

17 June 2021

Dr. Million Belay
General Coordinator
Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)
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Dear Dr. Belay:

I am writing to thank you for your letter of June 6th with respect to the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and its funding of research programs in Africa, notably with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

As part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, IDRC champions and funds research and innovation within and alongside developing regions to drive global change. IDRC recently launched a new 10-year strategy, [Strategy 2030](#), focused on the two major challenges of our time — climate change and inequality and aims to drive global scientific collaboration and action towards overcoming these barriers. Our Strategy guides our engagement with research stakeholders all over the world.

One of the many research priorities of IDRC's work over the next decade is to fund research that helps build inclusive and sustainable food systems. We are supporting research to develop resilience in communities severely affected by climate change, including women and marginalized groups, and which will address emerging health threats that arise from food systems.

IDRC's new Climate Resilient Food Systems program has a clear intention to support research on different dimensions of food systems (conventional and alternative) to assess trade-offs, potential and constraints of different approaches to food production. Several of our current projects align with alternative approaches to food production and with the Food Sovereignty movement (e.g., Organic farming in Bhutan; Bottom-up interventions to increase the resilience of food systems in vulnerable communities of Latin American or Supporting healthy food systems in urban context in Latin America.)

Our Climate Resilient Food Systems program is also completing soon-to-be-launched initiatives on pastoralism in Sub-Saharan Africa and on the trade-offs and knowledge gaps associated to alternative food systems and agroecology in West Africa.

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The primary aim of IDRC's funding for AGRA is to bring different voices, scientific debate and research evidence to the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) and the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).

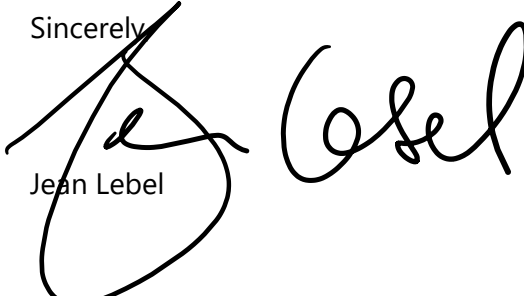
In the past, IDRC's funding of AGRA has allowed IDRC to participate in the AGRF steering committee – and in the Gender Working Group – to bring a plurality of voices, including the ones critical of AGRA's approach. IDRC has been instrumental in bringing to the fore issues of gender equality and inclusion to the global debate. IDRC's past support to AGRF has improved the visibility of African led research (e.g., through side events featured annually between 2016 and 2020 to discuss research evidence), strengthened the discussion of gender equality (e.g., through participation of IDRC and African partners in plenary in 2016 and 2018) or by reflecting on the specific challenges faced by Francophone researchers in West Africa (co-organized with CORAF and CIRAD in 2017).

IDRC's current support to AGRA is for a project with member states on the UNFSS in response to a request from African governments to support national dialogues and their participation in the UN led Food Systems Dialogues. Our collaboration with AGRA on joint events at the UNFSS helps secure the participation of organizations and partners at the Summit that do not necessarily share AGRA's approach but bring evidence for a debate on the present and future of sustainable agriculture. The intent is to increase policy coherence across sectors and promote consideration of sustainable food systems, and to generate commitments for concrete, integrated actions and policies required for food systems change and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

IDRC is dedicated to the generation of research evidence and innovation, and to providing avenues for scaling their impact in the Global South, which includes resilient and sustainable food systems in Africa.

In this critical decade in which we continue to respond to Agenda 2030 and helping to advance and meet the SDGs, may I wish you and your colleagues continued success with your work on food security in Africa.

Sincerely,



Jean Lebel

c.c.: Dominique Charron, Vice President Programs and Partnerships
Santiago Alba Corral, Program Director, Climate-Resilient Food Systems