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## AFRICAN UNION 2022 YEAR OF NUTRITION: STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE IN NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

*Dialogue #3 – Impacts of the Russia-Ukraine War on Nutrition, Food Security, and Poverty in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities for Building Resilient Food Systems*

Tuesday, July 26, 2022

### Key Messages and Recommendations

1. In support of the African Union (AU) 2022 Year of Nutrition and Food Security, AKADEMIYA2063 and the Conseil National de Développement de la Nutrition (CNDN), Senegal are organizing a series of [continental-level dialogues](#) on nutrition and food security with a wide group of stakeholders, including policymakers, civil society organizations, farmers' organizations, research institutions, the private sector, and development partners, to facilitate knowledge exchange and mutual learning and drive necessary action toward achieving continental and global food security and nutrition targets.
2. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Dialogue focused on the impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war on nutrition, food security, and poverty in Africa and its implications on the ability of African governments to build food systems that are more resilient to economic, health and environmental shocks.
3. In her opening remarks, **Mrs Aminata Diop Ndoye, Executive Secretary of the** Conseil National de Développement de la Nutrition (CNDN), Senegal, emphasized that African countries must pay particular attention to the effects of the war on the nutritional status of the populations and on the need for strengthening African people's resilience through the implementation of relevant programs in agriculture, education, and training. According to her, the war is disrupting all the efforts made by countries to revive their economies amid the various vulnerabilities faced by the populations, including those related to food crises, having immediate effects on their nutritional status and well-being.

4. **Dr. Simplicie Nouala, Head of Division, Agriculture and Food Security, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Commission (AUC-DARBE)**, pointed out in his intervention that the crisis between Ukraine and Russia has highlighted the vulnerability of food systems in African countries. According to recent WFP statistics, this conflict, which has disrupted our wheat and agricultural supply chains, resulting in unprecedented price increases, could drive ten to twenty million people into food insecurity.
5. **Ms. Gerda Verburg, Coordinator, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)**, argued that the major challenge is getting a stronger commitment from governments on the nutrition front (especially in terms of domestic resource mobilization) and strengthening the reliability of all policies. She also called on participants to seize the opportunity offered by this crisis to consolidate investment in the transformation of food systems in our countries.
6. **Dr. Ismael Fofana, Director of Capacity and Deployment, AKADEMIYA2063**, in his presentation on the study conducted by AKADEMIYA2063 on "The impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war on commodity world trade and the disruption of food markets," mentioned that the crisis has affected all countries, more specifically prices, markets, jobs, poverty and food security. The analysis showed that the effects vary according to the trade patterns of each country and classified the countries into three groups: those that will be strongly impacted, those that will show a quick recovery capacity because they have a very solid trade structure, and finally those that will be very slightly impacted.
7. Moderated by **Dr. Augustin Wambo Yamdjeu, Director of Knowledge Systems, AKADEMIYA2063**, a panel of experts including Mr. Abdoulaye Dia, Agriculture Team Lead, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Senegal, Mr. Malick Ndao, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment of Senegal, Ms. Boucal Rachelle Fayçaline Coly, Secretary General of the Ministry of Community Development and Territorial Equity (MDET), and Ms. Sara Mbago-Bhunu, Director, Eastern and Southern Africa Division, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), presented the mechanisms put in place or to be put in place by countries and development partners, to better cope with the impacts of the war in Ukraine which are severely felt by African countries on the economic and social levels, particularly in the areas of agriculture, health, and social protection.
8. **Mr. Abdoulaye Dia, Agriculture Team Lead, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Senegal**, shared the actions planned by USAID to support governments, communities, and businesses in mitigating shocks caused by the crisis in Ukraine. This includes the implementation of several programs in fundraising or field implementation stages to provide a humanitarian and local response to the COVID-19 and Ukraine crises.
9. **Mr. Malick Ndao, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment (MAER), Senegal**, presented the various measures taken by the Government of Senegal to anticipate shocks such as this crisis, which will have a definite impact on the roadmap developed by Senegal at the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit for the development of sustainable food systems by 2030. According to him, even if this crisis occurs in a context where, despite the agricultural performance recorded, Senegal is not

yet able to achieve food self-sufficiency, the actions listed in this roadmap could help mitigate the effects of the crisis. In addition to the road map, there is a clear vision and the definition of strategic axes: (i) sustainable improvement of the availability of diversified, healthy, and nutritious foods, (ii) improving the legislative and regulatory framework of food systems, and (iii) strengthening the resilience of food systems, in addition to the measures taken in the context of the agricultural campaign.

10. In her remarks, **Ms. Boucal Rachelle Fayçaline Coly, Secretary General of the Ministry of Community Development and Territorial Equity (MDCET) of Senegal**, emphasized the mechanisms put in place by the government under social protection programs that will contribute to strengthen the resilience of food systems.
11. **Ms. Sara Mbago-Bhunu, Director, Eastern and Southern Africa Division, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**, identified a set of key actions and investments that governments and their partners should undertake to build long-term resilience and capacity to better cope with shocks.
12. In his closing remarks, **Dr. Ousmane Badiane, Executive Chairperson of AKADEMIYA2063**, expressed his gratitude to CNDN for the partnership between the two organizations and thanked all the participants who shared their experience and opinions on the combined effects of the COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine crises. He committed to strengthening this partnership between the two organizations. In addition, he mentioned the analytical work done by AKADEMIYA2063 on the effects of the crisis on the various markets and the importance of making the link with nutrition and highlighted that this work should allow governments to better understand the corrective measures needed in several sectors to face this crisis.

## Key messages and Recommendations

1. The effects of the war, such as the increase in the price of staple foods, must lead states to improve the resilience of their food systems through the development of agricultural, education, and training programs better adapted to national challenges.
2. The impacts of the crisis are reflected in changes in the terms of trade; for example, most countries are facing increases in the import price index of more than 5 percentage points, while increases in the export price index tend to be smaller.
3. The effects of the crisis vary according to the terms of trade of each country and today we can classify the countries in 3 groups: those that will be strongly impacted, those that will show a quick recovery capacity because they have a solid trade framework, and finally those that will be very slightly impacted.
4. There is a need for African countries to take important steps such as: reducing dependence on imported products, increasing investment in more resilient food systems, developing education and agricultural policies that are more responsive to national nutrition and food

security opportunities and challenges, and strengthening private sector involvement in addressing nutrition and food security challenges.

5. Among the actions to be considered to build resilient food systems in Africa is the promotion of local production, especially of neglected crops, to increase our production capacity and reduce the impact of natural and climatic resources on our food systems, while strengthening the promotion of agricultural practices that are more in line with climate and environmental challenges.
6. It is crucial to strengthen governments' commitment to nutrition to reduce the impact of the crisis on nutrition and food security.
7. In the context of the crisis, countries must seize the opportunity to strengthen their food systems and increase investment in malnutrition prevention by at least 3%.
8. For Gerda Verburg, an investment in nutrition is an investment in the future of children, families, and communities and more globally for the development of countries.
9. USAID is increasing its funding by \$5 billion to support the agricultural sector seriously hit by the increase in fertilizer prices by supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and industries (SMIs) as well as large companies that produce fertilizer, while promoting the production of more environmentally friendly fertilizers. The *Feed the Future* project is developing new initiatives and working in a more targeted way with the most vulnerable households and families that have been severely hit by the crisis.
10. According to Mr. Malick Ndao, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment of Senegal, several strong actions are planned by the government to mitigate the effects of the crisis. These include: the development of a plan to revitalize and restructure food systems and agricultural production systems through the PASAD program (*Programme Agricole Pour Une Souveraineté Alimentaire Durable--2021-2025*), with a budget estimated at 1,021 billion CFA francs; evaluation and revision of the agroforestry law.
11. To ensure a quality 2022-2023 agricultural season, the Government of Senegal has started early the agricultural campaign, with the distribution of inputs, purchase of 80,000 tons of urea for horticultural products, distribution of approvals for the supply of seeds, and increase of the campaign budget from 60 to 70 billion CFA francs in 2022.
12. According to the Secretary General of the MDCET, Senegal, the implementation of a holistic and adaptive social protection system combined with universal health insurance coverage systems, strengthening access to basic social services, developing social protection activities (income improvement activities for vulnerable households, emergency food aid to vulnerable households to cope with shocks) will help reduce the effects of the crisis on the populations.
13. A strong territorial equity program and social protection system such as the *Registre National Unique* (RNU), a single repository for targeting beneficiaries of social protection

programs, is essential to ensure the effectiveness of resilience strategies in the face of food and nutrition insecurity shocks.

14. According to Ms. Mbago-Bhunu, Director, Eastern and Southern Africa Division, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in order to increase the resilience of African countries, it will be necessary to consider restructuring global finance, reviewing how to mobilize national finance, improving the value of our natural resources, leveraging climate change financing, developing the capacities of young people in terms of production and finally, prioritizing our investments.