

Letter addressed to the Government of Senegal, G7 members state, and the African Union

NAFSN in Senegal failed: Civil society calls on policy makers to put smallholder farmers at the core of strategies to address food security and nutrition.

The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) was launched by the G8 in 2012 in response to the food price crisis that took place in 2010-2011 and severe drought affecting the Horn of Africa and local populations. NAFSN built on previous efforts such as the L'Aquila Global Food Security Initiative. Whereas L'Aquila rallied governments to invest public funds in food security, NAFSN appealed to private sector companies, both national and multinational, to "achieve sustained and inclusive agricultural growth and raise 50 million people out of poverty over the next 10 years".

Civil society and farmer movements in Senegal welcome the G7 commitments made in 2012 to support agriculture in Africa, but condemn NAFSN both for its approach and design, and how it was implemented. We call on G7 countries, African governments, and the African Union to support smallholder farmers and agroecology, as a more effective way to improve food security and nutrition in a sustainable manner, as recognized by the 2018 FAO Forum on Agroecology.

Since its establishment, civil society has been concerned by NAFSN, due to the increased risks of landgrabs and privatization of seeds. While these threats did not come to pass in Senegal, NAFSN nevertheless did not fulfill its promises. An independent evaluation of NAFSN, supported by the Canadian Food Security Policy Group (FSPG), found that NAFSN did not meet its stated goals of improving food security and nutrition through an increase in private sector investment in agriculture. Neither did NAFSN lead to significant policy reforms nor to a better alignment and increase of international aid by G7 member countries.

NAFSN was launched under the premise that food security and nutrition would be improved thanks to an increase in private sector investment. The experience in Senegal however demonstrates that NAFSN did not adequately target and recruit businesses to partner with NAFSN due to a rushed process imposed by G7 members.

Lack of communication around NAFSN's goals, the lack of information and preparation of NAFSN partners to act on their commitments, and the absence of any binding mechanism or framework, led to a lack of engagement by partners, civil society and farmers' organizations.

NAFSN essentially perceives smallholder farmers as potential beneficiaries of jobs and services provided by agribusiness rather than seeing smallholder farmers as economic actors in their own right. Moreover, the jobs created by agribusinesses are often fewer than expected, of poor quality, often precarious and seasonal, and without any social or medical care provisions.

In contrast, smallholder farmers, by aggregate, represent the most important investors in agriculture, while also providing employment, and preserving farmland. NAFSN did not sufficiently take into account the role that smallholder farmers play as private sector investors in agriculture and food security.

In a context of climate change, with an increased scarcity of water and resources, and the loss of biodiversity, it is urgent for governments to transition towards agricultural models that are more sustainable and resilient. NAFSN rather favored agricultural companies that rely on monoculture and water and chemical input-intensive agriculture.

While NAFSN signalled a will to improve the plight of the poor and women in particular, women have largely been ignored. No women's organization or cooperative operated and led by women was recruited as business partners of NAFSN, while the majority of the jobs created under NAFSN went to men.

NAFSN also suffered from a lack of consultation and involvement of civil society from the start. Also, rather than encourage the implementation of already identified and agreed-to priorities in agriculture in Senegal, NAFSN duplicated efforts and resources and competed against pre-existing Senegalese projects and programs. It would have been better to directly support and strengthen existing frameworks and programs rather than unrolling a new parallel initiative with little chance of reaching its goals.

When considering the essential role that agriculture plays in Africa, Senegal's civil society believes this sector must receive ongoing support and commitment, rather than sporadic help.

We therefore call on the G7 to renew its support to agriculture, but by placing smallholder farmers and their policy demands at the heart of any new initiative seeking to improve food security.

We call on the G7 to recognize that:

- Food security in Africa is met by smallholder farmers and food producers and that these need to be supported by public policies to ensure a secured access to land, water and farmer-saved seeds;
- Small-scale farms are generally as productive and as efficient as larger agro-industrial farms, while providing more employment, of better quality, and producing food in a more sustainable manner;
- Women are the cornerstone of sustainable agriculture, and are pioneers of strategies that ensure food security.

We call on you to also:

- Maintain support to agriculture and food security in Africa, but for this support to take into account the perspective of civil society and farmer and peasant movements;
- Ensure that any new G7 initiative be harmonized with pre-existing national plans and programs, and respect the Paris Agreement, and the Malabo commitments.

We call on the Government of Senegal to:

- Increase its financial support to agriculture, with a special focus on smallholder farmers and food producers, and in line with the Malabo commitments;
- Complete the land reform process to ensure secure land tenure for smallholder farmers and to protect land and its natural resources for future generations;
- To implement its National « Eat Local » Strategy by facilitating access to locally and ecologically produced foods for local markets, establishing short value chains linked to smallholder farms, and by building greater capacity in agroecological production methods, with youth in particular;
- Strengthen rural women’s organizations and networks so that women can have more influence in food and agriculture policy making;
- Support rural women in their efforts to process, conserve and sell their products to local markets;
- Implement and protect the rights of peasants as recognized in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; and
- Recognize peasant seeds and farmer-saved seeds in national legislation and support farmer and peasant seed systems.

Finally, we ask the African Union, now responsible for the implementation of NAFSN, to:

- Prioritize support to smallholder farmers in agriculture and food security programs, in recognition of the fact that they are the most important investors in these sectors.

In conclusion, in light of the failure of NAFSN in Senegal, civil society and farmers movements call on policy makers to put smallholder agriculture at the heart of future food security and nutrition strategies. We call on the G7, the Government of Senegal, and the African Union to support smallholder agriculture, agroecology, and women, to build food production systems that feed people in a sustainable way.

Signatories :

1. Cadre de Concertation et de Coopération des Ruraux(**CNCR**)
2. Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (**IPAR**)
3. ActionAid Sénégal(**AAS**)
4. Association pour la promotion de la Femme Sénégalaise(**APROFES**)
5. Association des producteurs de la Vallée du Fleuve Gambie(**APROVAG**)
6. Réseau Africain pour le Droit à l’alimentation(**RAPDA**)
7. Conseil des Organisations Non Gouvernementale D’appui au Développement(**CONGAD**)
8. Cadre de Concertation des producteurs d’Arachide(**CCPA**)
9. Coalition pour la protection du Patrimoine Génétique Africain (**COPAGEN -SENEGAL**)
10. Alliance pour la Souveraineté Alimentaire en Afrique (**AFSA**)
11. Fahamu Africa

12. Nous Sommes la Solution (NSS): un mouvement de femmes rurales pour la souveraineté alimentaire
13. Conseil des Animateurs pour le développement de Djirnda (**CADD**)
14. Eco Citoyen
15. Enda Pronat
16. GIPSWAR
17. Journal Agropasteur
18. Innovation, Environnement et Développement en Afrique(**IED-Afrique**)
19. Carrefour International
20. Activista Sénégal
21. Forum social Sénégalais(**FSS**)
22. Organisation des Jeunesse Panafricaniste(**OJP**)
23. Panafricaine Pour Education et le Développement Durable(**PAEDD**)
24. Kedougou Encadrement Orientation Droits Humains(KEOH)
25. Etc,