



Roundtable

Policies for agroecological transitions in West Africa: What approaches and alternatives?

6th West African Organic Conference “Feeding the World Without Poisoning”
23-26th November 2021, Ouagadougou

Summary

On November 23, the **Food Policy Forum for Change** co-organized a roundtable in collaboration with the **Alliance for Agroecology in West Africa (3AO)**, the **National Council for Organic Agriculture (CNABio)** of Burkina Faso and the **Centre Ecologique Albert Schweitzer Switzerland (CEAS)**. The aim was to bring together political decision-makers, other actors involved in the development of policies related food systems, **link the different efforts towards a food systems transformation in West Africa** and enrich the discussion on the role, and instruments of action at the country level to ensure food security and nutrition. The session was opened by **Adama Savadogo**, focal point for agroecology in the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydro-agricultural Development and Mechanization in Burkina Faso, followed by a short presentation on the political landscape conducive to agroecology in West Africa and beyond and **two panel discussions**; one focusing on political decision-makers and one comparing visions from other actors of the region.

Key messages

Below, we present the main lessons and key messages discussed during the roundtable

- It is not sufficient to develop isolated policy initiatives for agroecology. Instead, **agroecology must be integrated and anchored in all national policies**, particularly those related to agriculture, environment, health and economy.
- Even though investment for agricultural transformation is a key concern of the ECOWAS community and regional approach (e.g. for standards) is indispensable, **the mobilization of economic resources should start from within the countries**. Financing a food systems transformation towards agroecology and organic agriculture cannot only improve food security but simultaneously holds advantages for health and trade (e.g. establishing local markets).
- **A holistic food system approach needs to break silos and create synergies between** different ministries and among sectors. In Senegal, the “Dynamique pour une Transition Agro-Ecologique au Sénégal (DyTAES) brought together 30 organizations and institutions from different fields to hold a national consultation for an agroecological transformation. In the case of Burkina Faso, a national strategy for agroecology and an accompanying action plan will be issued towards the end of 2021 and will integrated an inter-ministerial coordination platform.
- **There is also demand for multi-stakeholder frameworks** that allow to showcase food system champions, provide practical evidence from the ground and raise awareness of the benefits of agroecological and organic agriculture. These benefits must furthermore be communicated to society and consumers.
- It is also crucial for research and farmer groups to have a space where they can **share and exchange scientific and traditional learnings and co-create knowledge**. Continuous innovation is key for a food systems transformation and must be supported and picked up by national governments.





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- A major challenge for agroecological policies is to maintain a broad, systemic and long term vision, and **to sustain its implementation over time**. Among the key barriers to long-term continuity are a poor understanding of the implementation barriers, or other political barriers such as changes of governments.
- **Inclusion must be a core value of an agroecological and organic food system transformation**. Actors on the ground, particularly indigenous peoples, farmers, women and young people must be involved in the design of frameworks, platforms and initiatives mentioned above.

Panelists

- Mamadou Goïta (Moderator) – IPES Food
- Charlotte Pavageau – Biovision Foundation
- Adama Savadogo – Ministry of Agriculture and Hydro-agricultural Development and Mechanization, Burkina Faso
- Ernest Aubee – Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Yvonne Bonzi Coulibaly – Ouagadougou University
- Eugene Rurangwa – Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Elhadji Faye - Enda Pronat
- Karim Savadogo – Alliance for Agroecology in West Africa (3AO)
- Abdoulaye Ouedraogo – National Council for Organic Agriculture (CNABio)

Contact

This roundtable 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

