



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

*XIII International Scientific Agriculture Symposium
"AGROSYM 2022"
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AGRO-BIODIVERSITY IN NATIONAL PATHWAYS FOR FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION: CASE OF WEST AFRICA

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Abstract

The challenges relating to biodiversity loss, food insecurity and climate change show the urgent need to make transition towards sustainable food systems in West Africa. To bring about such a transition worldwide, the United Nations' Food Systems Summit was held in September 2021. One of the main outcomes of the Summit was the national pathways to sustainable food systems. This review analyses whether and how agro-biodiversity is addressed in the food system transformation pathways submitted by West African countries in the framework of the Summit. The content analysis suggests that agro-biodiversity is not a central topic in the national transformation pathways. In fact, it is completely overlooked in some pathways documents, and rather marginal in others. Some national documents (cf. Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria) refer to the promotion of the diversity of crops and farm animals as a means of adapting to climate change, improving livelihoods and diversifying diets thus contributing to nutrition security. Moreover, only a few measures and actions dealing with the valorisation of the neglected and underutilised species (NUS) and traditional crop varieties are included in the national transformation pathways (cf. Guinea, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone). The conservation, management and restoration of agro-biodiversity and agro-ecosystems are crucial to boost the transition towards nature-positive food systems in the region. Therefore, a paradigm change is needed in policy, research and practice to conserve the natural resource base and contribute to sustainable development by addressing, inter alia, food insecurity and malnutrition, rural poverty and climate change challenges.

Keywords: *biodiversity conservation, nature-based solutions, Food Systems Summit, orphan crops, transition pathways.*