



Insights for food systems transformation from southern Africa

Overview of southern African context



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Disclaimer

The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Sida, or any of the individuals and organizations referred to in the report.

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Contents

2021 – A critical year for food systems transformation	4
Framing food systems	6
The need for transformation	8
Key events of 2021	12
Key insights	24

Acronyms

AGRF – African Green Revolution Forum
CST – Centre for Sustainability Transitions, University of Stellenbosch
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP – gross domestic product
GRP – Global Resilience Partnership
ICRISAT – International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
ICT – information and communication technology
IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development
IWMI – International Water Management Institute
R&D – research and development
SAPECS – Southern African Program on Ecosystem Change and Society
SARA – Southern African Resilience Academy
SADC – Southern African Development Community
SME – small and medium-sized enterprises
SSA – Sub-Saharan Africa
UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFSS – United Nations Food Systems Summit
WEF – water-energy-food
WFP – World Food Programme
WHO – World Health Organisation

2021 – A critical year for food systems transformation

Transformation is needed to move southern Africa’s current food system into a space that is responsive to future uncertainties, climate-resilient, as well as environmentally and socially sustainable. Research plays an integral role in this shift.

According to Thornton et al (2021), “building resilience to climate change and climate impacts influences and is influenced by other forms of resilience within the system. Resilience building activities can have knock-on effects in other areas of vulnerability highlighting the need for the careful consideration of trade-offs”.¹

This report contextualises the actions of the Southern African Resilience Academy (SARA) in 2021, a year covering many pivotal events towards food systems transformation.

The year 2021 demonstrated the extent to which global leaders are committed to accelerating and deepening the transformation of food systems in a manner that aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Beyond this, the extensive participation of a wide range of stakeholders in food system dialogues (whether at a local, national, regional or global scale) demonstrates that people want to witness and engage in food systems transformation. Transformation that ensures the growing population can continue to be fed, in such a way that also contributes to people’s nutrition, health and well-being, restores and protects nature, is climate neutral and adapted to local circumstances, and provides decent jobs and inclusive economies.

About SARA

SARA is an initiative of the Global Resilience Partnership, supported by regional collaborators. SARA aims to strengthen regional expert networks, cross-sectoral collaboration, and the co-production of policy- and practice-relevant knowledge. SARA is coordinated through the Centre for Sustainability Transitions at Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

SARA’s main goals are to:

- Strengthen regional expert networks and collaboration in the areas of resilience and development
- Support the co-production of policy- and practice-relevant knowledge
- Enhance knowledge exchange between Global South regions and knowledge transfer from the Global South to the Global North

SARA’s activities align closely with the USAID Resilient Waters Program, as well as the Southern African Program on Ecosystem Change and Society (SAPECS), an established research network that connects social-ecological systems researchers in southern Africa.

¹ Thornton P, Gosling A, Chesterman S, Neely CN. 2021. The impacts of climate change on Southern African food systems AICCRA Report. Wageningen, the Netherlands: Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA). Available at: aicra.cgiar.org

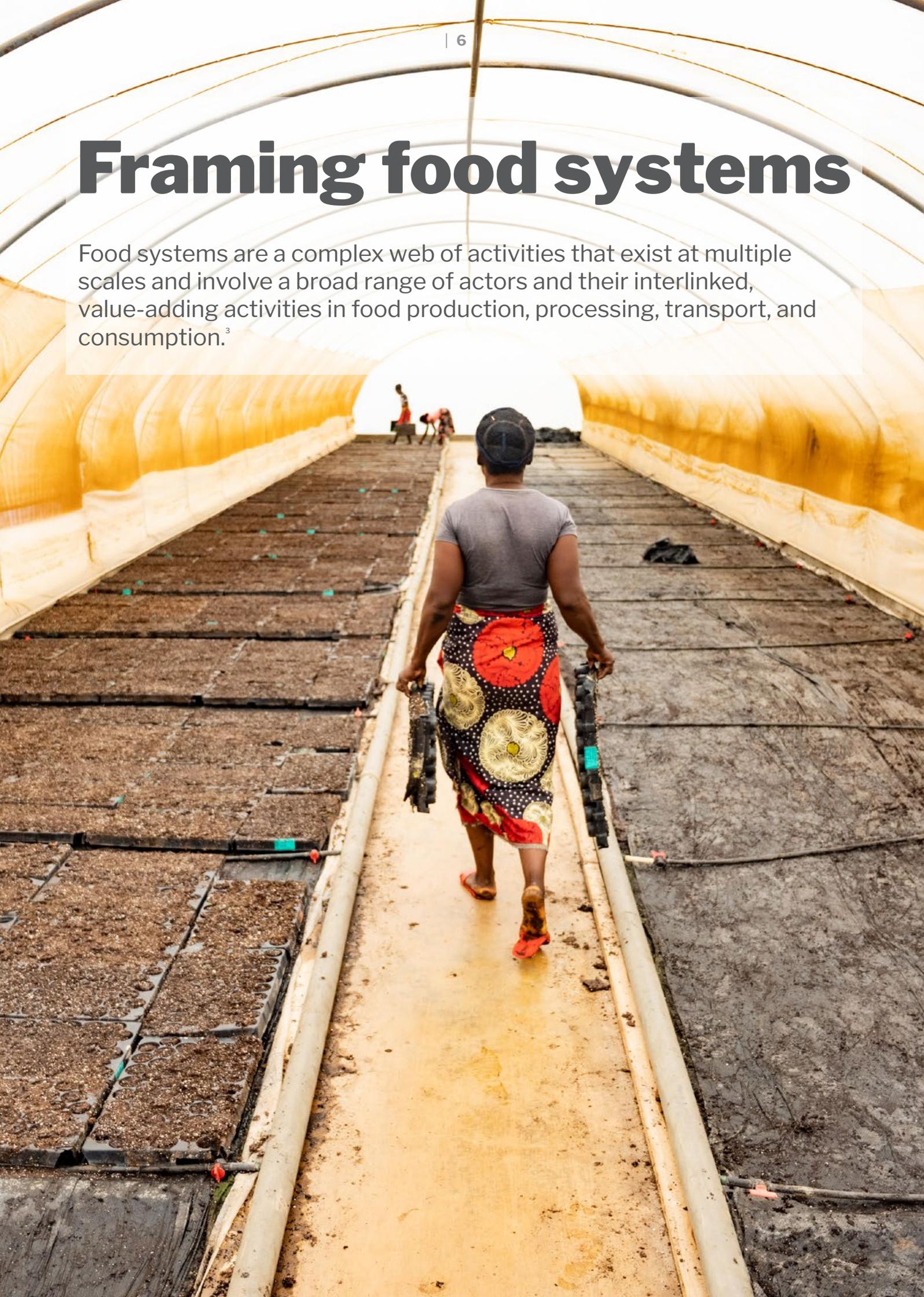
² Chesterman S, Neely CN. 2021. Foresight for Future Planning Training Series: Information Pack. Wageningen, the Netherlands: CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).



“Transformative change sometimes requires radical new interventions, policies and partnerships. It moves us beyond incremental change and results in major long-term changes in the way systems operate.”²

Framing food systems

Food systems are a complex web of activities that exist at multiple scales and involve a broad range of actors and their interlinked, value-adding activities in food production, processing, transport, and consumption.³



The FAO defines a sustainable food system as “one that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generation is not compromised”.⁴

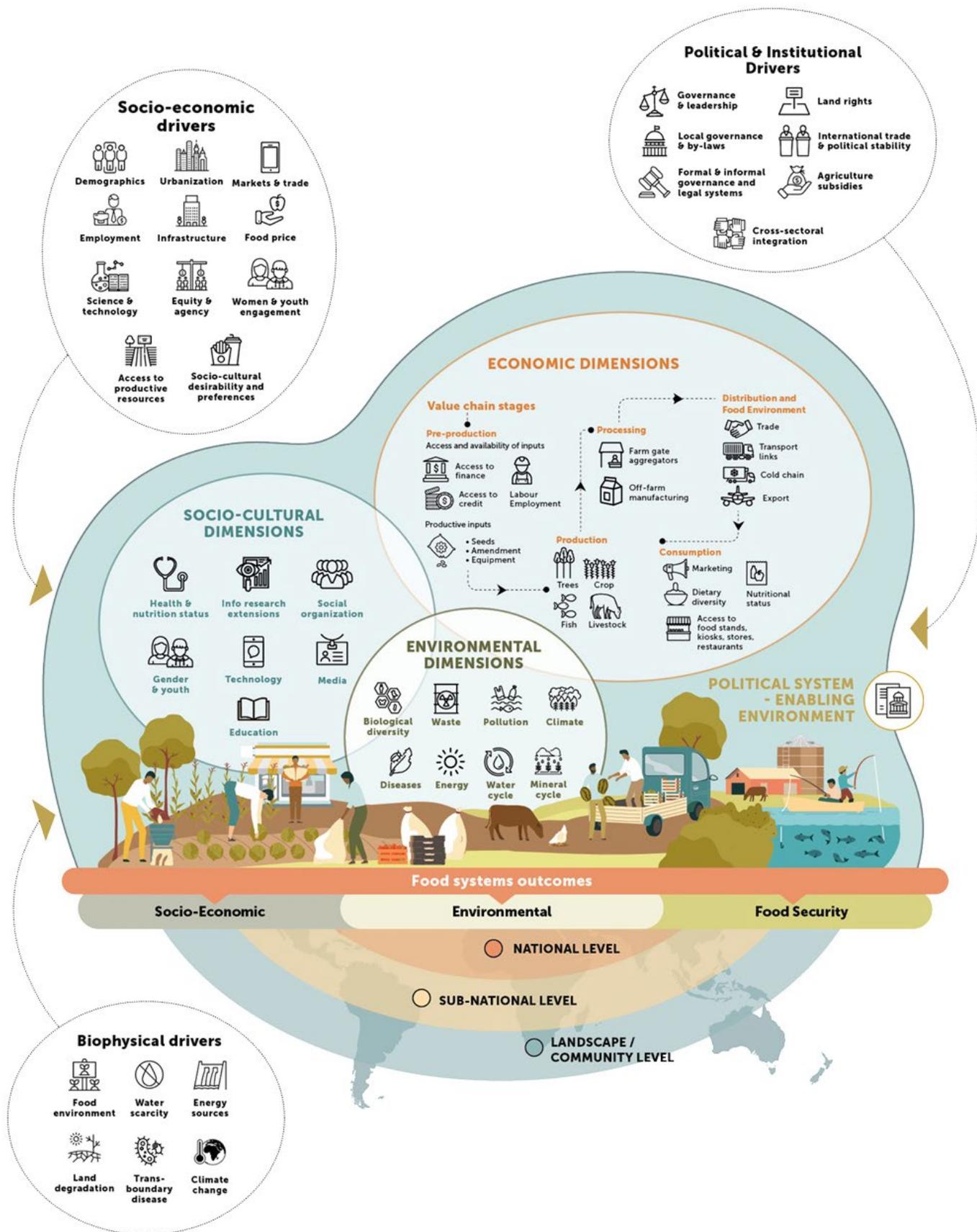


Figure 1: Dimensions and drivers of a food system⁵

³ UNFSS, 2021. Synthesis of Member State Dialogues: Report 2. Available at: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/member_state_dialogues_synthesis_report_2.pdf [03.03.2022].

⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization, 2021. Food Systems. Available at: <https://www.fao.org/food-systems/en/> [08.03.2022].

⁵ Neely C, Chesterman S, Getz Escudero A, Thornton P, Chevallier R, Mutamba M. 2022. Framing food systems transformation: A diagnostic framework and checklist for integrating transformative actions into African food systems. AICCR Report. Wageningen, the Netherlands: Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCR). Available at: <https://aiccr.cgiar.org>



The need for transformation

While highly productive, evidence is becoming ever clearer on how destructive our current food systems are to the natural environment.

The latest findings from UNEP demonstrate that, “of all activities on Earth, the production of food is the largest contributor to biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification and soil degradation”.⁶ Food systems are responsible for 70% of the water extracted from nature and generate up to one-third of human-linked greenhouse gas emissions.⁶ Agriculture also poses a direct threat to approximately 24,000 of the 28,000 species at risk of extinction.⁶

Even with a high level of productivity, the latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report indicates that there were 811 million undernourished in 2020, an increase of 118 million from 2019.⁷ Conversely, UNEP’s research has found that 17% of the world’s food is thrown away.⁶

Food systems transformation is critical to tackling rising inequality, poverty, environmental degradation and the climate emergency.

⁶ UN Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021. First UN Food Systems Summit seeks to new recipe for healthy people and planet. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/first-un-food-systems-summit-seeks-new-recipe-healthy-people-and-planet> [02.02.2022].

⁷ UNFSS, 2021. Synthesis of Member State Dialogues: Report 2. Available at: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/member_state_dialogues_synthesis_report_2.pdf [03.03.2022].

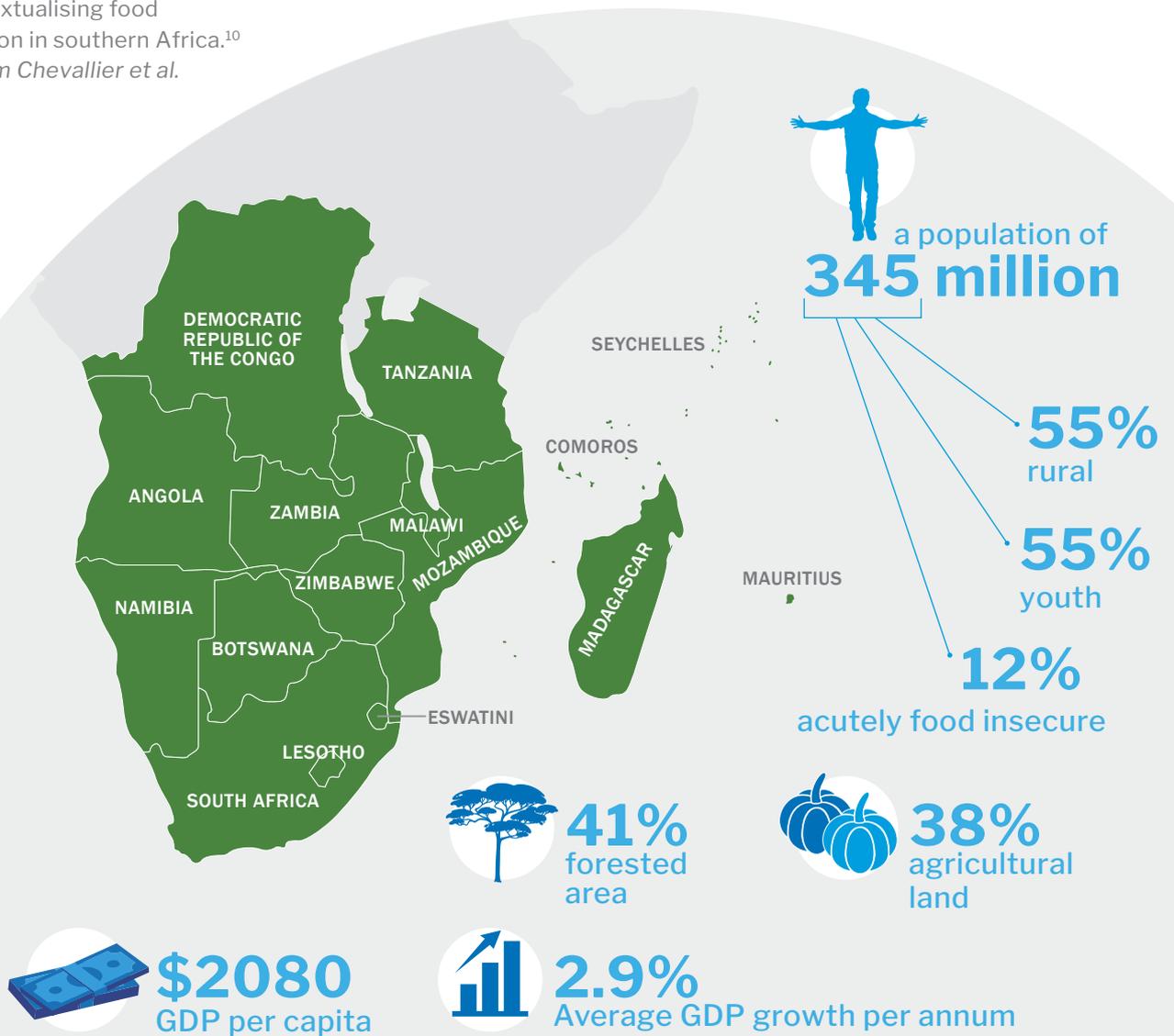
The context for transformation in southern Africa

In southern Africa, agriculture and food security are heavily dependent on predictable and sufficient rainfall events. As a result, changing rainfall patterns, increasing temperatures and more frequent extreme weather events (including heavy rainfall and drought) are already having a devastating impact on regional food systems.⁸ Research finds that the main driver of this is climate change, in addition to population growth.⁹ This impact is compounded by agriculture's role as the economic backbone of most SSA countries.

If transformative action is not taken, SSA countries are predicted to become critically water stressed in the next 25-50 years.⁹ Approximately 16% of the projected population of Africa (230 million people) will be living in water scarce areas (this includes South Africa and Malawi).⁹ Another 32% (460 million people) are projected to live in water stressed areas (this includes people in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Eswatini, and Tanzania).⁹

Box 3 on the following page highlights some of the key reasons why food systems transformation in southern Africa is urgently needed.

Box 2: Contextualising food transformation in southern Africa.¹⁰
Adapted from Chevallier et al.



⁸ Thornton P, Gosling A, Chesterman S, Neely CN. 2022. The impacts of climate change on southern African food systems AICCRA Report. Wageningen, the Netherlands: Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA). Available at: aiccra.cgiar.org
⁹ UNFSS, 2021. Synthesis of Member State Dialogues: Report 2. Available at: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/member_state_dialogues_synthesis_report_2.pdf [03.03.2022].

¹⁰ Chevallier, R, Gosling, A. and Chesterman, S. 2020. Structures, policies and stakeholder landscape relevant to climate change and agriculture in the SADC Region. SADC Futures: Developing Foresight Capacity for Climate Resilient Agricultural Development Knowledge Series. CCAFS Report. Wageningen, the Netherlands: CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS). Available at: www.ccafs.cgiar.org

Box 3: Drivers of change and opportunities for influence in food systems in southern Africa.¹¹

Adapted from WFP Regional Bureau for Southern Africa Food Lab, 2021.

Urbanisation will likely be a “megatrend” affecting southern African food systems for the next 25 years: urbanisation affects all aspects of the food system and can lead to food insecurity, as well as incidences of micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity.

Urbanisation also presents as an opportunity for higher incomes and therefore **new opportunities for food producers and processors**, as demand for processed foods increases.

Food prices in African cities are higher than in comparable cities in low-and middle-income countries in Asia and Latin America. **Food price volatility** will likely disproportionately impact the urban poor, who already spend 60%-80% of their income on food.

About a third of all food produced is lost in the **food supply chain**.

Consumers in southern Africa have purchased increasing amounts of **processed food** over the past 50 years. This has accelerated with the surge on the supply side of the processing sector and SMEs and large private companies.

Malnutrition in all its forms – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, obesity – is fuelling the rise of non-communicable diseases. This is both a significant outcome of the dynamics of southern African food systems and a challenge affecting their future.

Stunting remains a major concern in SADC (particularly in 11 out of the 16 member countries), with rates of over 30%, which the WHO classifies as very high.

Several southern African states experience the tension between ensuring that **producers** are properly remunerated and that **consumers** can afford to pay for nutritious food.



¹¹ WFP Regional Bureau for Southern Africa Food Lab, 2021. Food Systems in Southern Africa. Available at: <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000129529/download/>.

“What does it actually mean to transform a food system? It will mean untangling the complex web of food systems and actors, addressing pricing of food and access to healthy food, and considering levels of entry points, incentives and systemic feedback.”

-Dr André van Rooyen, ICRISAT



Key events of 2021

The following timeline summarises key events in 2021, including the three workshops that formed the SARA convening activities, and provides an analysis of their linkages and key outcomes in relation to food systems.



13 APRIL 2021 Online Independent Regional Dialogue, UN Food Systems Summit

On 13 April 2021, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), together with GRP and other partners, held a UNFSS-affiliated online Independent Dialogue titled, *Managing the water and energy we eat: advancing water-energy-food (WEF) nexus approaches to achieve food systems transformation in southern Africa*.

GRP helped organise and convene the Southern African Dialogue, specifically through SARA. The Southern African Dialogue looked at ways to unpack how food systems can be localized and transformed in a water-constrained region that acknowledges WEF nexus linkages, promotes regional trade, and enhances equity and inclusion.

The Dialogue highlighted the need for financing models to better support food and water security. Participants also flagged the benefit of greater institutional coordination, specifically reconciling donor interests with nation state and institutional interests. Through the discussions, priorities for action within the context of current realities were identified. These concrete actions for food systems transformations in the southern African region have short-term timescales of 3-5 years.

ORGANISERS:

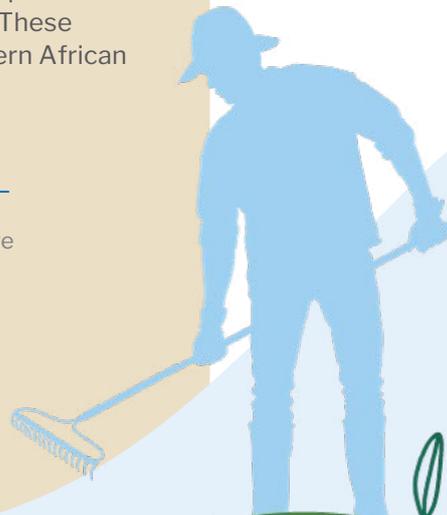
IWMI, GRP, and USAID Resilient Waters Program, together with regional partners. Linked to the UN Food Systems Summit as an independent dialogue

ATTENDANCE:

Over 80 participants representing a wide range of stakeholder groups



A more detailed insight into this event can be found in *'Insights for food systems transformation from southern Africa: Outcomes of the Southern African Resilience Academy'*.





5 JUNE 2021
**Launch of UN Decade on
 Ecosystem Restoration**

The UN Decade runs from 2021 through 2030, which is also the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals and the timeline scientists have identified as the last chance to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Led by UNEP and the FAO, the UN Decade builds a strong, broad-based global movement to ramp up restoration and put the world on track for a sustainable future. This includes building political momentum for restoration as well as thousands of initiatives on the ground¹². **Building soil health through restoration is critical and at the heart of food systems transformation.**

At the launch of the UN Decade of Restoration, FAO Director-General Dr. Dongyu made a powerful statement highlighting the link between food security, ecosystem restoration and sustainable development: “As the world moves to recover from the pandemic, healthy ecosystems are more vital than ever. They are our lifeline for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat. But pressure on natural resources continues to increase, affecting the well-being of 3.2 billion people and fuelling poverty and food insecurity...we need to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide, including our farmlands, forests, rivers and oceans. More efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems can help restore ecosystems and safeguard sustainable food production, leaving no one behind.”



¹² Geneva Environment Network, 2021. Update: UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). Available at: [https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/un-decade-on-ecosystem-restoration-2021-2030/\[08.03.2022\]](https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/un-decade-on-ecosystem-restoration-2021-2030/[08.03.2022]).

SEP



7-10 SEPTEMBER 2021 AGRF Summit 2021 – Nairobi, Kenya

The AGRF summit brought together leaders to define clear pathways and actions for food systems transformation in Africa. The hope is that these pathways and actions will enable the development of food systems that deliver sufficient and nutritious food; do not impact the environment negatively; and create sustainable, dignified jobs and shared prosperity for Africa.

The summit was a defining moment in unlocking political, policy and financial commitments. According to AGRF¹³, the African Development Bank committed to mobilising US\$1 billion in the next two years and, by 2030, up to US\$10 billion from bilateral donors, green funds and philanthropic organisations. Further commitments were made by IFAD through the Rural Resilience Programme and the Private Sector Financing Programme. The IKEA Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation also announced a US\$1 billion fund towards a global renewable energy alliance.

The summit also identified priority pathways for food systems transformation, including¹³:

- Strengthening interregional trade to diversify local and regional markets
- Improving post-harvest technologies and cold chains to reduce food losses
- Improving renewable energy access to reduce production costs
- Improving farmer access to clients and to knowledge platforms
- Ensuring capacity and resources to train agripreneuers
- Making farming and rural employment more profitable and attractive to youth. Youth comprise the biggest demographic in Africa, with nearly 60 percent of the continent's population being under 25 years. To get the views of this group in informing the creation of resilient and sustainable food systems in Africa, a Youth Townhall was held at the AGRF 2021 Summit.¹⁴

ORGANISERS:

AGRF, hosted by the Government of Kenya

ATTENDANCE:

8,580 virtual delegates and 150 in-person VIP delegates, from 104 countries

¹³AGRF, 2021. AGRF 2021 Summit Report: Pathways to Recovery and Resilient Food Systems.

¹⁴AGRF, 2021. <https://agrf.org/africas-youth-outline-their-priorities-for-an-inclusive-agricultural-transformation/>





14,16 SEPTEMBER 2021 Futures of Food in Southern Africa

Convening a group of leading thinkers in food systems and the WEF nexus, the online workshop was hosted by GRP and drew on a variety of futuring methods to explore futures of food. Taking a longer view towards more holistic, diverse, and creative visions for southern Africa for 2040 and beyond, the workshop aimed to explore more unorthodox trends and ideas and challenge deeply held assumptions.

Objectives of the workshop included:

1. Enable **diverse perspectives on food futures** for the southern African region to come together in a creative, generative process;
2. **Strengthen the community of practice** around food systems and the WEF nexus in southern Africa, and foster new connections and collaborations among experts in the region;
3. **Share tools and methods for thinking creatively about the future**, and enhance futures literacy and strategic planning skills among regional experts and decision-makers; and
4. Explore key regional goals, “what if?” questions, and innovative approaches to **identify important leverage points for transformational change**.

ORGANISERS:

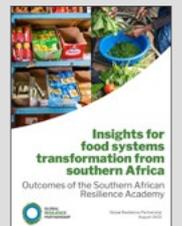
GRP with support from the USAID Resilient Waters Program and International Water Management Institute

ATTENDANCE:

The process brought together a diverse, carefully selected group of 25 key regional thinkers and change-makers, facilitated by a highly experienced strategic foresight practitioner.



A more detailed insight into this event can be found in *'Insights for food systems transformation from southern Africa: Outcomes of the Southern African Resilience Academy'*.





23-24 SEPTEMBER 2021
UN Food Systems Summit – New York, USA

In September 2021, the first ever UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) took place, bringing together governments, farmers, businesses, indigenous peoples, youth, academics and citizens. The summit served as a platform to produce a “detailed roadmap to a world where good food is affordable and accessible and produced with minimal damage to the natural systems that sustain life on Earth”.¹⁵

The UN Food Systems Summit embraced five action tracks:



Action Track 1

Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all



Action Track 2

Shift to sustainable consumption patterns



Action Track 3

Boosting nature-positive production at sufficient scale



Action Track 4

Advancing equitable livelihoods and value distribution



Action Track 5

Resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses

Key outcomes of importance to southern Africa are illustrated in Figure 2. Entry points for supporting food systems transformation across the southern African region are illustrated in Figure 3.

ATTENDANCE:

Over 160 Member States, representatives of partners and stakeholder groups. The participants represented a wide range of sectors and stakeholder groups. The number of men and women participants was close to equal, and the dialogues engaged increasing numbers of farmers, Indigenous peoples, workers and trade unions, and local civil society organisations. Many countries intend to continue their dialogues beyond the summit.

¹⁵ UN Environment Programme [UNEP], 2021. First UN Food Systems Summit seeks to new recipe for healthy people and planet. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/first-un-food-systems-summit-seeks-new-recipe-healthy-people-and-planet> [02.02.2022].



Box 4: Novel engagement in the UNFSS



Close to 100,000 people have engaged in the Food Systems Summit Dialogues progression, split between the Member State Dialogues and the Independent Dialogues.



Global Dialogues

Co-convened by the Special Envoy of the Food Systems Summit with partners and in conjunction with other global processes such as finance or climate



Member State Dialogues

Convened by national convenors nominated by their government, addressing the food system in that country



Independent Dialogues

Convened by anyone who has an interest in food systems

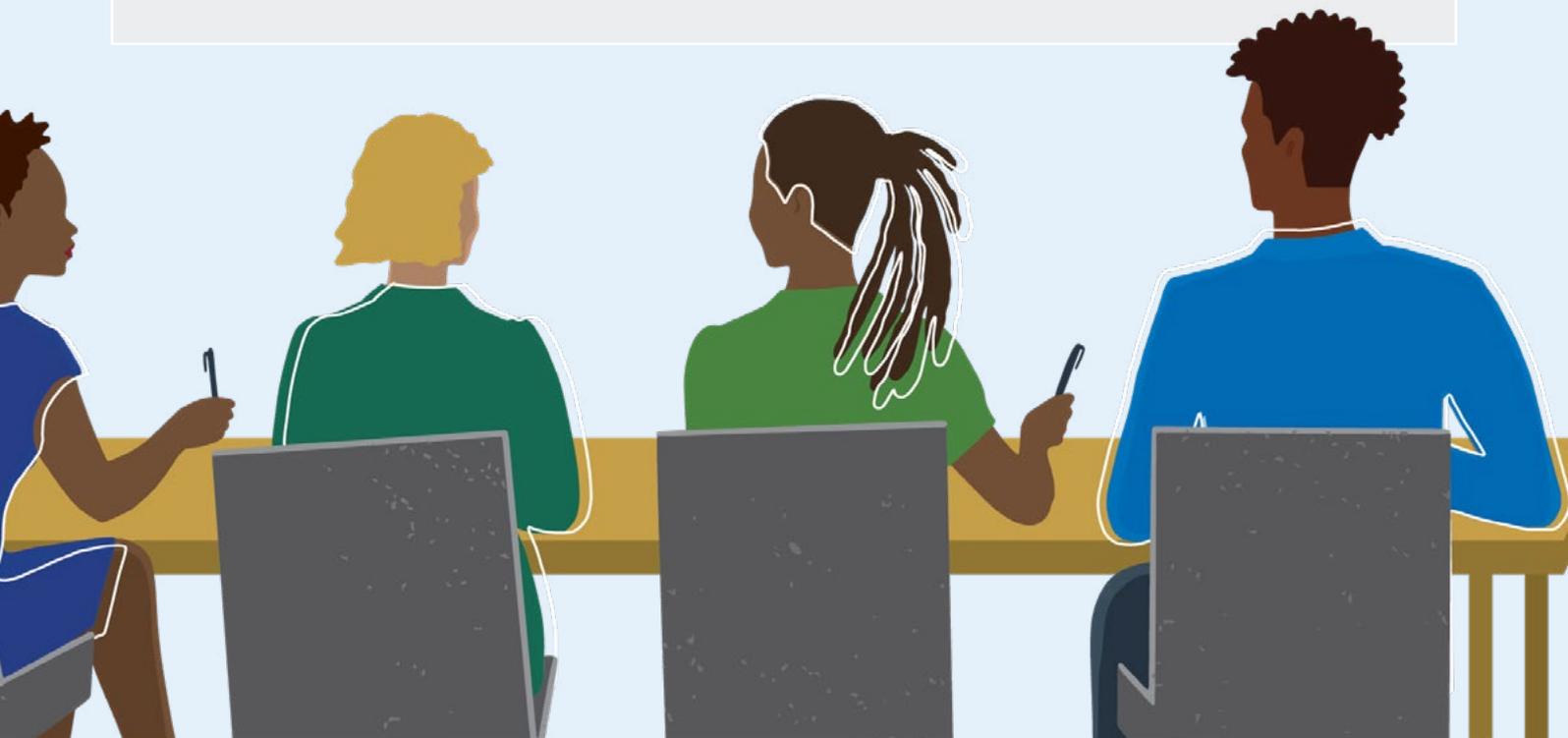


Figure 2: Key UNFSS outcomes of importance for southern Africa¹⁶

Right to food

Ensure available and affordable nutrition for all, through improved local production, access and transport of nutritious foods.



End malnutrition in all its forms, adopting a multisectoral approach and encouraging initiatives that respond to the needs of groups most at risk of malnutrition.

Localise food systems to develop regenerative and circular food systems, promoting potential diversification and reducing dependence on long supply chains.



Make food production nature-positive by linking agricultural support (including subsidies) to environmental outcomes and by documenting conservation measures.



Ensure food prices reflect the costs associated with environmental degradation and climate change, fostering a greater appreciation of the finite nature of natural resources.



Support capacity and capability development to improve food system resilience in crises, particularly for poorer food producers. View crises as valuable opportunities to learn ways for fostering food system resilience.



Develop policy frameworks that encourage climate-smart, water-conserving, energy-saving, food production systems for crops, livestock, aquatic foods, and forest products.



¹⁶ UNFSS, 2021. Synthesis of Member State Dialogues: Report 2. Available at: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/member_state_dialogues_synthesis_report_2.pdf [03.03.2022].

Tackling inequality



Access to productive resources and market opportunities, rebuilding food systems to include smallholder and labourer interests.



Insurance and social protection for small-scale producers to help mitigate climatic, meteorological or security crises.

SME growth through access to reasonable credit and increasing local/rural production.



Improve national legislation and regulation of food security and safety, from industrially produced food to informal food suppliers, with enhanced 'farm to fork' traceability.

Establish and maintain infrastructure for sustainable, efficient local food production and processing, backed by legislation, to reduce food waste.



Enable smallholders to benefit from increases in production with policy changes around taxation, subsidies and legislation that provide targeted support to the needs of smallholder producers, especially those who belong to ethnic minorities and Indigenous Peoples' groups.



Ensure smallholder producers and food system workers are fully involved in food systems transformation, through greater collaboration, a fairer distribution of value along the value chain, and purpose-driven public/private partnerships.



Figure 3: Entry points at national level across southern Africa



As important **entry points for supporting food systems transformation** across the southern African region, the map below summarises some of the key actions from the UNFSS' National Dialogues as proposed by southern African countries.

Angola

- Establish a national system for food and nutrition
- Accelerate compliance with the Malabo Declaration
- Promote consumption of diversified local foods
- Promote investment and innovation

Botswana

- Develop a connecting 'pathway' between existing food system policies
- Enhance land conservation and resource stewardship
- Enhance transportation logistics, cold chain facilities, aggregation, packaging and processing
- Improve water access/distribution infrastructure
- Improve farmers' access to markets and resources
- Improve knowledge of and access to healthy foods

Namibia

- Promote dietary diversification and consumption of indigenous crops
- Strengthen value chain through 'localism' and efficient technologies
- Facilitate market access, acquire agro-inputs and diversify value chains
- Relax collateral requirements to encourage participation of asset-deficient communal farmers, women, and youth
- Apply a water-energy-food nexus approach

Zimbabwe

- Promote consumption and production of traditional and indigenous grains, vegetables and wild fruits
- Reduce food wastage and spoilage
- Attract youths to agriculture through digitalisation
- Increase access to affordable agriculture financing
- Facilitate access to food markets for smallholder farmers, cooperatives and Agri-SMEs
- Invest in climate data and knowledge systems

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

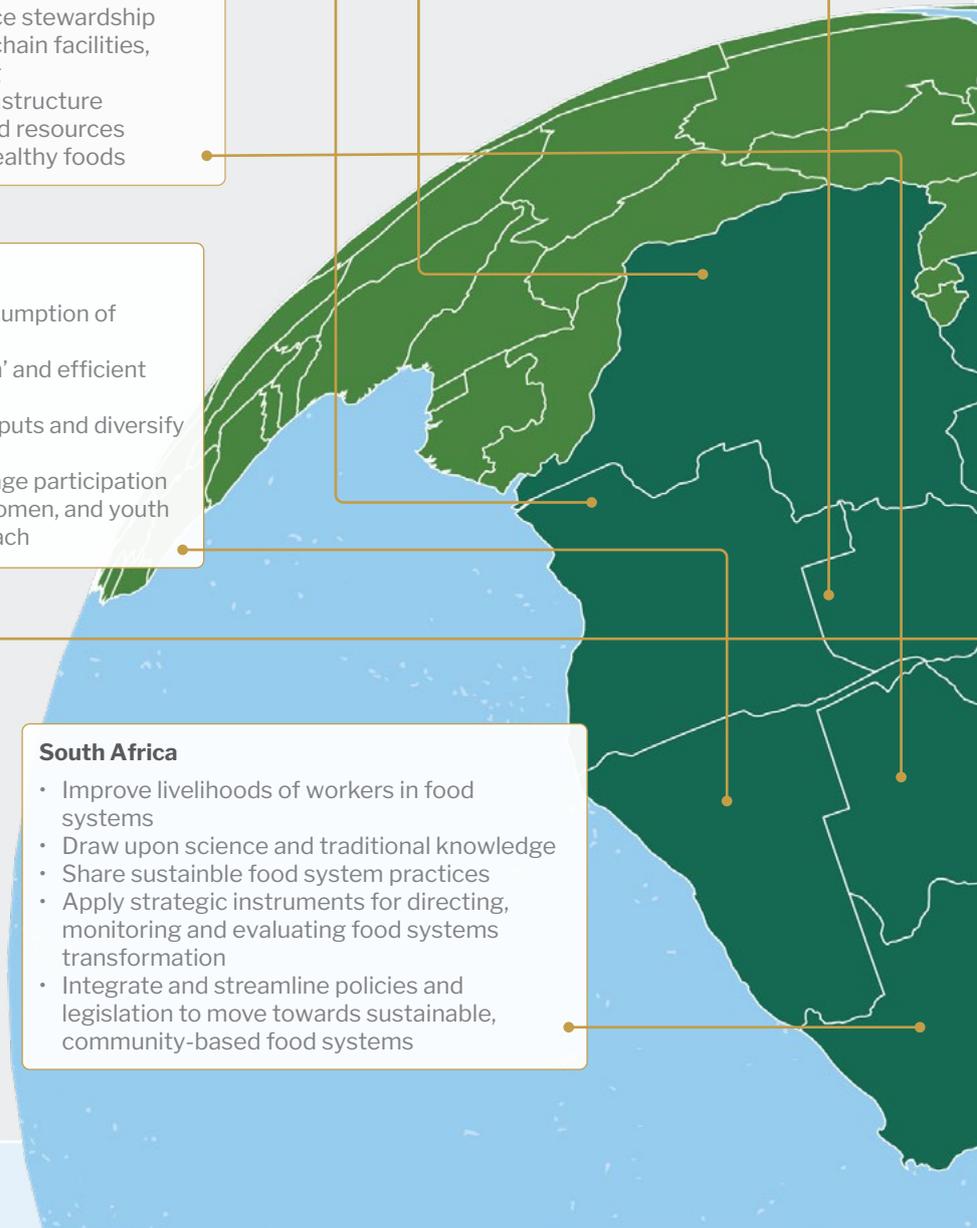
- Strengthen implementation of national food and nutritional security policy, with a state-level taskforce
- Conduct multi-sector and multi-stakeholder engagement processes and actions
- Encourage sustainable agricultural practices
- Promote equal access to land, technologies and markets
- Strengthen international cooperation, investments in infrastructure and technologies

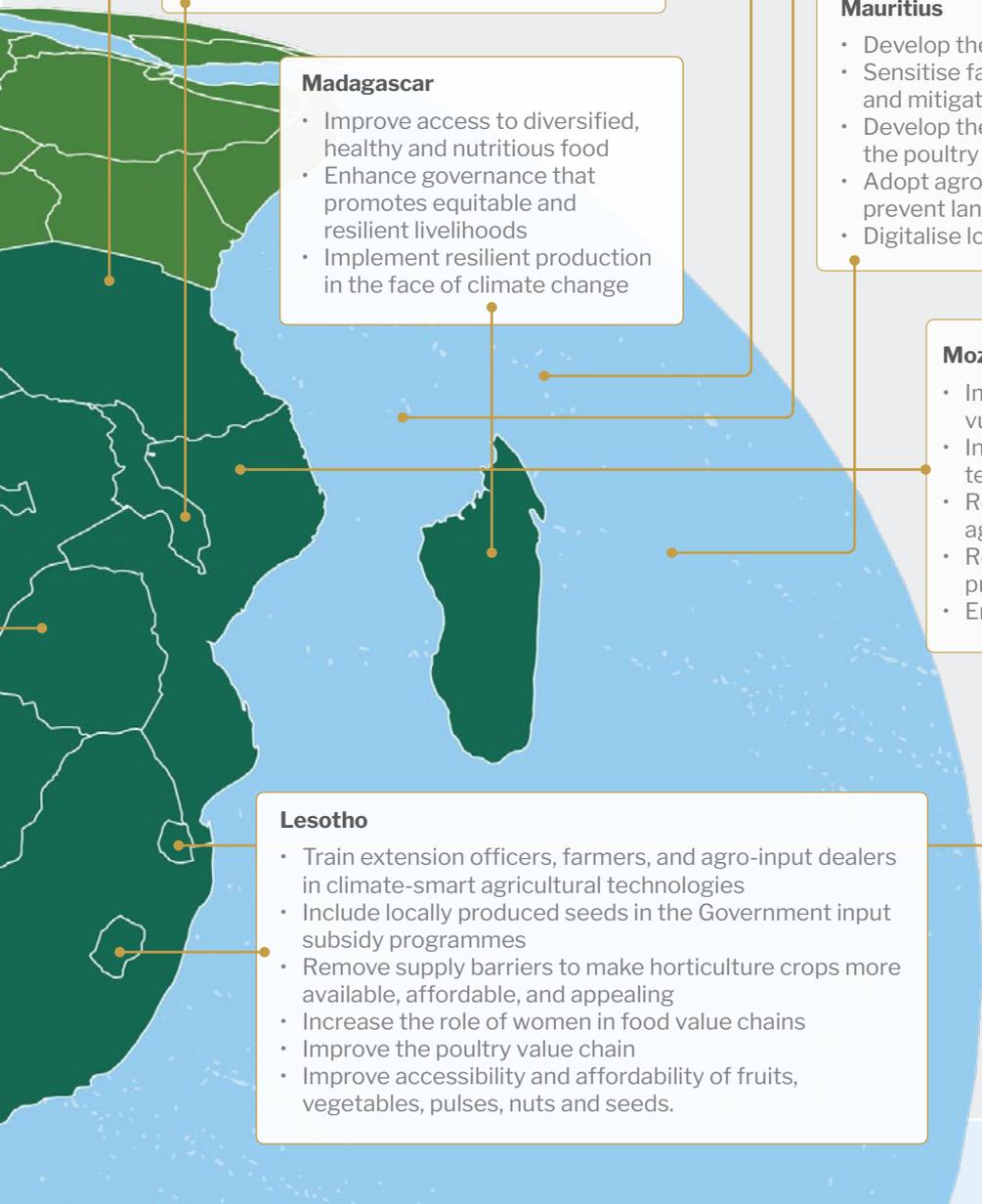
Zambia

- Improve crop and livestock varieties
- Enhance animal disease control
- Develop irrigation schemes
- Expand the provision of agricultural extension services and equipment
- Provide affordable, tailored financial services to small-scale farmers
- Regenerate land and protect biodiversity

South Africa

- Improve livelihoods of workers in food systems
- Draw upon science and traditional knowledge
- Share sustainable food system practices
- Apply strategic instruments for directing, monitoring and evaluating food systems transformation
- Integrate and streamline policies and legislation to move towards sustainable, community-based food systems





Tanzania

- Increase financing of agriculture and private sector involvement in food systems
- Ensure nutrition/healthy diets and safe food for all and school feeding programmes
- Strengthen early warning systems and expand shock responsive social protection
- Mainstream cross-cutting issues including ICT, gender, environment, equity and R&D

Malawi

- Enforce council bylaws to regulate street foods
- Enforce laws to limit charcoal production and promote alternative livelihoods
- Build agribusiness skills for all, particularly women and youth
- Enhance transport system and logistics hubs
- Invest in early warning systems for weather related changes and disaster response
- Introduce subsidies on small scale irrigation equipment

Madagascar

- Improve access to diversified, healthy and nutritious food
- Enhance governance that promotes equitable and resilient livelihoods
- Implement resilient production in the face of climate change

Lesotho

- Train extension officers, farmers, and agro-input dealers in climate-smart agricultural technologies
- Include locally produced seeds in the Government input subsidy programmes
- Remove supply barriers to make horticulture crops more available, affordable, and appealing
- Increase the role of women in food value chains
- Improve the poultry value chain
- Improve accessibility and affordability of fruits, vegetables, pulses, nuts and seeds.

Comoros

- Strengthen operational capacities of supervisory structures in the agri-food industry
- Enhance farmer access to improved seeds and inputs
- Increase control of imported animals
- Update existing data on food systems
- Modernise agriculture and fishing
- Reuse agricultural waste for compost, biogas production and animal feed

Seychelles

- Embed sustainability and climate smart international practices in local production systems
- Increase access to finance
- Drive food product innovation and diversification using local ingredients and market penetration
- Activate healthy living educational programmes

Mauritius

- Develop the local seed industry and diversify crops
- Sensitise farmers on climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Develop the small ruminant sector and strengthen the poultry sector
- Adopt agroforestry and farming practices that prevent land degradation
- Digitalise local agriculture

Mozambique

- Implement support programmes for vulnerable groups
- Increase access to improved inputs, technical assistance and finance
- Rehabilitate priority access roads for agricultural trade,
- Reduce woodfuel consumption through promoting affordable and accessible gas
- Enhance mangrove recovery

Eswatini

- Implement agricultural value chain planning and structuring
- Establish and operationalise the Agricultural Development Fund
- Promote integrated digital agri-information systems
- Support and upscale safe and nutritious food for all



31 OCTOBER-12 NOVEMBER 2021 COP26 – Glasgow, Scotland

Despite the growing recognition of their role as both a source of and solution to climate change, food systems were not prominently featured in the COP26 agenda. Instead, progress was made during the convention through critical side events and discussions on mainstreaming the transformation of agriculture and food systems within the UNFCCC process.¹⁷

One of the major outcomes of COP26 in terms of food systems was the recognition of food, land and nature in the Glasgow Climate Pact. This Pact specifically emphasises the need to protect and restore nature and ecosystems.¹⁸ According to reports, this includes promises of “action and finance towards more sustainable supply chains and protecting nature and restoring ecosystems”.¹⁸

Another outcome for food systems at COP26 were the discussions surrounding the Koronivia joint work on agriculture, originally established at COP23 in 2017 (see Box 5). This joint work aims to bring discussions of agriculture into UNFCCC and to address issues related to agriculture through a climate change lens. The Koronivia process was due to end at the COP26, however, the text remains “heavily bracketed”¹⁷, indicating several areas of contestation. The Koronivia process roadmap is due to be debated at the next meeting of the UN climate process in June 2022.¹⁷

ATTENDANCE:

COP26 brought together 120 world leaders and over 40,000 registered participants, including 22,274 party delegates, 14,124 observers and 3,886 media representatives

Box 5: Koronivia Roadmap¹⁸

The Koronivia roadmap lays out the topics and timing of the Koronivia joint work on agriculture. As part of the process, workshops were held on the following topics:

- Methods for implementing the outcomes of the other Koronivia workshops
- Methods for adapting and building resilience
- Improving soil health and soil carbon storage, including through improved water management
- Improving nutrient use and manure management
- Improving livestock management systems
- The intersection of the socioeconomic and food security dimensions of climate change and agriculture
- The systemic transformation required to build resilience to climate change and protect soils, water, ecosystems, and farmers, different from the “green revolution”

¹⁷ Carbon Brief, 2021. COP 26: Key outcomes for food, forests, land use and nature in Glasgow. Available at: <https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop26-key-outcomes-for-food-forests-land-use-and-nature-in-glasgow> [22.02.2022].

¹⁸ IISD, 2021. COP 26 Events Aim to Support Negotiations on Food Systems. Available at: <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/cop-26-events-aim-to-support-negotiations-on-food-systems/> [22.02.2022].



9 DECEMBER 2021

Food Systems Transformation in Southern Africa: Insights and Actions

SARA hosted an interactive webinar on ‘Insights and Actions’ for food systems transformation. Participants reflected on the year’s high-level policy events, such as UNFSS and COP 26, and engaged in a participatory matrix exercise to identify concrete actions that can be taken to achieve food systems transformation in southern Africa.

The following panellists shared their insights and reflections, including a critical assessment of whether southern Africa’s issues were sufficiently addressed at this year’s agenda-setting global policy discussions:

- **Dr Cliff Dlamini** - Executive Director of the Centre for Coordination of Agriculture Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA)
- **Vanessa Black** - Advocacy, Research and Policy Coordinator for Biowatch SA
- **Prof Tafadzwanashe Mabhaudhi** - Co-Director of the Centre for Transformative Agricultural and Food Systems, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

ORGANISERS:

Global Resilience Partnership, Southern African Resilience Academy, USAID Resilient Waters Program

ATTENDANCE:

Almost 40 participants representing a wide range of stakeholder groups

A more detailed insight into this event can be found in *‘Insights for food systems transformation from southern Africa: Outcomes of the Southern African Resilience Academy’*.



Key insights

- The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration serves as a **clear call to action** for food systems transformation. This includes highlighting the fundamental role that soil and ecosystem health have to sustain food systems. The UN Decade brings together key partnerships and working groups on critical areas such as monitoring at landscape scale.
- Through the independent dialogues, the **UNFSS process in 2021** provided many leverage points for continued partnerships including the private sector. The Member State dialogues also gave direct guidance on key national and sub-national interventions and priorities for food systems transformation across southern Africa.
- The AGRF summit put youth and the critical issue of **incentivising youth engagement** into agriculture and ensuring that agriculture can stimulate millions of jobs across the sub-continent.
- COP 26 ensured that **food and nature** were drafted into the Glasgow Pact, with key mention of sustainable supply chains. With COP 27 to be hosted in Egypt and a strong focus on an 'African' COP building key momentum for implementation, there is clear policy momentum for linking food systems to the climate change agenda.

More detailed insights into the three GRP events held in 2021 can be found in '*Insights for food systems transformation from southern Africa: Outcomes of the Southern African Resilience Academy*'.





**“Food can help us
accelerate actions
and bring in solutions
to achieve all of
the Sustainable
Development Goals and
recover better from
COVID-19”**

**– United Nations Secretary
General António Guterres,
UNFSS 2021**

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