



# National Dialogue on Just Transition and Adaptation in the Food System in South Africa

20-22 September 2023

# Synthesis of presentations





- Strengthen the voice of constituencies of workers, smallholder farmers, and communities by contributing to building a shared agenda on key criteria and principles for a just food system transition that mitigates food system emissions and builds adaptive capacity and resilience.
- Facilitate a multi-actor dialogue space to share understandings of and approaches to relevant national policy-making processes.
- Develop a shared understanding of the contents, gaps and opportunities in the CCAMP, Climate Change Bill, and other relevant sector policies to inform policy positions and create ongoing policy coordination on this and other related policy engagements.
- Establish an ongoing space/platform for strategic sharing between civil society, workers, smallholder farmers, and communities, to shape ongoing engagement with government policy.

### Link to all presentations

https://t2m.io/JT ND presentations

### Link to fact sheets in English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Xhosa, Zulu

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aPq\_MgvNZB6u\_mdxo-gXoGh61kFeyaga

#1 Towards a just transition in the South African food system

#2 The South African food system

#3 Climate change emissions in the industrialised food system

#4 Impacts of climate change on the SA agro-food system

#5 Overview of the CCAMP

#6 Agroecology for food sovereignty and climate justice

# Day 1

## Panel on the food system

### What is the food system?

Dr Marc Wegerif, Department of Development Studies, University of Pretoria

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

We can produce food in ways that improve or destroy the environment. The food system should respond to the needs for food for all through production that not only sustains resources, but regenerates them too. The system is characterised by high inequality. We must address that in the food system, and so must look at the power relations. This is not just a neutral system. It is full of power, with winners and losers. Some are getting more wealth and power. We should ask who owns what, who does what, and who gets what. Are those providing the labour getting a fair share? Who is making decisions? This is highly unequal in South Africa. For example there are low returns to farmers and labour. Half of the population can't afford a healthy diet. One in five children are stunted. The food system is not delivering food security, and is not delivering jobs. Instead, it is shedding jobs and there are higher returns to capital. There are contested processes.

Internationally there is a move to "multi-stakeholderism", which is unaccountable and corporate influence is very strong. Multilateral structures made up of governments can get undermined by this approach. We must look at who is being positioned to make decisions.

The High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Security and Nutrition indicates a number of drivers of the food system, for example technology, economic, political, and social elements. There are different actors, such as farmers, traders, and buyers of food. The system has policies that shape it. The ultimate outcome needs to be the right to food, and this must go along with creation of livelihoods.

There are different kinds of food systems. One is large-scale commercial farming. This is increasingly owned by investment companies. The model relies on capital-intensive production, machinery, and doing away with labour. This is not because it is the most effective. This system was created under apartheid. It was white owned but is also a model of production. Large-scale distribution centres include automation, and mechanisation to do away with jobs. Supermarkets force us to drive to buy food, and also produces casualisation of labour, with low pay in insecure jobs. It is very hard for a small-scale emerging farmer to get into this system. Maybe a few can grow into it, but the majority of farmers can't be part of it by definition. Those who get into this system do so on very adverse terms, even for larger farmers. Government is always promoting this model of selling into supermarkets and scale, driven by returns to investments.

But there are other systems as well. Many here are involved in that. There are many producers and traders out there. They can sell directly to local communities, or through street traders and municipal markets. Farmers can take small amounts and sell in local and fresh produce markets. This goes to the informal sector as well. Traders require same day turnover as they do not have good storage facilities to keep food fresh. This is a different kind of food system with many more actors in it, and a more equitable structure. Street traders sell for cheaper than the formal sector.

What is a just transition? It should include greater autonomy from the corporate system, equitable redistribution of ownership, democratisation, agroecology, and the right to healthy food for all. At the core of a just transition is a change from the relations of extraction and exploitation to one based on collaboration and mutual benefit.

### What does the South African food system look like?

Refiloe Joala, Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU IDs2U41]

We have a dual food system. One side is corporate-industrial dominated, with about 15,000 largescale commercial farmers producing about 80% of the food consumed. There are linkages to international finance and agribusiness, including large scale inputs. The sector has private land under private title. On the other side are small and medium scale producers and different actors in the food system. There are around 2.3 million small-scale farmers, mostly in the former bantustans. They are producing mainly for their own production but also some surplus sales. Policies are not speaking to what is happening on the ground. There is a growing number of medium to large scale black farmers, around 230,000. They are mostly selling to local markets, with some contracts and to supermarkets. These farmers benefit a bit from incoherent government programmes but the majority of small-scale farmers are excluded from these programmes. Some alternatives are arising, for example the national emergence of niche markets based on certification, fair trade, and organic production. Smallholder farmers are engaged in agroecological practices. However, there is inadequate support from the government.

How did we come to have this food system? We must look at the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act of 1996 which deregulated the sector. It has resulted in fewer, larger farms, and regional expansion and corporatisation of African food systems. Concentration enables more price gouging. The outcomes of this food system include food insecurity. As a country we do produce enough food, but affordability is a key driver of food insecurity. The system has multiple contradictions. Largescale commercial farms tend to focus on exports and we still have a lot of imports. Priority is given to high value crops. So much money is spent on social grants to buy food, but there is not a complementary procurement system for markets and resources to produce and grow food. On climate, livestock is a dominant issue which we need to grapple with.

### What is undermining the right to food in South Africa?

Mervyn Abrahams, Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity

The purpose of a functioning food system is that it is able to provide access to sufficient and nutritious food for all people. It must also be climate resilient, and good for nature as well but fundamentally it is to provide full access. We all know of the horrific stories of children dying of hunger. The food system is always embedded in a political and economic system and is shaped by it. We are in a capitalist economy, where food is commodified and production is based on private investment. The net goal is profit, that drives what is grown. Retailers are powerful players and operate from the biggest profit margin they can get while still having buyers. The capitalist economy determines who has access and who does not. South African households are net buyers of food. We may grow some food ourselves but not cooking oil, bread etc, so we do need to go to the store. There we buy what we can afford. The stores are full of food, the question is affordability. If you can afford it, you will not think food is expensive.

Some people say we must bring prices down but they suggest that to do this we must cut input costs including wages. Food is already being subsidised by the low wages farm workers earn. It is also a question of income. Historically there have been very low wages in South Africa. For example, the national minimum wage could generate about R4,500 for a household with a few people working. PEJD track a food basket of 44 foods; a minimum food basket for an average household of seven people costs R5,124 a month. That alone is greater than household income from the national minimum wage. Household priorities are transport so people can get to work, and then electricity. These take up about R2,490 or 55.7% of the national minimum wage. Only after that is money allocated for food. If you divide the remaining money by four people, each one gets R495 for food. The food poverty line of R760 is above this. People don't have enough money to pay for the food we need to eat.



## Panel: Climate change impacts on the food system and nutrition

### What is climate change?

Courtney Morgan, African Climate Reality Project

[presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

This is a climate change crash course. Climate change is the measured increase in global average temperatures, which is caused by human activities. Southern Africa is a climate change hot spot (warming at twice the global average); which does not have the strong economy that other countries do to bounce back on. This is particularly important given that Africa and South Africa experience a lot of hunger, which is set to get worse over the years. Women are more severely affected by the impacts of climate change than men are. Climate change is a threat multiplier, meaning that any existing threats will become worse as a result of climate changes in the region.

Common climate misconceptions include treating climate and weather as the same thing. Weather is what is happening now, whereas climate is the patterns of weather over time. Fossil fuels form over millions of years. When we burn them, they emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) trap heat in the atmosphere. The main types are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), mainly caused by burning fossil fuels and deforestation; nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) which is mainly caused by agricultural production (use of synthetic fertilisers, manure management practices); and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), which mainly comes from livestock and decay of organic matter in landfills. Chloroflurocarbons (CFCs) are a lesser form of GHG, used in refrigeration, but their use has mainly been phased out because of their ozone-depleting properties. Emissions are producing extreme weather, sea level rising, and biodiversity loss. Mitigation refers to efforts to reduce GHG emissions. Adaptation is about adjusting practices to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience.

Systematic change is important when discussing solutions to the climate crisis; not just individual responsibility. These also need to be taken up at the local level. Particularly important is conserving story-telling which is important in the African context.

Online library available at:

https://climatereality.africa/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Climate\_Action\_Online\_library-1.pdf

Where do emissions in the food system come from? Dr Stephen Greenberg, African Centre for Biodiversity

[presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU IDs2U41]

South Africa is in the top 15 emitters globally and produces about one third of total emissions from Africa, mainly through inefficient energy production and use. But even so, it is still only 1% of total global emissions. The US (25%), China (15%), Russia and Europe produce by far the majority of cumulative emissions. We can stop our entire economy and we will still have very little impact on slowing global warming.

But what is in the country's control is stopping multinational corporations from plundering Africa's natural resources including gas and oil to produce more emissions, where Africans benefit very little and Northern users are the main short-term beneficiaries. We must also focus on adaptation.

Energy production and use accounts for 81% of total emissions in South Africa. About 7% of that amount is energy use and transport in the food system. Agricultural production and other food system emissions contribute about 18% of total emissions in South Africa, making it the sector with the second largest emissions after energy.

Primary agricultural production produces just under half of all emissions from the food system. Livestock contributes about 77% of emissions from primary agriculture and about 37% of total agrifood system emissions, mainly in the form of methane. This is mainly through enteric fermentation (gas release from eating) in cattle. An area for further investigation is the role of manufactured animal feed, and the multiple potential environmental benefits of grass-fed livestock.

Emissions from the land is the next category in agricultural production, but much smaller than livestock. Nitrous oxide from managed soils is the biggest share here. This relates to microbial production and consumption in the soil. These are dynamic and complex processes, and not fully understood by humans, making responses quite complicated. There are variations in emissions depending on how soils are managed. Causes are a combination of application of nitrogen fertiliser, higher soil moisture, and higher temperatures.

Energy use in the food system is the second largest category of emissions after primary agricultural production, with just under one quarter of all agri-food system emissions. This includes an estimate of electricity and heat production and use, transport, and energy in agricultural production itself. Agroprocessing and manufacturing contributes under 10% of total food system emissions, followed by organic solid waste disposal and industrial processes (e.g. production of agrochemicals) at just over 5% each.

Forests and grasslands are also key carbon sinks. Agricultural production can also contribute to storing carbon in biomass and in the soil, if properly managed (e.g. through limiting tillage so as not to disturb the soil, or not expanding production onto new lands). These are complex processes. The priorities are to look in more detail at the livestock sector especially, and also grassland management. Emissions are one aspect of the food system, but we must also consider the bigger environmental, social and economic context to think about how to manage a transition in favour of the majority.

### What are the projected impacts of climate change on the SA food system?

Charles Simane, South African Food Sovereignty Campaign / Climate Justice Charter Movement

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

Southern Africa is warming at about twice the global rate due to its regional position. A small drought in Southern Africa has a severe impact as we are a semi-arid region. Examples are the drought in 2014/15, which resulted in a 40% decrease in yields, and the projected El Nino from this summer to next year. Two thirds of Africa's arable land is expected to be lost by 2025 because of lack of rainfall and drought. Rising temperatures will reduce stable agricultural production by up to 50%. The country's rainfall is less than half of the global average. Using soil as an example, increased

heat stress leads to a loss of soil moisture, leading to more irrigation and increased costs. Soil organisms die, soils harden and become infertile. Such factors mean farmers are now turning to more destructive chemical fertilisers, thus increasing desertification.

South Africa's agricultural sector is highly concentrated in specialized production in small regions (e.g. avocados in Limpopo), where a small drought in these regions can affect the whole country. Heat stress is liable to lead to the collapse of livestock farming and several key crops. Fish are moving away from shore as the ocean warms, with a negative impact for subsistence fishers. Impacts of such are also then felt in the country's economy through job losses (especially in the agricultural sector), increased hunger and gender dynamics, as well as costs being transferred to consumers. The alternative is to build food sovereignty through decentralised hubs.

# Panel: What is a just transition in the food system?

### Definition of a just transition in the food system

Melisizwe Tyiso, National Labour and Economic Development Institute

[presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

The word 'just' as used here does not mean *nje*. It speaks to the issue of justice. We must communicate these terms in language we are familiar with. The just transition concept comes from the 1970s, from trade unions in the USA in response to the shift from high to low carbon processes. They negotiated partnerships with environmental organisations for programmes with workers. We want this movement to build these alliances to deal with capitalism as the root cause. In 2010-11 COSATU came up with a definition of a just transition for South Africa. It is now being taken over by others and they are redefining it for us, so we must reclaim the term. It is about a deeper transformation with redistribution of resources for a more equitable social order.

The Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) has a framework. It may not be perfect but we have to engage with it. They break a just transition into four categories. It puts people at the centre of decision making, especially those most impacted such as the poor, women, youth, and people with disabilities. We need to educate and capacitate, and hand over the baton to the youth to take up the issues. The PCC breaks down the principles of a just transition to include distributive justice (dealing with race, gender, and class inequalities); restorative justice (there is lots of degradation of the environment and resources, then the exploiters leave while others have to deal with the impacts); and procedural justice, where we must define what development is according to us and we should be part of decision making.

Why a just transition? The food system is a contributor to emissions, while hunger persists in the population. South Africa is one of the top economies in Africa but has the worst rates of stunting. We need to build an alliance to advance justice. The long walk to freedom will be full of obstacles and challenges but we must proceed.



### Outcomes of a just transition

Gabriel Manyangadze, Southern African Faith Communities Environmental Initiative (SAFCEI)

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

We need values and factors beyond commerce. I will frame my presentation on the basis of morality. Why are we here when we know what is going on? At the African Climate Summit a statement came from faith leaders that actions are falling short of requirements. We must be responsible for stewardship, with justice, equity, and solidarity to guide our actions. Are we doing what we should be doing at the level we are? There are leaders in this room. People have already mentioned that those who suffer most have contributed the least to the problem. Buyers of organic food are those who have wealth. They are industrialists who pollute the land, they are shareholders of chemical companies, but they don't eat the products of their work. They produce for others and eat what is clean. This is a moral question.

What are the indicators of us having achieved a just transition? Fact sheet 1 refers to equitable livelihoods. This includes decent jobs and incomes, and that the market should not drive the food system. Determination of our lifestyles is being done through policy supported by corporations. It is not about life but profit. Policy actions are important, because we can and cannot do things based on what the policies say. For example, they are gradually inhibiting seed sharing. We should focus on this. Poverty is forcing people into a food system they don't choose. Supermarkets determine what we eat. Lifestyle is not only about food, but also health. We must go to the hospital if we eat bad food. Equitable livelihoods mean job security, safe working conditions, and decent wages. But we are not getting that. The amount of money allocated is not supporting this, while some are making money from this system. We must hold our leaders accountable for this because they are making the policies to allow this. Informal traders should be recognised as key actors, and have decent conditions. We must morally stand on the high ground to allow people to make choices.

Another element of the just transition is environmental sustainability. At the moment producers are targeting profit. But crops are grown in a way that kills the soil. All life should matter. The third element of a just transition is the right to food and improved nutrition. Policies determine what food we eat, which is shaped by corporate power. Is it morally right to allow this?

### **Principles and criteria - what do we concretely propose/demand/act on?** Dr Andrew Bennie, Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ)

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

We have looked at where we are currently on inequality, corporate power, injustice, and food insecurity. We have looked at where we need to be. What is our framing vision to guide our inputs into policy and the work we do together? How do we get to where we want to be? What values inform the food system we want? This links to local struggles and experiences. We know where we are now; now to start moving forward. Principles are the rules we agree to. Instead of survival of the fittest, profit etc, what should define the structure of our food system? After principles, criteria or indicators allow us to guide priorities. Then come concrete and practical proposals and interventions to realise those criteria. This is the lens through which we can listen to the policy inputs on Day 2.

Principle	Indicators/criteria
Meet human needs	
Labour justice	• Decent work: fair payment, working conditions throughout food system
	<ul> <li>Improved quality of life for workers</li> </ul>
Just food chain	• Fair and mutually agreeable relationships between food system actors
structures	<ul> <li>Fair food value chains that create green decent jobs</li> </ul>
Right to vital goods	• Access for all to sufficient nutritious, adequate, and safe food at all times
(e.g. right to food,	<ul> <li>Resilience of food supply chains to shocks</li> </ul>
land, water)	<ul> <li>Supporting farmer resilience in the face of shocks and stresses</li> </ul>
Livelihood	<ul> <li>Improved farmer livelihoods and quality of life</li> </ul>
opportunities	• Workers and farmers own and have secure access to the land they work,
	especially women
	<ul> <li>Smaller and non-corporate actors in supply chains recognised, supported</li> </ul>
<b>Ecological integrity</b>	<ul> <li>Ecosystem health is improved – agroecology</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Biodiversity restoration, conservation and expansion</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Soil, water and air health is protected and improved</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Natural resource use stays within planetary boundaries</li> </ul>
	• Animals are treated respectfully, and their inherent value is recognised
Participatory and democratic	
Just and	• Decision making processes are transparent, inclusive, and provide fair
participatory	opportunity for hearing different voices
processes	<ul> <li>Decision making does not simply reflect, create, or intensify power</li> </ul>
	disparities
Access to relevant	• Reliable information about the impacts of food systems, climate change,
information	and different diets on humans and nature is available to all in decision
	making and action
Respect and be	• Local, indigenous, and tradition knowledge is respected and given a voice
inclusive of	<ul> <li>Diverse visions related to producing, processing, and selling food are</li> </ul>
diversity	respected
	• Specific effort is made for gender, class, and race inclusion, and everyone
	is equally recognised and valued
Capacity building	<ul> <li>Developing individual and collective skills for just transition</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Capacity building for collective action on just transitions</li> </ul>
	• Appropriate technical and technological innovations are made available to
	relevant actors, especially marginalised groups

# Panel on climate change and adaptation in the food system

The session, organised by the Adaptation Network, drew on some of the discussions from the preparatory workshops.

**Climate change and adaptation in the food system** Elin Lorimer, Indigo Development and Change

[presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU IDs2U41]

We need not only to focus on emissions, but on the changes needed to adapt to the current climate. We have never been in such a climate situation before so there is no way of knowing completely what appropriate actions even look like. However, practical steps need to be taken and these need to address institutional, social and other levels. Agricultural policies in South Africa tend to focus on commercial farmers only, leaving out small-scale farmers and the adaptive skills they need.

As much of the country will become hotter and drier, with some of the East Coast experiencing more flooding, how we approach adaptation is important. It is also important to be aware of the different types of adaptation from the agricultural sector. Often, international solutions are top-down whereas supporting community-based adaptation requires a different approach, including drawing on existing indigenous knowledge and skills. We need to investigate transport, food waste and cold storage facilities as well. How can local markets be better supported? What is the demand side like?

Adaptation does not occur in a vacuum, and the impacts of other development initiatives are important. When people's livelihoods are supported, they are better able to cope with other vulnerabilities.

Nompumelelo Madubane (GenderCC), Nhlanhla Mthembu (HPSA) and Molatelo Mohale (Nkuzi) provided feedback from some of the preparatory workshop constituencies. This included the need to start considering indigenous goats as an alternative to cattle, which emit the most GHGs in livestock farming. Thus, goats were highlighted as a better way of adapting to climate change. They were also noted for being more resilient to drought and heat stress. The food sector's pricing and processing ought to depend on local farmers, not retailers, while also establishing ways to use local resources to ensure nutritional supplements are locally sourced. Agroecology was highlighted as a means of adaptation, noting the use of traditional seeds, foods, and water harvesting methodologies. This further raises the need for local markets, which is about satisfying local people's needs in an environmentally sustainable way. Key to this is promoting indigenous knowledge and increasing youth engagement. The use of organic seeds was also emphasised as some farmers did not want to use GMOs. Indigenous seeds were also noted for their ability to be used for future generations as well, whereas GMOs and hybrids need to be constantly purchased as seasons changed.

Adaptation already exists in rural areas, and the government should come to these areas to learn from the community, instead of telling them what to do. Rural communities understand their areas better. Community-based adaptation can build on the skills and knowledge that local producers already have, using participatory learning and problem-solving.

[link to full pre-dialogue consultations synthesis report https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eH0g51f3LlukSXtFdm4yyoE3X\_2h-T3Z]



# Day 2

### Policy panel 1: Just transition and the food system

### The Just Transition Framework and the food system

Dhesigen Naidoo, Presidential Climate Commission

This is a critically important dialogue. We need to move the bar. At a global level, the 78th UN General Assembly was recently engaging on climate issues. They did a deep dive into an analysis of where we are on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how to configure and adjust to the few years left to 2030. The state of the world, the economy, and the multilateral system all have implications on what we are talking about. The world is in dire straits. On the SDGs as a whole, including SDG 2 on zero hunger, the UN says we are in peril of not succeeding. Only 15% of the SDGs are on track. The issue of hunger is an immediate catastrophe. More than 600 million people in the world will be in severe hunger by 2030. About half of those are in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2019, before the Covid crisis, 2.9 billion people in the world were in moderate food insecurity. This number is now higher, revealing the severity of the global context. This will cause a deficit in the future. In 2022 148 million+ children under-5 years old were already stunted. This gives us a view of the future. 45 million are in the category of wasting. We are encountering abnormally high food inflation in South Africa, Africa and globally.

SA is in even more dire straits than global averages. The polycrisis is quite severe, including the climate emergency, forced mobility, a cost of living crisis, social polarisation, inequality etc. This polycrisis describes the situation both in the world and in South Africa. What about food security in South Africa, and is the just transition available to assist or to stoke the fires? The concentration is on a just energy transition as a big marker for moving away from the current system. There are reasons for energy being the focus. The North is controlling the agenda. The South has far more issues than just energy, though it does remain important.

In the PCC, we are looking at the possibility of a just agriculture transition under the broader just adaptation concept. We are developing a tool and toolbox on just adaptation and a resilience investment plan. If we look at Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) as a core component of food security, can we organise for it to be an important building block around future food security in the South African system? The2018 CSA Strategic Framework, which included fisheries and forestry as well, is a cornerstone policy instrument. Food security is around agriculture and this then fits with the Just Transition Framework (JTF) and we must look at how to navigate this. It comes from a range of dialogues under the PCC and other organisations. Earlier this week the PCC held a specific dialogue on CSA.

The PCC's Just Transition Framework has 3 underlying principle pillars:

On the JTF Pillar 1 on procedural justice, we must do an honest analysis of where we are and where we need to go. We have a project inside the PCC examining the gaps in the agriculture sector looking at where we are (high carbon) and the need for low carbon with more beneficiaries and inclusion. We must empower people much more to genuinely achieve transition. At the moment, top level government officials and corporations are having a discussion, but the majority of people are without information to participate. We need to bring more people with agency into the

conversation, to share information, structure discussions, and consider the language we use. Is this inclusive and allowing participation, or is it exclusive where people are only listeners rather than active participants? This needs work.

As we reorganise the system, the second pillar of the JTF on distributive justice should be met. We have a two tier agricultural system. The first tier is the successful commercial farming sector, with global standards and successful domestic and international markets. The second tier of smaller players, emerging and subsistence farmers have almost the opposite experience. The commercial sector is predominantly white, and smallholders are predominantly black. The gender divide is also stark, with the commercial farmers mainly male, and subsistence producers mainly women. Distributive justice is there to deal with this. We need inclusive CSA and value chains. If we get agriculture right, other reforms are also needed for the function to be prevalent in the system. These include markets and access, and finance. Access to finance is becoming more difficult even for large-scale commercial farmers, and is almost impossible for smaller producers. We must redesign value chains, with more emphasis on local and regional products rather than high risk products, noting how cold-chains have recently been compromised.

The third pillar in the JTF is restorative justice, aiming for higher levels of food security, also meeting the target of Zero Hunger by 2030 if possible. Can it be done in a way to deal with the difficulties of the past? The land question can't be ignored, because for agriculture or anything in the value chain, land is a primary collateral asset. Agriculture in South Africa was predominantly black for a long time. It took dispossession to create the current system. There is a need for extension and access to knowledge and financing.

### Update on UN Food System Summit-linked processes

Peter Ramolotja, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD)

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

Food production is directly linked to eight of the 17 SDGs. Fixing the food system is crucial to meeting the SDGs. Our food system is broken, and must be fixed. In South Africa, we have mandates from the Constitution s27.1 b on the right to food, the National Development Plan (NDP) on cooperation of food systems in Africa to enhance resilience in food systems, and the National Food and Nutrition Security Plan (NFNSP). Markets are the crux of the matter. The Agriculture and Agroprocessing Master Plan (AAMP) talks about an optimal land and agriculture sector that is sustainable, job creating, competitive and growing.

What is the food system? It includes all elements related to producing and distributing food. Covid 19 imposed stress on food systems. We are a long way from meeting the challenges of the SDGs. We currently have malnutrition and substantial ecological impacts. This is the paradox at the heart of the South African food system. On the one hand, we are a middle income country, and the most industrialised on the continent, with a positive national food balance, and sophisticated policy frameworks. But we still have over- and under-nutrition, with an unsustainable agricultural production system that is exclusive, and shaped by colonial and apartheid inequities, and integration into the global economy and liberalisation. There is a continuation of hunger and malnutrition, with environmental degradation caused by conventional agriculture. We have high levels of income and wealth inequality and power asymmetries with actors not talking to each other. The economy has been expanding since 1994 although with stagnation since Covid. A small number of commercial farmers (40,000) are producing 80% of the food.

There is increased agricultural production but with a decreasing share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) - 5% of GDP and 14% of exports. We need to improve nutrition, sustainable production, and level the playing fields across the food system. The NFNSP says we need to link smallholders and subsistence farmers to local food value chains. Government is meant to play a role in procurement. R17 billion goes to food purchases by the government. The Food and Nutrition Security policy is being reviewed but the plan is there. It calls for a Food Security Council and for an M&E system to be established. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was appointed to design the M&E system and terms of reference have been published for the Food Security Council.

### Respondent

Dr Brittany Kesselman, Postdoctoral research fellow, UCT Bioeconomy Chair

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

The presentations were a bit surreal. It is good to see that the PCC and DALRRD share our assessments of what is wrong and that they do acknowledge the problems of the food system. We are on the same page on the role of capitalism and colonialism. What's strange is that they are representing the government but these policies and programmes didn't just emerge out of nowhere, the government designed them. We have had these policies for years. Looking at the problems, we need to wonder if this is not a result of the policies and what they will be doing. The JTF has good things in it but it talks about agriculture, not the food system. Many aspects of the food system contribute to emissions and vulnerability. We must include other aspects such as refrigeration, transport, storage, food waste etc. At the same time, agriculture has a role in mitigation. There was mention of CSA, but this is not defined. Terms and definitions do matter. CSA as a term has been coopted by industrial agriculture. Agroecology is not mentioned in the JTF, which is what most smallholder farmers have been mentioning as a real solution. Smallholders are not interested in the big tech solutions of CSA, but rather a people-centred agroecology that looks after communities and the environment. Local markets are not in the JTF. There are also other aspects of food access. For example, what does energy transition mean in communities losing jobs? What about employment in long haul transport as we shift to local markets?

In terms of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), which wasn't covered in the DALRRD presentation as anticipated, South Africa went to the Summit in 2021 and submitted a report. But no one has seen any of this. This does not fall under procedural justice. There was no consultation or transparency. The UNFSS is generally undemocratic, with corporate capture, and operating outside formal UN decision processes. The South African Pathway mentions the right to food but this is not centred, and there is little or nothing on indigenous knowledge. There was no inclusivity in developing the pathway, and it calls for technology, exports, and commercial agriculture that are not aligned to the overall objectives. The same goes for the NFNSP. Some aspects e.g. the right to food, coordination, targets, and decent objectives are good. In general the policies sound good, but often don't define what they mean. There are also contradictory processes. For example, they call for support to smallholders, but also call for technological solutions suited for commercial agriculture. The framing is CSA not agroecology. This and 'no till' etc can be linked to big tech and production optimisation technologies. Definitions of food security and other concepts differ between different documents, and these are also not transparent and inclusive. There have been huge delays in implementation e.g. the Food Council was already in policy almost a decade ago and it is not yet happening. Why is there a tender out now for a coordination body?

It is wonderful to hear the government speaking our language, but are we really on the same page? Capitalism and colonialism are at the root cause of the food and climate crises. We need to take on capitalism. But why are government policies not doing that? There is no agroecology support, extension, markets, or procurement. All of these are in policies but they are not doing it. We may need to change other procurement laws so the government can do this. We need to think about processes of getting to the policies, and the content. In terms of process, the focus on procedural justice is good but we don't see it happening.

Communities are also meant to be involved in implementation and monitoring. If we have the vision, we will get the content. I don't see the right to food or agroecology which should be at the centre of these policies. We need to define terms and look at the interests behind the solutions being proposed, for example high tech solutions, and ask who these benefit; whether they are about food security or profits. It is good to hear that the CSIR is working on monitoring. We do need data. It is very late but it is still important to act. Instead of seeing food and climate as distinct, food systems can be a lever to achieve broader social transformation. We need to decommodify food and put people first instead of profit. We can then transform agriculture, distribution, and manufacturing, and have a much lighter and improved environmental impact of the food system, and development of communities.

### Respondent

Kedibone Mdlolo, Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU IDs2U41]

The Leading Health Indicators won't happen if the food system is broken. It is good to hear that the government says the food system is broken. But then what? Food is important to our heritage and traditions, when we celebrate, when we mourn, when we communicate with our higher powers, food is there. In health, food is important for life. We have non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and communicable diseases, and food contributes to both prevention and healing. We are mostly aware of the food system profile. Some solutions in the NFNSP are good on food insecurity and nutrition. But are grants, for example, able to buy the food we need? Pregnant women are supposed to get supplements. Do we have these? We don't even have high blood pressure pills, and patients have to be referred to private companies. We are talking about this government today.

From a health perspective, we are also imbalanced. Some are obese, others are hungry. NCDs like heart diseases and stroke are going up because the food system is broken. Healthy food is expensive. In 2024 we are supposed to vote in the majority. But we are not being taken seriously by the government. We must look for nutritious food. On the news today, in Nqeleni in the Eastern Cape they showed a family with a child saying there is no food at home, then they must wait until 11am for food at school, and then there is nothing at home again. The area itself is grey, there is poverty. Labour in rural areas have poor working conditions on farms. They produce food but working conditions are not conducive e.g. drought, floods, heat and they have low wages, and no or poor accommodation. The people producing food have no ownership of anything themselves. The employers don't allow them to attend clinics or receive other services. But we are having a progressive government.

Whatever we demand, the way the issue of energy has been approached is the way it will happen in all sectors on the just transition. An example of something we know is the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP). Cosatu has policies on this and the just transition came through there. But



## Policy panel 2: Climate change and adaptation

### DALRRD policies and programmes for climate adaptation and mitigation

Aubrey Nekuvule and Matiga Motsepe, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Directorate: Climate Change

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU IDs2U41]

DFFE is the focal point on climate change in South Africa. Our priority is on adaptation because climate change is a threat to farmers and food security. The CCAMP is to provide agriculture sector interventions. How do we enhance the resilience of farmers, farm workers, and the whole food system? How should we reduce emissions? This includes methane from livestock, and also other areas where farming practices must change. There is also the social and economic factor. We acknowledge that CCAMP has weaknesses on the socio-economic side. We are trying to address this through the programmes we are implementing. We did research through the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), on projections for 2050-90 on 14 major crops including maize, sugar cane and others. As much as climate change is negative and will affect production areas, other areas could also benefit. For example, we are observing the expansion of sugar cane.

We are emphasising drought resistant crops, looking at sorghum and millet in the west and drought resistant cultivars, such as in soyabean. This is the start of engagement to build relationships. We need the relevant people from Genetic Resources on GMOs so they can also provide insight. There are also issues of renewable energy and biofuels. Agriculture opposed that at the time because it could produce a shift out of food production. We are now looking at an integrated bioenergy-crop-livestock system, including biogas, vegetables, livestock, and water harvesting. On the carbon tax, agriculture is exempted for now. We need to look at complexity. Some emissions are from the energy sector e.g. transport of crops.

On the issue of climate smart agriculture (CSA) vs agroecology, the government needs to include other voices and to regulate, therefore it has a position on CSA, with the CSA Framework, and also organic policies. We agree on the recommendations in the synthesis report in the context of a just transition, but need to understand this in the context of agriculture. We see the Just Transition as maximising social and economic opportunities, minimising and managing challenges, effective social dialogue among affected groups, and respect for labour and minimum wages.

### The Climate Change Bill and food systems

Brandon Abdinor, Centre for Environmental Rights

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU IDs2U41]

A just food system is one element of our campaign. The Climate Change Bill (CCB) is a specific environmental management Act, which is a subset of NEMA and should be applied in conjunction with NEMA. We will see how that happens in practice. The CCB is framework legislation which puts

the institutional relations in place but doesn't speak to any particular sector or system. It is overarching legislation to apply to all sectors. It provides a skeleton, with the meat in the form of the sectoral policies, regulations and mechanisms still to be put in place. The Bill obliges all organs of state to amend laws, policies and measures to align with this Act. It is a very powerful piece of legislation that imposes requirements. It has been going on for 14 years but we are getting there now. We have been engaging with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (PC FFE). There is still a step to go to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) but this will probably be fairly limited compared with the PC. Then the Bill must go to the National Assembly, and then it should be signed as an Act.

A key objective is on mitigation, where state actors and emitters are to reduce their GHG emissions to achieve the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)/Paris Agreement targets. It includes carbon budgets and a threshold. Emitters are allocated a budget which they may not exceed. It will probably only be very big emitters, the large industrial energy producers and maybe fertiliser producers. Sectoral Emissions Targets offer a public participation opportunity. The remaining available carbon space is divided into the different sectors. It is important to participate here. Some sectors will find it harder to achieve reductions. Energy is relatively easier e.g. renewable energy. But it is worth having this battle to ensure others get their fair share.

Provincial and municipal measures are in place, mostly around adaptation. Adaptation is one of the other main objectives of the CCB, with obligations on the state. Adaptation objectives and scenarios must be developed within a year, including preliminary plans. After another year, there must be a national adaptation and mitigation plan, and then sector adaptation strategies and plans e.g. the CCAMP. All have public participation opportunities. To be compliant with the CCB there must be some public participation still on sector plans. Local and municipal plans on risk and vulnerability assessment are required a year after the Act is passed.

Local engagements on the food system are very important. Industry will attempt to push their solutions to make money. There is a critical opportunity to use these platforms before those decision makers on the potential of agroecology, the carbon sink potential of good agricultural practices, and alternatives to chemical fertilisers, feeding into those engagements.

The CCB is the only bill that actually speaks on a just transition. There is not much on how it looks, but it is an objective of the Bill, calling for a move towards a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society. We can use these for advocacy purposes. The PCC is already operational but will be properly established after the Act is passed. It is an important forum in that it is a place where business, labour, civil society and government can negotiate a compact on climate response. These are conversations that end up in policy. Try to engage as much as possible. The Act is an important instrument. It is worth engaging and in conjunction with the JTF and pillars.

### Water policy, food and globalisation

Mandy Moussouris, Environmental Monitoring Group

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

The water laws are progressive. National government is the custodian of water, with local governments responsible for distribution. NEMA also looks at environmental justice. There has been an increase in access to clean water, but also poor services and broken infrastructure. South Africa is running out of water. In 2017 14.1 million people did not have access to a clean, reliable water

supply. We have 2% water reserves but a 5% increase in population. There is a right to water in the Constitution, but access is still driven by affordability. Although there is a basic minimum of free water, there are problems with political governance. Water scarcity in some countries has led to land grabbing to produce food elsewhere. Virtual water is a concept we should consider. Food exports are also exporting water, accounting for 32.5% of all water exported.

Where did things go wrong in our development trajectory? The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994 offers an example. The document was well developed until section 4 which expanded on neoliberal economics and placed its bets on trickle-down economics to grow the economy. Government adopted aggressive tariff reduction policies (leading to the loss of a million jobs in the clothing sector). The point is that regardless of how well our policies are developed, if we depend on a capitalist system, it will undermine everything. Economies don't have to be capitalist. It doesn't have to be driven by profit.

Global demand for water exceeds supply by 40%. Africa has yield gaps. People in other countries are buying land in Africa to gain access to water to produce food. We must be aware of what this means. We are exporting 50% of our agriculture which uses 65% of our water. For example blueberries, which are not indigenous, are water intensive, and 75% of the product is exported. We need systems change. We need an economy that puts people before profits. We must plan for the worst and we must find ways to build alternatives.

### Land policy in relation to climate and food systems

Kearabetswe Moopelo, Land National Network Engagement Strategy (LandNNES)

### [presentation https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10X\_DjQDNd0stmumiuy7MpqUU\_IDs2U41]

Land and climate are two sides of the same coin, with common themes of accountability, marginalised smallholders, communal tenure, justice on farms, water access, and food systems. The climate crises emphasise the land crises. The land policy had three land programmes – land redistribution, tenure reform. Much of the land issue has to do with accountability. 60% of the population is still dispossessed. The fight for off-registry recognition continues. Processes are shrouded in secrecy. There is a relentless pursuit for profits by agribusiness and the like. We need regulation as a shield against our oppression especially as states ignore our requests and the implementation of customary law in this regard.

Eleven thousand claims for land are languishing and unprocessed. One in five households experiences hunger. There are 35 000 white owned farms, with 0.8% of the people claiming 80% of the land. South Africa will experience the worst of climate change globally. But we remain inactive despite years passing since the white paper. Tenure security is a prerequisite for land requisition and climate adaptation. Ecosystem restoration methods should centre small scale farmers. We must decolonise climate, which means integrating feminist and anti-capitalist discourses. Despite our grief and sorrow, there are remnants of hope and revolutionary tendencies.

### Respondent

Rosah Ramaipadi, smallholder farmer in Limpopo

We have sat and heard all these enticing policies and frameworks, but we have not been consulted. We must be there in engagements. I have been listening to DALRRD coming with the adaptation that they are helping small-scale farmers on energy. This will be good because agriculture is one of those contributors to emissions. If they come to us as livestock farmers and help us to construct biogas digesters, they will help us. We will be using gas for household use. As women, we feel frustrated and neglected, because we are the ones at the centre of what is happening. Yet no one has come close to us since the start of all this. We are frustrated because no one is helping us. We have heard about them encouraging indigenous seeds. Will they come to us to get those seeds, or just go and look for drought resistant seeds, not knowing where they are coming from? We wish to help if given the chance to sit with them at the table and plan around seeds, because we have those seeds, those are our seeds. How will they take this to other farmers? Will they really go down there, call those meetings and address this, telling those farmers that we should move to indigenous seeds?

Water is another crucial aspect also touching us as women again. Commercial farmers are planting those berries. Are they a staple food? Are they really contributing to food security? If not, then why are they allowing that? They are also taking a lot of scarce water while some families in the rural areas are without even a drop and people are buying water. On the other hand, commercial farmers are taking the same water and selling it. What about the backyard gardeners who we are encouraging to produce? Where is water coming from for that? Can we allow commercial farmers to rule us as they please? The only concern for them is profits.

On land, we don't have land and we want land. Our traditional leaders are taking that land and giving it to commercial farmers, saying they will create jobs. But can't we do that as small scale farmers too? If each of us employs 2 people, that will be millions. But where shall our cries fall? No government, no traditional leaders, no-one. Consumers should be with us on healthy and nutritious food. We are producing for them. They should know what we are doing so that they come and be with us in that space.

