**HYBRID REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ‘‘THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE OF INNOVATIONS FOR FOOD SECURITY’’**

 **SUMMARY REPORT ON WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS**

**25-26th March 2021**

**Prepared by Food Security Center at the University of Nairobi.**

**March 2021**

**Background and Content of the Workshop**

This workshop aimed at exploring innovations and technologies to ensure and enhance food security and how their implementation can be governed responsibly, especially in light of two new policy initiatives in relation to the implementation of two technologies to address food security, namely of GM crops and antibiotics in livestock farming.

Kenya has experienced severe food insecurity problems since 2008, with a high proportion of the population – an estimated 10 million individuals – having inadequate access to affordable quality food (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute). Between 2014-2019, Kenya experienced severe droughts, which more than doubled the number of food insecure people from 1.3 million to 2.7 million (OCHA 2017; UNICEF 2018). In coastal areas, maize production decreased by 99%, while agricultural output in Kenya has been decimated by an infestation of the African armyworm, leading to food shortages and increased food prices (Oxfam 2017).

Food innovations and technologies are crucial to secure sustainable access to food for millions of people in Kenya and across the Global South. Accordingly, Kenya has recently launched two new policy initiatives in relation to the implementation of two technologies to address food security, namely a lift to a 2012 ban on drought- and disease-resilient GM crops in order to increase agricultural output and a ‘One Health’ national plan and policy, which aims to raise awareness of antibiotic resistance and optimize the use of antibiotics in human and animal health.

Yet, at the same time, the poor development and implementation of these technologies also risk having unintended consequences: for example, while the safe use of antibiotics can increase productivity and contribute to food security, the use of antibiotics in livestock farming is widespread and poorly controlled in Kenya (Van Boeckel et al. 2019). Consequently, Kenya is one of the global hotspots for drug resistance in livestock (Van Boeckel et al. 2019; Taitt et al. 2017).

This raises the question: how can and should innovations and technologies for food security be responsibly governed?

By addressing this question, the workshop aims to influence Kenyan and East African food security policies through the discussion of the following issues:

1. What role can and should non-governmental actors play in setting out food policies?
2. How can innovative technologies help secure ample food supply?
3. How can the interests of producers, including smallholder farmers and consumers, be adequately represented within food security policy and planning?
4. What factors affect food (in)security and how do they relate to each other?
5. Who should be responsible for ensuring the responsible for ensuring that food innovations and technologies are safely and responsibly implemented?
6. What platforms for collaboration can help ensure the safe and responsible implementation of food innovations?

**Invited Speakers**

Prof. Reiner Doluschitz – Keynote speaker

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**Date and Place of Workshop**

The workshop was held both virtually and face to face at CHAK, Conference Center, Kenya from 25-26th March, 2021 between 13.00 PM and 17.00 PM EAT.

**Participation**

The workshop was hosted by the Food Security Center, University of Nairobi, in collaboration with the Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick. It was open and free to anyone interested in the matter of food innovations. We aimed both at students as well as at policy makers, academia, farmer groups, civil society, global governance bodies, and local/international NGOs. For the online participation, 87 registered for the workshop. While 26 people registered for the face to face.

**Objectives of the workshop**

Kenya is one of the countries hardest hit by food insecurity as well as a global hotbed for antimicrobial resistance in livestock. Moreover, Kenya is considering lifting the GMO ban and use of GM crops, the impact of which on smallholder farmers is not yet clear. The main goal of this two day event was to discuss scenarios and guidelines with regard to the use of antibiotics and GM crops. The workshop is part of a project between the University of Nairobi and the University of Warwick on the “***Ethics: Technological Risk Governance and Food Security”*** and focusing on innovations such as the use of antibiotics and GM crops.

**Opening Remarks**

The workshop was opened at 13.00pm EAT with a welcoming statement by Dr. Catherine Kunyanga, coordinator Food security center University of Nairobi, and Dr. Byskov, University of Warwick followed by the statement of Dr. George Abong’, Chairman, Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Nairobi, Prof. Moses Nyangito, Dean Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nairobi, Prof. Rose Nyikal, Principal, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS), University of Nairobi and an opening speech held by Prof. Julius Ogeng’o, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs University of Nairobi.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Julius Ogeng’o commented that he was delighted about the workshop. He highlighted that this workshop falls part of the University of Nairobi celebration of 50 years of Academic Excellence. He reminded the audience of the value of food especially to humans and commented on the relevance of these conversations around innovations.

**Keynote/Guest presentations**