

# CONCEPT NOTE

## Development of Africa Manifesto and Plan of Action on Forgotten foods

**Webinar**

**THURSDAY  
20TH MAY 2021**



**10:00 – 12:00  
HOURS GMT**

**Registration Link:** <http://bit.ly/FARA-GFAR>



## Background

The Human Development Index is premised on the balanced attention to issues that drive individual as well as societal wellbeing. The issues of food and nutritional security are central in this goal and they require more inclusive perspectives than the conventional. The upcoming 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) calls for consideration of other issues beyond classical ambits of food security - the availability, affordability and accessibility of food. The food systems thinking takes a deeper perspective at the complete chain of issues and factors from production, through processing, marketing, distribution, quality control and safety, consumption patterns, food waste management, to recycling of nutrients and other elements of environmental sustainability.

The science committee of the UNFSS has highlighted five central action tracks in a normative food system, namely: (1) ensuring access to safe and nutritious food, (2) shifting to a sustainable consumption pattern, (3) boosting nature's positive production at sufficient scale, (4) advancing equitable livelihoods and value distribution and (5) building resilience to vulnerability, stress and shocks. One crucial response the revisit of the so called neglected and underutilized species within the context of food system. The term forgotten food refers to crop and livestock commodities that have been neglected or underutilized as they have been displaced by increasingly uniform diets fueled by mass-produced processed ingredients from the 'BIG FOUR' of wheat, maize, rice and soybean. These four accounts for about two-thirds of the world's food supply.

The different names for forgotten foods point to the fact that they have been largely displaced from the home menus and pantries due to lifestyle and social changes influenced by colonization, urbanization and globalization and other social elements. FAO notes that forgotten foods are "often overlooked by policymakers, researchers and extension agents" and that "governments rarely allocate resources for their promotion and development." These crops are often seen as food for the poor with very low utilization and economic importance. Hence, new varieties were hardly developed save for the landraces, and knowledge on their genetic make-up, agronomic requirement for production and utilization has not been sufficiently developed to merit commercial interests. However, these commodities are well adapted to the agroecologies where they are found and they play vital roles in social and cultural lives of rural communities. .

The Africa orphan crop consortium has listed 101 orphan crops on the continent (<http://africanorphancrops.org/meet-the-crops> ). Available data also indicates these crops are highly nutritious. Furthermore, their adaptation characteristics especially, drought tolerance, capacity to thrive on marginal soils and climatic condition makes these commodities a vital asset for food security considering the impending vagaries of climate change.

The exploration of forgotten commodities has gained prominence following the work of ICRISAT on Sorghum and Millet under the "Smart Food" program which explores varietal development, agronomic practices as well as processing to generate new products. FARA is aligning with this work to develop the "Smart Food Africa" initiative which sets out to expand the work done by ICRISAT on Sorghum and Millet to other neglected commodities and develop a "smart food" research and development program for their economic utilization.

For the potential of forgotten foods to be realized, collective actions are required at the global, regional, national levels. These actions involve creating awareness and communicating the economic, nutritional, environmental and cultural values of these foods. They also involve the provision of the needed enabling environment for the development of these foods through research; empowering farmers in production; and supporting the private sector in processing, value addition marketing etc.

The recent call by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR) for increased attention on forgotten foods offers an opportunity for Africa to re-examine the value of these foods in enriching the continent's food system. The increased attention on forgotten foods will need to take a holistic view and design actions that will not only create awareness but lead to development of new technologies for production and utilization as well as the development of appropriate policies and businesses.

The GFAR-led global effort on forgotten foods is initially aimed at developing a manifesto on these foods and drawing on it to develop a plan of action to advance these foods. To this end, GFAR is pursuing a bottom-up approach wherein the global manifesto on forgotten foods will be assembled from continental manifestos that will in turn be outcomes of regional consultative processes.

GFAR is joining hands with FARA to co-convene a continental consultation process that will lead to the preparation of Africa's manifesto on forgotten foods. FARA will thereafter facilitate the creation and operationalization of the Africa Community of Practice on forgotten foods which will represent the continent in the crafting of the global manifesto on forgotten foods and in the preparation of a plan of action.

This concept note outlines the initial activity of co-convening a continental stakeholder dialogue aimed at informing the development of an African manifesto on forgotten foods and building African ownership of it.

## Objectives

The central objective of the stakeholder's dialogue on forgotten foods is to develop a comprehensive stakeholder owned Africa manifesto on forgotten foods.

Specific objectives are:

- a.** Facilitating effective engagement of stakeholders in Africa's food systems to actively contribute to crafting the manifesto on forgotten food.
- b.** Validation of a working paper on the state of the forgotten foods in Africa.
- c.** To increase awareness about forgotten foods and build momentum towards the subsequent implementation of the plan of action.

# Approach

**a.** The engagement will involve: **(i)** the circulation of a working paper on the state of Africa's forgotten foods which will be prepared as part of this exercise; **(ii)** convening a webinar to get reflections on Africa's forgotten foods by thought leaders on this subject and discuss the content and recommendations of the working paper, and **(iii)** to trigger on-line discussions on forgotten foods that will increase awareness and interest on the subject.

**b.** The webinar will be organized using the Zoom platform on Thursday 20th May 2021 between 10:00 – 1200 hours GMT. It will be hosted by FARA.

Reigister with this link; [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_5AZMtxn0QGItFa\\_xCsxPkw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5AZMtxn0QGItFa_xCsxPkw)

**c.** The webinar will comprise of three segments,

## 1) Section one: Opening

- Opening remarks by leaders in Africa's agriculture.
- Keynote statements from thought leaders on Africa's forgotten foods.

## 2) Section two: Technical discussion

- Presentation of the working paper on the state of forgotten foods;
- High level panel discussion (Panelist drawn from key stakeholders' group viz., research, farmers organization, policies, private sector).

## 3). Section Three: Validation Process

- Survey of participants on elements of the proposed Africa manifesto on forgotten foods.

**d.** The webinar will be co-convened with GFAR within the frame of the Independent Dialogues of the UN-Food Systems Summit (Action Track 1). It will be registered on the UNFSS web page and widely disseminated.

**e.** FARA will facilitate wide publicity for the webinar using its convening powers.

**f.** Report of the webinar proceeding will be produced and disseminated widely.

**g.** The required documents viz., Africa manifesto and the working paper will afterwards be finalized for integration into the Global manifesto.

# Outputs

**The consultative webinar is expected to yield the following outputs;**

- A validated working paper on the state of forgotten foods in Africa. This paper will be the principal reference in the preparation of Africa's manifesto on forgotten foods.
- A report of the webinar highlighting the views of thought leaders and stakeholder views expressed through the survey.

## Partners, Participants and Beneficiaries

### Partners

- The core partnership for these activities is with the FARA and GFAR. FARA runs its activities in alliance with the SROs and AFASS within the framework of CAADP-XP4 model. Other crucial partners include IITA, ICRI-SAT, ICIPE and PAFO
- By implication, FARA will partner with broad stakeholders' group in Africa agriculture viz., the research organization, the NARS, farmers' organizations, private sector actors, policy makers, media etc.

### Participants

- The webinar will be open to all stakeholders in Africa agriculture and ancillary sectors such as forestry, aquaculture, environment etc.

### Beneficiaries

- All stakeholders in Africa agriculture are the primary beneficiaries. The broad civil society will benefit from the outcome.

Time (GMT)	Activity	Responsibility
10:00 – 10.20 [20 minutes]	<b>Opening Session</b> [Facilitator ] (High Level Opening Remarks)	<b>Dr Alioune Fall</b> Chairman, Board of Directors, FARA <b>Dr Matthew Montavon</b> Interim Executive Secretary, GFAR <b>Dr Jacqueline Hughes</b> Director General of ICRISAT
10:20-10:30 [10 minutes]	<b>Scene setting</b>	<b>Dr Cliff Dlamini</b> (ED CCARDESA)
10.30-10.50 [20 minutes]	<b>Session 2: Technical presentations</b> Keynote Paper: Title (TBD)	<b>TBD</b>
	<b>Panel Discussion</b>	<b>Facilitator [TBD]</b>
	Non-State Actors	<b>Mrs Elizabeth Nsimadala</b> , Chairperson PAFO
10.50 – 11.20 [30 minutes]	Research and Extension actors	<b>Dr Segenet Kelemu</b> , Director General, ICIPE TBD, IITA
	Technocrats / Public servants /policy makers	TBD, AUDA
11.20 -11.40 [20 minutes]	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Facilitator [TBD]</b>
11.40-11.55 [15 minutes]	Survey on elements of Africa manifesto on forgotten foods	<b>Wole Fatunbi</b> (FARA)
11.55- 12.00 [5 minutes]	Closing Remarks and way forward	<b>Dr. Abdou Tenkouano</b> , Executive Director, CORAF