

## Informal Exchange between Policy Makers

On 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2021, the Food Policy Forum for Change organised an informal exchange between policy makers from different countries. The aim of the conversation was for the policy makers to exchange between each other, learn about public policies and food system transformation processes in the countries and to explore how the Food Policy Forum for Change could support their work. During the Session, members from two countries – Namibia and Burkina Faso – presented current challenges and future developments concerning agricultural and food system policies in their country.

Alisa Shidhika and Petrus Uushona from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform in Namibia mentioned that a number of policies are being implemented or reviewed in their country, concerning topics ranging from food security to drought issues: First, a National Agriculture Investment Plan is currently under development. Second, the Namibia Agricultural Policy from 2015 is the main national policy framework for the agricultural sector, still in the course of being implemented. Finally, the National Drought Policy initially developed in 1997 is planned to be updated to now address food-related challenges. Furthermore, Uushona pointed out the fact that there are several activities to promote agroecology in Namibia at the moment, but that there is a challenge of building synergies between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment. Whilst the Ministry of Environment focusses on preserving natural resources, the Ministry of Agriculture focusses more on food production. According to Uushona, the National Agriculture Investment Plan is a chance to create more synergies, as it involves different public and private stakeholders, as well as different parts of the economic sector and hence provides a more holistic framework.

When asked what challenges Namibia faced when implementing the aforementioned policies, Uushona on one hand referred to the difficult natural conditions, Namibia being the driest country in Sub-Saharan Africa and on the other hand the institutional challenge of lacking coordination between different institutions which is hampering the smooth implementation of policies.

Adama Savadogo, the national focal point for agroecology in the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Infrastructures of Burkina Faso, identified the need for a paradigm shift in agriculture towards agroecology. Burkina Faso has already organised trainings for farmers to teach them how to restore soil and several stakeholders have been working together on the level of small-scale farms. Concerning policies, a national agroecology strategy is planned following a national consultation process, and a third version of the national programme for the rural sector is currently under development. According to Savadogo, Burkina Faso is by contrast to Namibia not lacking synergies between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, since also the Ministry of Agriculture tries to protect the natural resources, for example by putting a focus on restoring soils. Despite that, there is no aligned and unified plan and framework yet.

### Discussion Outcomes

As a second part of the meeting, participants discussed how the Food Policy Forum for Change could contribute to transformation processes in both countries. The main question was how the Food Policy Forum for Change could support the development and implementation of the policies identified above.

Amongst others, the following activities were proposed:

- Organise field visits between different countries in comparable situations, in particular to countries with policies against drought or addressing soil restoration
- Conduct trainings on early warnings and information communication as well as on policy implementation and monitoring
- Showcase best practices from policy implementation
- Present the lessons learnt by different countries concerning disaster risk management



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- Show how to build synergies between different practices and policies

In particular, the participants highlighted the importance of every initiative on national level benefitting from support.

This webinar has been organised as part of the Food Policy Forum for Change initiative. For more information, please visit <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/policy-forum/> or email [food.policy.forum@biovision.ch](mailto:food.policy.forum@biovision.ch).



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