



Sustainable diets for Africa: Where are we and what questions need to be asked?

WPHNA Conference 2014: *Building healthy global food systems: a new imperative for public health*

Dr. Namukolo Covic

08 September 2013

namukolo.covic@nwu.ac.za



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

Objective of the presentation

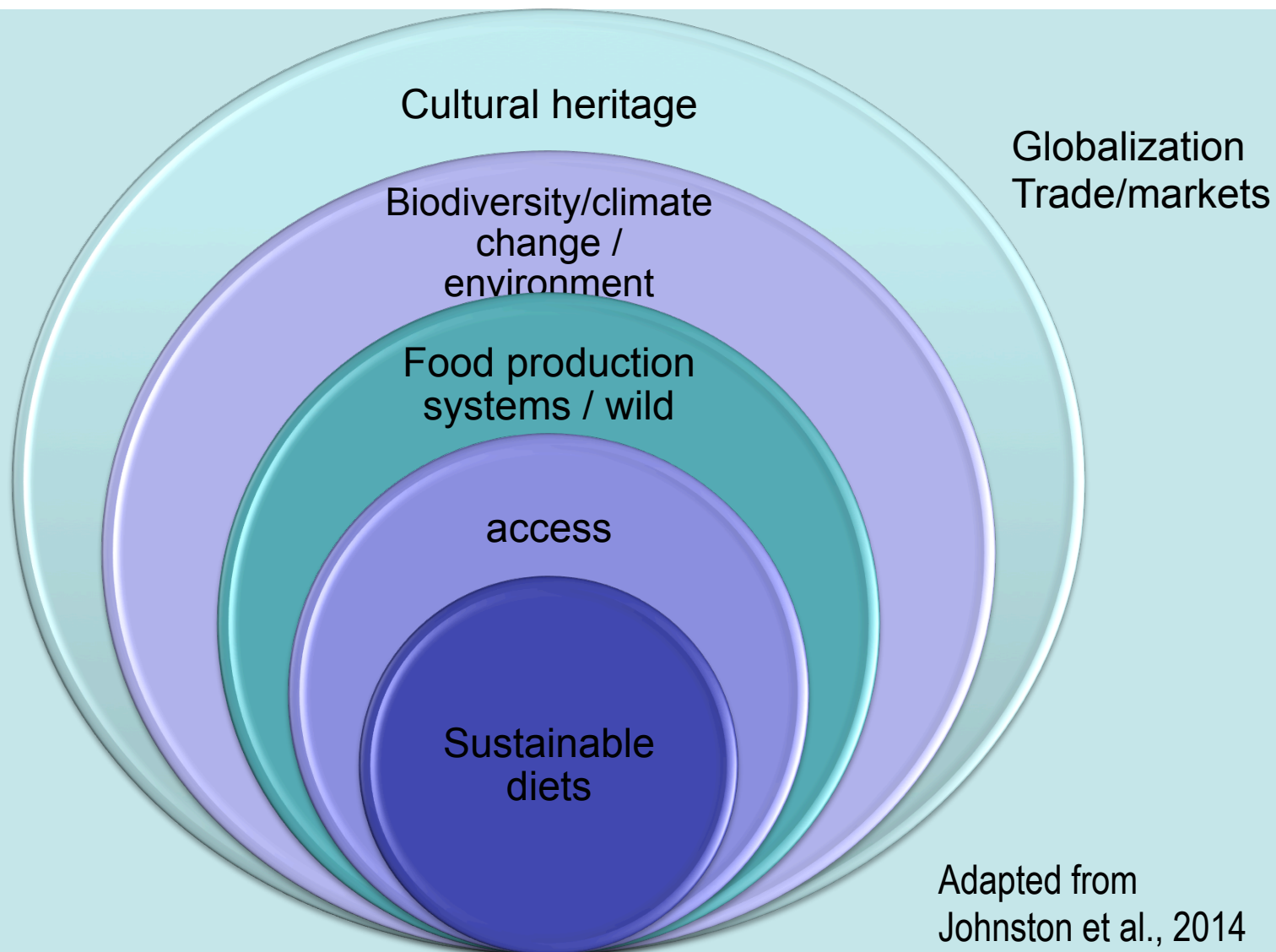
Provoke thought and discussion on questions that need to be asked on addressing sustainable diets in the context of multiple interventions addressing the current burden of micronutrient deficiencies on the African continent

Definition of sustainable diets

Diets that meet nutrient adequacy to promote optimal health while providing for conservation of food biodiversity, environmental integrity and social coherence.

- **Increased intensification of agriculture**
- **Contribution of agricultural production systems to environmental degradation and related climate change.**
- **Delicate environmental balance in different parts of Africa that offer a variety of challenges**
- **Desertification for the Sahel and other marginal climatic zones**
- **Overgrazing**
- **Water pollutions**
- **Loss of biodiversity**

Determinants of sustainable diets: African context



Multiple interventions from different initiatives

SUN, CAADP, SPRING etc.

Home fortification (MNP/LNS)

Fortified complementary foods

Limited surveillance processes

biofortification

Other supplementation programmes

Staple fortification

GMO foods

Intensified harvesting from the wild

Limited nutrition professional capacity

Intensification of agricultural production

Rapid nutrition transition

Africa's Complex situation

- **Very dynamic triple burden**
 - Undernutrition
 - Micronutrient deficiencies
 - Overweight / obesity and related NCDs
 - Various interventions being implemented simultaneously
- **Within this context**
- **We must ask relevant questions pertaining to sustainable diets**

What should we be asking?

- **Recognize unique peculiarities of each country setting and even regions within a country**
- **What are the various determinants of local food systems for sustainable diets in the different settings?**
- **How do we factor in the multiple interventions in place or being planned?**
- **The need to consider exit strategies from some of the interventions over time should we make adequate transition to more nutrient adequate diets?**
- **What kinds of indicators should be considered to assess sustainability of diets under the various contexts on the continent.**

What should we be asking? ...cont'd

- **What matrices/ indicator would be most appropriate under the different contexts**
- **We need to explore and better understand the food value chains that would be supportive of sustainable diets within a rapidly urbanizing communities under different African contexts.**
- **What would be the most supportive policy frameworks for promoting sustainable diets under different context?**

Conclusion

- **No doubt that there is a need to address the issue of sustainable diets for Africa**
- **Africa is currently subject to multiple interventions which need to be taken into account**
- **There is need to explore matrices/indicators that can be used to assess sustainability of diets under different contexts on the continent.**

- **UNSCN 2013 . Country policy analysis: nutrition impact of agriculture and food systems. South Africa Aug 2013**
- **Johnston et al. 2014 understanding sustainable diets: a descriptive analysis of the determinants and processes that influence diets and the impact on health, food security and environment sustainability.**
- **Du, Lidan, 2014. Leveraging agriculture for nutritional impact through the feed the future initiative: A landscape analysis of activities across 19 focus countries. Arlington, VA: USAID/Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) project**