



# SIDE EVENT ON GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS IN AFRICA

AT THE 5<sup>TH</sup> AU-  
EU AGRICULTURAL MINISTERIAL  
CONFERENCE, ROME

30/06/2023, 12:00-14:30

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# An African perspective on GI: how the Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications in Africa contributes to resilience and sustainability of food systems

The honorable Ministers of Agriculture from the African Union member states will address the assembly and share the main achievements over geographical indications in the past five years. The addresses will be departed into two panels, one dedicated to the contribution of geographical indications to food resilience and sustainable value chains; and one dedicated to the future of the continental strategy on GIs. Because of their role as facilitators of the enhancement of GIs on the continent, the floor will also be given to the two Director General of the above-mentioned regional Intellectual Property Organizations (OAPI and ARIPO). Speakers will be called to reply to the question based on their country/region experience on GIs.

Time will be given for questions and answers by the participants.

A basket of African GIs will be distributed to participants at entrance of the conference hall. The Manual for GIs for Africa[1] will be available as well. One or 2 roll-up depicting success stories under the Continental Strategy for GIs in Africa will be displayed in the hall of the event.

The overall event is organised with the precious support of the AfriPI project, funded by the EU and implemented by EUIPO.

## General objective:

- To increase public awareness through show casing the contribution of GIs in fostering resilience and sustainability of food systems in Africa.

## Specific objectives:

- To document best practices in collaboration and partnerships on implementation of continental frameworks to advance the food security agenda.
- To identify challenges and define mitigation measures.
- To brainstorm on the post 2023 GIs strategy.

# DRAFT AGENDA

## 12.00 - 12.30 OPENING

Overall moderation:

**Alexandra Grazioli, World Intellectual Property Organization.**

INTRODUCTORY SPEECH

**H. E. Josefa Sacko, African Union Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment.**

## 12.30 - 13.15 PANEL 1

**How have GIs enhanced food resilience and sustainable value chains in the past 5 years?**

Moderation: **Florence Tartanac, FAO.**

Speakers: **Ministers of Agriculture of Mozambique or Tanzania, Egypt or Nigeria, Ministers of Agriculture of Guinea or Comoros, Ministers of Agriculture of Niger or Gabon, Cameroon Penja pepper organisation.**

Geographical indications link people, places and products.

When GIs became an international area of attention, the community was focusing on identifying and qualifying the GIs in Africa. As geographical indication gain momentum in Africa, their success will depend on other equally important considerations like the remuneration of the GIs and their sustainability.

The “new age” of GIs identifies GIs as a guarantee for food safety. Indeed, GIs contribute to raising awareness of the consumers about the quality of food in general. We also observe that value chains have opted for the GI-path after having experienced a food crisis. This attention to food safety shows a particular preoccupation for the resilience of food systems.

In this session we will hear how projects on GIs implemented between 2018 and 2023 have contributed to the resilience of food systems and to the sustainability of value chains, and why the outcomes laid down in the continental strategy are still pertinent.

## 13.15 - 14.20 PANEL 2

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### What future for the African Union Continental Strategy on GIs?

Moderation: **Magdalena Kopczynska**, DGAGRI.

Speakers: **Minister of Agriculture Senegal and/or Ethiopia, Minister of Agriculture of Ghana and/or South Africa, Minister of Agriculture of Chad and/or of Agriculture of Mauritania, OAPI, ARIPO, Godfrey Bahiigwaa, DARBE Director.**

The Continental Strategy on GIs was endorsed by the high authorities of the African Union in 2018. The outcomes laid down in the action plan read as follows:

- An African vision on GIs as a tool contributing to sustainable rural development and food security and a GI African approach are developed and shared.
- A legal and institutional framework is enabled at the national and regional levels for the protection of GIs
- The development and registration of GI products as pilots and drivers for rural and sustainable development are supported, to provide learning and demonstrative effects.
- Market development for GI products is promoted through innovative approaches on local markets, through regional trade among the RECs and on export markets (EU in particular as GIs are there an established market tool).
- Research, training programs and extension are encouraged to ensure the identification, development and diffusion of the best African tailored practices and to contribute to the African approach, in a context of climate change. As a lot of research work has been undertaken by non-African institutions, co-operation between African and non-African experienced institutions should be facilitated.
- Awareness of all stakeholders, including consumers, is created, communication among stakeholders and information to a wider audience is ensured.

Considering that GIs usually require some years of implementation before it is possible to realize the aspired economic socio-cultural and environmental benefits of their setting-up, an important issue in 2023 is surely the future of the Continental Strategy on GIs as this is the last year of its implementation. In this session we will address this question.

## 14.20 - 14.30 CONCLUSIONS

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**Janusz Wojciechowski, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.**

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

European Union (EU) Agricultural Ministerial conference provides an opportunity to AU and EU Ministers of agriculture to exchange views and share best practices on the development of more resilient food systems and sustainable agri value chains. Since the first Agricultural Ministerial Conference, the world has experienced various challenges – the COVID-19 pandemic, political instabilities and economic shocks as well as conflict and impact of climate change – all of which have made greater agricultural resilience a pressing need. The inclusion of GIs as a topic in the AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial conference dates back in 2019. The rationale of this inclusion is, inter alia, the particular nature of GIs as a collective approach to local value, the sustainability of agri-food value chains and the resilience of food systems and consequently food security. While the issue of access to basic food supply remains of utmost importance in the short and medium terms, in certain regions of Africa, the economic and environmental sustainability of agri-food value chains is key in the long run. A particular emphasis given to quality and differentiation of foodstuffs in a knowledge-based economy allows the valorization of the know-how in the production sector and in turn the maintenance and economic sustainability of the agri food production in the territories.

The EU has been following this path for quite a long time now. On the African continent, while the consideration is more recent, two milestones support this approach:

- The adoption of a Continental Strategy on GIs for Africa by the African Union[2] which articulates key results that are inter-dependent, and mutually reinforcing (vision, laws, pilots, market, research and awareness) (2018).
- The entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area which creates a liberalized market amongst most of African member states[3] and calls for the increased need to inform the consumers including on quality schemes like geographical indications (2019).

Since the launch of the Strategy, a Consultative Committee constituted by OAPI (Organisation Africaine de la Propriété Intellectuelle), ARIPO (African Regional Intellectual Property Office), the African Union Commission[4], and the European Commission[5], have ensured coordination of and synergies between the GI activities of the various partners[6]. During its last meeting in November 2022, the Consultative Committee took stock of the progress made and drew lessons to inform the post 2023 GI Strategy. Furthermore, the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the Africa Union Commission has recently been engaged in reviewing the Continental GI Strategy to assess the progress made so far as well as challenges encountered with an ultimate objective of laying the ground for the formulation of the next (post 2023) Continental Strategy and its robust implementation.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Some of the achievements under the Strategy were shared during the “Africa session” of the FAO-CIRAD Worldwide perspectives on GIs organized in Montpellier on July 2022[7]. This has allowed a review of the progress registered under the framework of the Continental Strategy in particular the innovations made by African countries in the protection, governance, and sustainability of geographical indications, as well as challenges faced. One outcome of the session was the need for stakeholders and authorities to have more gatherings and experience sharing events around African GIs.

It is in the above context that a side-event will be organized in the margins of the 5th AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference, entitled “An African perspective on GI: how the Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications in Africa contributes to resilience and sustainability of food systems”. This is intended to show case best practices in the implementation of the Strategy and enhance peer-to-peer learning as well as draw lessons for the post 2023 GIs Strategy.

[2] See, [https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36127-doc-au\\_gis\\_continental\\_strategy\\_enng\\_with-cover-1.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36127-doc-au_gis_continental_strategy_enng_with-cover-1.pdf)

[3] The members of the AfCFTA are currently: Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Niger, Chad, Eswatini, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Namibia, South Africa, Congo, Rep., Djibouti, Mauritania, Uganda, Senegal, Togo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Rep., Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, São Tomé & Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mauritius, Central African Rep., Angola, Lesotho, Tunisia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, Algeria, Burundi, Seychelles, Tanzania, Cabo Verde, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Morocco, Guinea-Bissau, Botswana and Comoros.

[4] Represented by DARBE (Directorate for Agriculture, Rural Development and Blue Economy)

[5] Represented by DGAGRI (Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development)

[6] FAO, AFD, WIPO, EUIPO as observers in the Consultative Committee, Swiss IPI, UNCTAD and CIRAD as participants to the technical working group of the Consultative committee.

[7] An international conference on geographical indications in Montpellier, <https://www.cirad.fr/en/press-area/press-releases/2022/worldwide-perspectives-on-geographical-indications>