



THE SUSTAINABLE
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PRESS RELEASE

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS CENTER CONFERENCE

THE AFRICAN DIALOGUE ON THE WORLD IN 2050 (TWI2050): How can agriculture contribute to meeting the SDGs in the context of socio-ecological resilience and the conservation of agro-biodiversity in Africa?

**Park Inn by Radisson Hotel
28 – 29 August 2017
Kigali, Rwanda**

KIGALI – The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGC/A) in collaboration with the Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC) hosted the African Dialogue on the World in 2050 (TWI2050) from 28th to 29th August 2017. The multi-actor Dialogue explored pathways for how agriculture can contribute to meeting the SDGs in the context of social-ecological resilience and the conservation, and sustainable use, of agro-biodiversity in Africa.

The World in 2050 (TWI2050) is a newly formed global research initiative designed with the aim to provide such pathways. For TWI2050 to be relevant in the Agenda 2030 processes, it needs to reflect a diversity of African perspectives. In order to be effective in addressing these complex issues, following theme was selected for the African Dialogue: How can agriculture contribute to meeting the SDGs in the context of socio-ecological resilience and the conservation of agro-biodiversity in Africa? The choice of this cross-cutting theme and its importance in achieving the SDGs within planetary boundaries is based on the following considerations:

- role and importance of agriculture (including food systems) and biodiversity for attaining the SDGs in Africa within the planetary boundaries, and continuously following a sustainable trajectory up till 2050 (as aligned in the TWI2050 Narrative)
- role and importance of agriculture within the water-energy-food nexus as well in overall poverty alleviation



Co-chaired by Dr. Belay Begashaw, Director of the SDG Center for Africa, and Prof. Johan Rockström, Director of Stockholm Resilience Centre; the dialogue brought together a wide variety of participants including policy makers, academicians, business leaders and civil society, invited from diverse organizations across Africa. They participants shared expertise and experiences from a wide variety of perspectives. The workshop was divided into three main sessions focusing on different SDGs from the perspective of agriculture and the biospheres boundaries for sustainable resource use, not neglecting the importance of institutions, governance and universal values.

During the dialogue, it was noted that Africa must invest in advanced technology as one of the strategies to deal with challenges of climate change. In his presentation, Dr Belay Begashaw, Director General of the SDGC/A stated that “although Africa is responsible for 85 percent farming, it was still the biggest importer of food at \$37 billion per year”. Referring to the environment, Dr. Begashaw pointed out that of all freshwater species in Africa, 21% were recorded as threatened – 45% of freshwater fish and 58% of freshwater plant species are over-harvested while African birds have declined over the past 25 years.

Following the presentation, Dr Mark Cyubahiro Bagabe, Director General of the Rwanda Agricultural Board told the participants that demanding quality and safety of what is being grown by farmers comes with climate change challenges that require partnerships to overcome. “We are beginning to demand quality and safety of what we grow and eat from production to consumption, if we do that, then we have contributed to conservation. In the face of climate change, drought, floods, emergency of pests and diseases is going to be prevalent. Every country that is growing cereals is being faced with most of these challenges. These challenges will require close partnerships in scientific research, disease resistance and farming systems that conserve the soil stability,” he said.

The East African Sub-regional Coordinator for Food and Agriculture (FAO) Dr. Patrick Kormawa reminded the participants that Africa had the resources but needed to re-focus its attention to diversification. Dr. Kormawa noted that if invested in, agriculture can be the continent’s driving



engine out of poverty. “Despite the fact that African economies have been growing at average of 5% per year for the last 15 years, employment generation has not yet jumped to match the population growth. Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy and will have to be its driving engine out of poverty since it accounts for 65% of the continent’s employment and 75% of its domestic trade,” he said.

About SDGC/A

The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa (SDGC/A) is an autonomous international organization, that provides technical support, and expertise as input to national governments, private sector, civil society, academic institutions to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda across Africa. The SDGC/A builds upon the existing successes of the African continent by bringing together people, ideas, and innovation from across the world to collectively build a more sustainable future.

For more information about SDGC/A and its work visit: www.sdgc africa.org

About The Stockholm Resilience Centre

The Stockholm Resilience Centre is an international center that advances transdisciplinary research for governance of social-ecological systems with a special emphasis on resilience. SwedBio, that is financing the African Dialogue, is a knowledge interface at Stockholm Resilience Centre contributing to poverty alleviation, equity, sustainable livelihoods and social-ecological systems rich in biodiversity that persist, adapt and transform under global change such as climate change. SwedBio enables knowledge generation, dialogue and exchange between practitioners, policy makers and scientists for development and implementation of policies and methods at multiple scales.

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