



Note from African Food system and the SDGS conference

ActionAid International Senegal

Introduction

The African Food system and the SDGS conference took place in Senegal from November 3rd to 5th 2018. It's an initiative led by Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) in partnership with the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative for Africa (EOA-I), AfrONet, IFOAM-Organics International and others. The conference brought together social movements, society Civil organization, research and development networks, key experts in the workshop's thematic areas, food producers, consumer associations, youth, women, research institutions, media, governments, and non-governmental organizations working at global, regional and national level on the linkages between food production, nutrition and health.

ActionAid International is represented in the conference by ActionAid Senegal namely: Zakaria Sambakhe, Interim country Director and Aissatou Gueye, Project Coordinator . Our presence can be justified because the Platform 3 have engagement collaboration with social movements and AFSA is one of them.

<https://foodsystems.afsafrica.org/>

The objectives of the meeting

The Dakar conference aim to reflect on the future of food systems in Africa in the context of climate change, agroecology, health and resilience. To meet these objectives participants was invited to think on how change can happen, how to bring change. The exercise leads us to learnt that strengthening food system requires conviction, individual and collective engagement through network and alliance building to have a solid movement that can make change happen on practices and policies regarding to agroecology.

One of the pre-conditions, to promote agroecology is to ensure availability of peasant seeds. The challenges faced by the seed system must be addressed by different stakeholders, from policy makers and civil society organizations to farmers, in order to change seed management mechanisms. Members of civil society organizations have a duty to work to identify the various problems faced by the seed system. ActionAid in Senegal have contributed to this study with an specific work on women role in seed conservation ongoing at different Local Right Program. The finding will also inform this global struggle around seed system. Because who control seed control food system.

- Concretely the conference aim to Explore how to address the crisis in urban food systems and its impact on rural food systems and recommend changes.
- Explore how fixing the food system can reduce greenhouse gases through carbon sequestration.
- Explore what has happened to the outcome of the last meeting and re-strategize to implement the recommendations.
- Identify research agendas to explore what African food systems should look like in the continent, where the complexity will be exacerbated by climate change and social upheavals.
- Investigate the variety and complexity of African food systems and show the implication of their erosion by the industrial food system and develop strategies to counter it.
- Identify a campaign agenda before the conference and use the conference to launch the campaign, with the African food sovereignty movement fully behind it.

About the conference

Food systems are a global and immediate priority in the context of climate change, health and resilience. This 3-day conference focuses on the future of food systems in Africa. The conference will explore the complexity, diversity and nutritional value of African food systems and launch an action plan and declaration for change for better food systems geared towards the general public and policymaking bodies including the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities. The first

two days will focus on five thematic areas. On the third day, the participants will join with the participants of an organic agriculture conference which follows the food systems event.

African Rural women voice calling to strengthen food system in Africa by promoting agroecology

Mariama Sonko, Agroecology women amazon, from “We are the solution” a women farmer organization based in Senegal, made a presentation on the benefit of agroecology practice on soil conservation, nutrition, health inspired participants on the use of local resources to strengthen food system. Mariama and her organization members as well as other women farmers in the conference room are convince that women have a keep role to play in this arena. This will call to have a strong movement which can educate our political leaders to take the right decisions. Another exercise with the sculpture done with clay to reflect what have been identify by Mariam Sonko during her expose. The exercise brought some questions to ourselves such as: are we really making progress toward food sovereignty and nutrition, who control our food system? are we really challenging policies in the right way?

What is the alternative

The participants of the conference agreed that agroecology can be a strong alternative to industrial agriculture, All the dimensions of sustainable food system in Africa. ActionAid experience on promotion of agroecology, resilience and land governance have been shared through during the discussion. Differences experiences about social and ecological transformation have been also shared to enable learning and open for general discussion. On the task during the agroecological conference was to identify how we deal with challenges in different countries and cultures when it's come to climate change. the experiences showed people discuss their issues in public spaces in the middle of the villages. Twelve parliaments are established which mean spaces for dialogues and interactions between communities' members. The follow spaces have been identified and used as a group work.

1. Parliament of farmers and pastoralist
2. Parliaments of fisher folk
3. Parliament of rural women and their allies
4. Parliament of land rights and indigenous sovereignty
5. Parliament of soil health
6. Parliaments of seeds and seeds culture
7. Parliament on agroecology and indigenous farming
8. Parliament of struggles in engaging power with agribusiness and government
9. What about our young people
10. Parliament of responsibility what I/we/ you can do
11. Parliament of solidarity and unifying across continent
12. Parliament of connecting to our roots in order to progress

The group have discussed the follow questions:

1. What activities to be changed and what transformation learning do we need. What alliances do we need to develop with learning centers in our communities?
2. What is our long-term pathway in each our assemblies. What is our 20/30 years plan? (we need a long-term food movement)
3. We are devoted to the learning of children. How can we devote time to the learning of the leaders?

Actionaid have worked in the parliament on Land right, indigenous agroecology and responsibilities. Some of our experience on agroecology and land right (the code of conduct, agroecology policy brief) have been shared with participants.

Some recommendations made by the groups

1. Social movements and CSO should established an African indigenous agroecology network (building and bringing together amplifying existing research)
2. Package agroecology as a superior food system that feeds the world and protect the environment, the health and engaging young people
3. Secure arable land, water, seed local inputs for agroecology and food system in Africa
4. Educate children, young people and leaders to own agroecology practices
5. Involve more and more consumers organizations and young people
6. Develop a convincing narrative to influence the policy markers

The following recommendations are done to AFSA to strengthen policy work and actions in the context of climate change

1. AFSA should built technology or data center so CSOs, members and partners can get information to use to engage government
2. AFSA should built the capacity of CSOs so they can engage their respective governments
3. AFSA should be one step ahead of the multi corporation
4. Advocate for climate justice
5. Promote Agroecology as the most food system that feeds the world
6. advocate against mining companies, agribusiness including climate smart agriculture

Recommendations for ActionAid

Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa(AFSA)is a broad alliance of civil society, actors and movements who are part of the struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology in 50 African countries. AAI can engagement a conversion to have a strategic partnership with AFSA since we have in common the promotion of agroecology and strengthen food sovereignty and policy influence.

Connect our partners and Activista's groups with AFSA members in different countries in order to strengthen the network of food right defenders.

Photos Annex



Agroecology for Africa in 163 seconds : <https://youtu.be/jpWEHPz3dp8>