

Draft Concept Note

Towards more inclusive and resilient African cities: Learning from, and empowering the informal sector as a critical lever for transformation

A proposed ARFSD-9 side event building on “Urban Food Futures” research in Nairobi, Cape Town and Ouagadougou

Organizers: TMG Research, Berlin/Nairobi; Food Agency Cape Town; Muungano wa Wanavijiji/Slumdweller International (Nairobi); Africa Centre for Cities; Cuisines Sans Frontières (Ouagadougou); City of Cape Town Resilience Department

Headquartered in Berlin, Germany, TMG Research gGmbH – Think Tank for Sustainability collaborates with local civil society networks, research organizations and institutional partners in three African cities (Ouagadougou, Nairobi and Cape Town) to explore how to tackle the impact of multifaceted crises on food and nutrition security as well as sustainable livelihoods in low-income urban communities.

Recognizing that the informal sector is a crucial part of the solution, but is largely absent from planning and governance processes, our work seeks to identify and support associations of informal traders, food producers, women’s organizations and other critical actors to actively participate in identifying contextualized solutions and engaging in a more structured way with governance processes.

Our recently concluded one-year scoping phase sought to understand how the Covid-19, food price, climate and other crises are impacting low-income urban communities and how coping strategies are emerging and taking further shape. Building on insights from the transdisciplinary study, TMG and partners from the three cities propose to hold a [virtual pre-ARFSD side event](#) to inform national and regional reviews of SDG 11 and related goals. With speakers drawn from urban research, municipal administrators, informal sector support organizations and advocacy networks, the session aims to provide policy-relevant insights on:

- How to design food-sensitive urban planning approaches that “valorize” solutions from small-scale traders, urban food producers and other informal actors;
- How to build genuinely representative urban governance processes by linking urban planners, policy makers, activists and researchers with informal sector actors;
- How to strengthen accountability of power holders to low-income communities and hence boost their visibility and relevance in urban governance processes.

The 90-minute virtual event will be structured around three segments:

1. Urban Food Futures: An overview of the research project and key insights on informality and food-sensitive planning

Speakers and Moderators:

Wangu Mwangi, Nicole Paganini and Jes Weigelt, TMG Research

2. Moderated Panel 1 (Research): Identifying pathways for building more food-secure, inclusive and sustainable African cities

Speakers: **Jane Weru**, Muungano wa Wanavijiji, Nairobi; **Nomonde Buthelezi**, Food Agency Cape Town

3. Moderated Panel 2 (Policy): What elements are needed to fully tap Africa’s vibrant informal economy to strengthen food security, and resilient livelihoods in low-income urban communities?

Speakers:

Tamsin Faragher, City of Cape Town Resilience Department; **Gareth Hysom**, Africa Centre for Cities; Africa Centre for Cities; **Joseph Muturi**, Slum Dwellers International; **Yvonne Aki-Sawyer**, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone (Invited); **Apsa Diallo**, Foyet FAMA/Cuisines sans Frontières, Ouagadougou

