REGIONAL CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE DIALOGUE

Strengthening resilience in Africa by aligning food systems and climate action

13-15 July, Cairo Egypt

BACKGROUND

The Regional Convergence Initiative Dialogue was convened following the UN Secretary-General's 2025 Call to Action for Food Systems Transformation, which prioritizes "delivering in complex settings." Recognizing that climate change, conflict, food insecurity and displacement increasingly reinforce one another, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (the Hub) and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA) partnered to strengthen capacities across food systems, climate action and resilience agendas in Africa. The Regional Dialogue took place within the scope of the Hub's Convergence Initiative on Aligning Food Systems and Climate Action, which was launched at UNFCCC COP28 in 2023 by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and bridges the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Accelerated Food Systems Transformation (UNFSS+2) and the COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action. Through the Initiative, the Hub supports countries in aligning food systems transformation with climate action by strengthening cross-government dialogue and engagement with stakeholders. The Initiative has been implemented in several African countries, including Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Nigeria and Zambia.

Africa faces a deepening food security crisis: over 309 million people (20 percent of the continent's population) were chronically undernourished in 2025, and despite indications of some recent progress, Africa is projected to account for over 56 percent of the world's undernourished population by 2030[1]. According to the latest Global Report on Food Crises, 266 million people across 47 countries and territories faced acute food insecurity in 2025, reflecting a doubling of numbers over the past decade and primarily driven by conflict amongst 50 percent of affected populations[2]. Food crises today are increasingly protracted with 80 percent of acutely food insecure people concentrated in the same 33 countries every year since 2016. Food systems also drive roughly 32 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, making them both a source of vulnerability and a critical entry point for building climate resilience.

Grounded in African ownership, the first Regional Convergence Initiative Dialogue brought together 13 countries from Eastern and Northern Africa, including ten National Food Systems Convenors and seven climate focal points through technical sessions, case studies and peer-learning exchanges, producing shared technical recommendations, strengthened networks, and enhanced national policymaking capacities. Additional Regional Convergence Initiative Dialogues are planned over the coming years with participation from countries in other regions of Africa.

[1] FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2026. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2026 – Understanding and addressing the high cost of a healthy diet. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd8306en

[2] FAO, WFP & GNAFC. 2026. 2026 Global Report on Food Crises – Joint analysis for better decisions. Rome, FAO & WFP. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd9424en

The meeting agenda spanned three days and included the following elements: technical presentations on current trends and challenges for food systems in Africa by FAO, the Hub and the Global Network Against Food Crises; a plenary session, in which National Convenors and Climate Focal Points shared national experiences; presentations on the African Union policy frameworks for food systems, climate and resilience by AUDA-NEPAD; presentations and group exercises on systems thinking in the context of food systems by FAO; presentations on strategic foresight analysis by FAO; country case study presentations by FAO and WFP country offices and small group discussions on building resilient food systems in practice; presentations and capacity building activities on climate risk and climate resilience analysis tools by CCCPA; technical presentations on early warning systems and anticipatory action by FAO and WFP; as well as thematic breakout group discussions on financing and advocacy for anticipatory action, and on monitoring and data for early warning systems.

Based on the presentations and discussions among participants, the following key messages were developed. A draft version of the key messages was presented on the last day of the Regional Convergence Initiative Dialogue and validated in discussion with participants and partners.

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE DISCUSSIONS

1. **Recognize that food systems transformation and climate resilience are multi-dimensional and interconnected objectives that require a systems approach**
    - **Increasing food systems' climate resilience is about more than recovery after shocks** – it includes the capacity to anticipate, absorb, adapt, reorganize and transform food systems across all levels, from community to global, in response to external shocks.
    - Risk pathways, including climate change risks, are created by **interacting drivers**, so their impact and severity depend on understanding the wider network of relationships. Multiple interacting shocks can escalate into systemic risk, threatening communities, systems, or countries.
    - **In complex situations**, characterized by factors such as population displacement, and destruction of infrastructure, **the capacity to adapt** and the ability to adequately respond to shocks, including climate change impacts, is limited.
2. **Capitalize on food systems transformation as a key strategy to withstand the impact of shocks, enhance adaptation and increase resilience**
    - The 2019 Sustainable Development Report identified **food systems transformation as one of six critical solutions for operationalizing the SDGs** and achieving Agenda 2030. In addition, the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan 2026-2035 on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems in Africa, and other relevant African flagship initiatives, explicitly adopt a food systems approach to achieve the objectives set out in the Kampala CAADP Declaration.
    - **Food systems thinking**, including through tools such as the FAO Handbook for policymakers on tools and methods to support the design and implementation of policies for agrifood systems transformation, helps identify interconnections and strategic entry points for resilience across food, climate, nutrition, finance, governance and peace agendas.
    - **Food systems are already suffering from the impacts of the climate crisis** but also offer powerful levers to cut emissions and restore ecosystems, through land restoration, nature-based solutions and improved water management.

- **Appropriate sequencing and layering of humanitarian food assistance and resilience-building initiatives**, in line with needs on the ground, can accelerate the transformation of food systems in affected communities and break the cycle of recurring shocks and short-term solutions to focus on transformative investments.

3. **Develop coherent multi-sectoral resilience policies, aligned with CAADP Kampala as well as international policy frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**
    - **Aligning National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)** with food and agriculture policies is crucial for developing coherent policies to transform towards more resilient food systems.
    - **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, AU Agenda 2063, the Kampala CAADP Declaration and Action Plan, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** provide the key continental and global anchors for coherent resilience policies for food systems.
    - **Translate continental and global commitments into country-owned, operational investment plans** with clear institutional accountabilities, sequenced priorities and measurable resilience outcomes. Partners should support governments in connecting food systems pathways, climate plans, disaster risk reduction strategies and social protection frameworks with implementation, financing and national delivery systems.
    - The **Hub's** **Convergence Initiative on Aligning Food Systems and Climate Action** supports countries in aligning their food systems and climate action policies, promoting stronger cross-sectoral and multistakeholder governance structures. Furthermore, peer-to-peer learning among African countries on convergence experiences can bring positive results at national and regional levels.
4. **Establish inclusive and effective cross-sectoral governance structures to enable coherent policies and action for resilient food systems**
    - **Strong coordination across ministries, UN agencies and the broader ecosystems of support, the private sector, civil society and communities** is essential to move from commitments to effective implementation of food systems resilience policies.
    - **Joint anticipatory action and early warning evidence generation, supported by FAO, WFP, AUDA-NEPAD and other partners,** should be promoted, including through harmonized evaluation benchmarks and data sharing while making use of available tools and innovations including AI.
    - **Strengthen collaboration across humanitarian, development and peace actors** to address both immediate needs in food crises contexts and underlying drivers of vulnerability in food systems.
5. **Mobilize financing for resilience building in food systems and strengthen incentives for private-sector engagement**
    - **Scale public and private finance and de-risk investment** into food systems resilience building, with particular focus on anticipatory and pre-arranged financing.
    - **Financing needs to move beyond fragmented, project-based approaches** toward programmatic, predictable yet flexible models that can operate at scale through national and local delivery systems.
    - **Develop layered disaster risk financing strategies for food systems that provide protection from household to sovereign level.** Sovereign insurance, anticipatory finance, blended finance, contingency planning, early-response mechanisms and household-level insurance can be combined to make financing more predictable and

protect livelihoods, productive assets and resilience investments before and immediately after shocks.

- Invest in **resilience-building interventions for populations heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance** and those most vulnerable to funding reductions.
- **Domestic resource mobilization** for resilience increasing measures in food systems, including anticipatory research and technology adoption, should be strengthened to reduce dependence on external financial resources.
- **Support capacities of African countries to access available financing** opportunities especially from vertical funds and dedicated climate financing as well as investment readiness including capacity to develop costed and evidence-based investment proposals.
- **Engaging the private sector** in resilience building measures **can unlock significant contributions**, including at local levels, where proper incentives including potential co-benefits from increased food systems resilience are in place.

6. **Strengthen early warning, data, anticipatory action linked to local response, and strategic foresight for food systems**
    - **Data availability and access remain a challenge** in Africa; gaps between national forecasting, early warning and local dissemination must be closed.
    - **Link early warning and anticipatory financing to shock-responsive social protection and government delivery systems.** Pre-agreed triggers, anticipatory plans and pre-arranged financing should be connected to national targeting, social protection and delivery mechanisms so that forecasts translate rapidly into assistance for affected populations.
    - **Early warning systems must be matched with early action**. Anticipatory financing and preparedness are delivering roughly a 7:1 avoided-impact ratio at about half the cost of emergency response.
    - **Clear roles, responsibilities, traceable indicators** and sustainable financing are needed to strengthen monitoring and early warning systems and ensure that information leads to coordinated action.
    - Available tools and platforms for early warning can provide **timely information on market prices and agricultural production**, enhancing food systems resilience and national authorities' preparedness.
    - **Strategic foresight analysis enables prediction of long-term trends** affecting food systems to identify short- to medium-term response options contributing to evidence-based and anticipatory policy making.
    - The **Global Network Against Food Crises through its analytical work strengthens informed decision-making** for financing and political commitments, promotes collaboration and empowers stakeholders to lead effective systems approaches.
7. **Develop and implement community-led, inclusive and context-adapted resilience solutions for food systems**
    - **Community engagement, indigenous knowledge and participatory planning** are central to effective and sustainable resilience building measures for food systems.
    - **Integrated approaches** that combine ecosystem restoration and productive assets with nutrition, school meals, livelihoods, value chains, capacity strengthening **and social protection linkages can help communities withstand compounding climate, economic and food-security shocks**.
    - **Gender equality and support for women, youth and vulnerable groups** are crucial, alongside flexible, context-adapted programming to ensure that resilience building measures are inclusive and sustainable.

- **Invest in local committees**, small infrastructure, social protection and sustainability plans to maintain gains at community level beyond project cycles.
- In **complex settings, flexibility and adaptability to different and changing contexts are crucial** for delivering solutions in line with local needs and making food systems more resilient.

8. **Strengthen access to markets for food systems actors and promote inclusive and diversified food value chains for greater resilience**
    - **Reducing food loss and waste** can contribute to climate change mitigation through reduced greenhouse gas emissions, while strengthening resilience through increased incomes along food value chains.
    - **Invest in storage, processing, transport and market linkages** to reduce losses and raise farmer incomes, supporting smallholders through mechanization, strengthening agro-industrial capacity and improved seeds, reducing exposure to shocks and enhancing adaptive capacity.
    - **Value chain integration across stakeholder groups** strengthens local value addition while building trust and cross-community cohesion.
    - Increasing the **degree of self-sufficiency in food provision as well as local value addition and greater intra-regional trade, including through the AfCFTA,** are priorities for increased resilience in several countries in Eastern and Northern Africa.
9. **Strengthen regional collaboration for resilient and sustainable food systems in Africa**
    - The **Kampala CAADP declaration** calls on the African Union and Regional Economic Commissions to **facilitate regional collaboration, economic integration, and harmonization of policies** across African Union Member States to boost intra-African trade, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
    - **Coordination of early warning systems at regional level, data sharing and joint adaptation** to address cross-border risks and strengthen synergies can increase resilience at country and local level.
    - **Managing pastoral mobility and shared natural resources** through community-centered joint natural resource management and intergovernmental coordination were presented as practical collaboration examples.
10. **Leverage technology, digitalization and innovation for resilience building measures in food systems**
    - **Gaps in education, connectivity, data infrastructure and gender digital divides** continue to limit food systems transformation in Africa.
    - **Smart irrigation, drones, AI and other innovative technologies** can ease competition over resources and improve monitoring and early warning, alongside greater data standardization.
    - **Digitalization, interoperability, standardization and certification of data** are key priorities to making food systems-related information systems more reliable, accessible and usable for evidence-based decision-making.
    - **Regional resource mobilization and resource partners-supported targeted interventions** can help African countries build their technological and innovative capacities for food systems transformation.

The participants recommended the following follow-up actions:

- **Establish a Technical Africa Resilience Dialogue Network** to share experiences and tools across food systems, climate and peacebuilding efforts. The details and Terms of Reference of the Network will be discussed and agreed between African countries and partner organizations.

- **Sustain peer-to-peer learning** through regular webinars on good practices and methodologies for building resilience.
- **Leverage the network for partnership and support**, connecting countries with UN, regional and financial partners.
- **Present the Dialogue's outcomes at the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development** to raise visibility.
- **Submit the outcomes to African Union relevant bodies** to inform implementation of the Kampala Declaration and other regional commitments.
- **Advance regional collaboration and cross-border coordination** on shared challenges: climate risks, natural resource management, food security and disaster preparedness.

ANNEX: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE MEETING

Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC)

- Member-driven platform of Humanitarian-Development-Peace partners, which strengthens informed decision-making, empowers national stakeholders to lead effective systems approaches, and promote enhanced coordination and cooperation for impactful interventions against food crises.
- **Annual Global Report on Food Crises**, which presents key figures and updates on acute food insecurity and key nutrition indicators as well as financing to food sectors in crises contexts.
- **Hunger Hotspots report** - joint FAO and WFP publication providing early warning information on food crises as well as recommended actions to address emerging crises.

Anticipatory Action and Early Warning examples presented by WFP

- In Ethiopia and Kenya, WFP uses **AI-supported rainfall forecasting tools to strengthen early warning and anticipatory decision-making**, enabling faster and more accurate local action before climate shocks translate into food insecurity and livelihood losses.
- In Ethiopia, WFP links drought forecasting **with pre-agreed anticipatory action** to protect food consumption and pastoral livelihoods and to reduce negative coping strategies and livestock mortality before drought impacts intensify.
- In Somalia, WFP combined **riverine flood forecasting with USD 1 million in anticipatory cash assistance**, helping households act before flooding to protect lives and livelihoods. The intervention was associated with reductions in severe food insecurity and livestock mortality.
- WFP is also supporting the **scaling of early warning systems** in Nigeria, Chad and Madagascar. Where appropriate, these systems can link forecasts to anticipatory action and financial risk-management instruments, including insurance, to enable earlier and more predictable crisis response.
- **In the Sahel, WFP links African Risk Capacity (ARC) Replica sovereign insurance** with contingency planning, operational delivery and household-level protection. In 2024, USD 15.4 million in payouts in Mali, The Gambia and Burkina Faso enabled assistance to 417,000 drought-affected people ahead of the traditional lean-season response.
- **In Mauritania, WFP combined drought forecasts, pre-agreed triggers and pre-arranged financing** to deliver early cash assistance and early-warning actions to almost 100,000 people in 2026, before peak impacts materialized. The intervention also strengthened national drought monitoring and forecasting capacities.

Anticipatory Action and Early Warning examples presented by FAO

- FAO has various tools and instruments for monitoring and forecasting: Food Security Risk Intelligence and Early Warning Room (FAO Risk Monitor), Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS), Data in Emergencies (DIEM), Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA), Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPChttps://www.ipcinfo.org/).
- In addition, FAO manages dedicated financing facilities such as **FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Resilience Activities (SFERA) - AA Window**: USD 56 million disbursed to date, including USD 7.3 million for AA activations in Africa (7 countries) in 2025.

- FAO supports countries with **technical assistance** in setting up multi-hazard early warning systems and in developing anticipatory action protocols.
- FAO's **Desert Locust Early Warning System** has been operational since 1978 and is a working model of the monitor–forecast–warn chain behind anticipatory action, successfully applied for example in 2020-2022 in the Horn of Africa, where losses of 1.77 bn USD were avoided.
- El-Nino Anticipatory Action measures and Response Plans constitute another example successfully applied in 2023 and 2024 and are currently used to identify high-risk countries for 2026-2027 El Nino priority actions.
- **The Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS)** serves as FAO's tool for monitoring global food supply and demand conditions and for identifying emerging threats to food security, offering information resources to countries including **monthly bulletins on food price and market trends**, **food price anomalies indicators** and early warning information on droughts based on satellite data (**Agricultural Stress Index System**).

FAO's Strategic Foresight Work

- Strategic foresight analysis is being employed as a tool to improve **long-term anticipatory planning and decision-making**. FAO uses foresight analysis to inform its strategic framework, provide global public goods that outline a long-term vision for food systems transformation as well as tools for countries to improve scenario planning and management of future risks.
- Key knowledge products and tools include the **future of food and agriculture report** as well as **regional and country level foresight exercises**, which analyse long-term trends, drivers of change, future scenarios and challenges while providing recommendations on strategic policy options.

FAO's work in the Karamoja cluster in Eastern Africa - Conflict, climate change, food security, and mobility in the Karamoja Cluster (Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia)

- Project implemented in the cross-border region between Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia affected by climate variability and extremes, high levels of food insecurity and inter-communal conflicts.
- FAO's resilience building support in the region has **included integrated context analyses, capacity development and community engagement activities** aimed at generating early warning information, strengthening joint natural resource management and developing action plans for disaster risk reduction.
- Activities were accompanied by **addressing root causes of conflict and environmental pressures** through improved access to water and pasture as well as **dialogue formats for joint natural resource management** and participatory demarcation of livestock migration routes.
- The project resulted in a **reduction of conflict over natural resources** in the cluster, **improvements in adaptive capacities, increased engagement of women and youth** as well as **stronger collaboration between communities** including through the establishment of cross-border coordination mechanisms.

FAO's work in Burkina Faso - Building Resilient Food Systems, Climate Mitigation, Peace and Security in Burkina Faso

- Climate change, land degradation, lack of water resources and food insecurity are recognized as key drivers of outmigration and inter-communal conflict in the country. A multi-dimensional resilience approach has been applied to address these challenges in an integrated manner.
- Key interventions included **restoration of degraded agricultural land**, including through formalization of land tenure rights, **support for alternative revenue generating activities**, creation of **land conciliation commissions and capacity building activities**.
- As a result of these interventions **conflicts over natural resources were reduced**, while greater economic opportunities and better land management practices **increased the capacity to adapt to and withstand climate change impacts**. The project highlighted explicitly how improved economic relationships can reduce conflicts between groups, e.g. between pastoralists and farmers through value chain integration.

WFP's work in Sudan – Building Resilience in a Fragile and Conflict-Affected Context

- In Sudan, WFP applies an **area-based approach across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus** to address the combined effects of conflict, recurrent climate shocks, reduced food availability and disrupted food systems. The approach centres community-led planning and connects immediate food security needs with recovery, livelihoods and longer-term resilience.
- WFP's integrated package combines **support to climate-resilient agricultural production and livelihoods**, including access to inputs and improved practices; **community assets and climate-resilient infrastructure**, including water harvesting and solar-powered systems; **inclusive local governance and social cohesion**; and **market systems support** through SMEs, market linkages and local procurement.
- To sustain delivery in a volatile operating environment, WFP uses **flexible and adaptive implementation modalities** that respond to changing access conditions, strengthen collaboration across UN agencies, prioritize community-led delivery, and draw on operational innovations such as remote monitoring and community enumerators.

AUDA-NEPAD's work in South Africa - Strengthening Community Resilience and Disaster Preparedness in Kwa-Zulu-Natal and Eastern Cape

- The region is characterized by recurring extreme weather events, high levels of food insecurity and poor nutrition outcomes. **Grounded in Agenda 2063 and the CAADP-Kampala Declaration and Action Plan**, AUDA-NEPAD supports the country in improving disaster risk recovery and management.
- The interventions focus on increasing community resilience to disasters by **improving knowledge and making relevant tools** available to anticipate and respond to disasters as well as **connecting communities and local authorities to early warning systems**. The project takes a **community-centred approach**, including through establishing and strengthening local disaster risk reduction and management committees, implementing community-based disaster preparedness and contingency plans as well as conducting collaborative hazard mapping and vulnerability assessments.