

LILONGWE DECLARATION

BASED ON

**A UNIVERSITY-POLICY DIALOGUE ON STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS
FOR IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY, INCLUSIVITY AND RESILIENCE**

**A PRE-UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT (UNFSS) 2021 INDEPENDENT
DIALOGUE**

WE THE AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE CONVENING FOR THIS UNIVERSITY-POLICY DIALOGUE ON STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS FOR IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY, INCLUSIVITY AND RESILIENCE ON 1ST JULY 2021

1. **NOTE** that Africa is home to nearly 1.4 billion people, or about 17% of the world population; that the vast majority of these people live in rural Africa, deriving their livelihoods from the land, basically through agriculture and related resources; and that with sixty percent of Africa's population dependent on agriculture, it is clear that a vibrant agricultural sector must be part of the solution to create inclusive development on the continent.
2. **RECOGNISE** that Africa is home to diverse agricultural value chains and countries have competitive advantage in the production of agricultural products.
3. **NOTE** that vibrant Agri-food-systems and institutions engaged in the agricultural value chain, from food production to food consumption, are key to delivery of the continent's development Agenda 2063, *The Africa We Want*, and to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. **RECOGNIZE** that urbanisation, together with modernisation of the continent's food systems, generate risks and opportunities and that they create the need to institute appropriate measures to collectively realise sustainable and resilient food systems that meet Africa's food and nutrition needs.
5. **ACKNOWLEDGE** that Africa has to build human, financial and infrastructure capacity to mitigate natural and man-made disasters, including pandemics, locusts, floods, drought, and other climate change and related risks that contribute to the fragility of agri-food systems.
6. **RECOGNIZE** that for Africa to realize its full agricultural potential to bolster its food systems, there is need for significant investments in key productivity enhancing innovations to harness science-based solutions for growth.

7. **RECOGNIZE** that there is need for an interdisciplinary focus on the factors that contribute to the fragility of the agri-food systems in Africa, including but not limited to epidemics, emerging and re-emerging diseases.

We, the African Heads of States, attending the *University-Policy Dialogue for Strengthening Food systems for improved productivity, inclusivity and resilience*, a pre-UNFSS dialogue, are aware that current trends and transformations being observed in Africa's food systems are outcomes of policies and public investment patterns of prior decades, and note that the future will be shaped and transformed by today's investment and policy actions.

WE HEREBY

1. **REITERATE** our commitment to Africa's Agenda 2063, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Science Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
2. **ENDORSE** the declarations of the African Ministers Pre-UN Food Systems Summit Dialogue of 9th June 2021

WE HEREBY AGREE TO:

I. ON STRENGTHENING AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS

1. **COMMIT** to strengthen production fundamentals, such as research and innovation, to direct how we leverage our production resources, generate relevant technologies, test and incubate, and transfer and protect the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) of these technologies; guide health and climate induced threat surveillance; and inform policy design and accountability;

2. **COMMIT** to foster global partnerships to develop more sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems that consider the needs of smallholder farmers, the youth and women;
3. **COMMIT** to work towards harnessing competitive advantage, improving markets and eliminating trade and non-trade barriers for agri -food products on the continent;
4. **COMMIT** to implement the Actions agreed upon during the UNFSS 2021.

II. **ON STRENGTHENING LINKAGES WITHIN AND ACROSS THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

5. **COMMIT** to invest strongly in the education value chain, across universities and vocational colleges, to leverage secondary and primary education to upgrade the skill levels of young people entering the labour force;
6. **COMMIT** to work collaboratively with African Universities and other actors, in and outside Africa, to marshal the needed capacity to strengthen Africa's Food Systems and to scale up best practices, including for, but not limited to: increased value addition, and reduction in post-harvest losses;
7. **COMMIT** to pursue the requisite partnerships to operationalise the Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHA EA) initiative, the Strengthening Africa's Science Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity for Agricultural and Economic Development (SASTIE); and for Building Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity (BASTIC) as encapsulated in the African Ministers Communique of 5th December 2019 in Cape Coast Ghana.

III. **ON PARTNERHIPS FOR STRENGTHENING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY**

8. **COMMIT** to actively engage in: the European Union-African Union Partnership on Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture Initiative; the Africa Union-European Union Research and Innovation Partnership on Climate

Change, Green Circular Economy and Sustainable Energy; the Global Research Alliance on Agriculture Greenhouse Gases (GRA); and other continental and global initiatives;

9. **RECOGNIZE** that, co-developing, co-ownership and joint implementation of UNFSS agreed game-changers for food systems transformation on the Continent, must be inclusive and provide equitable opportunities for all.

Adopted on 1st July 2021, Lilongwe, Malawi