

# CERFAM'S BULLETIN

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Women cook for students in the school canteen at Rafa Elementary School in Niger. ©WFP/Evelyn Fey

## “ STRENGTHENING NUTRITIONAL RESILIENCE IN AFRICA

PROSPECTS, CHALLENGES AND  
OPPORTUNITIES OVER THE  
YEAR OF NUTRITION OF THE  
AFRICAN UNION.

République de Côte d'Ivoire



**CERFAM**  
CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE REGIONAL  
CONTRE LA FAIM ET LA MALNUTRITION



## EDITO



An agripreneur and a beneficiary working in a vegetable garden, Zimbabwe; ©WFP/ZWE Samantha Reinders

Assist countries to accelerate progress in the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the SDG2-Zero Hunger

**H**unger has risen again in the world, mainly in Africa. One in five people on the continent were affected by hunger in 2021, according to the 2022 edition of The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report, jointly published today by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO)<sup>1</sup>. Africa is also facing the combined challenges of civil insecurity, exacerbated by armed and inter-communal conflict, and climate change, compounded by the coronavirus pandemic and rising food prices due to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. These challenges have led to increased exposure and vulnerability in many parts of the continent and elsewhere in the world and have contributed to making the concept of resilience a priority for governments and key humanitarian and development actors, including UN agencies, donors, non-governmental organizations, and international and regional institutions. FAO has defined resilience as the ability to prevent and mitigate the impact of disasters and crises (...) <sup>2</sup>.

This includes protecting, restoring, processing and improving livelihood systems from threats impacting food and nutrition security and food safety. One of the keyways to build nutritional resilience is to capitalize on and especially disseminate good nutrition practices. On page 16 of this bulletin, you will find out how, for FAO, sharing and adopting knowledge and resources can have a transformative impact on the lives and livelihoods of communities.

Building nutritional resilience also requires multi-sectoral strategies and approaches. Recognizing these challenges for the continent,

the African Union (AU) has, among its priorities, set out in its Agenda 2063 a vision of prosperity based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, which includes a modern and productive African agriculture, using science, technology, innovation, and local knowledge. In this context, the institution has designated 2022 as the Year of Nutrition for Africa, with the major objective of strengthening nutritional resilience and food security in Africa. In an interview with H.E. Ambassador Cessouma Minata Samaté, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union, the AU recalls the main priorities and achievements of governments towards this AU commitment for the Year of Nutrition. The full interview can be found on page 28 of this bulletin.

CERFAM, the Regional Centre of Excellence against Hunger and Malnutrition, is also committed to helping countries accelerate progress in the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the SDG2-Zero Hunger. For the Centre, strengthening communities' nutrition and developing innovative sustainable solutions requires a holistic and integrated approach, bringing together all stakeholders while leveraging existing complementarities and synergies. In this context, CERFAM and its partners are deeply involved in country programmes and policies that address both the long-term development challenges of countries and the immediate needs related to the well-being of families and communities. The main interventions and contributions of CERFAM's partners, including CGIAR, the Bill and Melinda Foundation, the National Nutrition Development Council, and HarvestPlus, can be read in this 10th Bulletin.

<sup>1</sup> [In Brief to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/publications/collection/en/collection.do?lang=en&collection=state-of-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-world)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/i6463f/i6463f.pdf>

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A farmer fills bags with harvested maize, in Masaka, Malawi. ©WFP/Badre Bhaji



A farmer putting soil on potato field to prevent the seed to be burned, Kigali, Rwanda. ©WFP/Aristide Gatera

01

## EXPANDING EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH FOR IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL RESILIENCE AND STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

### Effects of climate change on nutrition and food systems

The continuing climate crisis has worsened effects on the environment with more frequent and intense droughts, lengthy dry spells, storms, rising global temperatures and heatwaves, melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and warming oceans. Such climatic and weather shocks are consistently demonstrating temperature deviations from historical values, which are creating impact on the earth's ecological balance, the wellbeing of people, and global and national economies.

climate and concomitant shocks, thus causing enormous strains on local economies and on the capacity of governments to appropriately respond to emerging challenges.

Agriculture, the economic sector that employs most of the global workforce and which is the main source of food and income for most of the world's poor, is severely affected by climate change and the accompanying shocks. Such shocks lead to decline in agricultural productivity and production, with the largest effects being decreased crop yields and livestock productivity and decline in fisheries and agroforestry. Most of such effects are observed in areas of the globe that are already vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity. Rising levels of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, and associated pollutants) are seemingly diminishing the nutrient profile of staple crops, particularly cereals and legumes, that many rural households depend on (Myers et al., 2017; Beach et al., 2019).

Under such circumstances, the risk of climate change undermining the sustainable availability, access, and utilization of food, and the stability of each of these elements over time is high. In addition, constrictions at any point in time exacerbates food and nutritional insecurity through the food system continuum, including food production, its storage, distribution, and consumption. Nutritional insecurity, and notably undernutrition, sometimes referred to as the hidden hunger, is also undermined through its



**+3.3 BILLION PEOPLE**

live in countries that are highly vulnerable to climate impacts

Currently, between 3.3 billion and 3.6 billion people live in countries highly vulnerable to climate impacts, with global hotspots concentrated in Small Island Developing States, the Arctic, South Asia, Central and South America, and much of sub-Saharan Africa (IPCC report, 2022). Many areas of life of these people are severely undermined by the changing

impact on health and the coping mechanisms of vulnerable populations, including the reduction in their purchasing power and limiting their ability to invest in assets that enhance their resilience to shocks.

### **Interrelationship between climate change and shocks on nutrition and food system**

Nutrition and food systems are not sectors by themselves; they are dependent on actions that originate from a range of sectors such as agriculture, food security, public health, water, sanitation and hygiene, and social protection. Their interrelationship with climate change is complex, multidirectional, inextricable, and must, therefore, be considered through various pathways, if they are to be effectively and sustainably addressed. Several conceptual frameworks have been developed to illustrate these complex pathways and most are based on how climate variability and change affect nutritional outcomes through the three causal pathways of food, health, and care (IFPRI Global nutrition report, 2015; Bryan et al., 2017; Salm et al., 2020).



## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

**has the potential to worsen the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and weaken food systems**

The conceptual frameworks demonstrate that climate change has the potential to worsen the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and weaken food systems. Most of the evidence linking climate change and nutrition remains, however, at the macro level, with few examples of effective strategies at country and community levels. Though evidence on this linkage is growing, the focus is, however, on climate-related impacts on nutrition outcomes, primarily through the food pathway, and on individual nutrition indicators such as stunting in children and/or wasting, lowered immunity, mucosal damage, and invasion by pathogens. There is limited evidence on effective adaptation and mitigation interventions. Moreover, the wider threats that climate change poses to achieving sustainable, healthy diets for all, for example, are not captured.



Cutting fodder at Simon and Sylvia Kiruja's dairy farm in Meru, Kenya. ©G. Smith/ Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Food systems are affected through diverse impacts on crops, including the appearance of new pests, increased intensity crops diseases, the appearance of hardy weeds, and reduction in pollination because of climate change impacts on pollinating insects. Climate change can also induce forests diebacks, reduce livestock productivity and production, cause increased deaths of herds and flocks, aquatic food sources, and in general, the availability, access, utilization of such food sources (Myers et al., 2017; WHO technical series, 2019). The altered environmental temperature and humidity due to the changing climate can directly affect livestock feed quality and consistency of nutrients in the feeds, thus affecting the wellbeing of animals. In Madagascar, four years of successive droughts wiped out harvests and severely hampered access to food sources.



**MADAGASCAR DESIGNATED AS THE PLACE WHERE THE WORLD'S FIRST 'CLIMATE CHANGE FAMINE' OCCURRED FOLLOWING FOUR SUCCESSIVE YEARS OF DROUGHT**

As such, Madagascar was referred to as the place where the world's first "climate change famine" occurred (BBC, 2021). In 2019, unusual weather conditions, exacerbated by the changing climate, created conditions conducive to a desert locust outbreak that resulted in the destruction of food and vegetation, which jeopardized food security across Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Increased food price in a climate crisis was reported to have resulted in reduced access to food (FAO 2008). Biodiversity loss caused by climate change resulted in reduction in the ability of the food system to respond to shocks and stresses, including further climate change (FAO, 2019). In effect, food prices are extremely sensitive to shocks on both the supply and the demand side, as demonstrated recently by the

COVID-19 pandemic (Heady et al., 2020). It was also reported that climate change negatively affects household food availability and access to quality diet as well as to social and health services and quality care of infant and young children (Fanzo, 2018).

**Building more nutritional resilient and equitable food systems**

The effects of climate change will worsen over the next thirty years if steps are not taken urgently to effectively mitigate the increasing risks, which will disproportionately impact the world's poorest people. While climate change threatens many areas essential to life, food systems, food security, and nutrition are particularly vulnerable through increased pressure on food production (IPCC Report, 2022). Whilst the interest in and awareness of the climate crisis on nutrition and foods systems is growing, actions to strengthen their linkages appear to be increasing but are still limited. Future efforts need to focus on more holistic systems approaches to address the huge threat climate change poses to achieving universal healthy sustainable diets and well-nourished populations. It is more urgent, now than ever, to develop viable farm businesses that would help build stronger local and regional communities and economies, encourage the broad use of sustainable and ecological production practices, and enhance the capacity for wealth creation in socially vulnerable populations.



**AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS**

**energy efficiency depending on renewable energy**

Farms and farming systems need to develop energy efficiency that is dependent on renewable energy.

Research has delivered many promising innovations and policy approaches that show potential to addressing food systems while also increasing productivity, improving diets and nutrition, and advancing inclusion of vulnerable groups, in a climate crisis. These include new, resilient and nutrition improved crop varieties; new technologies and resource management techniques to help farmers and actors in the value chain cope with more extreme weather and climate-related events; sustainable crop management techniques, inputs, and financial tools such as index insurance which protect farmers from the economic risks associated with extreme weather events; bundling agricultural services products; clean energy sources; digital technologies as well as policy options on effective trade reforms and landscape governance, and social protection advice.

The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit recognized that in the face of increasing pressures from both the pandemic and the continued climate crisis, food systems across the Global South must become more resilient, more inclusive, more consumer-driven, and more oriented towards better health and nutrition for all, particularly for women, girls, and other equity-seeking groups. This has become the new challenge. Researchers need, therefore, to rigorously refocus their efforts in expanding evidence-based research to the nexus of climate change, food security and nutrition and particularly on improving nutritional resilience and strengthening food systems in the context of extreme weather conditions and shocks.

## One CGIAR's contribution to improving nutritional resilience and strengthening food systems in a climate crisis

These topics are a growing area of focus for One CGIAR as demonstrated by its 2030 Research and Innovation strategy, which is built on delivering science and innovations in a climate crisis. The delivery of One CGIAR's strategy as well as those of the 15 Centers of the CGIAR are based on the following principles that guide investments in research geared towards improving nutritional resilience and strengthening food systems in a climate crisis :



Focus on nutritional and food systems resilience and contributing to greater productivity, sustainability, and equity, both on and beyond the farm, in low and middle-income countries, in the context of climate change and environmental shocks.



Build actionable evidence around climate-resilient pathways and transformations and build capacities for the translation of this evidence into holistic and integrated policymaking, policies, and practices.



- Build appropriate partnerships including the promotion of public and private sector investment, for delivering, sharing, and bringing to scale pro-poor, ethical, and accountable use of innovations, which emphasize on a greater integration and diversification of food systems and nutritional research at the regional and global levels, and which allow countries with limited local research capacity to benefit from gains achieved by countries with more developed systems.



Empower marginalized farmers and livestock keepers and ensure equitable access to nutritious food associated with healthy, sustainable plant and animal-based diets, and reducing food loss.

The One CGIAR research prospectus consists of dozens of research initiatives that mostly include the key evidence-based research steps including questioning, searching, making critical appraisals, implementation, and evaluation. They are carried out on the following key domains that could be considered as attempts to expand research into areas that would generate new evidence-base options for improving nutritional resilience and strengthening food systems in a climate crisis :



Achieving healthy, equitable, and sustainable diets through transformative food systems and leveraging a systems approach for policy action and exploring integrated policy approaches that create better market incentives, strengthen regulation and institutions, and fund climate-resilient technologies and practices that will catalyze and accelerate climate action.



Boosting nature-based solutions within food systems including local food sources, and livestock production and processing, marketing an affordable, environmentally sustainable alternative protein source for livestock feed, and using gender-inclusive financing, certification of processed fish products, improved access to formal markets, and promotion of community-level gender equality and reduction of post-harvest aquaculture losses.



Understanding the potential and limitations of alternative food systems such as agroecology to complement conventional agriculture and inform the transformation of food systems structure and their transition towards more resilient and equitable outcomes, particularly for women.



Empowering communities, especially women entrepreneurs to achieve equitable livelihoods and healthy families, including improving the incomes and diets of women farmers and their families by facilitating enhanced participation in the market economy and farming-entrepreneurship opportunities, including bundling services to help farmers and actors of the food value chain, that can be supported by local institutions.



Mariama, who lives in a village in Bandaro, Mongo, Province du Guera, Chad, stands in front of the community garden in Bandaro. ©WFP/Evelyn Fey



Supporting gender-responsive climate change adaptation in agriculture and in transforming food systems through the role of local platforms in facilitating household resilience, women empowerment, social inclusion, diet quality, and sustainable food systems.

Accelerating the transition to healthy sustainable food systems that prioritize access to healthy and affordable diets while keeping greenhouse gas emissions within sustainable limits.



Mapping and identifying crucial stakeholders along the food production value chain and creating the opportunity to learn about and support partnerships with private-sector players, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, and to increase the supply and consumption of healthy diets through a series of new tools, models, and approaches.



Piloting new, scalable models to increase the availability, access, and demand for livestock vaccine for both women and men livestock smallholders.



Developing genome editing to especially unlock the enormous potentials in local genetic resources and to rapidly develop climate-resilient and climate-adaptable crop varieties tailored to low- and middle-income countries. This will be associated with the development of functional and streamlined regulatory frameworks, understanding the needs and preferences of farmers as well as the establishment of start-ups and small and medium enterprises that can help drive the democratization of genome editing.



Maintaining increasing productivity, sustainability, and resilience of food value chains through monitoring the impacts of climate change, with particular attention to maintaining poverty reduction and the quality of diets, creating an enabling environment for cold chain development that can reduce food loss and waste, and supporting simple, low-cost options to reduce aflatoxins.



Intensifying the use of digital infrastructure and services to sustain food system and manage climate risks across the entire agri-food system, from producers to markets and value-chain services to policymakers. This includes localized weather information services, digital extension services, and weather index-based insurance schemes. This should be associated with bridging the digital divide, strengthening agri-food information systems, and strengthening digital capabilities to manage climate risks.

## CONCLUSION

Consideration of these new research areas address urgent local needs, focus on the most vulnerable people and communities, and stay true to the One CGIAR focus on investing in high-quality food-systems research and innovation globally. One CGIAR will share results from across these research investments to inform local, regional, and global agendas, sharing knowledge that is ready for use and that responds to emerging challenges imposed by climate change and weather shocks?

The challenge is, however, daunting and requires both the resources to support cutting-edge research and the will to forge innovative new partnerships while giving voice to underrepresented groups. One CGIAR is committed to taking on this challenge, investing in research to build more climate-resilient food and nutritional systems.

Making rigorous and development impact-oriented research findings available to stakeholders is vital in ensuring the improvement and strengthening of food systems in a climate crisis. The One CGIAR research initiatives will facilitate the integration of usually underrepresented researchers from the Global South to join the growing network of specialists and interdisciplinary collaborators conducting research around nutritional resilience and strengthening food systems against climate change, to expand the evidence base for particularly achieving United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2).

Article written by Dr Harold Roy-Macauley, Director General of AfricaRice and Regional Director of One CGIAR East and Southern Africa Region.



A student at KDC Primary School in Dar Es Salaam Community receives a hot meal as part of the WFP supported school feeding program, Tanzania. ©Michael Duff

02

## NUTRITION FOR AFRICA: PROSPECTIVE FOR THE YEAR OF NUTRITION

While there have been commendable improvements in African nutrition status over the past few years, the burden of malnutrition, particularly undernutrition amongst Africans remains worrying. The region has lower than global averages in the prevalence of wasting (6.0%:6.7%) and overweight (5.3%:5.7%) among children under 5, and the prevalence of stunting remains higher than the global average (30.7%:22%).

Additionally, more than 40% of women of reproductive weight in Africa are affected by anemia<sup>3</sup>. It is estimated that 75% of Africans cannot afford to maintain a healthy diet and the effect of malnutrition on the lifetime earning potential of Africans as well as on the Gross Domestic Product of African countries is immense<sup>4</sup>. Consequently, the 2022 theme is timely as an indication that the African Union prioritizes nutrition as a core focus area for addressing regional challenges and promoting regional development.



**+40% OF WOMEN**

of childbearing age in Africa affected by anaem



**75% OF AFRICANS CANNOT**

afford to eat a healthy food

<sup>3</sup> <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/africa/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gainhealth.org/media/news/gain-supports-2022-year-nutrition-africa>

## Some ways to combat malnutrition

One way to combat malnutrition is by ensuring that populations not only have access to food but that they have access to nutritious foods that provide the bulk of their nutritional requirements. Some of the main challenges that worsen the malnutrition status in Africa and other regions include:

the high cost of nutritious foods; the insufficient nutritional value in staple foods; and nutrient gaps between various demographics.

Therefore, a comprehensive approach to addressing malnutrition in general and micronutrient deficiencies must accommodate the nutritional needs of the general population while also impacting vulnerable groups, and it must be multisectoral in its outlook and implementation.



**“ADOPTING a «One NUTRITION», APPROACH IS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESSFULLY ADDRESSING NUTRITION CHALLENGES IN AFRICA**

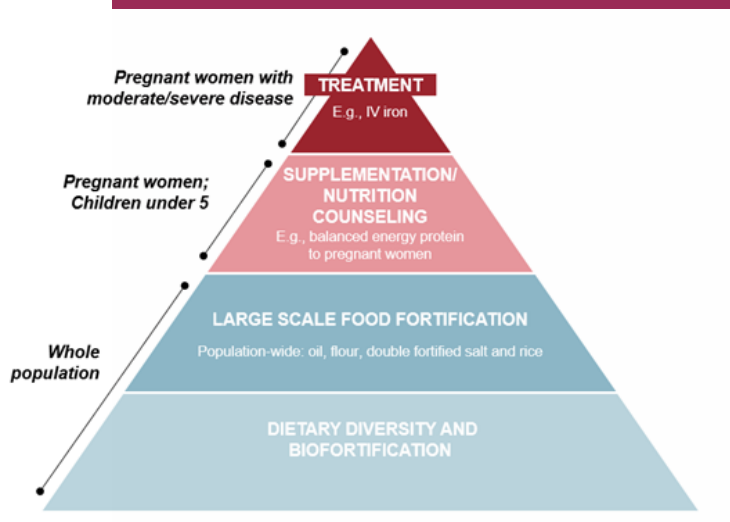
This calls for a “One Nutrition” approach that is critical to successfully addressing the region’s nutritional challenges.



Jeanne, a refugee from Democratic Republic of Congo, feeds her youngest child Dieu-Aimé in Kigeme refugee camp, Rwanda. ©WFP/Arête/Fredrik Lerneryd

## One Nutrition approach fosters complementary impact across interventions

Figure 1: One Nutrition approach enables foundation to holistically address malnutrition



The One Nutrition approach adopts and promotes various interventions for increasing micronutrient intake in a way that impacts diverse groups as well as the general population. Approaches such as biofortification, largescale food fortification (LSFF), dietary diversification, nutrient supplementation, and treatment, rather than being mutually exclusive, are complementary in a One Nutrition approach, where each intervention is meant to enhance the effects of the others.

Whole population approaches (biofortification, dietary diversification and LSFF) are meant to ensure a basic level of nutrient availability across the general

population, while nutrient supplementation and treatment are targeted at groups that are vulnerable to certain micronutrient deficiencies, such as anemia in women of reproductive age.

### Large Scale Food Fortification (LSFF) is proven, cost-effective and scalable

Among all the available micronutrient deficiency control (MNDC) interventions mentioned above, LSFF has been proven to be particularly cost-effective and scalable.



**The LSFF, a «LOW-COST, HIGH-IMPACT TOOL» TO COMBAT MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES**

The WHO, the World Bank and other stakeholders have acknowledged the effectiveness of LSFF as a feasible and economic intervention in the control of micronutrient deficiencies. With \$15 lifetime cost and 27:1 (benefit: cost) return on investment, LSFF has

proven to be a “low-cost high-impact tool” for addressing micronutrient deficiencies<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, LSFF does not require behavioral change as it relies on the fortification of recognized staples which are already available to and consumed by the general population. Consequently, it has the capacity to deliver notable results with limited investment.

### A comprehensive LSFF approach comprises five focal areas that will guarantee effectiveness

The Foundation’s approach to enhancing LSFF adoption, compliance and impact relies on five key initiatives: data, research and development (R&D), technical assistance (private sector-focused), standard-setting (public sector-focused), and digitization (for quality assurance and quality control (QAQC)). The first two initiatives comprise upstream efforts to address the data gaps around micronutrient deficiency and support research to drive innovative as well as cost-effective LSFF methods for controlling and preventing micronutrient deficiencies across a population. In Africa, for example, almost half the countries have insufficient data to properly track nutrition across the population.

5 <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/articles/food-fortification-to-fortify-the-future>

Downstream efforts include the implementation efforts aimed at directly tackling micronutrient deficiencies. These include engagement with the private and public sectors to support regulatory implementation and the introduction of digital processes to enhance QAQC.

By focusing on these upstream and downstream methods side by side, LSFF implementation and compliance can be improved across the entire value chain, thus advancing health, social, and economic objectives.

### **An effective LSFF strategy is interconnected across initiatives**

The five core areas mentioned above are not stand-alone interventions targeted at addressing disparate aspects of MNDC challenges. They are interconnected in ways that promote multi-sectoral effectiveness and impact for MNDC. Improved data collection and digital processes increase transparency, accountability and provide increased access, analysis and use of gender-specific data, and generate insights that illustrate the prevalence and distribution of sub-optimal nutrient intakes to better inform LSFF programme accountability across the value chain. This impacts and is impacted by the availability of research and development that leverages 'on horizon' and 'blue sky' innovation for the promotion of LSFF and the consequent MNDC.

The Technical Assistance Accelerator (TAA) & Standard Setting Accelerator (SSA) unite in a public-private partnership (PPP) approach at the country level that contributes to LSFF with new digital implementation approaches for millers along a transparent value chain framed by quality food and nutrition security policies, regulations, and industry standards. Additionally, PPPs provide a platform for policy makers, regulatory agencies, and industry actors to deliver enhanced compliance through the introduction of innovative technological tools to improve production, utilization, and testing. This will foster fortification quality from the inception phase (premix producers) to the termination phase (consumers).

Increased focus on these core areas to improve LSFF as a key MNDC intervention will vastly impact the effectiveness of a One Nutrition approach that ensures, among other things, a baseline nutritional balance across populations.

**Article written by Dr. Andreas Bluethner, Ph.D., Director, Nutrition Global Development, Bill, and Melinda Foundation.**



Young bakers working at the Moulin Moderne du Mali-M3, an agro-food company supported by the African Development Bank, to help diversify its activities. ©AFDB



Members of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, led by the Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Patrick ACHI, visiting CERFAM's stand at the COP15 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. ©CERFAM

## 03 STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE AFRICAN UNION YEAR OF NUTRITION

### The state of hunger and nutrition in the world

**D**espite hopes of an end to the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the beginning of an improvement in food security, hunger is gaining ground in the world in 2021.



**+828 MILLION  
PEOPLE  
AFFECTED BY  
HUNGER IN  
2021**

worldwide, including 278 million in Africa



**149 MILLION  
CHILDREN  
UNDER 5  
YEARS**

with stunted growth and development

According to the 2022 edition of the Report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the world, the number of people affected by hunger has increased from 768 in 2020<sup>6</sup> to 828 million in 2021<sup>7</sup>. In Africa, hunger affected 278 million people in 2021 or one in five people in the continent. In 2021, 45 million children under the age of five suffered from wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition, which increases the risk of child death. In addition, 149 million children under the age of five suffered from stunted growth and development due to a chronic lack of essential nutrients in their diet.

### 2022, The African Union Year of Nutrition

In order to address current nutrition challenges, as well as recognise and preserve nutrition benefits while safeguarding future efforts to achieve the goals of the Malabo Declaration by 2025, the African Union has declared 2022 as the Year of Nutrition for Africa. The common objective of the Heads of State and Government is to make strengthening nutrition resilience and food security on the African continent a priority, through the theme: Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the Continent: Strengthening Agro-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems for the Acceleration of Human, Social and Economic Capital Development. This initiative, spearheaded by Côte d'Ivoire in the form of advocacy, is also an opportunity to celebrate the progress made in recent years and to secure greater political commitment and investment in nutrition. Given that the success of this initiative could not be solely achieved by the African Union, concerted and harmonized commitments and efforts by

6 <https://www.fao.org/3/cb5409fr/cb5409fr.pdf>

7 <https://www.wfp.org/news/un-report-global-hunger-numbers-rose-many-828-million-2021>

all partners and stakeholders would enable action to be taken for continental and integrated changes to eradicate hunger and malnutrition in all its forms.

### **CERFAM, a committed partner working to improve nutrition on the Continent**

CERFAM is a recognised knowledge center for good practices and innovations in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. Nutrition is one of its main areas of intervention. Since its launch in 2019, CERFAM is committed to contribute to improve food security and nutrition in Africa, by leveraging on the exchange of knowledge between countries. In fact, one of CERFAM's main activities is to document good practices that have a high and sustainable impact on zero hunger in African countries. These good practices are accessible on its knowledge management and exchange platform "KEPT", a new digital tool launched in November 2020, to promote good practices and facilitate the sharing of expertise to achieve Zero Hunger and nutrition through South-South and triangular cooperation in Africa.

To date, this platform has 10 documented good practices, 10 practices under examination and 20 experts mobilized to review submitted initiatives.



## **SYNERGY OF ACTIONS, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

**and sharing of experiences are essential to improve nutrition on the Continent**

### **Joint efforts for Nutrition in Africa**

CERFAM calls for strategic partnerships and collective action to improve nutrition on the continent. For the Centre, only a synergy of efforts will enable the achievement of what no partner would be able to achieve alone, through the sharing of experiences, knowledge, and results.

« +650 participants, from 69 countries including 41 in Africa and 88 panelists at the High Level Consultation organized by CERFAM in 2021 »

For example, in 2021, CERFAM invited many African countries and experts in the field of nutrition from the African Union, the West African Health Organization, Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and Helen Keller International to share their experiences, good practices and lessons learned in food fortification and discuss the best approaches to reduce micronutrient deficiencies in Africa. This was done at a high-level Consultation, where there were more than 650 participants from 69 countries, with 41 in Africa, and 88 panelists.

In order to further mobilize commitments and investments and also to improve the coordination of efforts, CERFAM will provide technical support to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and support all activities that will be organized within the framework of the African Union Year of Nutrition. As a contribution to the Year of Nutrition, in November, CERFAM will bring together experts and key actors in the fields of food safety, security and quality, agriculture, value chains, among others, to discuss on the stakes and also share experiences and challenges of West and Central African countries in the field of food safety and quality. This meeting will serve as a platform for integrated and coordinated multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder actions to ensure better health security in Africa, mainly in West and Central Africa.



Kibsa Sawadogo, beneficiary of the project to strengthen nutrition and resilience of crisis-affected communities in the Centre-North region of Burkina Faso. ©FAO/ Burkina Faso

## 04

### ZOOMING IN ON COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES AND THE CAPITALIZATION OF NUTRITION-SENSITIVE GOOD PRACTICES

# TRANSLATING KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION FOR LIVELIHOODS RESILIENCE IN THE SAHEL

**T**he Sahel region is a fertile ground for the development and implementation of good practices. Yet all too often, knowledge is left undocumented and therefore remains out of reach to many stakeholders and decision-makers—not to mention the affected communities who stand to benefit from it the most. **Sharing and adopting knowledge and resources can have a transformational impact on lives and livelihoods**, helping build upon the lessons learned and past resilience experiences that pastoralist and agro-pastoralist groups have already provided.

That was one of the points raised during a webinar held on 13 April 2022 on “Capitalisation, dissemination, and adoption of resilience-building agropastoral good practices in West Africa”, organised and hosted by KORE, the knowledge-sharing platform of the Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with CERFAM (the Regional Centre of Excellence against Hunger and Malnutrition). Here are some key insights and takeaways from the discussion :

## 1. Focusing on community perspective

It is often observed that there is no “one size fits all” approach to humanitarian and resilience-building interventions. Prioritizing community perspectives is key. As one webinar participant succinctly noted, “Good

practices must respond to the needs of beneficiaries.” That means incorporating a structured combination of relevant and evidence-based good practices.

When it comes to resilience-building activities, the target community should not only be informed, but involved. Beneficiaries must be consulted from the earliest stages—even before it is decided to integrate a good practice. This also means implementing participatory approaches and making sure chains of communication remain open and accessible to community decision-makers.

For greater impact, any knowledge that is shared needs to be translated into actionable steps. Documentation alone is never enough; it is essential to adopt and adapt. Key to the replication of good practices is a defined dissemination plan with outlined roles and responsibilities, keeping an eye on uptake potential. Here too, context is key. This means that not only does the content need to be tailored to target audiences, but also the medium of communication (e.g., radio broadcast, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials such as posters and brochures, or even theatre groups).



A key example of a community-driven approach focusing on knowledge sharing and dialogue is the work done by FAO Dimitra clubs, set up in thirteen sub-Saharan African countries and accounting for over 225,000 members. The approach facilitates rural people's collective action and empowerment in rural development, with an emphasis on inclusivity and gender equality. This is achieved through tailored training, regular coaching of the clubs, and by promoting dialogue within and between communities, encouraging club members to work together to improve their environment and transform their lives while amplifying the voices of rural populations, especially women. In this process, community radio plays a key role as it provides inclusive access to knowledge and raises awareness on specific issues identified by club members themselves – agricultural practices, food security, access to water, land, sanitation, social norms, etc. The COVID-19 crisis, which further isolated rural communities, showed the potential of radio to contribute to improving health, nutrition, and agricultural practices.

## 2. Capitalizing on nutrition-sensitive interventions

Another key recommendation for more efficient knowledge sharing is to capitalize on evidence-based good practices. Since 2019, KORE has embarked with the Food and Nutrition Division of FAO, in a capitalization initiative with the objective to identify a package of selected types of evidence-based nutrition-sensitive interventions and good practices. This knowledge initiative focuses on how support to rural livelihoods and food systems can improve healthy diets -which include quality, diversity, safety, and quantity- and contribute to nutrition in contexts affected by food crises. Here are a few key takeaways in the context of humanitarian resilience building:

**– Nutrition is key in emergency and resilience because nutrition-secure individuals and households may better withstand shocks and recover faster. Strengthening resilience is essential to reduce malnutrition. Improving resilience entails addressing diverse causal factors that contribute to malnutrition<sup>8</sup>.**

**Food and nutrition education is essential in most of the FAO nutrition-sensitive good practices documented since 2020. It consists of a variety of educational strategies that can be implemented at different levels, aimed at helping people to achieve long-lasting improvements in their diets and eating behaviors (FAO Infographic).**

**Food and nutrition education should be a continuous process during the whole implementation of an intervention and not a one-off interaction. This applies in emergency as well as resilience contexts. Both behavior change and skill adoption take time and require constant reminders of key messages and frequent practices. Food and nutrition education interventions can be carried out using different communication channels (including local media, group meetings and short message systems, among others). Combining different modalities improves their effectiveness.<sup>9</sup>**

**The food and agriculture sector is essential to human nutrition and to communities' resilience, but approaches designed to increase households' resilience to shocks do not always contribute to positive outcomes – and sometimes can even have undesired outcomes such as increase in workload. Specific attention is required to make resilience-building interventions "nutrition-sensitive".**

An interesting case from the Central-North region of Burkina Faso showcases various options for designing nutrition-sensitive resilience-building interventions in contexts affected by conflict and food crises :

- + Nutrition education training given to partners and technical staff;
- + • Livelihood support, including promotion of small livestock and distribution of inputs for the production of nutrient-rich foods (e.g. cowpeas);
- + • Dissemination of radio messages (using local dialect) on food and nutrition as well as prevention of malnutrition<sup>10</sup>.

8 <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/fr/c/7fbbf167-9d62-4d87-847f-f78ebdf66105/>

9 <https://www.fao.org/3/c0064e/c0064e.pdf>

10 <https://www.fao.org/in-action/kore/good-practices/good-practices-details/en/c/1455350/>

# About KORE

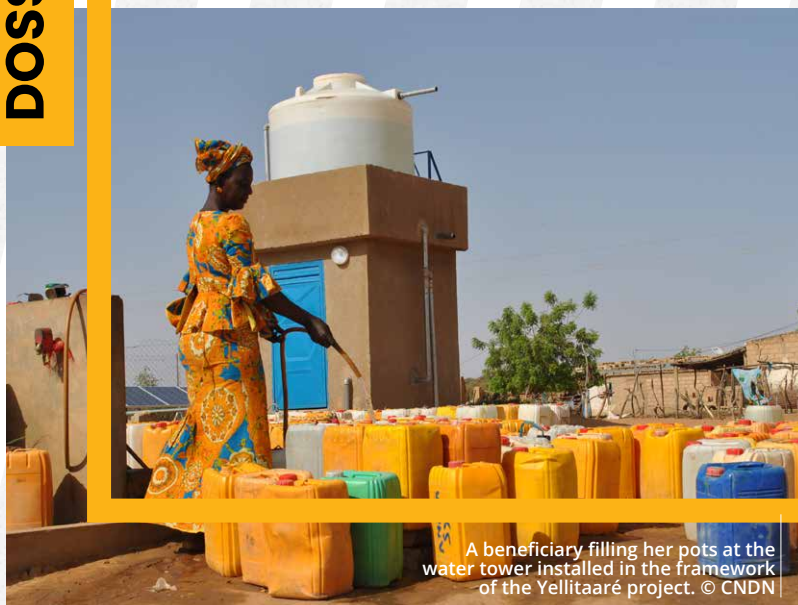


Salmata Sawadogo, a beneficiary of the project to strengthen the nutrition and resilience of crisis-affected communities in the Centre-North region of Burkina Faso, explains how the project has helped her. ©FAO/Burkina Faso

**KORE is dedicated to accelerating learning and capitalizing on good practice**

KORE, the knowledge-sharing platform on Emergencies and Resilience is dedicated to accelerating learning and capitalization of good practices by supporting and providing guidance of the identification, documentation and dissemination of good and promising practices that strengthen the resilience of agriculture-based livelihoods. KORE helps information and knowledge flow across programs and practitioners, so they more efficiently and effectively create value and impact. KORE will continue to collaborate with diverse subject-matter experts and networks such as CERFAM in advocating and promoting timely dissemination of knowledge and implementation/uptake of learning and good practices.

Article written by Frédérique Matras, Knowledge management officer and KORE platform coordinator; Lucia Palombi, Knowledge management and learning specialist; Ariel Sophia Bardi, Knowledge management specialist, Office of the Emergencies and Resilience, FAO



A beneficiary filling her pots at the water tower installed in the framework of the Yellitaraé project. © CNDN

## Tackling malnutrition by combining resilience-building interventions to address nutrition insecurity with specific nutrition activities

In the first ten years of the implementation of the National Nutrition Strengthening Programme (PRN), interventions at the community level included only specific nutrition actions. These interventions have had an overall positive impact on the nutritional status of the population and have enabled Senegal to achieve satisfactory results. However, with the impacts of the 2008 economic crisis on nutrition, the Cellule de Lutte contre la Malnutrition (CLM) (Unit in charge of fighting against malnutrition), a structure for monitoring the national nutrition policy, placed under the supervision of the Prime Minister, deemed it necessary to integrate nutrition-sensitive actions into the interventions in order to better fight against the causes of malnutrition and thus strengthen the resilience of beneficiary communities to various shocks.

In this perspective, and taking into account the multidimensional nature of nutrition, in 2015 Senegal developed a new National Nutrition Development Policy (PNDN, 2015-2025) and adopted the multi-sectoral approach as a key principle for its implementation. Thus, in its desire to develop human capital and improve the contribution of local sectors and actors so as to improve the resilience of the most vulnerable communities in relation to nutrition insecurity shocks, public authorities set up the National Nutrition Development Council (CNDN) in 2020.

### WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO BUILD RESILIENCE TO NUTRITION INSECURITY?

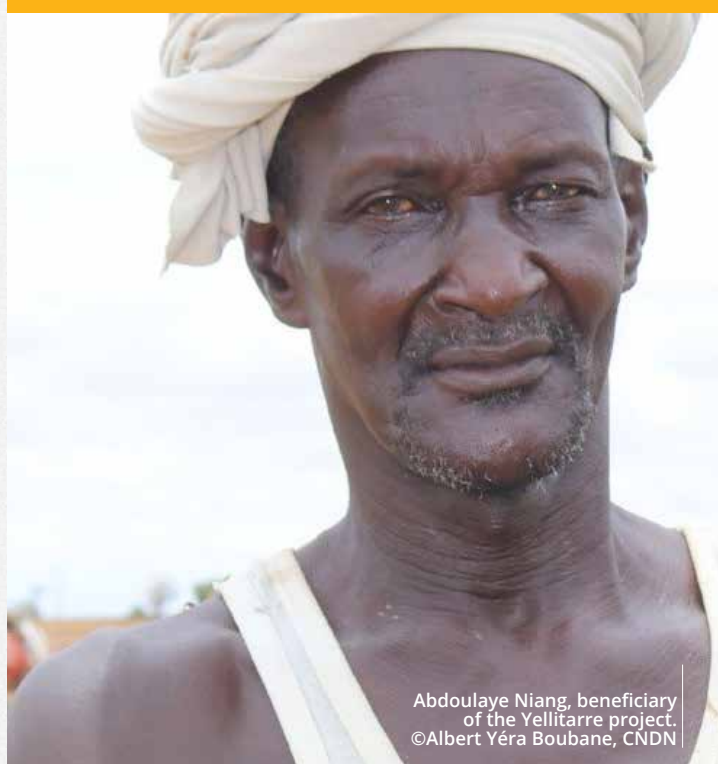
Through its steering and monitoring committee and its executive secretariat, the CNDN is developing a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach (communities, local governments, administrative authorities, line ministries, and civil society) to ensure better coordination of interventions and consideration of the causes of malnutrition. To this effect, the main interventions to build resilience to nutrition insecurity have focused on :

- + (i) supporting communities in the production and consumption of food with high nutritional value;
- + (ii) developing climate change adaptation initiatives;

- + (iii) strengthening access to basic social services: education, drinking water, sanitation, health;
- + (iv) developing social safety net programmes (small ruminant and poultry farming, backyard gardens, etc.);
- + (v) developing community micro-enterprises for the benefit of "Femmes Micro-Entrepreneurs Communautaires" (FMEC) in order to facilitate the access of households to healthy products with high nutritional and hygienic value;
- + (vi) strengthening female leadership centered on nutrition, and
- + (vii) strengthening the local governance of nutrition through community dialogue activities centered on nutrition.

The Yellitarré project implemented in northern Senegal, an area with the highest prevalence of acute malnutrition, is a perfect example. This project enabled CNDN to realize this multi-sectoral approach with the involvement of all stakeholders in nutrition development at the territorial level, especially local actors who ensure momentum and community commitment to nutrition.

## BENEFICIARIES' TESTIMONIES



Abdoulaye Niang, beneficiary of the Yellitarré project.  
©Albert Yéra Boubane, CNDN

**Abdoulaye Niang, the beneficiary of a perimeter and in charge of monitoring the processing unit of GIE Yellitarré, Horndolé (Matam) :**

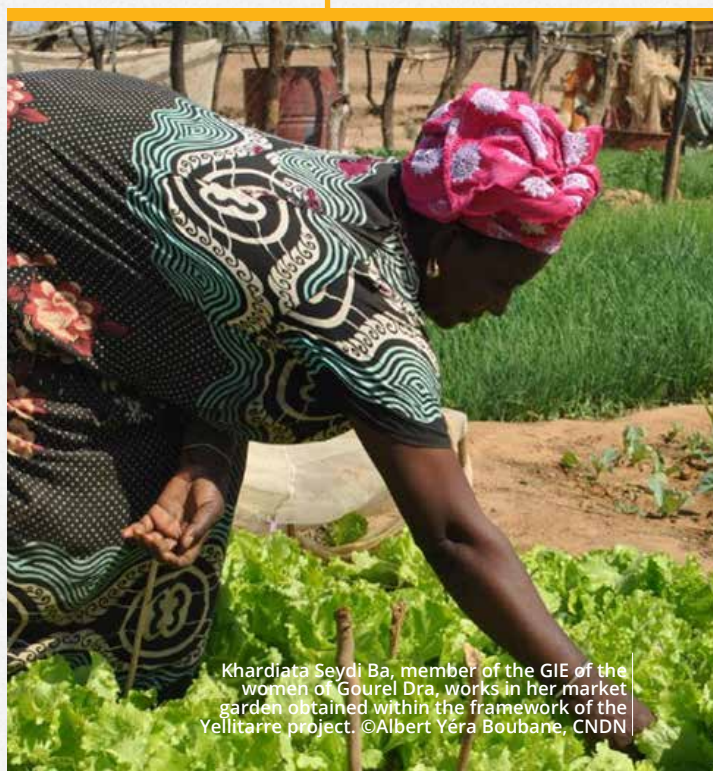
### IT IS THROUGH THIS 21HA AREA THAT 70 FAMILIES HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT

« We have benefited from a 21 ha perimeter. And it is thanks to this perimeter that 70 families have enough to eat. People who used to go on exile to look for food for their families have chosen to stay in Horndolé, to work and provide for their children. In addition, Yellitarré's support in training has helped to improve production. We harvest during two seasons, rain and dry seasons, with harvests of around 2, 3 or even 4 tons. ».

**Khardiata Seydi Ba member of GIE women of Gourel Dra (Kanel) :**

## THE MARKET GARDEN HAS BECOME OUR MARKET

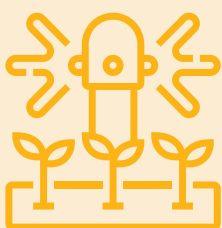
« Before the Yellitaare project, vegetables were a luxury for us. To get vegetables, you had to travel twenty kilometers. Now, market garden is our market, you can pick up your basket and get them within a minute's walk. GIE which operates in this area earns money, however, the people also benefit a lot. Food is improved for the well-being of children who now have a diet ».



Khardiata Seydi Ba, member of the GIE of the women of Gourel Dra, works in her market garden obtained within the framework of the Yellitaare project. ©Albert Yera Boubane, CNDN



## SOME RESULTS OF THE YELLITAARÉ PROJECT



**117 HECTARES DEVELOPED AND MECHANIZED EQUIPMENT PUT IN PLACE**

to enable the population (especially women in groups) to increase their production of cereals and vegetables.



**1,392 SMALL RUMINANTS AND 1,952 POULTRY WERE DEPLOYED IN VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS**

to improve the local breed, diversify diets, increase consumption of protein-rich foods and build resilience in vulnerable households by increasing their income.

**14 MINI-BOREHOLES AND 4 WATER TOWERS WITH A TOTAL CAPACITY OF AT LEAST 1000M3 CONSTRUCTED**

In addition, access to water has enabled women to have more time for a more active participation in social and personal development activities, in particular, learning activities. In addition, access to water has enabled women to have more time for more active participation in social and personal development activities, including functional technical learning activities with a focus on nutrition, childcare and monitoring, and to develop other interests, including involvement in AGR.

## WHAT APPROACHES AND STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THESE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES?

The implementation and monitoring of interventions to build resilience to nutrition insecurity are based on a community-based, inclusive and participatory approach, with the involvement, empowerment and commitment of communities, administrative authorities, local governments, technical State services and civil society. The process of implementing interventions depends on the nature of the actions to be implemented. It is structured around several stages coordinated and supported by different governance frameworks at different levels :



Administrative and local authorities chair the monitoring committees put in place. At the community level, frameworks have been put in place to ensure transparency of the process, security of investments, community participation, technical assistance and ownership, and sustainability of interventions.



The State's technical agents support the management and monitoring of the interventions and ensure technical and organizational capacity building of beneficiary communities. This is crucial for the success of interventions to strengthen resilience to nutrition insecurity in this northern part of the country.

## THE SUCCESSES OF THE EXPERIENCES SUPPORT THE SCALING UP

Today, interventions implemented within the framework of resilience to nutrition insecurity are diversified and affect several sectors (social protection, health, agriculture, livestock, trade, water, sanitation, women's empowerment, etc.). They are based on a multi-sectoral approach, the empowerment of communities and the significant contribution of technical agents of the State in their formulation, implementation and monitoring.

Article was written by Ms. Aminata Diop Ndoye, National Executive Secretary of the National Nutrition Development Council.



Oulèye Diop, a beneficiary of the Yellitarre project, stands with her goat that she received to start producing and selling milk. Senegal. ©Albert Yéra Boubane, CNDN



Biofortification can have a significant impact on the nutrition, health and future of African people. ©FAO

## 06 ADDRESSING CHRONIC HIDDEN HUNGER IN THE AFRICAN YEAR OF NUTRITION

**A**n estimated one in five Africans—or nearly 280 million people—were undernourished in 2021 ; the number has surely increased this year amid disruptions to global food markets from the Ukraine war and climate change effects. This lack of nutritional resilience is exacerbating persistent hunger and malnutrition in Africa that increases human suffering, traps people in cycles of low productivity and poverty, and holds back the development of their countries<sup>11</sup>.

### **Biofortification: A proven, practical, and cost-effective technology for better food systems**

The African Union (AU) Common Position on Food Systems, released in the context of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, highlighted biofortification (as well as industrial food fortification) as a technology that is “worth special attention” in member states’ efforts to craft better food systems. This year, at their most recent summit meeting, AU Heads of State and Government formally adopted a Declaration on Scaling Up Food Fortification and Biofortification in Africa. It calls on member states to prioritize investments in biofortified crop development and distribution, and their integration in public food procurement programmes, in input support programmes for farmers, and in relevant health programmes (especially those looking to improve nutrition and health of young children and women).

### **Biofortified crops as an appropriate response to malnutrition**

The HarvestPlus programme of the CGIAR is currently working with the AU Commission, member state governments, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), CGIAR crop research centers, and other partners to ensure that biofortification takes firm root on the continent<sup>12</sup>.



**14 AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE SO FAR ADDED BIOFORTIFICATION TO THEIR POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES**

11 <https://www.fao.org/3/cc0639en/online/sofi-2022/food-security-nutrition-indicators.html>

12 <https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1395127/icode/>



# BIOFORTIFIED CROPS

**an appropriate response to malnutrition**

These crops have been released or are being tested in 38 countries in Africa to date, and 14 countries have so far added biofortification to their policies and programmes. Biofortified crops are an appropriate response to malnutrition for people living on the 80 percent of farms in Africa that are smaller than two hectares and produce about 30 percent of the continent's food .

Recent commitments at the national level attest to African governments' strong interest in rapidly scaling biofortification, to ensure that these nutritious crops and foods reach those who are most in need of an affordable source of nutrition in familiar foods and make the continent's food systems more nutritionally resilient. A few recent examples :

HarvestPlus is providing technical assistance to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through a major World Bank-funded biofortification scaling project, which focuses on establishing domestic capacities to produce and distribute these crops.

Last year, the Government of Tanzania issued detailed biofortification guidelines to spur biofortification activity all along seed, crop, and food value chains.

In Nigeria, the National Council on Agriculture and Rural Development approved mainstreaming biofortification in all agricultural interventions, including making it a priority in national extension services provided to smallholder farming households.

These and other governments are seeing firsthand that biofortification can improve the nutrition, health, and the livelihoods of their citizens—as in the case of Dinavance Kyomuhendo, a single mother and guardian of 10 orphans who was once nearly destitute but was able to leverage HarvestPlus-led training to become of vitamin A orange sweet potato (OSP) farmer and vine multiplier, who earned enough income to diversify into also raising small livestock.

## Promoting biofortified crops in Africa

While the primary focus of HarvestPlus' delivery strategy for biofortification is on crops grown and eaten by smallholder farming households, there is a need to take a value chain approach so that these nutritious crops make their way into added-value products. Thus, HarvestPlus works with partners across the full crop and food value chain; in addition to reaching off-farm consumers, this also provides markets for surplus harvest produced by farming households that want to support their livelihoods.

One key challenge faced by African farming households is that they are unable to access or afford improved seed varieties that would help them produce crops that are high-yielding, climate-smart, and more nutritious. Currently, improved crop varieties are grown on only about one third of Africa's farmland.

## The benefits of biofortification for African countries and community health

The biofortified crops promoted by HarvestPlus, in partnership with the African Union and other partners, combine these attributes.



# 80% OF THE DAILY NEEDS

**iron requirements provided by biofortified bean varieties**

For example, in countries of East and Southern Africa, we promote varieties of iron-biofortified beans which provide up to 80 percent of daily iron needs when eaten regularly, are very competitive on yield, are heat- and drought-tolerant, and have shorter cooking times that reduce energy needs.



Beyond the direct benefits for human health and development, biofortification has the potential to help national governments optimize limited resources by reducing demand on national health sector budgets and systems, and to contribute to national development by improving the productivity of the population. According to

the World Bank, the productivity hit from hidden hunger shaves an estimated \$1.5 billion annually from the GDP of Nigeria, and \$186 million from the GDP of Zambia.



## To be sure, staple crop biofortification is not a silver bullet

for Africa's hidden hunger problem. It needs to go hand in hand with efforts to increase dietary diversity, expand industrial food fortification for nutrients of public health concern, and expand targeted supplementation programs. Even so, properly scaled biofortification can make a significant impact on the nutrition, health, and futures of Africans. The African Year of Nutrition provides the ideal impetus for accelerating scale.

Article written by Peter Goldstein, Head, Strategic Communications, HarvestPlus



Carrying her young son, Derek, on her back, Joyce gathers salt in a concentrator pan at a production operation near Koluedor on the edge of the Songhor Lagoon in Ghana. © UNICEF

Women peeling cassava,  
Dabou, Côte d'Ivoire. ©CICG

## 07 CONTRIBUTION OF SMES AND START-UPS IN STRENGTHENING NUTRITION RESILIENCE OF COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA

**T**o meet the food needs of Africa's population, which will have doubled by 2050, 50 million small-scale farmers will have to put in 70 percent more effort, according to the FAO report, *How to feed the world in 2050*, published in 2016; this in a context where they are already confronted with all kinds of challenges (limited access to information, technology, markets, inputs, as well as climate challenges). Also, putting in 70 percent more effort means 70 percent more pressure on current natural resources. How do we strengthen nutrition resilience in farmers, and feed this growing population, while preserving natural resources for future generations?

### Advantages of involving the private sector

Many initiatives led by international organizations (African Development Bank, World Bank, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development) to strengthen the nutritional, organizational, and climatic resilience of African

farmers have witnessed encouraging results. However, these initiatives still face challenges in terms of the sustainability of their business model without real private sector involvement due to the temporary nature of their projects and programmes (3-5 years on average).

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Government, through the NDP 2025, has accorded a special place to the private sector in the development of agricultural value chains in which small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups should play a major role. Today, SMEs and start-ups are champions of innovation. Their solutions, which are mostly digital based, have the advantage of impacting a large number of farmers throughout the chain. Most of the time, they have a business model that allows farmers to pay only after the sale of their products, which best suits their situation. Unfortunately, these SMEs and start-ups are less integrated and supported within the framework of public-private partnerships in order to scale up. A model that we have tested in Côte d'Ivoire in Canaan Land, an SME in agribusiness, has proved its worth and only needs to be taken to scale, to be supported, to reach a larger number of farmers.

## How can SMEs and start-ups contribute to strengthening resilience?

 **+80% OF FOOD**

**that end up on consumers' plates around the world is produced by small farmers**

According to the FAO, small-scale farmers produce more than 80 percent of the food that ends up on consumers' plates around the world. However, individually they are the most vulnerable along the value chain. Financial institutions find it difficult to finance this segment, which is considered too risky and difficult to identify. Therefore, an SME or a start-up could play the role of champion and while emerging, it should also pull these actors in the chain. Financial institutions should be more confident in supporting farmers because, at the end of the chain, there are more structured and formal actors. This could be the beginning of a solution for financing green technologies for farmers earning less than 10 dollars a day, especially women. There is a need to rely on more flexible SMEs, emphasise and develop public-private partnership models with those able to reach more producers and improve yields, and incomes, and promote responsible production and market access. In East Africa, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Starts Up have enabled farmers to triple their yields, improve their nutrition, and have a significant ecological impact on the environment.

## When ?

Now, we are in an urgent situation and the strategies, while being structural, must also integrate cyclical strategies. The nutrition resilience of small-scale producers, already severely tested, has been exacerbated by climate challenges. However, solutions do exist. It is necessary to go beyond conferences and seminars which have already provided diagnoses, and make it happen on the ground, by identifying the key players, the methodology, and especially acting in time.

Article was written by Ms Patricia Zoundi, President, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Movement of Côte d'Ivoire, CEO of Canaan Land



Farmer Field School beneficiaries are seen at work in a maize field, in the farming region of Bugesera in south Rwanda. ©FAO

# INTERVIEW OF H.E. AMBASSADOR CESSOUMA MINATA SAMATÉ

African Union Commissioner for  
Health, Humanitarian Affairs and  
Social Development



08

**1**  
**6 MONTHS HAVE GONE BY SINCE THE CHOICE OF THE STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE IN NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT, FOR THE AU THEME FOR 2022. : PRIORITIZING NUTRITION HAS BEEN A KEY STEP TO ADVANCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS ON THE CONTINENT. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS SO FAR? WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN FROM GOVERNMENTS' COMMITMENT TOWARDS THIS AU COMMITMENT FOR 2022? WHAT WOULD YOU HIGHLIGHT ?**

**A**frican member states have made significant

development achievements in the last few decades in addressing food security and nutrition challenges. However, the combined effects of COVID-19, climate change, and armed conflict, as well as the rising costs of food and fuel driven by the Ukraine-Russian war, are producing a concerning – yet silent – nutrition crisis across Africa. The first 6 months of 2022 have ensured that urgent actions have been undertaken at the continental regional and national levels to preserve gains made over the past years in safeguarding the lives, well-being, and prosperity of millions of Africans, including future generations. Several Member States are on track in implementing the theme of the year priorities at the national level and this is further been complemented by activities by other key stakeholders working in food and nutrition security.

Through the support of the African Union Commission Department of Health Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, Department of Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment and AUDA – NEPAD, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member states have made significant efforts. Just to name a few, for example, the Government of Ethiopia made a commitment to implement the African Union Theme of the Year for 2022. Ethiopia officially launched the theme of the year the event to share the government of Ethiopia's commitment to food and nutrition strategy and related experiences; to Showcase the Seqota Declaration Innovation Phase Learning and to catalyst the implementation of the Expansion Phase among government sectors. More Member States are making plans toward the launch of the theme before the end of the year.

Other member states who actively implemented the activities of the year in the first half of the year include the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Nigeria with the launch of School feeding guidelines and cote d'Ivoire with the engagement of media to popularize the theme of the year.

**2**  
**IMPROVING THE NUTRITION INDICATORS IN AFRICA HAS BEEN A CHALLENGE. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE KEY PRIORITIES ON ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE AU YEAR OF NUTRITION IN 2022? COULD YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE STRATEGIES TO GET TO THESE ACHIEVEMENTS?**

Key priorities of the theme include :

### **Strengthening data management and information systems, knowledge generation, and dissemination to inform decision making**

Under this priority the focus is on current knowledge and evidence-based on nutrition security, including food security. This also entails documenting and disseminating good practices, sharing experiences as well as south-south learning. It also covers the aspect of investing in national nutrition monitoring platforms, including data management and information systems to generate and make available evidence for informed decision making. Within this priority African Union Commission and key stakeholders have key initiatives among them Continental Accountability Nutrition Scorecard, which is to be rolled out at regional I and national level with the leadership of Africa Development Bank, Africa Leaders for Nutrition Initiative ; the 3rd Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Biennial Review (BR) Report was endorsed by the assembly of African Heads of State and government in February 2022. The report findings show that, out of the 45 member states that reported progress, only seven (7) are on track of reducing stunting to the set target of 10 percent. On the target to reduce underweight to five percent, out of the thirty-three (33) member states that reported progress on this indicator, only eight (8) countries are on track. In addition, there is the Continental reports on the Africa Nutrition Report and Cost of Hunger in Africa were endorsed by the Executive Council in July 2022.



Mr Patrick Teixeira, Interim Director of CERFAM and H.E. Ms Cessouma Minata Samaté, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union during a working visit to Côte d'Ivoire. ©CERFAM

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## Between 1.9 and 16.5 percent of African member States

### GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT LOST DUE TO CHILD UNDER-NUTRITION

According to the findings of the Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) Study, conducted in 21 Members States so far, it is estimated that African member states are losing the equivalent of between 1.9 and 16.5 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to child under-nutrition. It is also estimated that malnourished children are at risk of losing more than 10 percent of their lifetime earning potential.

### Advocacy for increased commitment and nutrition Investment

The activities within this priority include among others, advocacy targeting parliamentarians and policymakers and high-level discussion panels participated by the African Union Champion for Nutrition, Members of the ALN, and other informed prominent personalities. This also includes involvement with the media and preparing key messages informed by the sub-theme, targeting a specific audience and readers. The AU Nutrition Champion has continued to advocate to advocate at high level forum to ensure prioritization of nutrition and in May 2022, the Champion hosted a high-level event on nutrition on the margins of the Humanitarian Summit in Malabo.

### Partnerships and mutual accountability for nutrition

Activities involve the interaction of partners and stakeholders to discuss options and agree on practical solutions for the way forward in addressing food and nutrition challenges in Africa. Activities on accountability, include capacity building trainings on the Continental Accountability Nutrition Accountability Scorecard, a measurement tool on the progress made towards targeted nutrition investments.



A woman and child eat beans at home in Pemba District – a small farming town in Zambia's Southern province. © WFP / Andy Higgins





**3**  
**PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY TO IMPROVING THE POSITIVE RESULTS OF FIGHTING HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION. WHAT DO YOU THINK PARTNERS COULD BRING TO THE TABLE IN SUPPORTING AU THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR? WHICH ARE AU STRATEGIES TO ADVOCATE FOR MORE CONCRETE ENGAGEMENTS?**

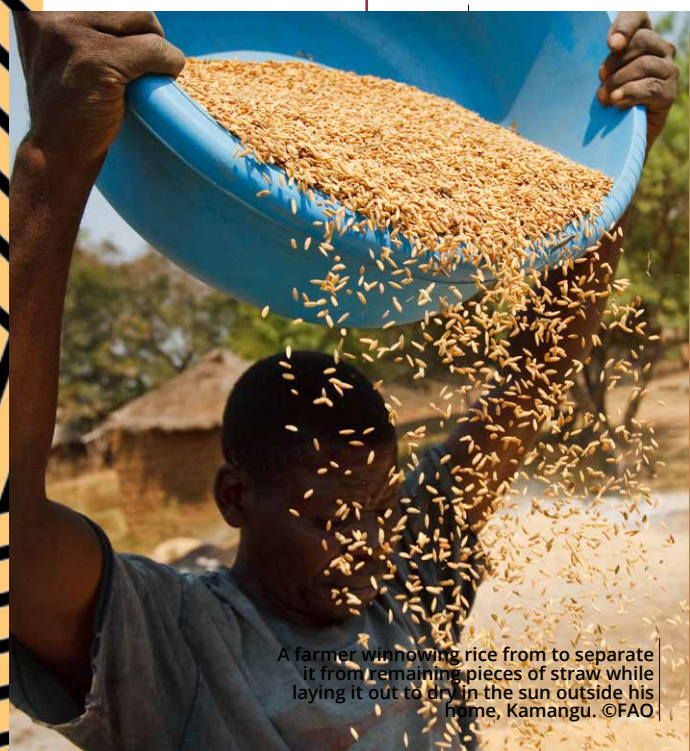
**Enhancing institutional capacity and enabling environment for nutrition, for intensified action and delivery of results and impact**

the activities involve interventions for enhancing capacities of institutions and individuals at the regional, national, and local levels to be able to plan and implement planned activities, monitor progress and report on performance and achievements, are critical for the success of any programme.

Partners could embrace a multi-sectoral approach to nutrition as it has the potential to address the main drivers of malnutrition in the continent and accelerate progress toward global and regional targets. Partners could also rally high level leaders to prioritize investment in nutrition.

AU strategies in advocating for more concrete engagements that partners can leverage include :

-  Encouraging Member States to implement the theme of the year priorities at the national level
-  Use of advocacy strategies e.g., increased political will and engagement of Heads of State and Government for activities of the theme of the year
-  Advocating for nutrition and Food security, with greater emphasis on increased funding and increased Budgetary allocation for nutrition
-  Enhancing and promoting dialogue among stakeholders, sharing of experiences, best practices, innovations, and mutual learning among various stakeholders
-  Advocacy and sensitization on Nutrition and Food Security at the continental, regional and national level



A farmer winnowing rice from to separate it from remaining pieces of straw while laying it out to dry in the sun outside his home, Kamangu. ©FAO

Use of champions like ALN to rally high-level political engagement to advance nutrition in Africa, the African Union Heads of State and Government in 2018 endorsed the African Leaders for Nutrition (ALN) Initiative by the Africa Development Bank and the African Union Commission

Encouraging all the stakeholders working in all sectors of development to mainstream nutrition in their sectors as nutrition needs a multisectoral approach to ensure the human, economic and social capital Development of our population..

4

**FROM GOVERNMENTS' DECISION TO INVEST IN NUTRITION TO CONCRETE IMPACT ON POPULATIONS. LIFE IS A LONG WAY. WHAT WOULD YOU HIGHLIGHT AS SOLID BRIDGES TO STRENGTHEN AND IMPROVE ACTIONS ON THE GROUND WITH HIGH IMPACT ON POPULATIONS?**

The following strategies will have a high impact :



Coherent policies, governance, and accountability: It is imperative to strengthen political commitments and accountability to nutrition in Africa..



Strengthening the capacities of people, communities, governments, and regional experts to implement key strategies and policies in place is critical to reducing the gap.



Multisectoral and interdisciplinary approach: The complex causes of malnutrition and the wide range of risk factors need to be addressed through a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach.



Link between agriculture and nutrition: Nutrition sensitive agriculture interventions have a key role to play in improving health and nutrition. There is a need to consider the entire food system in determining, designing, and implementing agricultural and food-based interventions to improve nutrition. Through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), AU Members States committed to increasing agriculture productivity through the Malabo Declaration.



Financing for nutrition: Substantial nutrition investment is a vital component in the fight against malnutrition. This calls for a clear understanding of the importance of these investments, followed by investment in tracking nutrition finance and investment, especially within the budget allocated to health and other sectors.



Promotion of Trade: Promoting the trade of agricultural products within member states, especially within the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has a big role to play in fighting malnutrition since it opens markets for income generation, reduces post-harvest losses, ensures food safety, and increase the availability of nutrient rich foods.



Evidence, Knowledge Generation and Capacity Building: Evidence and data to inform agriculture, food system, nutrition, health and population programmes and interventions are key in addressing food security and malnutrition..



Commitments to action: There has been significant efforts at all levels to translate policy commitments and strategies for nutrition into key effective programmes and interventions at the national level. However, more effort is needed if we are to attain the ambitious targets set in the Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (2016-2030); The African Union's Malabo Declaration for 2025, World Health Assembly targets and Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030.



A woman selling fish caught in the Saloum Delta, Senegal. ©CGIAR



## 5

**GOOD PRACTICES  
DISSEMINATION CAN PLAY  
AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN  
SUPPORTING COUNTRIES TO  
ADVANCE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMES  
AND PROGRAMMES BASED IN  
EVIDENCE.**

**WHAT WOULD BE AN  
STRATEGY TO CONTRIBUTE  
TO IDENTIFICATION AND  
DISSEMINATION OF GOOD  
PRACTICES IN NUTRITION IN  
THE CONTINENT?**

Facilitating broad-based and inclusive dialogue among relevant stakeholders, partners, and institutions on nutrition

Enhancing and promoting policy dialogue and engagement among stakeholders on nutrition and related issues of food security

Creating online Platforms for documentation and knowledge sharing of good practices and lessons on nutrition and food security

Establishing an interactive database for improved coordination and reporting at all levels



The rice farmer Rajabu Juma examines his harvest in Kiroka, Tanzania. ©WFP



CERFAM and AFRICARICE teams stand in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, for the family photo at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate in the fight against hunger, poverty, and malnutrition in Africa. ©CERFAM

The Africa Rice Centre (**AfricaRice**) and **CERFAM** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** on 30 September 2022 to exchange information and technical expertise, promote **policies, strategies, and actions to strengthen Food and Nutrition Security**, and improve the livelihoods of communities.



On 28 September 2022, CERFAM and WFP jointly hosted a webinar on the theme: **«2022, African Union Year of Nutrition: Roles, Challenges and Opportunities for Food fortification in the fight against Malnutrition and in strengthening nutritional resilience of communities»**

On 15 September 2022, in collaboration with WFP, AfricaRice, HELP Logistics and NANGUI ABROGOUA University, CERFAM organized a webinar under the theme **« The capacity of existing assessment tools to capture and report on the current situation of agrifood chains in West and Central Africa»**, to share good practices, recommendations and lessons learned around Food Value Chains in Africa.

On 14 September 2022, the WFP Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation in China (China CoE) and CERFAM partnered to organize a virtual side event to the Global South-South Development Expo 2022 held in Bangkok, Thailand, to **showcase China's South-South experience in Africa and share China's solutions for Food Systems transformation**, on the management of post-harvest losses.

From 12 to 14 September 2022 in Bangkok, Thailand, CERFAM participated in **the Global South-South Development Expo 2022** and organized a side event, on the theme **«South-South Dialogues and Lessons Learned in Africa: powerful strategy and tools to improve Food Security and Nutrition»**. The objective for CERFAM was to raise awareness among participants, both present and online, of the benefits and importance of South-South exchanges, including knowledge management through documentation and dissemination of good practices, through its digital Knowledge Exchange Platform (KEPT).



From 7 to 9 September 2022, CERFAM, together with several States, regional economic communities, partners, and other stakeholders, met in Gaborone, Botswana, to participate in the 13th African Union Commission (AUC) Task Force on Food and Nutrition Development (ATFFND), organized by the African Union Commission, on the theme **« Nutrition as a driver for sustainable development and transformation in Africa »**. The meeting was an opportunity to identify key priorities **to help African Union Member States accelerate progress towards Food Security and Nutrition**.

From September 7 to 8, 2022, CERFAM collaborated with the WFP Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation in China (China CoE) and other partners to organize a seminar to **exchange knowledge, experiences, technologies and ideas on solutions and ways forward to improve the rice value chain**, specifically in rice processing, storage, and quality control. The event brought together several key partners from China and Africa.



Since 7 September, CERFAM has been working with WFP and the Direction des Cantines scolaires (DCS) in Côte d'Ivoire to **develop the draft roadmap for a law to be proposed on School Feeding for the country**. Based on its experience and within the framework of technical assistance, CERFAM is committed to supporting WFP and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in the preparation of this project for which a technical working team composed of experts and technicians from DCS, WFP and CERFAM will be set up to deepen the reflections and begin the work of developing the initial roadmap to be submitted to the stakeholders.



On 20 July, CERFAM joined the Ministry of National Education of Senegal and the WFP Office in Senegal, to organize a webinar on the theme: **«Exchange of experiences in Home-Grown School Feeding and appropriation»**. This webinar brought together more than 186 participants involved in the implementation of local Home-Grown School Feeding programmes in Africa, including experts from national and international NGOs, international institutions, United Nations agencies, representatives of governments and partners from different countries including Niger, Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, etc.



Professor Tano Yao, President of NANGUI ABROGOUA University of Côte d'Ivoire and Mr. Patrick Teixeira, interim Director of CERFAM, signed, on August 30, 2022, a partnership agreement, whose objective is **to implement joint research projects, and promote good practices and lessons learned in the fight against hunger and malnutrition**. The two institutions will also work to promote the professional immersion of African researchers and knowledge transfer to help **inform strategic and operational decisions and encourage investment in and by African countries**.



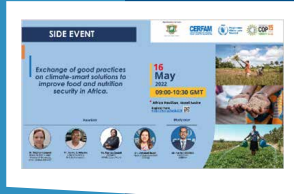
On 29 June 2022, more than 30 experts and stakeholders gathered in Monrovia, Liberia, to **review and validate the results of the rice and cowpea value chain analysis**, led by the WFP office in Liberia. The workshop, organized with the support of CERFAM and moderated by Dr. Christiani Buani, brought together H.E. Ms. Jeanine M. Cooper, Minister of Agriculture and Mr. Niels Scott, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Liberia, and led to **the collection of suggestions for actions that could help overcome the relevant constraints of the rice and cowpea value chain in Liberia**.

The African Network of Young Researchers (RAJeC) and CERFAM signed a letter of understanding on 3 June 2022, in line with the exchanges started between the two entities in February 2022. This letter of understanding provides **a framework for collaboration, in areas of common interest, particularly in research for better Food and Nutrition Security**.

CERFAM, represented by its interim Director, Mr. Patrick Teixeira, took part in **the regional workshop on strengthening partnerships for resilience in the Sahel**, organized by the Network of Sahel Universities for Resilience (REUNIR) from 30 May to 1 June in Saly and at the Gaston Berger University in Saint Louis, Senegal. The objectives of this meeting were to **share the vision and areas of intervention of REUNIR as well as the activities carried out, and to explore avenues of partnership with the institutions of the network including CERFAM**.

CERFAM participated in the 15th United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 9 to 20 May, on the theme: **«Land. Life. Legacy: from scarcity to prosperity.»** CERFAM welcomed

several high-level visitors to its stand, including the Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, H.E. Mr. Patrick Achi, and several members of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire. CERFAM presented its achievements and orientations, participated in several side events with partners. CERFAM also organized a hybrid side event on the theme **«Exchange of good practices on climate-smart solutions to improve Food and Nutrition Security in Africa»** in which 70 face-to-face and 62 online people participated.



On May 18, 2022, **CERFAM** team exchanged with **HE Sidi Tiemoko Touré, Minister of Animal and Fisheries Resources (MIRAH)** of Côte d'Ivoire, in the presence of the main directors and experts of the ministry. This was during **a joint visit to the training centre for surimi processing and marketing techniques**. The two institutions discussed the development of a framework for collaboration between their two entities.



From 9 to 12 May 2022, CERFAM facilitated **a study visit by the Libyan government to Zambia**. The objective was **to exchange with Zambia on the experience of national School Meal programmes and the integration of hydroponic crops in schools**. In Zambia, national school feeding programmes are fully funded by the government, receive technical assistance from WFP and **cover approximately 1.9 million primary school children in 10 provinces**.



A healthy family photo in Zabzugu in the Northern Region of Ghana. ©WFP/Derrick Botchwa



“Reducing malnutrition is crucial to strengthening resilience, as healthy and well-nourished people can work and perform better”

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

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