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Panafrican farmers' organization  
Organisation panafricaine des agriculteurs  
المنظمة الإفريقية للفلاحين

NEWSLETTER N° 3 :

# RETROSPECTIVES 2020 PERSPECTIVES 2021



**Elizabeth Nsimadala**  
President of PAFO

## Greetings from the President, Elizabeth Nsimadala

On the occasion of this New Year, 2021, allow me to extend my best wishes for good health, longevity and prosperity to all family farmers and agricultural producers across the continent. I reiterate our confidence and unwavering support for the noble work that you are doing and that you have accomplished, throughout 2020, by continuing to work and to feed our fellow citizens. A particularly difficult year, marked by a pandemic whose impact was sometimes devastating on family farming.

I also offer my best wishes to all PAFO member networks and to all technical and financial partners who support PAFO's programs. May you receive, through this message, all our appreciation for your continuous support for the promotion of family farming and farmers throughout the African continent.

On the African continent, 2020 was marked by various measures imposed to prevent the spread of the virus. In most countries, sometimes very strict measures were imposed for a period of about three months but even afterwards, activities did not return to normal. These included: the closure of borders, the cessation or suspension of certain activities, leading to a drop in the income of the populations, and therefore a loss of wages for workers, including farmers and their families. The economic consequences of COVID-19 on the African countries affected by this pandemic concern production, consumption, public finances and employment. In addition to all these challenges, there is also a problem of access to other necessary support services to farmers due to strict measures of Covid-19. But again, 2020 has been a year full of socio-political and security uncertainties. 2020 was marked by permanent and growing insecurity, particularly in certain African countries where many farmers perished in armed attacks or were displaced, abandoning their farms. I hope 2021 will be full of peace and commitment, especially since the Covid-19 virus is still with us.

As such, we must not lower our guard or our arms. We will continue to work on our farms to guarantee food for all in full compliance with all barrier measures. In this new year, PAFO and its respective member networks in the regions of the continent call on partners and stakeholders to make concerted efforts to ensure the implementation of the recommendations it has proposed.

These include ensuring the security of farmers while agriculture continues uninterrupted; to connect rural farmers; to promote innovation; strengthen support for smallholder farmers; improve policies related to implementation at the continental level, strengthen support systems and member organizations for African farmers....

I take the opportunity of the new year that we are starting, to call on the Farmers' Organizations to work with self-sacrifice in order to complete the various common projects together, in particular to campaign for the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the PAFO to draw attention to the extent of the impact of Covid-19 on African farmers and to call on the respective governments as well as partners and stakeholders to work on the implementation of the proposed recommendations.

May 2021 be a prosperous year, full of commitment and action for family farmers.

Finally, I call upon farmers of the continent to loud their voices and make sure that their concerns are incorporated in the discussions around the UN food systems summit 2021 that are happening or yet to happen at all levels - nationally and globally. I wish you a happy, prosperous and covid free 2021.





# Editorial Fatma Ben Rejeb

## PAFO CEO



The past year has been very unusual. It has been marked by a catastrophic health crisis, a devastating economic crisis, a climate crisis ravaging communities and a crisis of inequality exposed by the pandemic.

PAFO, as a continental network of farmers' organizations will continue in 2021, to draw attention to the extent of the impact of Covid-19 on African farmers and family farming, and call on the respective governments as well as partners and stakeholders to work on the implementation of the recommendations proposed by PAFO for the end of the crisis.

In addition, the COVID-19 crisis has offered opportunities to innovate, expand and promote the use of digital tools in agriculture. From this perspective, it is necessary to seize the opportunities offered by ICTs through public interventions to promote the digital transformation of agriculture while including smallholders.

Also, it is recommended to maximize the opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness on the African continent through continental initiatives to connect farmers with each other and connect them to markets. In addition, more capacity building programs should be consolidated to enable African farmers to work to their full potential on local food crops. Some of the intrinsically linked factors contributing to poor agricultural performance include outdated technologies as well as inadequate financing. In this regard, ensuring sustainable agriculture will require appropriate mechanization, the use of green energy and the improvement of rural infrastructure.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), scheduled to kick off on January 1, 2021, is expected to accelerate the continent's recovery and strengthen its resilience by boosting the level of intra-African trade in goods and services.

The zone will create a single African market of over 1 billion consumers with a combined GDP of \$ 2.5 trillion. It aims to promote agricultural transformation and growth in Africa, contribute to food security, improve competitiveness and encourage necessary investments in production and marketing infrastructure.

Finally, the private sector, among which are the farmers since they are the first investors in agriculture, will certainly be the engine of agricultural transformation. However, it is the actions of governments that will be most decisive in making it possible. It is the actions of governments that will determine when and to what extent private investment is injected into the economy to move it forward in a sustainable manner, as political will is needed for far-reaching reforms. This is especially true in light of the crucial role of policy reforms and the creation of an enabling environment for investment and private sector participation.

In 2021, PAFO will continue on the same path and will continue its efforts in favour of a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable African agriculture that ensures food security and sovereignty.



# RETROSPECTIVES AND PERSPECTIVES IN OUR REGIONS



**Steve Muchiri**

EAFF CEO



The situation has been very catastrophic, especially because of the pandemic we are facing around the world. When we take a look at the eastern part of Africa, we find that restrictive measures and lockdowns have taken place in most countries except Tanzania and Burundi. Measures and directives from governments which have affected several sectors and which now have affected the right to free movement, whether between regions or between countries, notably following the closure of borders. But again, the year 2020 was characterized by disputes and tensions between countries, for example, the problem between Rwanda and Uganda, to which are added other problems with Kenya and Tanzania.

The point is, in 2020 a lot happened: many businesses closed, infrastructure broken, the hospitality industry lost revenue just as much as the agriculture industry. Indeed, the demand for food has fallen because it was difficult to access it due to the general containment. This was the case, for example, with Uganda, where a large part of its exports could not be made to neighbouring countries.

The workers were at home which made life difficult, especially for people who make a living by receiving a wage, like drivers, motorcycle taxis, and other activities that provide a daily income. Not to mention that the restrictive measures are not completely lifted. From total lockdown measures we found ourselves in partial lockdowns in some countries which means that some people are still at home until now.

On the other hand, in some areas we still have challenges that should be faced because the return to "normalcy" is not the same in all countries. For example, even though all of Tanzania is open, we still have a lot of foreign markets closed to it, as a result of restrictive measures and containment. Not to mention that the curfews established differently by governments, were perceived differently by countries. For example, in Tanzania, there was no compulsory wearing of masks or total lockdown but, on the other hand, in Rwanda, the mask is compulsory and the government has provided for sanctions for offenders both for wearing a mask and the curfew violation.

We were faced with another experiential challenge in dealing with a situation like this that we have never encountered before and where we do not even have enough information on how to react quickly. After the total lockdown was lifted, people had to comply with other specific or conditional measures. For example, traffic is authorized but under conditions. In other words, we have moved from full lockdown to partial containment. And, this constraint disrupted the entire value chain.

The agricultural sector is no exception to this health crisis and its devastating impacts. We had significant challenges. First, the farmers could not move around normally. Also, those living far from their farms could not go to work, which resulted in considerable losses knowing that one had no choice and that one could only comply with the measures. Then, with regard to the families, they had difficulty in managing their budget and they had to be satisfied with the minimum. Some even had difficulty accessing food.

Having said that, with the management of all these difficulties and challenges we have learned a lot and we must not take things for granted, especially with regard to the agricultural sector. An extremely important sector which plays a primordial role in human life. We are all aware that we cannot live without food. To do this, it is imperative to find solutions such as investing in varieties and gaining support from governments. Support which should not be limited to a simple signature but which should be implemented.

On what to expect for 2021, I can say that there was not much we could do during the general lockdown and that a lot is still pending. And even if people envision a positive year, we should always know that it will take time to recover. Country programs and

economies are on hold and countries are in debt. Some even wonder how they could repay their loans. Most governments have lost significant tax revenues in particular, because certain activities had to be exempted as is the case in Kenya where, Governments only got about 25 to 30% of what was supposed to be obtained.

The accounts are still high and the gaps are still to be identified and especially to be filled. In short, we don't need to expect much, in 2021 but above all a good recovery first. A recovery which in my opinion constitutes the most important thing of the actions and programs that could not be implemented in 2020.





The Covid 19 certainly marked the year 2020 around the world, not only by the risk of contracting the disease but also by the disruptions that this pandemic has caused in the planning and work systems of institutions.

At PROPAC, we had to take measures to protect our staff by providing individual and collective

health kits but also by considerably reducing the support missions to our members. To adapt to the new situation, PROPAC had to acquire a videoconferencing device to work remotely with its partners and members.

But despite the Covid, PROPAC has not stopped working. With the support of our partners, we

continued to execute ongoing projects and negotiated new partnerships. In this context, and at the institutional level, we were able to develop the strategic plan of PROPAC 2021-2025, updated the manual of procedures, held a physical meeting of the Board of Directors of PROPAC in Yaoundé in Cameroon, launched the process establishment of a market information system (MIS) for agricultural products in Central Africa and finalized the establishment of the computerized monitoring and evaluation system.

In terms of the development of members' economic activities, PROPAC closed the project to support cassava cooperatives in Central Africa "Manioc 21", a project which aimed to improve the economic performance of cassava cooperatives led by women. and young people to improve food and nutrition security and promote job creation. We recall in passing that this project targeted 10 cooperatives in Cameroon and the DRC. We will not forget to point out that PROPAC has financially supported more than thirty (30) local economic initiatives in 5 countries as part of the FO4ACP project.

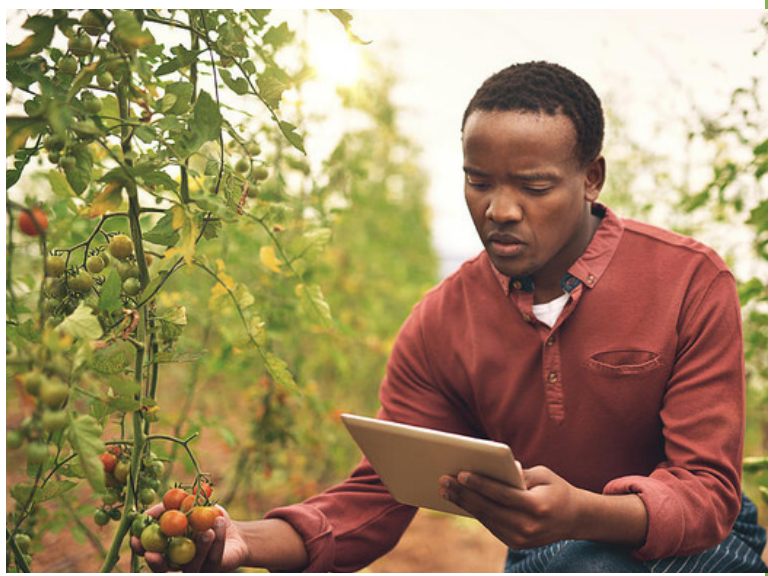
In terms of advocacy and political positioning, PROPAC continued its intervention in the defence of the rights of rural women with a view to ensuring women's access and control over land resources.

This is an opportunity for me to thank, on behalf of all the technical staff of PROPAC, our partners who supported us in 2020. I am thinking of IFAD, the European Union, CTA, ILC and ECCAS. I especially thank PAFO for its leadership and strategy of making regional FO networks into respected partner institutions.

Regarding the expectations for the new year, for PROPAC, 2021 marks the end of the first term of the current president, Mr. Buka MupunguNathanaël. It is planned to hold a General Assembly. Our wish is that this meeting further strengthens governance within the Platform and confirms the credibility of PROPAC.

PROPAC's 2021-2025 strategic plan will be presented to partners during a business meeting. This strategic plan resolutely propels PROPAC into modernity by proposing a coherent and relevant theory of change. We are waiting for the partners to buy the projects from PROPAC. We are especially looking at ECCAS and CEMAC, our regional economic communities. We expect a new boost in our partnerships with the conclusion of institutional partnership agreements.

The technical staff of PROPAC will remain mobilized under the supervision of the Board of Directors with the aim of improving PROPAC's service offer to members.





**Ousseini Ouedraogo**

ROPPA CEO



The covid-19 pandemic, which appeared in the West African region in March 2020, has changed everything. The barrier and restrictive measures announced by the States have had a major impact on family farms. For many West African countries, the health crisis has coincided with the harvest season and restrictive measures announced by Governments have disrupted production, productivity, marketing of livestock, and vegetation as well as access to markets, seriously affecting the income of family farmers.

The year 2020 has also been special for Farmers' Organizations which were unable to implement programs in favour of farmers. Health crisis and restrictive measures oblige, several actions could not be carried out. Also, ROPPA and the national platform of its members have valued the opportunities offered by ICTs, like the Zoom tool and others to continue working, and provide the necessary support to farmers. All member networks have set up the "Monitoring and Action Committee" to act, provide responses and deal with the health crisis. We have also worked closely with institutions and states to disseminate information on barrier measures and restrictive measures. But also, to bring back from the base (monitoring and action committee) to decision-makers, solutions to end the crisis and a response plan, first of which is the need to

provide support for the 2020/2021 campaigns. If we had not been careful, West Africa would have experienced an unprecedented crisis that could have put 17-20 million food-critical people at risk.

terrorist acts, loss of human lives; many people have been displaced and forced to abandon their homes, their lands. The resurgence of this scourge has strongly affected family farms and farmers. In addition, 2020 also experienced post or pre-election unrest with friction between different political parties which have not failed to impact the production basin and the supply chain as well as production and marketing capacities. ...

Above all, 2020 has revealed the fragility of the policies implemented by our States and our institutions. And, this imperatively requires a review which requires all of us to learn the lessons of the crises experienced in 2020 and to know how to bounce back.

However, while it is true that 2020 has brought a lot of negative events, the fact remains that there have been positive aspects including maintaining the markets. Indeed, West Africa has not experienced, and for a long time, the surge in prices generated by the Covid crisis because these are local markets supplied by local family farmers and are not dependent on the import. This is because policies supported local production and supply which continued despite the crisis to supply local markets. Hence the importance of the fundamental role of family farms in the crisis. The crises revealed in 2020 come on top of other already existing ones including climate change, the employment of young people who brave the seas in search of a better life....

2020 was also a year in which PAFO demonstrated its dynamism and solidarity. As such, I would like to take this opportunity, to congratulate the President of PAFO, the CEO and the entire technical team for their perseverance, and for maintaining a large part of the agendas, and for having developed certain initiatives in favour of family farms.

2021 is a new year that we approach with a lot of hope and expectation. Certainly, the Covid-19 will not leave us anytime soon. You would have to adapt to living with it in order to keep working and moving forward. In this sense, ROPPA, along with the other members of the Monitoring and Action Committee, will ensure that lessons learned from the crisis are used.

At the political level, we must work, alongside States and national institutions, to revise sectoral policies in order to find lasting solutions. Because, until then, we have no vision or strategy in the medium or long term, and even less coherent and sustainable solutions. We will focus on insecurity. How to have secure elections, how to have coherent and complementary global policies. We must avoid being in an emergency and short-term solutions, but rather lasting solutions. In 2021, we will also take care to enhance the potential for innovation and the opportunities offered by ICT in order to integrate ICT tools into the work of FOs and to restore the capacities of family farms in many production areas. In 2021, ROPPA will tackle the challenge of youth employability in the agricultural sector. We will rely on studies carried out to identify solutions in favor of each group of actors: State / Youth / Family. Without forgetting the woman who represents an important pillar. Indeed, 56 to 60% of the working population, depending on the country, are women and we will work to achieve, with great ambition, the empowerment of women.

Finally, with regard to Farmers' Organizations, we are going to settle the institutional and organizational framework and take up the challenges, with PAFO for more dynamism and construction and consolidation of the sharing of values between all members.





**Ishmael Sunga**

SACAU CEO



2020 has been a difficult year for everyone in more ways than one. As a CEO, what I retain is mainly the disruption of the farmers caused by the tragic situation of Covid-19 and especially the negative impact of this health crisis on the community. There is resilience in agriculture that needs to take place and to achieve this we need to keep working hard to make up for lost time.

The farmers and the agricultural sector in general who were supposed to save the community from hunger needed support themselves. In view of the restrictive measures announced by the Governments, the farmers could not move to continue to produce and feed their community. Thus, there was not enough food and there was an urgent need to support the agricultural sector in general and the farmers in particular.

For the prospects and expectations of this new year, 2021, we must see the health crisis as an opportunity and seize it to put in place a better food system that guarantees equity, distribution and support.

We must create a system that does not take away from the farmers but on the contrary, create a system that will open the way for the farmers. In addition, we must give more value to the farmers. Because, they play an essential role in providing the basic food needs of the communities.

We must also see more public support for farmer organizations, especially after a major health crisis and the countless challenges encountered during the pandemic period. A period characterized by great disruption of the entire value chain. For example, you cannot leave the farmers on hold because they are the pillars of food production and in this sense, you must always put them on the front line. We don't need to see farmers living in the danger zone, but rather we need to see their protection ensured.

Finally, we must learn the lessons of the health crisis generated by Covid-19, particularly in terms of New Technologies (ICT) and encourage farmers to invest in these technologies that are sources of innovation and encourage them to access them as service providers.



**Rym Ferchichi**

UMNAGRI CEO



If there is one thing to take away from the year 2020, it is undoubtedly the health crisis generated by Covid-19 and its repercussions on the agricultural and farmer sector. The year has been difficult and we had to deal with new habits, to comply with restrictive measures announced by Governments.

For our region, 2020 has been doubly difficult. Indeed, of the first eight countries in Africa affected by Covid-19, five belong to the North African region. For UMNAGRI, as for all the member networks of PAFO, it was difficult for us to complete our actions and our programs planned for the year 2020,

given the difficulties of traveling in the field. Nevertheless, we still proceeded to launch the FO4ACP program. Admittedly, the start was difficult, lockdown oblige even more so as the countries involved in the program (Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia) - are among the most affected by the health crisis.

It must be recognized that in 2020, the health crisis has revealed the potential for innovation and the opportunities offered by New Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which have enabled us to organize our meetings and "interacting with our members, although a bit difficult given the connection problems in some countries.

For 2021 our expectations are ambitious and high. We plan to go ahead and continue our actions in favor of the farmers, by carrying out our projects.

We hope that during this new year, we will be able to work better face-to-face and be in the field with the Farmers' Organizations. We also hope to continue the implementation of FO4ACP with specific interventions, visits between pairs, exhibitions and fairs.

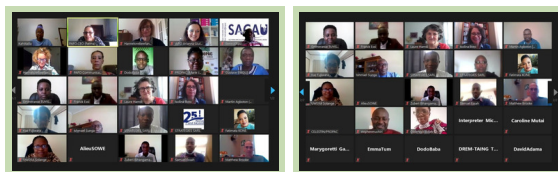
In addition, in 2021, UMNAGRI plans to organize, in partnership with IFAD, the North African regional farmers' forum, scheduled for October or November 2021 in Egypt. Not to mention that we will continue our cooperation with our partners, for the implementation of our projects.

I hope that UMNAGRI, member of PAFO, will have other projects and other opportunities to implement, thanks to the dynamism of PAFO, its president and its secretariat.

# PAFO NEWS

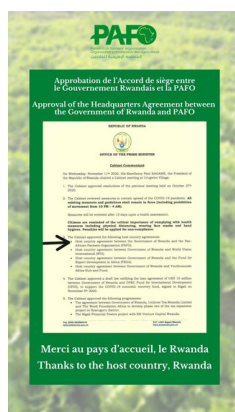
## PAFO FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY

PAFO has completed the reflection of its new strategic plan for the next five years 2021-2025 as well as its operational plan 2021-2022 thanks to a proactive and participatory approach of the PAFO member networks and their affiliated national organizations, reporting to various African countries. Over a period of three months, individual interviews with leaders, regional workshops and two continental workshops were organized with all stakeholders and PAFO partners. The participatory and inclusive process chosen by PAFO to implement its strategy for the next five years was well carried out thanks to the accompaniment and technical support of the "STRATEGIES" consultancy and the financial support of COLEACP.



## PAFO OBTAINS ITS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT

His Excellency, Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, chaired the meeting of the cabinet of ministers during which he validated the headquarters agreement between the Government of Rwanda and PAFO. To this end, the headquarters agreement was signed early 2021.





# PARTNERSHIPS

COLEACP

« INNOVATIONS SERIES »



PAFO and COLEACP have designed a new series of webinars to highlight the critical role the private sector plays in supporting sustainable and resilient food systems as well as in providing safe and healthy food to consumers. This series of sessions aims to increase awareness and use of existing innovations led by Farmers' Organizations and SMEs across value chains; to highlight impending innovative technologies and practices with potential for FOs and SMEs and to exchange best practices and success stories between regions of the continent and with the EU.

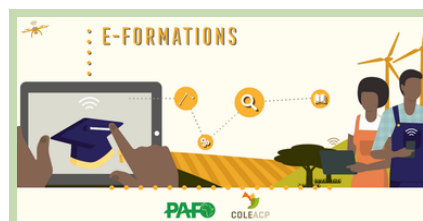
Named the "Innovation Series", its sessions share the best practices of African entrepreneurs, farmers and agri-entrepreneurs, with an emphasis on innovations in production, markets, digital solutions, technologies and use of natural resources. Perspectives on policy, research, finance and investment are also presented.

400 participants registered for the first online session held on November 19, 2020, which focused on "increasing market opportunities through value-added and branded products." The recording of session 1 is available here : <https://bit.ly/3ahbXf4>

The second session of the Innovation Series was organized on January 21, 2021. It saw the registration of more than 1000 people and was an excellent opportunity for exchange and debate with experts from various backgrounds, around the theme "Produce locally: Conquer markets with high added value". The participants in this 2nd session were able to discover the successes of companies in different value chains on value-added agri-food products intended for local markets in Africa.

The next session will be held on March 18 and will focus on the African Continental Free Trade Area.

## ONLINE TRAINING



As part of the memorandum of understanding between PAFO and COLEACP, distance training workshops with PAFO member networks were organized. The first, organized in October-November 2020 on the theme of COVID-19, focused on information; practical guidelines for implementing COVID-19 measures and adapting the requirements of private voluntary standards.

The second training course on the theme of crop protection began in November 2020 and should end in mid-January 2021. It aims to develop skills on the principles of integrated crop protection and the safe use of crops, pesticides. At the end of the training, participants will be able to identify pests; to choose suitable and sustainable control methods; to understand the risks associated with the use of plant protection products and to know and adopt practices reducing these risks.

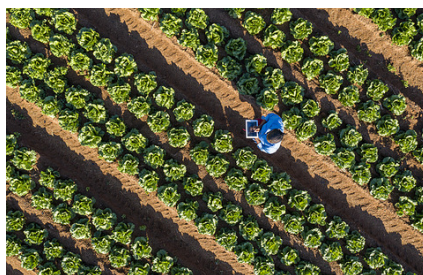
Other online training courses are on the program and the topics were identified through a survey launched beforehand with farmers' organizations.



## NEWS ON CURRENT PROJECTS

### Launch of FO4ACP in the Caribbean

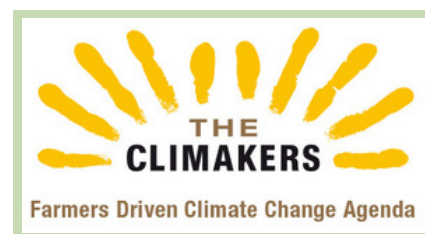
FO4ACP (Farmers' Organizations Program for African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries) funded by OACPS-EU and IFAD, implemented by six regional farmer organizations, the Pan-African Farmer Organization (PAFO), AgriCord and its agri-agencies, for the benefit of over 52 million smallholders, will be complemented today by the launch of FO4ACP in the Caribbean with the participation of the FAO regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean, in close collaboration with national farmers' organizations. As a reminder, FO4ACP, which was launched in Africa in July 2019, emphasizes the provision of economic services, advocacy activities and the institutional development of farmer organizations. It aims to increase incomes, improve livelihoods and strengthen food and nutrition security, including food safety, of organized smallholders and family farmers in countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific by consolidating regional, national and local farmers' Organizations.



## CLIMAKERS

Climakers is inaugurating a new approach where the entire value chain is in partnership with farmers, downstream from input suppliers and upstream to reach consumers, promoting a genuine bottom-up, farmer-centric approach made up of solutions at the level base to ensure the sustainability and resilience of food systems. In these new circumstances, The Climakers is even more ready to draw the attention of decision makers - at all levels - to the needs and solutions of farmers and all food system stakeholders in this new challenge.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, members of the Climakers Alliance took their practical knowledge and put it at the service of their business and the entire food chain, from farm to fork. Farmers have proposed breakthrough initiatives to ensure they can continue their activities, and each actor in the supply chain is committed to ensuring that farmers have the means (seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals, technologies) to do it; R&I actors have done their part in partnering with farmers and actors in the food chain to help find the right solutions in different contexts. It is now up to policy makers to ensure that food systems are functioning properly and are resilient to external shocks. This implies first that policymakers must channel decision-making and investments to improve solutions that have already proven to work at the sector level and the food chain as a whole. Because only a truly bottom-up approach can ensure that we act quickly and effectively. Next, political decision-makers must take into account the needs and actions of sectoral actors, in particular the contributions of civil society, in a joint effort towards the proper functioning of food systems and sustainability.



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