



# AFRICA-AMERICAS MINISTERIAL SUMMIT ON AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SYSTEMS

*"BUILDING BRIDGES FOR COOPERATION ON AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS  
TRANSFORMATION"*

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**SUMMIT PROCEEDINGS**

SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA,  
JULY 28, 2022

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# 1. BACKGROUND

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Within the framework of South-South cooperation, leaders from Africa and the Americas have been making joint efforts to align their priorities in accordance with the ecological, cultural, and historical similarities between the two continents and with the common challenges related to agri-food systems.

In different dialogues initiated in 2019 prior to the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNSCF), Africa and the Americas drafted and ratified a Common Position in each continent, under the leadership of the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD, [www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org)) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA, [www.iica.int](http://www.iica.int)), respectively.

On January 18, 2022, the First High-Level Round Table meeting between Africa and the Americas, was held virtually and convened jointly by IICA and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA, [www.agra.org](http://www.agra.org)), where the latter functioned in its capacity as the technical body that provides support to AUDA-NEPAD.

This first meeting made it possible to recognize that both continents share the common goal of feeding the world and promoting global environmental sustainability and highlighted the need to develop a joint agenda of cooperation.

During this round table event, the participants proposed to hold a Ministerial Summit in the second half of 2022, in which the ministers of agriculture and other actors in the sector, from both continents, will analyze the global agenda for the transformation of agri-food systems, with the participation of high-level specialists who also had wide international recognition.

In keeping with this commitment, and with the support of the African Union Commission (AUC), AUDA-NEPAD, AGRA and IICA, the first Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems was held on 27-29 July 2022 at IICA headquarters in Costa Rica, under the theme "Building Bridges for Cooperation in the Transformation of Agri-Food Systems".

The purpose of this Summit was to identify areas where the two continents can work together, especially those where opportunities for cooperation could be most profitable; as well as the operational and financial mechanisms necessary to mobilize the required resources. The dialogues focused on the following thematic areas: (i) science, technology and innovation; (ii) climate change and resilience; (iii) opportunities in digital agriculture; (iv) institutional and policy innovations; (v) international and regional food trade; and (vi) the transformation of post-CFSA agri-food systems; among other issues considered indispensable to increase productivity, inclusion and sustainability of agri-food systems.

This first Summit between the African and American continents had more than 181 participants, including Ministers, Vice Ministers, and high authorities of agriculture and environment from forty countries; as well as representatives of international organizations and institutions, the private sector and academia. (Annex 1)

Of note is the participation of international specialists whose presentations provided context for the summit's deliberations: Dr. Joachim von Braun, Director of the Center for Development Research and Distinguished Professor of Economic and Technological Change at the University of Bonn, Germany; Dr. Oseyemi Olurotimi Akinbamijo, Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); Dr. Rattan Lal, Director of the Center for Carbon Management and Sequestration at The Ohio State University, USA; Dr. Michael Kremer, Nobel Prize in Economics 2019; Dr. Ousmane Badiane, Executive Chairman of AKADEMIYA 2063; Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO); Dr Gloria Abraham, Chair of the WTO Negotiating Group on Agriculture; H.E. Rafael Hipólito Mejía Domínguez, Former President of the Dominican Republic; and Dr. Eugenio Díaz-Bonilla, Senior Visiting Researcher of the IICA/IFPRI Program.

Also noteworthy is the presence of the First Vice President of the Republic of Costa Rica, H. E. Stephan Brunner Neibig; the Administrator of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Mr. Daniel Whitley; the Director of CAADP AUDA-NEPAD, Dr. Martin Bwalya; the Senior Advisor in Agricultural Development of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Rubén Echeverría; and IICA's Special Ambassador for the First Africa-Americas Summit, H.E. Keithlin Caroo; as well as Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Executive Director of AUDA-NEPAD; Dr. Agnes Kalibata, President of AGRA, H.E. Josefa Leonel Sacko, Commissioner of AUC-ARDBE and Dr. Manuel Otero, Director General of IICA, co-hosts of the Summit.

To fully reflect the richness and importance of the deliberations that took place during the event, press releases were prepared that include the interventions of the participants, which are included in this report (Annex 2).

Undoubtedly, the expectations around the Summit were more than met, achieving the following objectives:

- **UNDERSTANDING** the role that Africa and the Americas can play in shaping global food and environmental security in the future.

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- **ESTABLISHMENT** of opportunities for cooperation in science, technology, and innovation, for the achievement of resilient and sustainable agricultural systems.

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- **MUTUAL LEARNING** on the institutional and policy innovations needed to drive the transformation of the agri-food sector.

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- **IDENTIFICATION** of challenges related to climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience; as well as the issues of convergence between both regions towards COP27:

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- **COMMITMENT** to promote the digital transformation of agriculture through appropriate public policies and the construction of alliances with different national and international actors to that end.

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- **ANALYSIS** of innovations in institutions and public policies necessary for the transformation of agri-food systems.

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- **SHARED VISION** on the situation and prospects of global agri-food trade and on opportunities to strengthen participation in international agri-food markets and bi-regional trade.

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- **CONSENSUS** on the need for joint work to position agriculture in post-CFSA processes and in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes, in particular at COP27.

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The ideas developed and shared by the participants in this first intercontinental Summit of Agriculture and Agri-Food Systems are contained in this communiqué.

## 2. Communiqué

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Ministers and high-level officials of agriculture of the countries of Africa and the Americas, as well as the continental organizations such as the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), were in attendance at the Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agri-food Systems held in San Jose, Costa Rica, from July 27 to 29, 2022 to the issues highlighted in this joint communiqué:

### A VISION ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

1. The international community is suffering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the unstable situation in Eastern Europe. As the conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues to unfold, global food security is deteriorating.
2. The war has destabilized world commodity markets and global trade flows, leading to an increase in global food and input prices, which were already high in most countries of the two continents.
3. In addition, climate change continues to affect the productive capacity and resilience of the agricultural and livestock sectors, with negative impacts on the creation of employment; particularly for women and youth.
4. Within this complex situation, countries of Africa and the Americas can play a key role in ensuring global food security, environmental sustainability, and resilient livelihoods, given their wealth of natural resources, biodiversity and the opportunities afforded by their diverse agriculture.
5. Many of the challenges and opportunities for the agricultural systems of these two continents are common, so their agricultural systems and households face many similar issues. Hence, the resolution to build bridges for cooperation to transform agri-food systems in both continents, based on a shared vision and the development of a solid cooperation agenda, as well as an understanding about forms of land tenure in the countries and population size.
6. Cooperation between the two continents, under the leadership of AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, AGRA and IICA, will be fundamental to achieving the objectives on the following issues:

## A. "SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION"

7. For most countries in Africa and the Americas, the agri-food sector is very relevant to their economies, as it provides strategic income through exports and job creation, which is essential to fight poverty and exclusion, considering that in rural areas these problems are more widespread.
8. The countries of Africa and the Americas agree that science is fundamental to the transformation of resilient and sustainable agri-food systems, and only through harnessing the potential of science, technology, and innovation (STI), will they be able to overcome the challenges of food insecurity and environmental sustainability.
9. Both continents share a wealth of biodiversity and natural resources, as well as situations of vulnerability and challenges, which open innumerable opportunities to share knowledge, experiences, and good practices, within the framework of a vision of transformation of agri-food systems.
10. It is necessary to integrate the objectives of productivity, efficiency, sustainability, resilience, nutrition, and inclusion, considering synergies and trade-offs, among these dimensions, in order to better exploit the potential for economic and social growth, that is in sync with environmental and climate change issues. All of this is part of a circular bioeconomy, where sustainability must include reduction of carbon emissions, water security and other activities, including bioeconomy and its importance to food security.
11. It is urgent to overcome the constraints faced by the low levels of investment affecting most national systems, both in Africa and the Americas, and to ensure greater commitment by both public and private sector investments to STI.
12. There are specific areas for cooperation, such as those linked to soil health, crop, and animal productivity, increasing availability and access to nutritious food and healthy diets, low-carbon agriculture, digital agriculture, and biotechnology, bio-inputs and gene editing, as cross-cutting platforms to address critical issues such as drought and heat tolerance, pests and diseases resistance, and improvements in the nutritional quality of food.
13. Multilateral, bilateral, and triangular cooperation between the countries of Africa and the Americas, as well as the strengthening of existing collaboration spaces, specifically the adaptation of Brazil's low carbon emissions model, are key to increasing their capacities and capabilities in innovation, science and technology. Initiatives such as the creation of a network of Bio-inputs or a Hub for Innovation, can contribute to unconventional thinking guided by science, technology, and innovation.

## B. “CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE”

14. Climate change affects economic, social, and political conditions in many countries across the two continents, which, in turn, increases poverty, malnutrition, poor health, mortality, and forced migration and displacement of populations, particularly those that are most vulnerable, marginalized, and underrepresented.
15. The adaptation of agriculture to climate change in Africa and the Americas – two regions with a wealth of natural resources that comprise a wide range of climates, biomes, soils, and human capital – has the capacity to play a leading role in mitigating the global climate change impact.
16. The adoption of “no regrets” and nature-based solutions (NBS) by our farmers is crucial to improve the resilience and productivity of agri-food systems.
17. Actions should consider evidence-based practices and adoption of a soil-driven approach, in areas such as ecosystem-based adaptation, soil restoration, intensification of land use, reduction of land degradation, improvement of soil carbon sequestration and soil health through the adoption of best management practices (BMPs), training of farmers (especially youth and women) in the implementation of BMPs, mapping of agroeconomic practices, and the strengthening of new public policies and effective governance.
18. International partnerships and initiatives such as “Living Soils of the Americas” and the “Coalition of Action for Soil Health” are crucial to create conditions that are conducive to agri-food systems transformation, through people focused solutions.
19. The vulnerability of several countries in Africa and the Americas to more frequent extreme weather events, such as droughts or hurricanes, requires specific cooperation actions, particularly in risk management and in addressing the challenges of food insecurity related to increased imports of basic food commodities.

## C. “OPPORTUNITIES IN DIGITAL AGRICULTURE”

20. Digital solutions for agriculture can contribute substantially to increasing production and resilience, improving food security, addressing climate change, minimizing impacts on the environment, and generating inclusion and development opportunities for people. Thus, digital solutions are indispensable to face the problems and challenges of the agri-food systems of Africa and the Americas. But they must be embraced in an inclusive and equitable manner.

21. The process of digital transformation of agriculture offers opportunities for development and employment to young people and to make rural areas more attractive. In turn, young people have more ability to handle technologies and can, therefore, accelerate the digitalization process.
22. Most of the elements that are needed for digitization are not fully developed in either LAC or Africa. There are large gaps and limitations for the advancement of digital transformation. It highlights the need for training skills or capabilities, as well as overcoming challenges related to the development of software solutions and digital infrastructure.
23. There are opportunities for collaboration between countries to share information and experiences to drive the digitalization of agriculture, particularly in rural areas with small-scale producers, for improved products and services, providing solutions to support increased productivity to develop resilient, strong, and inclusive economies.
24. Utilization of smart phones serves as an important tool to detect, track, and overcome threats on agriculture, for information sharing and providing support to farmers, to implement best practices and monitor the status of planting, harvesting and markets, among others.
25. Digital solutions can create real conditions to provide equal opportunities, helping farmers to increase their productivity and their integration into value chains and markets. These potential benefits can become threats if access to technologies and the capabilities to use the technologies are limited and uneven. Access to digital technologies needs to be democratized.

#### D. "INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY INNOVATIONS"

26. The transformation of agri-food systems also requires innovation in policy and institutional design and implementation, as well as continental development frameworks such as the agenda 2063, agenda 2030 and the CAADP-Malabo Declaration. The harmonious development of the sector demands: (a) agricultural policies for primary producers, classifiable into subsistence, intermediate/family and commercial producers; (b) rural/territorial development policies, taking into account geographical space; (c) policies for value chains, covering production inputs and services, as well as processing, transport, distribution and marketing; (d) policies for the consumers and the food environments in which they operate; and (e) policies for the agri-food system as a whole.
27. There are areas in which to exchange experience and knowledge, such as: social protection measures based on cash transfers for poverty alleviation while linked to the financing of productive activities, the additional costs of implementing sustainable adaptation and



mitigation technologies and the payment of environmental services; interventions focused on women or youth; measures for climate-smart agriculture including irrigation and soil management; different approaches to reduce food insecurity, improve nutrition and health; management of food losses and waste; and other related areas.

- 28.** These policies must be implemented by different public and private actors within existing institutional frameworks, which, in turn, need development and innovations to facilitate the implementation of programs to transform agri-food systems.
- 29.** Institutional innovations that address the complex agenda of the agri-food sector in developing countries must include mechanisms for intersectoral operational coordination, with annual programs and objectives, linked to the preparation and execution of budgets.
- 30.** Investments and financing are required to create environmentally sustainable agri-food systems that generate decent income and jobs, and provide healthy diets, while being resilient to shocks.
- 31.** The support of international funds is key to development and must be used more strategically. Also, governments' budgets (expenditures and taxes) must be analyzed and reoriented for the transformation of innovative food systems. Constraints on banking systems and capital markets to finance such transformation must be eliminated.

## E. "INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FOOD TRADE"

- 32.** Agri-food trade in the Americas and Africa plays a key role in regional and global food and nutrition security, in all its dimensions, availability, access, utilization and stability of food. Strengthening this role requires countries to take steps to facilitate trade, improve market access, and ensure transparent, fluid, undistorted, science-based trade.
- 33.** To enhance the benefits of international trade in agri-food products, it is important to continue to participate actively in trade negotiations both in the multilateral trading system and at the regional level, which promote rules-based, open, transparent, fairer, and non-discriminatory trade; and contribute to the promotion of sustainable development and food security in member states.
- 34.** Dialogue between the two regions and South-South cooperation should be promoted to strengthen the implementation of the commitments of the current trade agreements, to improve their use and to adopt actions that promote the equitable inclusion of the different actors, with special attention to MSMEs, small and medium producers, so that they can be better linked to regional and global value chains.

35. Efforts should be made to promote intraregional and interregional trade, addressing key issues such as trade facilitation, improvements in supply chains and logistics, transport, as well as strengthening regulatory cooperation.

## F. “ADVANCING THE TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD SYSTEMS POST UNFSS”

36. The operation of food systems is directly related to the achievement of a high percentage of the 17 SDGs that require, in addition to a variety of policies and institutional issues, to articulate different individual interventions in comprehensive national plans that lead to real improvements for people and the planet.
37. The SDGs define the overall framework, but a more detailed and quantitative specification is needed in relation to food systems. These definitions make it possible to analyze the complementarity, but also the contradictions that may exist between objectives. Comprehensive programs need to determine and structure institutional and operational capacities to implement required activities and monitor and evaluate progress.
38. It is necessary to define components of these comprehensive plans, including the policies and investments, the required technologies, and the macroeconomic and trade frameworks, along with laws, regulations, and other interventions necessary to achieve the transformation.
39. Each comprehensive program or plan requires an estimate of the costs of the activities and interventions needed and the identification and mobilization of the financial resources required to implement national programs, whether they come from international development funds, or from the financial resources available in public budgets and in banking systems and capital markets.
40. The countries of Africa and the Americas participate in two global processes: on the one hand, there are the “national pathways” agreed at the UNSFS; on the other, there are the formal climate change negotiations, within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which lead to the definition of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). These two processes require coordination mechanisms at the national level that integrate both types of programs, so that policies, investments, technologies, institutional aspects, and financing are adequately articulated.

## G. WAY FORWARD

41. Africa and Americas have had positive exchanges, which should serve as the foundation for mutual learning and cooperation in the future, especially with a view to improving agri-food systems; translating science into action; implementing public policies that benefit farmers, nature, and agriculture; and involving the private sector. Furthermore, increasing access to technology and improving investment in agricultural research and development are key to guiding the transformation of agri-food systems.
42. Work together to position agriculture in post-UNFSS processes and in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) processes; particularly, at COP27.
43. Request the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, AGRA and IICA to explore and put in place a mechanism of mutual interest which also involves the national Ministers on how to foster and get action on agreed issues including continental collaborations.
44. Take forward the recommendations from this Summit for further deliberations at the AGRF 2022 Summit in September in Rwanda and the African Union (AU)- Specialized Technical Committees (STCs).

San José, Costa Rica, July 28, 2022

## 3. Acknowledgements

The organizing institutions and participants express their gratitude to the institutions, organizations, and companies whose sponsorship supported the celebration of this Africa-Americas Ministerial Summit on Agricultural and Food Systems. These sponsors include Bayer, CAF, Microsoft, Rabobank, Syngenta, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the World Bank Group, as well as Turvisa. They recognize all of them as strategic partners for the consolidation of an alliance for global food security and sustainable development.

They also thank Clarín Rural, El Tiempo, Jamaica Observer, El Observador, Guyana Chronicle, as well as all the media that have covered this momentous Summit. Their work and partnership facilitated the promotion and the sharing of the Summit results with the global community.

