



AKADEMIYA



WEST, CENTRAL, & NORTH AFRICA REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUE

CONCEPT NOTE

**Building Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems
in Africa:** Mobilizing African Voices and Building
Momentum for the **UN Food Systems Summit**

30 JUNE 2021
12:00-14:45 GMT
08:00-10:45 US EST

1. BACKGROUND

The world's food systems touch every aspect of human existence – making them not just essential but also valuable and important instruments of change. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragilities and inequalities in food systems which underscores the urgent need to ensure that food systems are more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

In 2019, the UN Secretary-General called for a Food Systems Summit and engagement process to help establish the future direction for food systems and accelerate collective action to deliver progress on all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Summit is guided by the five Action Tracks: (1) Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; (2) Shift to sustainable consumption patterns; (3) Boost nature-positive production; (4) Advance equitable livelihoods and; (5) Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

As the Food Systems Summit is intended to serve as both a people's and a solutions summit, it has several workstreams to help gear up for the Summit in September 2021. Of note is the workstream on Food Systems Summit Dialogues that provides opportunities for UN member state dialogues, global dialogues and independent dialogues.

2. AFRICA FOOD SYSTEMS REGIONAL DIALOGUES

Despite progress made over the past few decades, about 767 million people globally continue to live in extreme poverty, half of them in Africa (FAO, 2018). The majority of Africa's poor and hungry live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihood. However, their livelihoods are often constrained by limited access to resources, services, technologies, markets, and economic opportunities, lowering their productivity and income. Rapid population growth, youth unemployment, conflict, civil unrest, climate change, and environmental degradation exacerbate the situation.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has further threatened Africa's food systems and the livelihoods of the most vulnerable. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, market supply chain and trade disruptions have reduced food accessibility, especially in areas that are already substantially affected by food insecurity (Cullen, 2020). Furthermore, some countries have seen an increase in food prices and global models predict that the number of people living in poverty could substantially increase—exacerbating poverty and hunger in developing countries (Vos et al, 2020).

Through the African Union's Agenda 2063, the 2014 Malabo Declaration, and the UN SDGs, African leaders have resolved to transform food systems on the continent including ending hunger and improving food security and nutrition for all. Nevertheless, the Second Biennial Report reveals that Africa is not on track to achieve the Malabo Declaration's commitment on ending hunger by 2025 (AUC, 2020). In fact, the number of undernourished people in Africa rose from 184 million to 206 million between 2015 and 2017 (ReSAKSS, 2020). The increasing trend is closely associated with the increase in civil unrest in the Africa, exacerbated by climate-related shocks, recurring pest infestations, and other stresses that threaten agricultural productivity and food security of the most vulnerable populations. Ensuring that Africa has sustainable and resilient food systems requires a multi-pronged approach and multi-sectoral concerted efforts that seek to address in a holistic manner the closely interlinked objectives of poverty reduction, ending hunger, food and nutrition security, and ensuring resilience of livelihoods and production systems.

It is against this background that the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and AKADEMIYA2063 are organizing two Africa Regional Food Systems Dialogues under the Independent Dialogues Food Systems Summit banner. The overall goal is to enhance regional advocacy in support of the Food Systems Summit engagement process specifically focusing on Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress.

The resilience of food systems needs to be strengthened in such a way that the economic, social and environmental foundations to produce sufficient nutritious food are not compromised for future generations. It demands a comprehensive approach that integrates responses to climate, biodiversity

loss, conflict, pandemics, economic crises, food insecurity, malnutrition and considering poverty, inequalities and poor land use and distribution as structural root causes of increased hunger.

3. OBJECTIVES

The Africa Regional Food Systems Dialogues will seek to:

1. Convene a broad group of African stakeholders including the private sector, civil society, farmers' groups, policymakers, and the research and academic community to:
 - a. Deliberate on challenges and opportunities to transforming African food systems and ensuring that they are sustainable and resilient;
 - b. Showcase best practices, lessons learned, technological innovations, collaborations, and policies in transforming food systems;
 - c. Identify game-changing solutions¹ (e.g. emerging best practices, research evidence, conceptual frameworks,) from across the continent that are actionable, sustainable, and can have impact at scale in terms of building the resilience of African food systems to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress;
 - d. Discuss the role of high-level African champions that can advance the African perspective and "solutions" coming out of the regional food system dialogues.

4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of the Africa Regional Food Systems Dialogues are:

1. Increased understanding of critical issues around challenges and opportunities to transforming African food systems;
2. Consensus on potential game changing solutions for ensuring resilient and sustainable food systems in Africa;
3. Identification of high level African Champions and agreement on their role in advocating for coherent support on the key issues emanating from the discussions; and
4. A summary statement consolidating African voices on best practices, game changing solutions, and recommendations from the dialogues.

5. FORMAT FOR REGIONAL DIALOGUES

The Africa Regional Food Systems Dialogues will be convened as a set of two regional dialogues of 2.5 hours each, covering East and Southern Africa and West, Central, and North Africa. The Dialogues will be conducted virtually in plenary sessions (80 minutes), discussion sessions (50 minutes) and summary sessions (30 minutes).

6. PARTICIPATION

In line with the Food Systems Dialogue [principles of engagement](#), the Africa Regional Food Systems Dialogue Series will embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity. The dialogues will bring together a wide range of stakeholders directly involved in moving food from farm to fork. Participants will include representatives of the research/scientific community; government; civil society, the private sector, and farmers' groups, etc.

¹ "A 'game changing solution' is a feasible action which can be sustained over time that would shift the capacity of food systems to advance global goals."

7. TIMELINES

The culminating Summit gathering will take place in New York in September 2021 in conjunction with the UN General Assembly. This will be preceded by a pre-Summit gathering in Italy in July 2021. Therefore, for the outcomes of the Africa Regional Food Systems Dialogues outcomes to feed into the pre-Summit gathering in July 2021 and the Summit in September, the two Africa Regional Food Systems Dialogues will be convened in the second quarter of the year as follows:

- May 31, 2021 - East and Southern Africa
- June 30, 2021 - West, Central, and North Africa

8. ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

FANRPAN was established in 1997 in response by ministers of agriculture and environment from Southern and Eastern Africa for an independent network to promote the dissemination of policy research results across Africa, and to act as a platform for policy engagement of all food, agriculture and natural resources (FANR) stakeholders. It is an Africa-wide network of country-based policy nodes that are groups of existing policy institutions with technical expertise and FANR stakeholders collaborating to generate evidence for use in addressing policy bottlenecks. The national nodes are an inter-sectoral platform of different stakeholder groups, including farmers' organizations, agriculture and policy research institutions, government departments, the private sector, civil society, donors, women, youth, and the media. For more information, please visit: www.fanrpan.org

AKADEMIYA2063

AKADEMIYA2063 is an Africa-based non-profit organization with headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda, and a regional office in Dakar, Senegal. AKADEMIYA2063's mission is to provide data, policy analysis, and capacity-strengthening support to enable the AU Member States to achieve economic transformation and shared prosperity. More broadly, AKADEMIYA2063 leverages science, generates knowledge, and strengthens capacities to help advance the African Union's Agenda 2063.

AKADEMIYA2063 is home to three longstanding Africawide programs—(1) the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS), (2) the African Growth and Development Policy (AGRODEP) Modeling Consortium, and (3) the Malabo Montpellier Panel (MaMo Panel)—that provide data and analysis in support of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). For more information, please visit: www.akademiya2063.org

9. REFERENCES

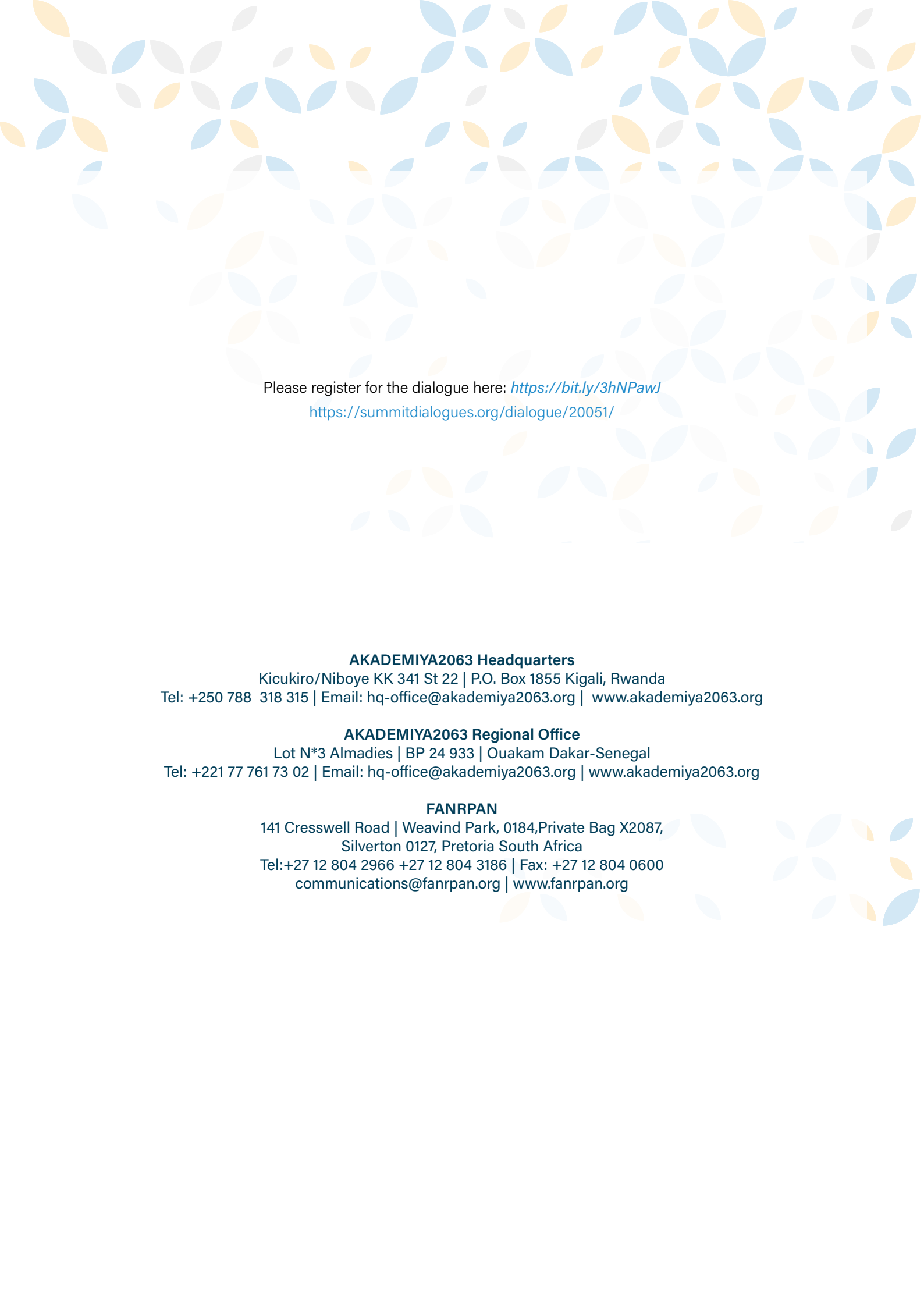
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Please register for the dialogue here: <https://bit.ly/3hNPawJ>
<https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/20051/>

AKADEMIYA2063 Headquarters

Kicukiro/Niboye KK 341 St 22 | P.O. Box 1855 Kigali, Rwanda
Tel: +250 788 318 315 | Email: hq-office@akademiya2063.org | www.akademiya2063.org

AKADEMIYA2063 Regional Office

Lot N*3 Almadies | BP 24 933 | Ouakam Dakar-Senegal
Tel: +221 77 761 73 02 | Email: hq-office@akademiya2063.org | www.akademiya2063.org

FANRPAN

141 Cresswell Road | Weavind Park, 0184, Private Bag X2087,
Silverton 0127, Pretoria South Africa
Tel: +27 12 804 2966 +27 12 804 3186 | Fax: +27 12 804 0600
communications@fanrpan.org | www.fanrpan.org