



CONCEPT NOTE

Coordinated and Coherent Support to Member States in the implementation of their UN Food Systems Summit Commitments

24 May 2022

I. SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

In declaring the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), the UN was making a compelling statement on the inherently cross-cutting nature of food systems across all the 17 SDGs. This is also true across Africa's 20 goals of Agenda 2063. Hence, Africa, under the leadership of the African Union (AU) recognized the UNFSS as an opportunity to bring increased focused attention and action on implementation of Agricultural and food systems transformation goals of Agenda 2063 and as specifically "pulled out" in the AU CAADP – Malabo decision (Malabo, 20-14).

In this regard, the AUDA-NEPAD in liaison with the African Union Commission (AUC) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) accompanied member states (49 in total) through intensive food systems national dialogues – integral component of the UNFSS processes during 2021. Connecting to regional and continental efforts and structures, the national dialogues and consultations, Africa also developed the Africa Common Position on Food Systems. In these undertakings, Africa identified three issues as critical in what would be unique value addition of the UNFSS. These are:

- Attention to systems approaches, recognizing the cross-sector, cross-discipline and even multi-national linkages and interdependence as inherently essential for sustainable success in transforming the food systems – towards food systems that are resilient, inclusive and a source of as much nutritious diets as much as incomes for local populations
- Intention effort to reach and involve non-traditional players and stakeholders – essentially frontline players such as food vendors as well as sub-national government and non-government structures including community and traditional leadership structures
- Putting a spotlight on systemically transformational goals (by implication medium-long term) while responding immediate needs in terms of food and diets, environment and climate as well as incomes and government revenue

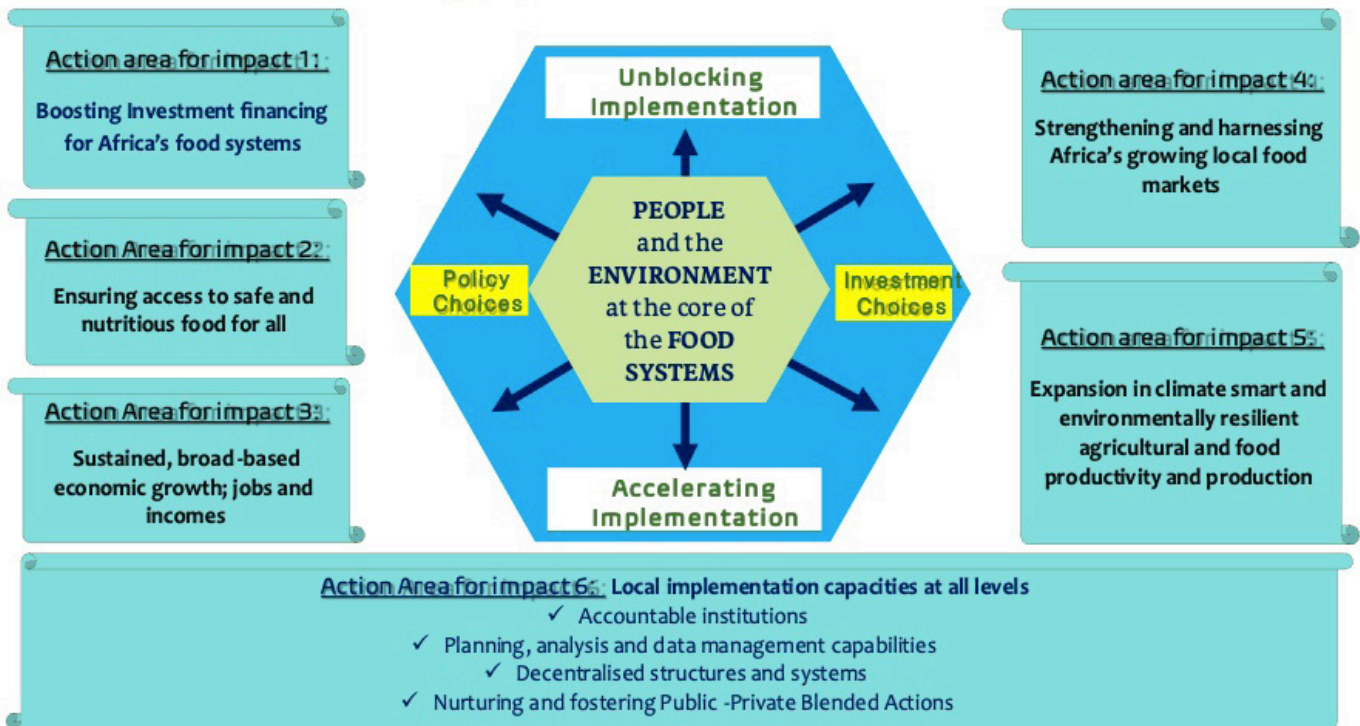
The above three issues, underline one key factor in this renewed momentum on food systems – the focus on IMPLEMENTATION and RESULTS. In this light, the Africa Common Position on Food Systems, went further to elaborate practical consideration to accentuate deliberate policy and investment choices as well as institutional and human capital development to expand purpose-built systemic capabilities to plan and execute – in pursuit of resilient, viable and inclusive food systems (as an underlying cross-cutting pillar in economic growth and inclusive development trajectories). The Africa Common Position in Food Systems, in articulating the implementation and implementation support mechanisms, also highlighted following points as part of the conditions for success - sustainable and at scale (See below chart):

- Centrality of PEOPLE as well as NATIONAL (LOCAL) OWNERSHIP-RESPONSIBILITY
- Public-private blended solutions

- Interdependences across sub-national, national, regional and continental solution while remaining integral in existing development frameworks and institutional structures [Agenda 2063; CAADP-Malabo as primary entry points as well as National Development Plans (NDPs) and sector plans-strategies – such as NAIPs, NDCs, Social Protection Plans, Agro-industry plans, Water and Energy Security strategies, etc.
- Regional solutions and vertical coherence and alignment; Nurturing shared social capital – mitigating risks; citizenry responsibilities; economics of scale, etc...

Recent shocks and disruptions, including the desert locust (in parts of the continent) and COVID-19, have among other issues, gone to highlight that the continent remains fragile and vulnerable on key human development aspects; current socio-economic TRAJECTORIES simply UNSUSTAINABLE. It is also clear that BUSINESS AS USUAL is not an option. The African Common Position on Food Systems Implementation mechanism provides for bold introspection, rallying science, knowledge including indigenous knowledge and bring to the fore views and perceptions of grassroots communities for those business-unusual game changing solutions.

Priority Impact Area considerations



II. ROLLING OUT OF THE AFRICA FOOD SYSTEMS IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT MECHANISM

With a focus on rallying and enhancing IMPLEMENTATION CAPABILITIES at all levels, the AU Common Position on Food Systems, highlight the need for intentional interventions aimed at strengthening and aligning implementation capabilities at all levels through, specifically interventions in the following areas:

- Brokering of partnerships and alliances including multi-partner initiatives, whose main aim to augment implementation capabilities
- Programmatic interventions to enhance institutional operational capabilities through aspects such as data collection and data management, resource allocation-use and associated value-for-money and accountability; embracing emerging technological innovations especially in digitalization, artificial intelligence, and
- Human capital development including alignment of skill sets and competencies

It is here important to emphasize that implementation on the food systems commitments will be integral to existing national, regional and continental structures and tools. The AU CAADP-Malabo declaration is the primary entry point with deliberate efforts made to strengthen inter-governmental, cross-sector alliances and joint delivery structure especially with climate and biodiversity resilience, social protection, health and education, agro-industries, among others.

Within specific national needs and circumstances, AUDA-NEPAD support, in liaison with AUC and RECs, will involve:

- Technical advisory services in the formulation of specific food systems interventions / initiatives along and within existing agricultural transformation programmes (i.e. NAIPs). In this regard, AUDA-NEPAD will mobilise and make accessible to member states, evidence- and science-based capabilities, addressing, among others, issues of relevance and appropriateness, bankability and implementability including in-context cost:benefit analysis, etc...
- Brokering technical and investment financing partnerships: The support will, at appropriate stages, support member states in organising investment financing platforms for identified food systems programmes – targeting both domestic and international investment windows
- Expose and facilitate dialogue and knowledge-science access in multi-sectorial platforms bring together policy makers, scientists and practitioners. This will give country development planners and policy makers access to up-to-date local and international capabilities on aspects such as foresight and Science-Technology-Innovations (STI)

In this light, AUDA-NEPAD has maintained engagement with National Food Systems Conveners and CAADP-Malabo focal point teams. The Systems approaches thrust recognise Ministries of Finance and Economic Planning and Ministries of Agriculture as primary entry points and core custodians of the FS agenda at country level. The pursuit of systems approaches will advance efforts on cross-government engagements especially with ministries/departments such as Environment and Climate change; Health, Nutrition and Social Protection; land, Energy and Water Ministries, etc...

III. LEVERAGING UN AGENCIES' CAPABILITIES TO AUGMENT AND ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY OF RESULTS

Additional to normative work, experience and knowledge in supporting Africa's agriculture, food security as well as social and food safety nets, including strengthening of institutional capabilities, various UN agencies are a key default development partner owing to several factors including (i) established national level presence in all the countries; (ii) long term presence as well as (iii) collectively providing for key elements of the integrated and comprehensive thrust within the food systems nexus and across the various priority components of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

In the shared interest for coordinated, coherent and integrated support to country-owned and led food systems initiatives, systematic and structured engagement between AUDA-NEPAD and the UN agencies is essential. UN agencies' capabilities and experience track record is noted in key aspects including:

- Analytical tools and data (including sub-national level data) regarding social protection and food safety nets, vulnerability assessments including practical household-community measures in responding to sudden as well as systemic shocks and disruptions
- National and frontline presence which allows direct and systemic engagement with national structures including Government as well as other frontline players and stakeholders
- Expertise in building resilience using appropriate integrated approaches for desired results and understanding of managing the linkages between sustained development efforts, on one side, and critical responses to emergencies, conflicts and disruptions, including the COVID-19 pandemic
- Mobilising international / global attention in issues of uniquely Africa interests especially in issues of global interests such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic
- Expertise in business development and project preparation as well as identifying and informing consultations on regional value chains - along AfCFTA goals

IV. IMMEDIATE “MAKING-HAPPEN” CONSIDERATIONS:

- Joint working framework: A joint convening bringing together AUDA-NEPAD and all UN Agencies (regional and national) officers responsible for food systems aspects to dialogues and ensure common strategies and tools as well as ambitions in fostering coordinated and coherent support to member states
- Network of Experts: Identify and establish a UN community of practice to serve as an experts' resource in the technical advisory support to member states (participating in multi-disciplinary independent technical advisory support and reviews essentially within their duty countries)

Note: AUDA-NEPAD is already engaging with member states through an initially 18-months programme. First National FS Conveners' Meeting was held on 3rd March. Currently the Member States are formalizing country-specific needs for support within the AU context

