

Family farming in Gambia

Family farms feed and employ two thirds of the African population and work 62 percent of the land. Family farmers ensure the future of Africa and are at the heart of food security and sustainable food systems. The United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF 2019-2028) aims at unleashing the potential of family farmers as key agents of change to transform food systems world-wide. Within this framework, the Yenkasa Africa communication initiative implements a regional campaign to raise awareness on the UNDF and promote improved communication capacities and services for family farming in Africa.

KEY FIGURES

The agricultural sector is the most important sector of the Gambian economy, contributing 32 percent of the gross domestic product, providing employment and income for 80 percent of the population, and accounting for 70 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings. Family farming is the main agricultural activity and relies on traditional farming systems including, crops, livestock, fishing, backyard gardening and horticulture, fruit tree orchards etc., that ensure food security and safeguards for the families also in trying times. Seasonality is also a key factor of the agricultural produce, as is clearly manifested during the rainy season, when small groups of families can be found sorting seeds especially groundnut at the (Bantaba) villages squares and other public spaces.



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UNDF in Action

The Gambian played a key role in promoting the United Nation Decade of Family Farming 2019 – 2028 and in adopting a plan of action for its implementation. Gambia National Action Plan (NAP) for the UNDF is the result of an extensive process of discussion among public institutions of the agricultural sector, civil society, farmers' organizations, local governments, academia and international cooperation agencies. During formulation, technical and financial support was provided by The Gambia Ministry of Agriculture, the Network of National Committee of Family Farming, the World Rural Forum (WRF), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Plan aims to strengthen

Family Farming sustainable development through the creation of an enabling environment, the improvement of family farmers' livelihoods, the promotion of territorial governance and the reduction of environmental vulnerability. The implementation of the NAP has enabled the Network of National Coordination Committee (NCC) to push the Gambian Government to adopt the Seed Policy and Seed Act. Alliance partners and the network of the National Coordination Committee of The International Year of Family Farming + 10 have now representatives at the recently created National Seed Council. Farmer Organizations now have seats in most of the government's projects and programmers' Steering Committees.

United Nations
Decade of
**FAMILY
FARMING**
2019-2028



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Contribution to sustainable food systems

In the Gambia, there are several farming practices being applied by smallholder farmers that conform a set of strategies to make agriculture more sustainable. These are also considered by the Climate Smart Agriculture approach that guides actions needed to reorient agricultural systems to ensure food security in a changing climate. The impacts of climate change are aggravated by The Gambia's low-lying topography, heavy dependence on subsistence rain fed agriculture and inadequate rainwater drainage and management in a context of a rapid and uncontrolled urban expansion. Within this framework, the Food System Adaptation in Changing Environments in Africa project was initiated by a consortium of leading research institutions to understand current adaptations of local food systems, and to identify future trends. The project is developing tools to identify and quantify the impact that tested adaptations in food systems will have on food availability, diversity and equality of access in climate vulnerable contexts, and assesses the capacity of food systems to deliver healthy and sustainable diets by 2030.

Useful links

[FAO in Gambia](http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=GMB)

www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=GMB

[UNDFE](http://www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/)

www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/home/en/

[Family Farming Knowledge Platform](http://www.fao.org/family-farming/home/en/)

www.fao.org/family-farming/home/en/

[Family Farming Campaign](http://www.familyfarmingcampaign.org/en/agricultura-familiar/)

www.familyfarmingcampaign.org/en/agricultura-familiar/



Parliamentary Alliance on food security and nutrition in The Gambia

Several members of the Gambia National Assembly participated in the second Virtual Parliamentary Dialogue on Food Security and Nutrition in the time of Covid-19, held on 15 April 2021 involving lawmakers from several Anglophone African countries. The objective of the dialogues is to support capacity building activities for parliamentarians and strengthen the policy dialogues that are being developed in each region. In fact, the pandemic has not only affected food trade, supply chains and markets, but also people's lives and livelihoods and the access to adequate food in general. In The Gambia, the immediate assistance to the most vulnerable and the support to resilience-building was initiated with the distribution of rice to food-insecure people, the assistance to farmers through procurement of equipment and inputs, and encouraging small businesses. The national assembly is currently working on an insurance scheme, and considering extra allocations for agriculture, as investing in agriculture offers a way out of the pandemic.

The Gambian parliamentarians are also working on how to increase women's financial inclusion to rural and agricultural finance by developing alternative approaches to collateral while fostering an inclusive financial space for women. The focus of the initiative is on encouraging financial institutions such as banks, and microfinance institutions in expanding access to affordable finance to rural women in The Gambia.



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