural adjustment policies and international trade regulations dismantled African governments' existing system of grain reserves and are now resisting their re-establishment even though the food price crisis has demonstrated that some form of reserves are necessary not only for humanitarian reasons but also to correct the dysfunctions of the market.

Local producers face competition in their local markets from imports through unfair trade. Years of structural adjustment policies have forced African countries to liberalise and open their markets to competition from powerful companies and production systems that have been strengthened through decades and even centuries of support and protection by their own countries. While all countries, including those in the global North, should be able to support production for their own local food networks, subsidised products should not be able to compete in the local markets of other countries, especially those of the global South. The rhetoric of free trade competition is especially hollow given the non-tariff barriers that rich countries impose around health and quality standards and certification, which it is clear that small-scale producers lack the capacity to comply with. African governments need to protect their own food systems and family farmers against unfair trade.

Conversely, measures to support trade within the African regions should be supported. Important cross-border trade already exists in foods important for local food security, including staple crops, vegetables, artisanally processed fish and meat from pastoralist herds. Much of this is within the informal trade systems, and often formal trade rules actually inhibit this trade. Policies are needed instead to encourage this important trade, including the removal or reduction of tariffs on the products of small-scale farmers, fishers and herders, and facilities and systems to enable pastoralists to move their herds to trade cross-border.

The development of an effective local processing sector, providing a livelihood for small-scale producers is vital for the future of local food networks. It is also key for African economies more

broadly. The food processing sector has great potential as a strategic industry through which to nurture industrial capacity and skills in a manner that creates jobs and supports local economies. Funding and infrastructures support are important to get projects off the ground. Such support should be targeted especially at women and young people.

One aspect of this support should be to explore ways that small-scale processors and producers can meet the requirements of quality certification without imposing excessive transaction costs on small enterprises. This could include certification through cooperatives, traditional social institutions and similar bodies, as well as options for self-certification.

One specific asymmetry in markets is around access to information. Support for improving access to information for family farmers is important, whether through radio, mobile phones or other technologies. Initiatives such as the fledgling grain stock exchange in Mali discussed earlier could be replicated and scaled up. The purpose of this stock exchange is to help establish a transparent market linking producers and buyers where wholesale prices can be agreed fairly. It is not for speculation.

The fluctuation of prices affects both producers and consumers, particularly as prices rise during the hungry season. Price stabilisation measures, particularly through reserves such as grain banks, can help to counter this.

Strengthening and building agricultural and food markets, which are within the control of family farmers and small-scale food producers, support socially and environmentally sustainable production, and provide accessible quality food for consumers, is essential.

- Data that record the largely 'invisible' structures of exchange and trade of foods, which are the most important for small-scale producers, processors and consumers, should be collected and market studies using these data should be carried out.
- Policies and services to recognise and support this currently 'invisible' trade need to be reoriented.
- Regulation of large-scale agribusiness' control over the market is required to reduce or eliminate their inequitable market power.
- While regional integration and trade may facilitate cross-border exchanges, unfair trade and unequal trade agreements harm family farmers and small-scale food producers and national governments should refrain from accepting these. Sustainable small-scale food processing, which prioritises support for initiatives involving women and young people, can be a strategic industrial sector of the economy.
- Price stabilisation measures, particularly through reserves such as grain banks, can help to counter the fluctuation of prices, which affects both producers and consumers, particularly as prices rise during the hungry season.
- The establishment of grain stock exchanges, which improve local and national grain markets, should be investigated but it is important that these do not include any possibilities for speculation.

4.5) Research and capacity building

As has been observed:

"We need a radical shift away from the existing top-down and increasingly corporate-controlled agricultural research system to an approach which devolves more responsibility and decision-making power to farmers, indigenous peoples, food workers, consumers and citizens for the production of social and ecological knowledge. The whole process should lead to the democratisation of research, diverse forms of co-inquiry based on specialist and non-specialist knowledge, an expansion of horizontal networks for autonomous learning and action, and more transparent oversight."³⁹

This is not an 'anti-science' position – family farmers are innovative, are constantly using their knowledge and skills to produce appropriate technologies and keen to adopt other innovations that benefit them. However the essential point is that local communities need to be able to decide which innovations and technologies are needed, when, where and under what conditions.⁴⁰ To do

³⁹ Michel Pimbert, *Transforming knowledge and ways of knowing for food sovereignty*. London: IIED, 2007. Available at: <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/14535IIED.pdf>

⁴⁰ *ibid*

this involves on the one hand opening up the decision-making bodies and governance structures of the current research establishment, and on the other hand strengthening the spaces and institutions of farmers' organisations and wider communities to debate and agree priorities for research and to develop our own knowledge.

Agricultural extension services are an important route to share and disseminate information, and they need to regain priority within public services. However extension systems also need to be reformed, starting with building staff capacity on sustainable agricultural methods and technologies. Extension staff should also be trained in respecting and learning from farmers' knowledge for an interactive capacity building program. Community members should participate in the design, execution, monitoring and evaluation of the extension program.

In addition to extension services, farmers' networks in the region are taking a lead themselves in developing institutions to share knowledge, including through farmer-to-farmer capacity building, skill sharing and producer-led training.

Participatory research in support of, and determined by, family farmers and small-scale food producers is required to enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of food provision.

- Genuinely participatory research programmes that value existing knowledge and skills, including participatory plant breeding, should be integrated into publically funded national research strategies, so long as small-scale food producers have decisive control, in order to reframe overall research priorities.
- Accountability of researchers should be to the organisations of small-scale food providers and not subject to corporations' control of research agendas.
- Farmer to farmer extension and knowledge sharing programmes and similar skill sharing processes between small-scale food providers should be strengthened and provide training for young farmers, fishers and pastoralists in developing resilient food production systems, that also includes enterprise and technical skills. The innovations of family farmers and other small-scale food providers should be promoted through media and outreach programmes for training, education and information dissemination.

4.6) Public sector policies/programmes and family farmer participation

Family farmers throughout Africa have reacted to the onslaught of structural adjustment and neo-liberal policies by developing a variety of strategies to defend their local food systems and by building up their organisations from the national to the regional and continental levels. Today, family farmers' networks exist and interact with governments and intergovernmental institutions at national level and regionally; ROPPA in West Africa, PROPAC in Central Africa, EAFF in East Africa, SACAU in Southern Africa. In October 2010 these four platforms, along with UMAGRI in the Maghreb, came together in Malawi to constitute the Pan-African Farmers' Organisation (PAFO), which has been recognised by the African Union.

Participatory formulation of agricultural policies and investment programmes – and the CAADP process – have been a strong focus of the farmer platforms' fight to achieve meaningful involvement in decision-making. Already in 2004 the four Sub-Saharan African farmers' platforms submitted to NEPAD their concerted vision of agriculture in the context of CAADP. Since then they have continued to deepen their platforms of proposals based on sustainable family farming and increased control over their food systems in a framework of food sovereignty.⁴¹ They have defended these platforms in forums from the national to the global level, on issues ranging from agricultural policies to trade (e.g. EPAs and WTO), access to natural resources, agricultural biodiversity, research, the formulation and implementation of agricultural sector programmes, and others.

These efforts have met with a certain degree of success. Farmers' platforms have been enabled in some countries and regions to organise consultative processes in order to feed farmers' views into the formulation of agricultural policies and land tenure and pastoral codes.⁴² In some cases national farmer platforms have been able to obtain the reformulation of Country Investment Programmes in whose formulation they were not involved and which did not respond to objectives

⁴¹ See the Declaration and Synthesis Report of Nyéléni 2007: Forum for Food Sovereignty, www.nyeleni.org. See also www.roppa.info, www.eaffu.org and www.sacau.info

⁴² For example in Senegal, Mali and ECOWAS.

of food security and poverty reduction.⁴³ In these cases key factors have been the ability to speak with one voice and to build strong alliances with other actors. Calling government officials and elected representatives to account has also been effective.

But much more needs to be done. Farmers' platforms need to be able to go beyond generic defence of family farming to develop their own proposals for alternative policies and programmes that strengthen their sustainable food systems rather than co-opting them into agro-industrial systems. They need to defend their autonomy against official efforts to create parallel platforms and to divide the movement. At the same time, to ensure integrity, the legitimate organisations and networks of family farmers must achieve accountability and transparency in leadership at all levels.

There is a need for opening up agriculture policy processes to more diverse views and forms of knowledge derived from farmers and their organisations and for these processes to embrace participatory decision-making approaches in the policy-making and agenda setting as well. Much has been written about the kind of inclusive deliberative processes that can ensure meaningful and decisive participation.⁴⁴ A significant achievement by civil society, including especially farmers' movements, in the process of renewal of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), has been the recognition of civil society's right to autonomously develop an inclusive and self-organised process for interacting with the member governments and the CFS as a whole – the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM).⁴⁵ In the CFS, all participants – including civil society – engage in the debate on an equal footing but it is member governments that are responsible and accountable for making decisions.

There is a need to realise this standard of meaningful engagement in all policy making forums including those focused on agricultural investment decisions in and for Africa. Recognizing that the same issues are raised at different levels – from local to global – and in a variety of different forums, it is necessary to develop multi-level strategies of engagement that can enable farmers' platforms and their allies to defend coherent common platforms of claims and proposals wherever there is an opportunity to have an impact.

The public sector has an essential role to play by tailoring national investment frameworks, policies and programmes to support the needs of family farmers. With effective and decisive engagement in policy processes and practical implementation, family farmers and small-scale food producers will become architects of their own futures and those of their societies.

- Inclusive multi-actor frameworks, in relevant forums that cover the issues referred to in the above findings, which welcome and facilitate the participation of civil society organisations, particularly organisations, networks and social movements of family farmers and small-scale food producers, and recognise their autonomy and self-organised processes, are needed in order to ensure improved policy engagement and decision making at international, regional, national and sub-national levels.

⁴³ For example, Burundi and Benin.

⁴⁴ See, for example, publications by McKeon and Pimbert.

⁴⁵ See the website of the Civil Society Mechanism, www.csm4cfs.org

5) Key findings

5.1) Models of production

Investing in family farming and small-scale food production will improve food provision, social and environmental sustainability and safeguard livelihoods for the majority.

- As found necessary by the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), agricultural investments should be redirected toward support for the more ecological, biodiverse, adaptive and resilient models of production and harvesting that value family farmers, pastoralists and small-scale fishers and their institutions, improve livelihoods through local value addition and build on their knowledge and skills.
- In order to develop food systems, which are more resilient to shocks including climate change, support is needed to protect, rehabilitate and develop farmers' seeds and livestock breeds and locally-adapted fish/aquatic species.
- These seeds and livestock breeds should be improved through participatory research systems and on-farm management and not through the use of GMOs in agriculture, livestock production, fisheries and the food system. Biosafety legislation and policies should protect family farmers' ecological and biodiverse food production and healthy food supplies, respecting the precautionary principle.
- Improvements to the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries, both inland and marine, achieved through developing the FAO guidelines on small-scale fisheries, will realise food security and poverty eradication, increase socio-cultural diversity in the food system, and will guarantee decent employment and livelihoods and improve local and national economies.

5.2) Productive resources

Guaranteeing rights of access to and control over productive resources – land, water, agricultural biodiversity – is essential to support family farming and small-scale food production and resilient food systems.

- Land issues require urgent attention, taking into account the context of each country, but simplistic 'titling' of land, which can lead to the privatisation of the commons, national heritage and ancestral lands, will not secure access in the long-term, especially for young people.
- The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security need to be implemented at national levels in conformity with the African Union's Land Policy Framework and Guidelines.
- Land and water grabbing by private foreign or domestic investors, which transfer large areas of land and access to water resources out of local control needs to be prevented through moratoria, implemented nationally.
- Pastoralists' grazing land and migratory corridors require designation and protection.
- Exclusive fishing zones for priority use by small-scale fishers in seas, lakes and rivers need designation and protection.
- Access to, and control over, genetic resources for food and agriculture and wider agricultural biodiversity, is required by small-scale food providers, and the realisation of their Farmers' Rights, should take into account the purposes of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.
- Family farmers' sustainable and efficient use of local biomass and other renewable energy sources requires more support.

5.3) Financial resources

Sustainable sources of credit, social protection measures and grain reserves and livestock resources are needed to strengthen the resilience of family farming and local food systems.

- For the long-term support of family farming and the supply of inputs needed to realise their sustainable food systems (e.g. locally adapted and biodiverse seeds, diverse breeding stock, bio-pesticides, organic manures, appropriate equipment for tillage, irrigation, livestock keeping, aquaculture and transport, and sustainable energy provision), specified funds are needed at affordable costs.
- Access to credit at reasonable rates from private financial actors by family farmers and small-scale food providers requires a regulatory framework at national levels.
- Social protection instruments that can be an effective safety net for family farmers and other small-scale food producers should be set in place for times of need..
- Grain reserves, provided by local production, are needed to stabilise prices and as a social security tool, in order to support food sovereignty.

5.4) Markets

Strengthening and building agricultural and food markets, which are within the control of family farmers and small-scale food producers, support socially and environmentally sustainable production, and provide food accessible quality food for consumers, is essential.

- Data that record the largely 'invisible' structures of exchange and trade of foods, which are the most important for small-scale producers, processors and consumers, should be collected and market studies using these data should be carried out.
- Policies and services to recognise and support this currently 'invisible' trade need to be reoriented.
- Regulation of large-scale agribusiness' control over the market is required to reduce or eliminate their inequitable market power.
- While regional integration and trade may facilitate cross-border exchanges, unfair trade and unequal trade agreements harm family farmers and small-scale food producers and national governments should refrain from accepting these. Sustainable small-scale food processing, which prioritises support for initiatives involving women and young people, can be a strategic industrial sector of the economy.
- Price stabilisation measures, particularly through reserves such as grain banks, can help to counter the fluctuation of prices, which affects both producers and consumers, particularly as prices rise during the hungry season.
- The establishment of grain stock exchanges, which improve local and national grain markets, should be investigated but it is important that these do not include any possibilities for speculation.

5.5) Research and capacity building

Participatory research in support of, and determined by, family farmers and small-scale food producers is required to enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of food provision.

- Genuinely participatory research programmes that value existing knowledge and skills, including participatory plant breeding, should be integrated into publically funded national research strategies, so long as small-scale food producers have decisive control, in order to reframe overall research priorities.
- Accountability of researchers should be to the organisations of small-scale food providers and not subject to corporations' control of research agendas.
- Farmer to farmer extension and knowledge sharing programmes and similar skill sharing processes between small-scale food providers should be strengthened and provide training for young farmers, fishers and pastoralists in developing resilient food production systems, that also includes enterprise and technical skills.
- The innovations of family farmers and other small-scale food providers should be promoted through media and outreach programmes for training, education and information dissemination.

5.6) Public sector policies/programmes and family farmer participation

The public sector has an essential role to play by tailoring national investment frameworks, policies and programmes to support the needs of family farmers. With effective and decisive engagement in policy processes and practical implementation, family farmers and small-scale food producers will become architects of their own futures and those of their societies.

- Inclusive multi-actor frameworks, in relevant forums that cover the issues referred to in the above findings, which welcome and facilitate the participation of civil society organisations, particularly organisations, networks and social movements of family farmers and small-scale food producers, and recognise their autonomy and self-organised processes, are needed in order to ensure improved policy engagement and decision making at international, regional, national and sub-national levels.

5.7) Perspectives

To build a sustainable food system for the future, research and data collection need to prioritise the means by which the majority of people access food and thus to actively seek information on the informal and mostly 'invisible' production, processing and trade within the food system.

- Food networks are deeply ingrained in social institutions that serve rural and urban communities and provide a healthy diversity of foods.
- 'Local' can mean different things in different contexts. Sometimes it refers to the range of daily activity, at others to the national economy as contrasted with the international; often it means the regional economy including urban-rural linkages. 'Local' is not simply a geographical concept, but one that combines geographic, economic, social and cultural dimensions in a complex matrix. Using the term 'local' helps focus on the need for food markets in a region to make good use of food produced in the region, to benefit the producers and consumers in that region, to remain within the control of people in the region and to sustain the environment of the region.
- Family farmers are the basis of Africa's food system, and developing, as well as protecting, the resource base of family farmers is essential to achieving a sustainable food system in Africa.
- All family farmers are in markets of various types. The nature of these markets and the terms in which they participate in them affects both the distribution of their high quality food and their income.
- Investment by farmers is around 85% of all investment in agriculture in Africa. It dwarfs foreign direct investment, yet needs protection from FDI's negative impacts. The public sector has an essential role to play by tailoring national investment frameworks, policies and programmes to support the needs of family farmers.
- Family farmers are great innovators. Technologies developed with family farmers and controlled by them, will benefit them.

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7) Annexes

7.1) Annex 1:

Excerpts from the *Final Declaration of Civil Society Organizations, Regional Civil Society Consultation for Africa held in Brazzaville 21–22 April 2012 in conjunction with the FAO 2012 Africa Regional Conference*

We, African civil society organizations - including small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, consumers, women, young people, NGOs, human rights movements, trade unions, academics, artisans, indigenous peoples – meeting in Brazzaville from 21 to 22 April 2012 in the context of the 27th FAO Regional Conference, having discussed the situation of agricultural development and food security in Africa, make the following observations :

1. Food insecurity affects more than 40% of the African population, of which 65% are small-scale producers, despite the variety of projects that have been implemented in Africa and the strong economic growth rate over the past few years highlighted by the authorities ;
2. Lack of coherence among policies, programmes and projects at different levels (local, national, regional and continental) continues to be a problem ;
3. Governments look to external resources to fund African agriculture yet, we maintain, our agriculture can only develop if it receives adequate national resources as a priority ;
4. Resources are targeted towards industrial agriculture adopting the Public/Private Partnerships (PPP) approach which is not an appropriate instrument for supporting the family farms that are the foundation of African food security and sovereignty ;
5. Despite the expectations that CAADP inspired at the outset, civil society notes that the process of its implementation is not inclusive and that the modalities of its funding are oriented towards external aid that is often not adapted to the national context ;
6. Government accountability regarding the various types of investments that have been put in place before and after the 2008 food crisis is progressively weakening;
7. There is a communications deficit among the various actors of food security;
8. The needs of small producers – women in particular – are increasingly highlighted in programme proposals as a means for successfully mobilizing financial resources, yet these resources do not reach the small producers in whose name they were sought.

In order to address these preoccupations, which we discussed in detail, we make the following requests:

Regarding agricultural investments

- The existence of agricultural policies formulated with a participatory approach should be the pre-condition for the formulation of national investment plans.
- States should be accountable for ensuring that agricultural investments are useful and relevant and that they are coherent with the visions of the agricultural policies.
- Agricultural investments should be directed towards family farms, and particularly towards women and young people and other marginalized groups.

We request that :

- governments, FAO, the G8, the World Bank and the GAFSP reconsider their promotion of Public/Private Partnerships which, as they are now conceived, are not suitable instruments to support the family farms which are the very basis of African food security and sovereignty.
- governments speed up the proactive participation of small-scale producers and other members of civil society in the decision-making mechanisms of CAADP, as is the case in the CSF.
- agricultural research be financed by the public sector and that it take local knowledge into account.

7.2) **Annex 2:** **Excerpt from Agricultural Investment strengthening family farming and sustainable food systems in Africa: synthesis report, African farmer workshop, 4–5 May 2011, Mfou, Yaoundé, Cameroon**

The issue of agricultural investment is a key one in Africa and how and where these investments are directed is of considerable concern to African family farmers and their organisations. From CAADP to the reformed Committee on World Food Security, enhanced investment for food security is at the top of the agenda. Although there is now a commitment on the part of multilateral institutions and of a number of donors to give greater priority to supporting family farmers, a number of questions need to be explored in depth in order to ensure that the support proposed is what is wanted by, and is potentially beneficial to, Africa's family farmers and their sustainable food systems. These productive and resilient family farming systems currently provide food for more than 80% of the African population and could deliver more.

The African regional farmers' platforms conclude that in order to defend and promote family farming, sustainable food systems and food sovereignty, it is necessary:

1. to realise a common approach in the face of harmful agricultural investments that are capturing productive resources, imposing industrial models of production, and implementing policies, strategies and research and other programmes that undermine local food systems;
2. to redirect agricultural investments towards more agroecological, biodiverse and resilient models of production supported by participatory research, development and extension systems under farmers' control;
3. to give priority to agricultural investments that support the infrastructure and input requirements of sustainable family farming;
4. to secure agricultural investments to improve the effectiveness, capacities and capabilities of farmers' organisations and networks, including their ability of farmers to self organize, for example in co- operatives that have social, economic, welfare and equity principles;
5. to ensure that there is meaningful participation by our networks and organisations, by using in particular, the approach agreed by States for civil society engagement in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) which recognizes the autonomy of civil society organizations and welcomes them – small-scale food producers, in particular – as full participants. Existing arrangements in, for example, the accelerated CAADP and other investment programmes, are not as effective.

Family farming is the basis for modern food provision in Africa, today and tomorrow. Its multi-functionality and sustainable productive potential is supported by extensive research evidence. Family farming and small-scale food production generates food and well-being for the majority of the population and the wealth of the region, and conserves its natural resources. It can ensure employment for young people within their territories, thus promoting social peace and attenuating migration. Innovative family farming, backed by appropriate research, supportive investments and adequate protection, can out-perform industrial commodity production. It provides the basis for the food sovereignty of communities, countries and sub-regions of Africa.

Key findings:

1. Investing in family farming and small-scale food production will improve food provision, social and environmental sustainability and safeguard livelihoods for the majority.
2. Guaranteeing rights of access to and control over productive resources– land, water, agricultural biodiversity – is essential to support family farming and small-scale food production and resilient food systems.
3. Sustainable sources of credit, social protection measures and grain reserves and livestock resources are needed to strengthen the resilience of family farming and local food systems.
4. Strengthening and building agricultural and food markets which are within the control of family farmers and small-scale food producers, support socially and environmentally sustainable production, and provide accessible quality food for consumers is essential.
5. Participatory research in support of, and determined by, family farmers and small-scale food producers is required to enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of food provision.
6. The public sector has an essential role to play by tailoring national investment frameworks, policies and programmes to support the needs of family farmers. With effective and decisive engagement in policy processes and practical implementation, family farmers and small-scale food producers will become architects of their own futures and those of their societies.
7. To build a sustainable food system for the future, research and data collection need to prioritise the means by which the majority of people access food and thus to actively seek information on the informal and mostly 'invisible' production, processing and trade within the food system.



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EuropAfrica – Towards Food Sovereignty is a campaign that connects African farmers' platforms and European civil society organisations to reflect and act together on major current issues

concerning food and agricultural policies, trade and development cooperation. EuropAfrica aims to raise awareness and advocate on shared issues and to promote sustainable small-scale family farming and local agri-food systems that bring consumers and producers closer together. The campaign supports the realisation of food sovereignty, i.e. the right for people and communities to define their own food and agricultural policies, both in Africa and in Europe, without impeding the food sovereignty of others.

Partners in Europe:

Terra Nuova (campaign coordinator), Centro Internazionale Crocevia (CIC), Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires (CSA), Glropolis, Practical Action, Vredeseilanden

Partners in Africa:

ROPFA – Network of Peasant organisations and Producers in West Africa, EAFF – Eastern Africa Farmers Federation, PROPAC – Regional Platform of Farmers Organisations in Central Africa