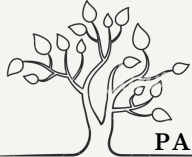


SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS AND HEALTHY DIETS IN THE COMMUNITY OF PORTUGUESE SPEAKING COUNTRIES

**Policy Recommendations
(DRAFT 0 - DECEMBER 2020)**



BACKGROUND

“Our food systems are failing, and the Covid-19 pandemic is making things worse!”.

This was stressed by Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, in June 2020, at the launch of the Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition. As highlighted in that opportunity, *“There is more than enough food in the world to feed our population of 7.8 billion people. But, today, more than 820 million people are hungry. And some 144 million children under the age of 5 are stunted – more than one in five children worldwide. We need to act now to avoid the worst impacts of our efforts to control the pandemic.”.*

Indeed, the global food system needs an urgent transition. As underlined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), *“A sustainable food system (SFS) is a food*

system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised”. Its complexity therefore requires a coordinated approach, based on dynamism and lessons learned by regional organizations, governments and relevant actors, such as civil society, academia and the private sector, in different territories.

This warning message from the United Nations echoes in the words and actions of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), which has played a relevant role in this global movement of urgent transition,

Implementation:

Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries

Partners:

- MSC-CONSAN
- CONSAN-STP
- CONSAN-CV
- Amigos da Natureza - Cabo Verde
- ADAPPA - São Tomé e Príncipe
- ACTUAR
- FIAN Portugal

Selected territories as pilots:

- Mé-zochi, São Tome e Príncipe
- Santo Antão, Cabo Verde



through important political measures to promote systems and sustainable food diets, within the framework of its Strategy for Food and Nutritional Security (ESAN-CPLP), approved in 2011.

The *Sustainable Food Systems and Healthy Diets Initiative*, approved by CPLP member states and coordinated by the Civil Society Mechanism at the CPLP Food and Nutritional Security Council (MSC-CONSAN), illustrates, thus, the political priority given by CPLP to the promotion of an inclusive approach in the promotion of sustainable territorial food systems. Francisco Ribeiro Telles, Executive Secretary of CPLP, in its message on the occasion of World Food Day (October 16th 2020) underlined:



“the CPLP should consolidate the efforts it has been developing within the framework of its Strategy on Food and Nutritional Security (ESAN-CPLP), promoting mechanisms to support the strengthening of CPLP’s food systems, particularly those based on family farming and rural communities, where the capacity to produce sustainable elements, cultivated based on the cultural and social expressions of our peoples resides”.

OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this initiative is to promote sustainable food systems for healthy diets in selected territories in Cabo Verde and Sao Tome and Principe, through local food systems analysis and policy recommendations provided to CONSAN at national and CPLP level.

INNOVATIVE APPROACH

- **territorial:** considers the territory as a relevant level of analysis for food sustainability
- **multi-level** dialogue possible thanks to the CPLP innovative institutionally for Food Security and Nutrition: the recommendations resulting from the territorial diagnosis carried out are shared and negotiated at the national and CPLP levels, strengthening the existing governance bodies within the scope of the CPLP's Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (ESAN-CPLP).
- **rights-based approach (RBA):** aims at guaranteeing the realization of the human right to adequate food and nutrition, expressed in the access to healthier food by the most vulnerable groups to poverty and food and nutritional insecurity.
- **inclusive and multi-stakeholders processes:** building the diagnosis sits on a process of giving voice to local communities and vulnerable populations, who build their capacities in dialogue with other relevant stakeholders (government, private sector, academia). The team brings together members of the national food and nutritional security council, government technicians, representatives of civil society and other relevant stakeholders and rights-holders.

ACTIVITIES

- Multi-stakeholders training actions on food territorial sustainable systems, aimed at strengthening local capacities (further information at <https://alimentacplp.com/>)



“The articulation that took place between the Ministry of Agriculture, civil society, the private sector, other development organizations was spectacular! (...) In order to strengthen national capacities and bring a new (...) vision of sustainable territorial development (...) we believe that, with these tools, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development will be in a better position to contribute to sustainable development” (Celso Garrido, CONSAN-STP coordinator)



ACTIVITIES

- Participatory diagnosis of Sustainable Food Territorial Systems - step-by-step:
 1. landscape analysis;
 2. historical analysis;
 3. stakeholders analysis;
 4. nutritional and food security profile analysis and food culture;
 5. comparative analysis of vulnerable groups;
 6. SWOT analysis;
 7. strategic matrix and recommendations

“Before, we put the corn on the fire with a little bacon, in case it came. Our parents killed the pig, removed the bacon and put it in a rolled bag and hung it on the top of the house. When they went to prepare the cachupa, they took a little piece to put in the pot (...) This was the spice that was put into it (cachupa). Seasoning used to be the bay leaf, if there was, garlic or a piece of bacon, it was no more (...) Industrial broth? I no longer remember if industrial broth was used at that time; now? There's a lot of 'juice' out there now” (**Guimar Tereza Monteiro, Pico da Cruz, Santo Antão - Cabo Verde**)



ACTIVITIES

- Sharing lessons learned and recommendations with relevant stakeholders and rights-holders at national and CPLP level, including members and participants in the respective councils on food and nutritional security.



“The context of crisis must reinforce innovative cooperation mechanisms, which allow us, in a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral way, to bring together existing knowledge platforms at different levels (...) promoting, thus, renewed training processes (...) that can bring us new strategies to mitigate an extremely challenging scenario” (**Manuel Lapão, Director of Cooperation - CPLP Executive Secretariat**)



KEY CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Santo Antão, Cabo Verde

In Santo Antão, the population is concentrated in the north of the island (around 66%), in the municipalities of Ribeira Grande and Paul, where there are greater agricultural potentialities, more favorable climate and a greater amount of water. The diagnosis focused on this specific territory, from the analysis of the landscape from the South (Pico da Cruz) towards North (Ribeira Grande). This exercise resulted in the division of the territory into the high zone (marked by rainfed agriculture), and the low zone (where agriculture is irrigated). Pico da Cova, due to its sui generis characteristics, was considered as a sub-zone within the rainfed agriculture area.

The diagnosis showed a dissociation between culinary cultures and eating habits and local production. Although access to the global food market and food aid programs have allowed the population of Santo Antão to face prolonged droughts, on the other hand, such options have led to consumption habits which make negative pressure to the local production system. Food globalization has also contributed to the double burden of malnutrition, characterized by the coexistence of undernutrition along with overweight and obesity, or diet-related noncommunicable diseases, within individuals, households and populations, and across the lifecourse.

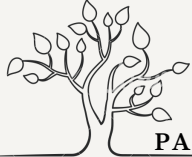
Moreover, the development of agricultural production is related with the ecological imbalance of the territory - the intensification



of production and the growing dependence on imported chemical inputs (which increases the cost of production) contribute to the inviability of family farmers and favors pests (mil-pés), which prevent family farmers from selling their production to other islands, with the exception of São Vicente. The promotion of more sustainable ways of producing food, especially organic farming, combined with strategies to enhance local production are essential to increase the food resilience of the territory.

Meanwhile, local agricultural systems continue to conserve traditional soil and water management systems, reflecting on the quality of food and the dynamic preservation of the landscape. For this reason, a possible application for the recognition as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) could be prepared. This process should be aligned with the CPLP initiative on GIAHS, approved by the CONSAN-CPLP.

Thus, the essence of a possible coherent and multi-sectorial strategy for the territory involves an accelerated transition towards agroecological production models (including the whole local food value chain - farming, food processing, distribution, retailing and consumer handling); strengthening most vulnerable groups' access to healthier food; and the valorization of traditional agricultural systems and products (linking with other economic sectors including tourism) through GIAHS application. These proposals can be better developed, implemented and monitored if the existent (national and supra-national) food security and nutrition councils are continuously strengthened and coherent local platforms are established.



Mé-zochi, São Tomé e Príncipe

The analyzed territory is located in the island of São Tomé, in the East part of Mé-Zochi District. With an altitude between 900 and 1250 meters, it is next to the edge of the Obô Natural Park. This territory guarantees most of the national agricultural production, representing the source of vitamins, and concentrates about a quarter of São Tomé and Príncipe farmers. Historically dependent on coffee cultivation, the distribution of land and their ability to produce food in quality and quantity, combined with the fragility of the agroforestry system, led to a transition to the growing production of vegetables that currently supplies the capital, assuming, thus, an important role for ensuring the food security.

Despite being a promising source of revenue, horticulture is based on an exploitation model with great vulnerabilities that resulted in soil degradation, the appearance of pests and diseases and a high dependence on imported factors of production (in fact, during Covid-19 pandemic, producers were put under great pressure, as a consequence of the import constraints).



Still, the change in culinary cultures and eating habits and, consequently, in the nutritional and food security profile observed in the last decades, due to food donations and food globalization, put a negative pressure on the reconfiguration of the production system: producers sell vegetables to be able to purchase imported and industrialized food, which may not be sustainable in the medium and long term. Thus, the growing availability and diversity of the produced vegetables is not necessarily translated into an increase in their consumption.

The definition of strategies for greater sustainability of the territory's food system will, therefore, involve the promotion of more agroecological production methods; the valorization of local products (including, greater investment in the agri-food sector, the introduction of innovative and entrepreneurial

processes which promote food produced and processed in the territory); the promotion of physical and economic access to ensure healthy diets to all (includes School Feeding Programs and public procurement of local food products). Tourism has already a significant weight in the Sao Tome economy, and may play an important role in the valorization of local products; however, it must be complementary (and not structural), avoiding excessive dependencies and always ensuring an articulation with broad strategies to ensure increased access to local food via public procurement. The strategy for recognizing the São Tomean agroforestry system as GIAHS (Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System) may also contribute to the enhancement of local production, biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge.

Strengthening the overall food governance system already in place (national, supranational) as well as establishing new bodies at local level will be also critical to increase resilience and the overall sustainability as well as to further promote a territorial approach in existent and future public policies, programs and projects supported by international donors. It is important to mention that in São Tomé e Príncipe major policies and projects are still conceived and implemented without this territorial perspective.



KEY LESSONS LEARNT

The CPLP member States are discussing key policy recommendations on how to transform their territorial food systems offering healthier diets through rescuing local food culture and environmental sustainability.

Both countries are small island States located in the Atlantic. They share a common language but also a common historical path in terms of development of their food systems. The mountain areas analysed in Sao Tome and Principe and Cabo Verde are important hotspots in terms of biodiversity, have remarkable landscapes and traditional food knowledge. Family farming is still predominant but at risk. In a certain sense, both territories are part of a broader CPLP food patrimony.

The diagnosis indicated the need to transform the existent agriculture and food systems by making production more sustainable (fruits, vegetables), developing marketing and social protection policies to add value and promote broader access to more healthier food products. It also indicates the need to strengthen the existent food security and nutrition governance system from CPLP and promote territorial approaches for food transformation.

In fact, the existent food security governance structures in both countries (national food security and nutrition councils linked to CPLP's Food Security and Nutrition Council) were crucial to develop this initiative in times of Covid 19. Trustable relations, clear incentives for collective action and multi-stakeholder partnerships seem to be an important asset to build food resilience in adverse moments. This is an important lesson learnt from CPLP.

