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Statement on topic area 2 securing the food supply. Combating climate change

Seed Savers Network like other government and humanitarian agencies has witnessed a worsening trend of food and nutritional insecurity in Kenya. The effects of climate change, COVID 19 pandemic and economic forces have recently impacted on vulnerable families in the country by making it difficult for them to obtain food.

According to National Drought Management Authority ,4.35Million Kenyans are in need of food assistance.

Major driver of food and nutritional insecurity in Kenya

Unsustainable food system: The food system in Kenya is designed to increase dependence on external inputs including fertilizers, seeds and agrochemical. Less focus is given on building resilience of local communities by utilizing locally available inputs. Agroecology related investments are low and government research institutions focus majorly on conventional agriculture.

According to National seed policy 2010, informal seed system contributes the highest in supply of seeds compared to formal seed system. However, the interventions supported by the government are skewed towards formal seed system in terms of funding, research, policy and institutional frameworks. This has created a trade-off where indigenous varieties have been eroded and local communities are unable to diversify in their farms due to limited seed access.

As a result of the skewed agricultural policies towards commercial seeds, mono cropping **is rampant for maize** where the government consider it as the main staple crop.

Maize vulnerability to climate change, and the limited investment possibilities of small-scale farmers for adaptation, Kenya needs to diversify its staples with more climate-resilient (Rampa et.al.,2022). The **crop has proven to be unsuitable in the current environmental landscape.** Farmers incur losses when they dry up due to unreliable rainfall or destruction by pests and diseases. The crop has suffered attack from fall army worm and maize lethal necrosis disease which further reduce its productivity making vulnerable families at high risk of food insecurity.

RECOMMEDATION FOR A RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM

1. Increased investment in aggro-ecology through financial support to initiatives promoting aggro-ecology in the global south.
2. Providing financial and technical support to initiative that mitigate impact of climate change including small scale irrigation and protection of rivers and other water bodies
3. Proving support for intervention that promote self reliance on food supply including prmoting farmers managed seed system, use of onfarm inputs such as manure and use of indigenours knowledge in food production and enviromental conservation .
4. Assisiting governements in the global south to domestic international agreements and treaties that they ascend to intended to promotes rights of the communities to feed themselves such ITPGRFA, Malambo decraration etc.
5. Capacity development for rural communities to effectively particepate in policy development processes in safegurding their interests.

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Responses for topic area 2 securing the food supply. Combating climate change

1. The structural changes that need to happen is a shift from market based model that assume small scale farmers can access food through buying to self sufficiency model, that enable family farmers to produce diverse food for own consumption. Family farmers will not access food through the market because they have no income and their scale of production make them uncompetitive at the market space.

Some of the needed interventions are capacity building, Subsidy to farm based input including transportation of manure , moving away from rain fed farming to small scale irrigation. Investment in small scale farming technologies development and research.

Some of the barriers to progress include unfavorable - policies environment and low investment in promoting self reliance for food. Policies to ensure farmers right in accessing and utilization of traditional varieties and technologies.

Food security policy need to embrace crops and food diversity and move away from a few commodities that encourage monoculture and dependency on external inputs.

2. Initiatives that focus on food sovereignty and aggro-ecology should receive more support from German government. Some of the solution that are working include are small scale irrigation , cultivation of crops that align with climatic conditions of different regions. Soil and water conservation measures, inter cropping of trees and food crops, combination of crops and small livestock to provide manure and other ago-ecological practise.

3. Climate change and aggro-ecology, diversity of crops provides permanent soil cover protecting from adverse weather conditions. Diversity of crops and animals ensure the resilience

of communities food system. Aggro-ecology improve ability of soil to retain moisture. Investment in aggro-ecology means assisting farmers to transport manure from pastoralism regions to cultivated regions, it means making seed for locally adopted crops available at the local level it means adding aggro- ecology to the curriculum in schools and colleges. Small scale farming is the only sustainable way of feeding the majority rural population who lack income and therefore they can not access food through the market.

4. The strength of farm based seed system lie in its capacity to naturally adopt to the changing climate. It means natural selection that allow the best genes to go to the future based on nature preferences. Unnatural manipulation of genes is done for profit and market forces put such technologies in the league of tools that create dependency. Crops do not need to be manipulated but rather humanity should embrace diverse diets based on their aggro-ecological zones.

5. Many interventions fail to reach the grassroots where there impact is targeted. There is need to rethink models of targeting the small scale farmers. Private sector driven by profit has the biggest influence to the type of agriculture practised through money driven policy making processes.

6. Fertilizer subsidies consume all the funds meant to subsidies small scale farmers. However, it mostly benefit large scale farmers. On the other hand, livestock manure from pastoralism areas go to waste while chicken manure continue becoming a nuisance to livestock farmers. The majority bottleneck is high transport cost to the areas where they are needed. This can entirely replace the need for fertilizer and the cost of transportation far much less than the cost of subsidizing fertilizers.