

Policy Brief

Food Sovereignty

Feb. 2023

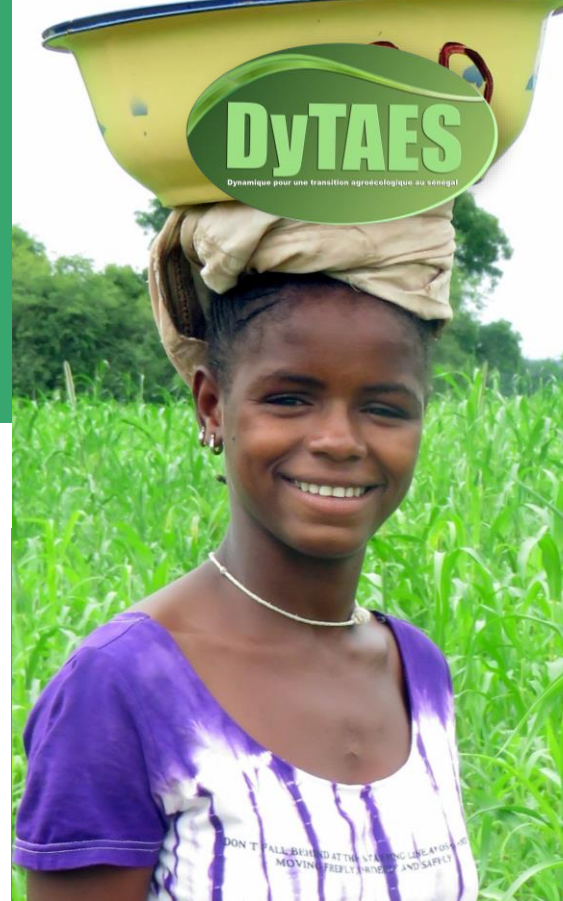
For agroecological food systems in Senegal

Food insecurity remains a constant concern in Senegal. Nearly 4 million Senegalese were under food pressure in 2022 (RPCA). Although rice and horticultural production has increased, national supply remains well below demand. The country has to import almost 70% of its foodstuffs, mainly rice, wheat and maize.

This dependence on world markets represents a risk, particularly in the event of soaring prices on the international market or logistical disruption to distribution. It makes Senegalese households vulnerable by exposing them to fluctuations in the price of agricultural commodities. This is all the more worrying given sustained population growth and high post-harvest losses.

By encouraging the diversification and relocation of food systems, agro-ecology opens up the prospect of food, nutrition and energy sovereignty. Agroecology proposes rethinking the ways in which we produce, trade and consume, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region. It favors short marketing channels as a means of protecting against the risks of shortages and uncontrolled price fluctuations inherent in globalized supply chains. Ultimately, agro-ecology proposes to design healthier, sustainable and fairer food systems with a view to achieving food sovereignty in Senegal!

Decision-makers must include the development of local food systems based on agroecology in the national strategy for food sovereignty.



La Dynamique pour une Transition Agroécologique au Sénégal (DyTAES)

is a network of farmer organizations, consumers, NGOs, research and training institutions, local elected representatives and businesses.

From 7 February to 15 March 2022, DyTAES consulted thousands of people in 14 localities spread across Senegal's 6 eco-geographical zones.

This policy brief is a summary of the issues discussed about productive water and the recommendations made to the State and local authorities.

www.dytaes.sn

dytaes2020@gmail.com

Tel: +221 33 889 34 39

National programs provide little support for transforming food systems

Recent global crises (war in Ukraine, Covid 19) have largely revealed the fragility of today's food systems. Against this backdrop, the President of Senegal has called for a general mobilization to promote local products and food sovereignty.

With this in mind, the Government of Senegal has drawn up the Programme Agricole de Souveraineté Alimentaire et Durable (PASAD 2021-2025). It provides for the development of agroforestry and fishery products based on sustainable, environmentally-friendly agriculture and fairer supply chains. Although PASAD and other national programs take into account the country's agricultural and food issues, the specific challenges of agro-ecological transition and the sustainable transformation of food systems are not sufficiently integrated.

Lack of policy cohesion and inclusion

In Senegal, public policies are often implemented through a multitude of projects and programs. In this context, we can criticize (i) the lack of mechanisms for synergizing actions carried out by the various ministries concerned, and (ii) the low level of involvement of civil society and local stakeholders in the development, implementation and monitoring of public policies.

The transition to sustainable food systems must be based on inclusive governance, involving dialogue between the different levels of decision-making and the plurality of sectors concerned (agriculture and rural equipment, livestock farming, fisheries, environment, water, trade, health, etc.) in a holistic approach.

Difficult access to means of production for family farms

In Senegal, public and private investment is mainly directed towards export agriculture, high value-added sectors and agropoles.

Against this backdrop, family farmers, and in particular women and young people, find it difficult to access the credit, farm equipment, productive water and land they need to ensure the agro-ecological transition of their systems.

Increasingly extraverted consumption

Under the influence of the neoliberal system, Senegalese people are turning to poor-quality processed foods offered by agro-industries. This phenomenon encourages consumption patterns that are harmful to people's health. It also contributes to the gradual disappearance of small and medium-sized production, processing and distribution units.

Low market value of agroecological products

There is still a lack of distribution channels, warehousing facilities and profitable outlets for agroecological products. In addition, there are too few mechanisms to promote quality and differentiate prices between agroecological and conventional produce. The prices of local produce are driven down by imported products, which are considered identical or substitutable. The weight of imports discourages the development of local and agroecological value chains.

Food sovereignty can only be achieved by taking measures commensurate with these challenges.

Drawing on the consultations carried out during Caravan 2022, DyTAES encourages the Senegalese government to create favorable conditions for the sustainable transformation of agri-food systems through agroecology. These recommendations are in line with the commitments made by the Senegalese state in 2018 when it adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP).



Agroecology, a response to the challenges

By bringing about changes covering all components of food systems, from seeds and soils to the consumer's table, agroecology opens up a horizon of food, nutritional and energy sovereignty for Senegal.

Agroecology takes care of the territories in which it is developed by encouraging crop diversification and the use of more resistant local varieties. In this way, it helps the farming system adapt to the disruptions associated with climate change, while preserving biodiversity.

Agroecology contributes to greater social justice by putting farmers back at the heart of the production system. Economically viable, it ensures better remuneration and increases agricultural yields in a virtuous circle.

Finally, agroecology offers local, seasonal, more diversified and higher quality food. It implies the development of short circuits, more remunerative for producers and beneficial for consumers (price, proximity, quality).

Recommendations for sustainable food systems

DyTAES recommends the development of an inclusive, integrated and coherent agrifood policy, based on the right to food.

Such a policy would: (i) align the various sectoral programs and letters (agriculture, livestock, fisheries, environment, health, trade, territorial development, etc.) around a common medium- and long-term vision, (ii) clarify the distribution of roles and responsibilities between the various players, (iii) make the agro-ecological transition a political priority by rallying a wide range of players who share the same objective, namely to put food systems on the path to sustainability.

This policy must be based on the following principles:

Community rights and inclusive governance

- Include in policies the right to food, as well as collective rights to land, water, seeds and productive resources for family farms in general, and for women and young people in particular;
- Promote inclusive governance mechanisms at municipal, territorial and national levels, enabling the participation of food system stakeholders in decision-making processes and territorial planning.

Support for the most disadvantaged players and territories in transition

- Redirect subsidies and investments towards diversified farms and local food systems based on agroecology principles and sustainable food practices;
- Strengthen incentives (administrative and tax relief), support measures and social protection mechanisms to encourage the development of local businesses that create jobs in food systems;
- Support territories in agro-ecological transition and direct sales initiatives between farmers and consumers to strengthen local food circuits;
- Provide financial support for participatory research based on the needs of food system stakeholders, in particular farmers, value chain players and local authorities.

Raise consumer awareness and support local markets

- Develop and implement programs to educate young people and raise public awareness of the health and nutritional benefits of local and agroecological products;
 - Strengthen import regulation policies to support the development of local, national and regional markets, with prices that ensure an adequate standard of living for producers;
 - Create sales areas dedicated to agroecological products in existing markets;
 - Support the labeling of agroecological products based on specifications, a control system and appropriate marketing (geographical indication, brand, eco-responsible packaging, etc.);
 - Subsidize low-income urban households so that they can afford a healthy diet based on local agroecological products;
 - Include a quota of agroecological products in public procurement (school catering, hospitals, army, prisons, etc.) adapted to the productive capacity of each territory.
- Support the coordination of local agro-ecological initiatives and players by structuring supply chains and setting up food networks to re-establish connections between farmers and consumers (short circuits);
 - Strengthen the capacity of rural players to preserve, process and trace agricultural produce through appropriate training, information and advisory services, and appropriate equipment (e.g., harvesting, drying and hygiene standards, etc.).

Sources

- *DyTAES, 2022, Rapport de restitution de la Caravane, Dakar.*
- *DyTAES, 2020, Contribution aux politiques nationales pour une transition agroécologique au Sénégal, Dakar.*
- *FAO, Union européenne et Cirad. 2022. Profil des systèmes alimentaires – Sénégal. Activer la transformation durable et inclusive de nos des systèmes alimentaires. Rome, Bruxelles et Montpellier, France.*
- *IPES-Food, 2020. Valeur(s) ajoutée(s) de l'agroécologie : Déverrouiller le potentiel de transition en Afrique de l'Ouest.*
- *Alliance mondiale pour l'avenir de l'alimentation, 2021, La politique de la connaissance.*
- *HLPE. 2020. Sécurité alimentaire et nutrition: énoncé d'une vision globale à l'horizon 2030. Rapport du Groupe d'experts de haut niveau sur la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale, Rome.*

Development of regional food plans

The national agri-food policy could be implemented at local level through local food plans. These plans are to be drawn up through a participatory planning process involving all stakeholders in local food systems.

As part of an agroecological approach, local food plans aim to relocate agriculture and food on a territorial scale, with a view to achieving a degree of self-sufficiency, improving public health and the environment, and creating local jobs.

To achieve this, local food plans must be based on the following principles:

- Guarantee the provision of basic infrastructure and services in each territory for small and medium-sized production, preservation, processing and distribution units (infrastructure, adapted equipment and structuring credits at subsidized rates);

