



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Rediscovering African foods: Promoting native foods for improved nutrition, health, and food security

Senior Officials Meeting 26-28 March 2024

Theme: Resilient agrifood systems and inclusive rural transformation



Situational Analysis

- ❑ Africa is facing a **food crisis** of unprecedented proportions.
- ❑ Africa is not on track to meet the agreed food security and nutrition targets – SDGs, Malabo Commitments.

Nearly **282 million** people in Africa were undernourished in 2022, an increase of 57 million people since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Affordability of healthy diets – more than 1 billion people cannot afford healthy diets.



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www.fao.org/Africa

Stunting **30 percent**

Wasting **5.8 percent**

Overweight **4.9 percent**

Anaemia **38.9 percent**



Key Message

*African Agrifood systems must transform to be
MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and
sustainable, for Better Production, Better
Nutrition, Better Environment and Better Lives,
Leaving no one behind.*



Native crops and non-wood forest products stand to play a role in this transformation in line with the Theme of this ARC of

“Resilient agrifood systems and inclusive rural transformation”

- ❑ *They offer Nutritional, Environmental, sociocultural and **inclusive** economic benefit potential .*

Nutritional Benefits

- ❑ Native foods and NWFPs are nutrient powerhouses.
- ❑ Dietary diversity role – including de-risking production systems consuming diverse diets.
- ❑ Consideration of their addition to food-based dietary guidelines.

Environment protection and climate adaptation

- ❑ Contribute to greater resilience to climate change - adaptation or mitigation.
- ❑ Slow down climate change – Carbon Sequestration – biodiversity.

Sociocultural benefits

- ❑ Food forms an important part of people's cultures and norms:
 - binds communities together and can foster peace.
 - preserving cultural heritage and maintaining cultural identity and traditions.

- ❑ Native foods and NWFPs are culturally acceptable products.

Economic benefits

- ❑ Adaptability to local conditions: Limit need for expensive inputs.
- ❑ Diversification of income sources and smooth consumption.
- ❑ Market opportunities – niche high products potential.
- ❑ Reduced dependency on imported varieties: Short value chains and local sourcing.
- ❑ Support for small-scale farmers.

Challenges for their uptake

Supply Side

- ❑ Low Investments.
- ❑ Weak policy support for their promotion: Governments.

Demand Side

- ❑ Perceptions - Viewed as Poor Mans crops.
- ❑ Information Asymmetries - Not enough information on where they are weak use of traditional knowledge on their value, market information.
- ❑ Logistics – Undefined supply chains and market information – including market size and demand.

Promising Actions

At Global level

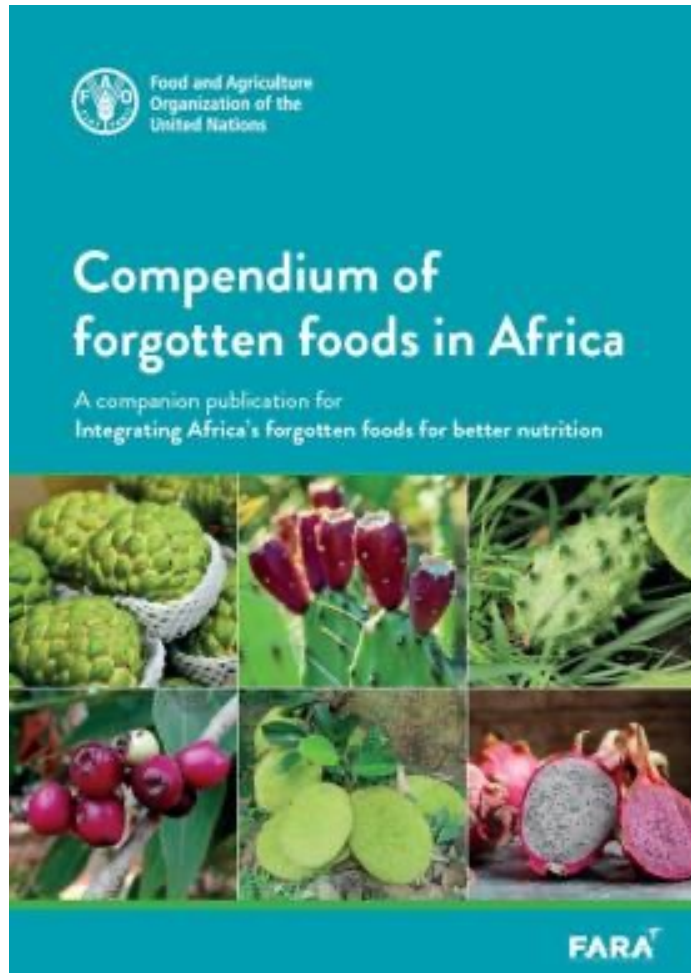
- UNFSS and drive towards agrifood systems transformation agenda.
- Concern about climate change.

At Continental level

- Vision for adapted crops (VACS) Project – Partnership between US State Department, AU and FAO to promote research and preservation of traditional crops seed banks.
- African Orphan Crops Consortium (AOCC) by the African Union.
- The African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative led by the African Union Development Agency and the African-led Great Green Wall Initiative aim to restore degraded lands in 34 African countries and in the Sahel region.

Organizational - FAO Support

- ❑ Vision for Adapted Crops Projects.
- ❑ FAO's Action Against Desertification programme.
- ❑ FAO compendium on traditional foods .
- ❑ FAO led initiative addressing Water scarcity in Agriculture and the environment (AWSAMe).
- ❑ Declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets .
- ❑ Promoting traditional food cuisine and chefs (including youth Expo).



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Matters brought to attention of the Regional Conference

- 1. *Deliberate on key entry points for stakeholders' engagement, technical and financial investments.***

- 2. *Call upon FAO and other partners***
 - To build momentum for high-level political commitment on the promotion of native crops and NWFPs;
 - Raise awareness on the multiple benefits that can be achieved by promoting native crops and NWFPs;
 - Build and share evidence and knowledge about effective approaches to promote native foods and NWFPs in line with FAO Strategy and flagship programmes e.g. *The Green Cities Initiative, Hand in Hand Initiative, Science and Innovation.*

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Thank you

Merci

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Obrigado

谢谢