



## **Reviews and Recommendations of Smallholder Farmers on “Food Systems” towards the United Nations (UN) Food Summit to be held in September 2021 in New York, USA.**

We, smallholder farmers through our organisations whose names are listed below; -

1. Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima na Wafugaji Mkoa wa Arusha- MVIWAARUSHA (Reg. No: S.A. 19231)
2. Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima na Wafugaji Mkoa wa Manyara – MVIWAMA (Reg. No: S.A 21827), na
3. Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima na Wafugaji Mkoa wa Kilimanjaro - MVIWAKI (Reg. No: S.A. 19659)

Collectively, having 27,679 active members, we have the honor to submit our views and recommendations to our Government of the United Republic of Tanzania with regard to FOOD SYSTEMS towards the Global Food Summit, 2021 that will be held in New York, USA in September 2021.

### **1.0 GENERAL OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **We see that;** ongoing dialogue on “food systems” nationally and globally should be an opportunity for our country to choose and formalize the food systems we want as a nation, and the direction that will lead to what will be policy statements regarding food systems. In that sense, our policies must articulate our vision as a nation with regard to food systems
2. **Therefore,** it is our ambition to see our country has integrated food systems, which recognize smallholder farmers as a pillar of current and future food systems, and protect the ownership of skills and resources such as their lands, ensuring crop-marketing systems and ensure that all kinds of incentives are available so that they can produce efficiently and profitably.
3. **It is our desire;** to see the ongoing dialogue both nationally and later at the international level is aimed at responding to the needs of our nation even if there will be (later) donor contributions in financing the implementation of the resolutions to be achieved.
4. **We want to see that;** the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Working in Rural Areas- (2013); and the International Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028, which together aims to protect the rights of smallholder



producers in rural areas, form part of the key documents to be considered during discussions on food systems nationally and internationally.

5. **We warn that;** the influence and financial power of multi-national companies producing and monopolizing agricultural technologies including production of agricultural inputs, is a new threat in deciding; food sovereignty and security for smallholder producers and their nations. Therefore, as our government moves into international dialogue on food systems, to take all precautionary measures to prevent our country from falling into the trap of these companies who are determined to continue dominating the global food system (food totalitarianism).
6. **By considering these,** we are recommending that agro-ecology be officially recognized as a proper and safe system for production that guarantees food sovereignty and food security in a sustainable manner.

## 2.0 COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC AREAS

### Area 1: Research

We recognize that it is difficult for agriculture to develop without research. We recognize initiatives that have been done on agricultural research in the country in order to improve food systems. However, in our opinions there are the following major challenges: -

- a) The results of many agricultural researches have not been passed on to farmers and have instead been used as a way to promote the researcher. As a result, farmers are failing to benefit from the results of such studies.
- b) Most of agricultural research costs are borne by donors. As the proverb says, "the one who pay the drummer is the one who chooses the song". Not surprisingly, many studies do not focus on the real needs of farmers and the nation and instead focus on the needs of donors even if they are contrary to the needs of farmers and the nation.
- c) There is very little farmers' participation in agricultural research and if there is any participation it is often announced what has been produced such as new varieties of seeds or livestock in order to farmers to become buyers.
- d) There is insufficient appreciation of indigenous knowledge in researches. This is a problem because there are nations that have made strides in expertise by starting in local knowledge. Many farmers still use their indigenous skills but are not valued and included in any of ongoing agricultural research.



Given these shortcomings that have a direct negative impact on sustainable food systems, we recommend the following; -

- i. Establish a system to ensure that the research is based on the real needs of farmers and the nation, especially by ensuring that the research priorities and agenda are based on the priorities of farmers, pastoralists and fishermen.
- ii. Establish a system to ensure that research results reach the target/beneficiaries.
- iii. The government should allocate sufficient budget to own agricultural science. Donors, multinational companies and foreign nations should never be given the opportunity to set the agenda for agricultural research as in doing so; there is a risk of *mortgaging* our sovereignty in relation to food systems.
- iv. Our policies and laws should guide the recognition of indigenous research and knowledge and give legal protection.

## **Area 2: Right to Seed ownership**

The seeds of plants and animals are the basis for the availability and sustainability of food systems. On the contrary, the uncertainty of all of this threatens food sovereignty and security.

We recognize the existence of long-term efforts initiated by some local and foreign companies to degrade indigenous seeds in tandem with the hybridization of hybrid seeds, and more dangerously others wanting the country to allow the adoption of genetic modified organism (GMO) seeds.

It is by that basis; in order to ensure that our food systems are free and secured, and in recognition of our role as smallholder farmers' organisations and the importance of seed sovereignty for the sustainability of our nation, we recommend the following; -

- a. A review of various seed policies and laws to ensure that indigenous seeds are recognized, developed and legally protected.
- b. Closure of all policy and legal loopholes that provide for the testing of GMO seeds in the country, even if necessary, to withdraw from international conventions that endanger the freedom of seed and food for Tanzanians.
- c. That, extension officers are properly educated about the importance of cooperating with farmers in caring for and developing indigenous seeds. This is because, experience shows that various seed companies (especially foreign



ones) have been using these officers as their agents to spray their seeds in parallel with encouraging small rural farmers to abandon indigenous seeds.

- d. That, our Government should take into account the issue of food sovereignty and food security as a matter of “NATIONAL SECURITY” and the issue will never be left in the hands of opportunistic/corrupt scientists who agree to serve as agents of foreign companies on sensitive issues such as seeds.

### **Area 3: Extension Services**

Extension service is very important in ensuring the productivity and sustainability of food systems. However, the service is challenged by inefficiency for a variety of reasons. We therefore recommend; -

1. Our policies and laws should guide the existence of a formal system that will involve farmers in evaluating extension officers.
2. To fill the deficit of extension workers, our policies and laws should guide the preparation and recognition of professional farmers (para-professionals) by providing training in existing agricultural colleges.

### **Area 4: Irrigation**

To a large extent food production activity have been depend on rainfall while our country is endowed with abundant water sources. In order to ensure the safety and sustainability of food systems; -

- A. Our government should focus on investing in Irrigation infrastructure as a priority area and thus allocate sufficient budget to enable that.
- B. The government should take great care in providing water ownership to the private sector. Water is among the public resources and cannot be a commercialized. It is the right of smallholder farmers for agricultural, livestock and fisheries activities. So, it will be safe if it remains in the hands of the public.
  - This view is due to the presence of conflicts in some areas for example in Mbarali district, Mbeya region; where irrigation systems have been given to some private companies that control water contrary to the interests of other users.
- C. In order to ensure that food systems are safe for consumers, the Government through its regulatory bodies should ensure that there is no toxicity in the water used for agricultural, livestock and fisheries activities; since apart from



environmental impacts, these toxins can affect health of consumers of toxic water products.

### **Area 5: Agricultural land**

All production activities, and especially those performed by smallholder producers, depend on land. In order to enable smallholder farmers to play their effectively in food systems, we recommending that; -

1. Without land security, there is no food security thus will affect food systems.
2. It is high time for the government to ensure that it provides protection for the land used by small producers for their activities.

### **Area 6: Inputs**

We recognize the existence of various agricultural inputs for stimulating productivity in agriculture, livestock and fisheries. Despite this, smallholder farmers see some challenges in this area that need to be addressed so as not to affect the food system;-

- 1) Producers have invested a lot in promoting the inputs they produce but without taking into account the provision of the knowledge on proper use of the inputs they produce.
- 2) Many smallholder farmers do not have the expertise on proper use the inputs they are encouraged to use. Improper use of these inputs, and especially herbicides and pesticides, puts at risk producers and consumers.
- 3) The government should put in place a system of compensation for farmers affected by substandard inputs.

### **Area 7: Marketing**

It should be noted that the reliable market is a catalyst for production. Conversely, the lack of reliable markets for products produced by smallholder farmers can discourage them, thus slow down production efforts, and affect food systems. Furthermore, there has been a long-standing view of recognizing markets as infrastructure rather than looking at the market as a system. In this part we see and recommend the following; -

- i. The government should look at how best to protect the farmers against the constant fall in crop prices and to subsidize smallholder farmers during the fall of prices so that they can continue to produce.



- ii. Where there are restrictions or prohibitions on the sale of farmers' produces (due to different circumstances); farmers should be compensated so that they do not incur losses for an act they are not responsible for. For example, during the export ban the government should buy products that have been affected by the ban.
- iii. The Government should strengthen the rule of law on the use of appropriate measures in the sale and purchase of agricultural products.
- iv. The challenges of coordination in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sectors need to be addressed. For example, it is our view that agricultural markets should be under the ministry of agriculture to integrate agriculture, cooperatives and markets.
- v. The government should look for a better market system for products that do not have a formal Board. Currently the Cereals and Mixed Crops Board is more focused on cereals, especially maize and therefore has not been able to solve the marketing problem for crops that do not have an official Board.
- vi. The government should direct the existence of a member-owned cooperative system that will regulate markets

### **Area 8: Farmers' Organisations**

Farmers' organisations are key stakeholders in ensuring strong and sustainable food systems. These organisations have been an important opportunity for farmers to gain knowledge and experience in improving their production activities. We recommend the following; -

1. The Government should recognize the participation of smallholder farmers and their organisations in policy-making processes and various other issues that affect them nationally and internationally, including the food systems related issues.
2. That, farmers' associations are supported by the Government and assisted in obtaining communication and cooperation from various internal and external stakeholders in order to serve their members who are major players to the food systems.