



CFS 50, Tuesday 11 October 2022, 13.30-14.45 CEST

**Side event summary -- Responding to the food crisis: 3 pioneering examples of building resilience through diversity**

The effects of the current price crisis on global food systems are evident and they are most devastating to vulnerable populations. This side event showed the importance for a timely and effective reaction by states and other actors to help farmers and citizens cope with the price spikes on food and agricultural inputs. Some of the examples show that through comprehensive interventions the crises can even be harnessed to drive the much-needed transformation towards more agroecological, resilient and equitable food systems.

**Building resilience in Mali by replacing chemicals with biological inputs Amadou Cheick Traoré Ministry for rural development, Mali**

Mali's agricultural policies already had a focus on strengthening smallholder farmers and ecological agricultural practices, but these aspects had been weakly implemented. As a reaction to the food crisis the government is reviewing their implementation. For instance, the country is moving away from subsidizing synthetic fertilizer. Instead, organic inputs are subsidized and good agroecological practices are mainstreamed in trainings at academic and vocational level as, well as in farm advisory services. Additionally, Mali is currently revising its seed policies to better harness the potential of farmer managed seeds. This reduces dependence on certified seeds and facilitates access to varieties that are more tolerant to climate variability and less exigent in inputs.

**Supporting agroecological transition through Mexico's crisis response package – Santiago Arguello, Ministry of Agriculture, Mexico**

Mexico came up with a fast and effective reaction to the crises, addressing both emergency and resilience-building responses. It intervenes on two levels: short-term measures buffer the shock for farmers through the stabilization of fuel prices for agricultural use as well as fertilizer. Long-term measures aim at a transformation towards a more resilient and ecological form of agriculture, use of organic fertilizer and localized

market systems. Furthermore, Mexico is investing in more resilient and productive seeds. They put a focus on native crops that have been neglected by research to date but are highly resilient and less dependent on external inputs.

**Discussion and call for action: the potential for today's crises to spark food system transformation.**

High food prices have the potential to improve farmers' revenues, and high input prices give incentives for a shift towards agroecological practices. However, this potential will not materialize by itself; the interventions of national governments and other actors to support these shifts are key. **As food security is at immediate risk, short-term measures for the stabilization of the currently rising input and production costs for small scale farmers are necessary. However, these measures should be embedded in a plan for the transformation of food system and any incentives reinforcing outdated structures must be avoided. This will help to minimise the costs of the transition from currently high input systems to low input systems, including by providing the right policies to achieve this shift to agroecological food systems.** Farmers – in particular small-scale farmers pioneering low input and agroecological approaches – have a central role to play in designing these policies. The capacity of farmers' organisations, cooperatives and other civil society groups should be strengthened to allow them to play an active role in policy processes, in market systems and in food systems in particular. Remarkably, all of the speeches and the discussion have identified seed systems as a part of food systems that merit more attention: they are the foundation of sustainable food systems and the decision on what seeds are planted has a major impact on the resilience and biodiversity of production systems. **Farmers' seeds and local, neglected, and underutilized species merit more attention for their potential to ensure access to high quality food and nutrition as well as to provide increased resilience to economic shocks and the climate change crisis.**

Unfortunately, the *Hon. Hussein Mohamed Bashe, Minister of Agriculture (Tanzania)* was unable to take part in the event.

Video Recording of the event can be watched here: <https://youtu.be/ft7gL6sLBYI>