

Africa Days 2024: Lost Crops, Found Opportunities
Securing the Future with Crops from the Past

Dakar, June 27th & 28th

Conference on Crops, Cultures, and Resilient Food Systems

Introduction

Lost or forgotten crops, once widely cultivated, now play a diminished role in agriculture and food production. In Africa, these indigenous crops are often more productive, less resource-intensive, pest-resistant, and nutrient-rich. They represent a considerable resource for the continent's consumers and farmers. Africa Days 2024 will take place on June 27 and 28 in Dakar, under the theme “**Lost Crops, Found Opportunities: Securing the Future with the Crops from the Past!**” This event aims to raise awareness of the issues surrounding Africa’s lost crops and encourage the consumption of local produce. It seeks to create a genuine community committed to improving the global food system and recognizing indigenous cultures on the continent. SOS SAHEL’s annual event is an essential meeting with its network of partners, celebrating the incredible potential of the Sahel and formulating recommendations to strengthen knowledge and skills on the ground.

Thursday, June 27th – Mobilization Day at French Institute of Senegal

Opening ceremony with Dr. Mabouna Diagne, Minister of Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Livestock.

Three High Level Panels:

- **High Level Panel 1 - “Why Bring Neglected Crops to Current Food Systems?”** This panel aims to explore the regain of interest in forgotten crops and emphasize the urgency of elevating neglected crops in today's food systems, underscoring their benefits and advocating for supportive policies and practices. The question we must address: What are the risks if we neglect to prioritize them?
- **High Level Panel 2 - “Is There a Future for Lost Crops?”** This 2nd panel seeks to explore the opportunities and the future of neglected crops, addressing challenges and opportunities to ensure these valuable resources play a significant role in sustainable and resilient food systems. The central question is how to materialize the recent interest in forgotten crops beyond wishful thinking.
- **High Level Panel 3 - “What are the Current Initiatives on Lost Crops?”** This panel aims to provide a comprehensive overview of current initiatives on lost crops, showcasing successes and addressing challenges to support the revitalization of these valuable agricultural resources.

Launch of the African Crops Alliance: The African Crops Alliance is a global alliance of partners working across food systems in Africa, particularly focusing on forgotten and underutilized crops with significant potential to address food security and hunger concerns on the continent, offering a path for development. It brings together smallholder farmers, the public and private sectors, as well as research, financial, and philanthropic institutions. The ACA aims to break down silos and create a unified vision and holistic approach towards the development and commercialization of forgotten and underutilized African crops.

Cooking and Cultural Sessions:

- **The Story of “Trees of Life” – Presentation of the Exhibition** A discussion centered on the question: ‘Can neglected crops serve as an opportunity for ecosystem restoration?’. On June 17, 2024, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought. The Great Green Wall initiative is an ambitious program to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land and strengthen food systems in dry regions of Africa.

- **Cooking Demonstration** with Chefs from the National Federation of Senegalese Chefs. Around a convivial buffet in the gardens of the Institut français du Sénégal, participants will have the opportunity to taste different recipes prepared by Senegalese chefs and to exchange ideas.
- **Short Documentary and Conversation with Chefs** A conversation facilitated by Raïssa Okoï, between Pierre Thiam (Chef & Activist), Earlene Cruz (Director of Kitchen Connection), and Paul Newnham (Executive Director of Chef's Manifesto).
- **Exhibitions & Networking** : Exhibitors will present their products at stations set up in the gardens of the Institut Français

Friday, June 28th – Knowledge Building Day at Pullman Dakar Teranga

June 28th will explore specific themes that will help us to establish the roadmap for the African Crops Alliance.

Four Themes:

- 1 LOST CROPS ADVOCACY: AGRO-BIODIVERSITY AND FOOD SYSTEMS
- 2 CEREALS: FONIO USE-CASE
- 3 GRAIN LEGUMES: BAMBARA GROUNDNUT USE-CASE
- 4 NON-FOREST TIMBER PRODUCTS: BAOBAB TREE FRUITS USE CASE

Four Working Sessions:

- 1 *The Present Landscape (Round tables):* Four panels will provide a comprehensive overview of each theme, including its cultural significance, current challenges, opportunities, and potential growth drivers. For each subject, a general presentation will be given by the keynote speaker. Participants will then debate current initiatives, development opportunities, and obstacles to development.
- 2 *“Our Vision of Change“ (Workshop 1):* This workshop aims to define our vision and the drivers of change.
- 3 *“Our Impact Pathway“ (Workshop 2):* The path and impact of change. The working groups will propose the foundations of a roadmap for the Alliance of African Cultures.
- 4 *“Our African Crops Alliance Roadmap“ (Plenary Session):* This plenary session will provide an opportunity to share the results of the roadmaps proposed in the various workshops. The conclusions will be included in the forum summary report and communicated to participants. The session will close with an exchange with the Regional Director of IFC, who will provide participants with insights into financial models for supporting lost crop supply chains.

Cooking and Cultural Sessions:

- **“Lost Crops“ Cooking Competition:** A cohort of young Senegalese chefs will be tasked with composing four recipes using ingredients from the themed workshops. A jury will determine the best dishes, and prizes will be awarded at the gala.
- **Exhibitions & Networking** : Exhibitors will present their products at stations set up in the Institut Français garden.
- **Gala Dinner** (including the Culinary Competition Awards)

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