

Le Paysan

Bulletin de liaison de la CNOP-Congo

Edition spéciale

Third edition of the farmer's week A turning point for agriculture: challenges and hopes

Four speeches were delivered at the opening

The third edition of Farmer's Week has just concluded in Boko on an optimistic note. The exchanges, sharing of experiences, and perspectives outlined during this event mark a decisive turning point for the future of our agriculture and this activity, which is increasingly included in the calendar of national activities promoting local agriculture and "consuming Congolese."

Our country, like many others in Africa, faces major challenges: climate change, land degradation, low productivity, limited access to markets and agricultural financing... These challenges weigh on the food security of our populations and hinder the economic development of our rural communities. However, Farmer's Week, organized by CNOP-Congo as part of the FO4ACP program, has shown us that solutions exist. Policymakers, farmers, researchers, elected officials, and technical partners have demonstrated their ability to innovate, adapt, and work together to build a better future.

Discussions on agroecology, the valorization of local products, the strengthening of producer organizations, and the promotion of agricultural entrepreneurship have opened up new perspectives. These approaches, which are more environmentally friendly and resilient, are essential to ensure the sustainability of our agriculture and improve the living conditions of rural populations.

It is now time to take action. Public authorities must implement ambitious agricultural policies that promote investment in research, training, and agricultural extension. The private sector must play a leading role in the processing and marketing of agricultural products. And farmers themselves must be the main actors in this change.

Farmer's Week has reminded us that agriculture is much more than an economic sector; it is a pillar of our identity, our culture, and our food sovereignty. By investing in agriculture, we are investing in the future of our country.

Séraphin Médard NTADY, President of CNOP-Congo



Mr. Séraphin Médard NTADY
Président de la CNOP-Congo



Mme Pradesh ELENGA
Maire de la Communauté
urbaine de Boko



Mr. Germain Céphas EWANGUI
Secrétaire permanent du Conseil
consultatif de la société civile et
des Ongs



Mr. Romuald NZONZI
Directeur départemental de
l'agriculture au Pool



Le Président et la Vice-Présidente de la
CNOP-Congo à la tribune officielle



Une vue des producteurs agricoles

The third edition of Farmer's Week opened on promising prospects.



view of the officials at the opening ceremony

From August 20 to 22, 2024, the urban community of Boko vibrated to the rhythm of agriculture during the 3rd edition of Farmer's Week. This major event, organized by CNOP-Congo as part of the FO4ACP program, brought together numerous actors from the rural world: public authorities, farmers, livestock breeders, researchers, elected officials, representatives of producer organizations, and technical partners.

Under the patronage of Mr. Paul Valentin Ngoba, Minister of Agriculture, the ceremony was finally presided over by Mr. Romuald NZONZI, Departmental Director of Agriculture for the Pool. Four (4) speeches marked the opening ceremony. The first was by Mrs. Pradesh ELENGA, Mayor of the Urban Community of Boko. While welcoming the delegations present at this agricultural fair, she emphasized the role of agriculture for the development of the community in particular, but also and especially of the department in general. She urged agricultural producers to take full advantage of this opportunity to strengthen their capacities. For his part, taking the floor, the President of CNOP-Congo, Mr. Séraphin Médard Ntady, outlined the context of the organization of this activity, the first edition of which was held in Dolisie in 2017. He welcomed the progress made and the scale of Farmer's Week. He also reviewed the multifaceted support of technical and financial partners in the agricultural sector in Congo. Speaking about the role of CNOP-Congo, he welcomed its involvement in the implementation of agricultural policies and large-scale projects in the agricultural sector in Congo. In conclusion, he called on representatives of public authorities, local elected officials, and the media to be the relay in their various sectors to

disseminate the results of the 3rd edition of Farmer's Week. The third speech was delivered by Mr. Germain Céphas Ewangui, Permanent Secretary of the Consultative Council of Civil Society and NGOs. Quoting President Denis Sassou-Nguesso who said: "A people who do not produce what they consume are not a free people," he encouraged agricultural producers to do more to combat the phenomenon of massive importation of food products that our country suffers from in order to put this quote from the Head of State into practice. He continued by strongly emphasizing the efforts made by donors who continue to support the activities of civil society organizations in Congo. In the same vein, he called for strengthened collaboration between civil society organizations. Speaking last, the Departmental Director of Agriculture in the Pool, representing Minister

Paul Valentin Ngoba, underlined the importance of agriculture in the socio-economic development of the country and recalled the challenges facing farmers, including climate change, low productivity, and limited access to markets, before officially launching the activities of Farmer's Week.

The analysis of these different speeches presents the following challenges: food security. In this regard, it is a question of ensuring sufficient agricultural production to feed the population and reduce dependence on imports; valorization of local products. It is necessary to develop processing and marketing channels to valorize local agricultural products; preservation of the environment. It is actually a matter of adopting sustainable agricultural practices to protect natural resources and combat climate change; strengthening producer organizations. Giving them the means to act and defend the interests of their members and promote entrepreneurship. (Continued on page 3)

After the speeches, the second highlight was the tasting of local dishes, presented by a chef from Brazzaville. A varied range, combining local products, was presented to the public. We can mention: safous stuffed with "nsombé" (hannitons) with a stuffing of "bouekabueni" (salted black fish), etc.

Participants then visited the stands of agricultural producers. Several varieties of products were on sale. Fresh products (vegetables), processed local products (dried safous, dried mangoes, dried bananas, corn flour, Boko mayonnaise, etc.), fruit tree seedlings, vegetable and agricultural seeds, farmed hannitons (nsombé), packaged sorrel and pepper, natural organic fertilizer, seeds and cuttings, essences of all



A view of the Cameroonian delegation's booth



Visite dans une exploitation maraîchère dans la périphérie de Boko

kinds, etc. It should be noted that for this third edition, CNOP-Congo wanted to give a sub-regional character to Farmer's Week. Indeed, three (3) foreign delegations (Cameroon, Gabon, and DRC) were present. Their stands, composed of various products, attracted both the authorities present and local agricultural producers. "For me, it is a capital experience to exchange with foreign colleagues who do the

same job as me. I bought seeds that I will experiment with and I received advice from the seller to maximize my future production," says Jean, a producer from Boko visiting the agricultural fair.

On the festive side, the official launch ceremony of Farmer's Week in Boko was accompanied by three traditional groups: Mbongui za kongo, La

campagne l'heure a sonn , and Kikulu kia kongo. The 2024 edition of Farmer's Week was marked from the first day by innovation and solidarity. It was an opportunity for all actors in the rural world to meet, share their experiences, and build the agriculture of tomorrow together.

Ruffin Georges TOUADI

A gustatory journey to the heart of Boko's local flavors

The third edition of Farmer's Week in Boko opened on a note that was both festive and flavorful. Immediately after the official speeches marking the opening of the agricultural fair, participants were invited on a veritable taste journey through the region's culinary riches.

A specially designed space hosted this gourmet market where the intoxicating scents of simmering dishes filled the air. Beautifully set tables displayed an enticing variety of dishes, prepared with fresh, local ingredients. The chef, who came from Brazzaville, highlighted the authentic flavors of the terroir.

Visitors enjoyed a wide variety of dishes, ranging from ancestral recipes to more contemporary creations: Safous stuffed with "buekabueni" (salted black fish), accompanied by "nsomb ". Smoked and grilled fish, such as captain and tilapia, delighted the taste buds. These fish, caught in local waters, were prepared according to traditional recipes, passed down from generation to generation. Local vegetables: Juicy tomatoes, melting eggplants, okra... seaso-

nal vegetables were cooked simply and deliciously, revealing all the freshness and quality of local products. Braised meats and grilled meats: Local meats, such as pork and beef, were simmered over low heat or grilled over hot coals, accompanied by sauces.

Beyond simple tasting, this day was an opportunity to pay tribute to the culinary skills of rural women and the chef present. It is women who, for generations, have perpetuated culinary traditions and passed on their recipes to the younger generation. Their dishes, often prepared with simple and accessible ingredients, reflect a rich and varied culture. Hats off also to the chef who managed to add value to the products while captivating them.

This tasting was also an opportunity to highlight the economic potential of local products. By promoting the consumption of fresh, seasonal products, we support local producers and contribute to revitalizing the rural economy. As the chef pointed out: "By promoting culinary know-

how, we can develop new sectors and create jobs."

This day was a resounding success. Visitors were able to discover new flavors, meet passionate producers, and appreciate the richness of the region's culinary heritage. This event also helped to strengthen the link between producers and consumers, and promote sustainable agriculture that respects the environment.

A celebration of local culinary traditions

Reimagined traditional dishes



Farmer's Week in Boko : A crossroads for exchanges on African cultures and agroecology



The agroecology panel held the audience's attention

Held from August 20 to 22, 2024, Farmer's Week in Boko provided a platform to highlight the richness and diversity of African cultures and promote agroecological practices. This event, which brought together policymakers, farmers, researchers, elected officials, and representatives of producer organizations, was marked by fruitful exchanges on key themes for agricultural development.

Participants in Farmer's Week emphasized the importance of preserving and valuing ancestral knowledge in agriculture. Traditional production systems, often more environmentally friendly, were presented and discussed. Panelists shared their experiences on the use of medicinal plants, crop rotation, soil fertility management, and biodiversity conservation.

farm in Cameroon was widely cited as a model. Cameroonian and Gabonese delegations shared their experiences on agroecology and the conservation of traditional seeds. Participants were able to discover local initiatives aimed at : Developing agroforestry systems, Promoting the consumption of local products.

Agroecology : A Future Pathway for Agriculture

Agroecology, which combines scientific knowledge and traditional practices, was at the heart of the debates. Participants highlighted the many advantages of this approach, including : Better adaptation to climate change, reduced dependence on chemical inputs, Improved soil fertility, Better remuneration for producers.

Local Initiatives for More Sustainable Agriculture

Numerous innovative projects were presented at Farmer's Week, demonstrating the vitality of agroecology in Central Africa. The example of the xxxx agroecological

Challenges to Overcome

While the prospects are encouraging, panelists identified several challenges to accelerating the transition to agroecology in Central Africa and particularly in Congo, including : Access to financing, Farmer training, Consumer awareness.

The Valorization and Conservation of Traditional Seeds : A Major Issue for Agriculture and Biodiversity

Traditional seeds were also the subject of a panel that provided a great deal of information to producers. As the fruit of centuries of selection by farmers, they are an invaluable treasure. They contain a unique



The practice of agroecology guarantees healthy products on the market

Boko : Un carrefour d'échanges sur les cultures africaines et l'agroécologie



Agricultural seeds, subject of a specific panel

genetic diversity, adapted to local conditions and capable of resisting many environmental stresses. Yet they are threatened by the widespread use of commercial varieties. This panel highlighted the crucial issue of their preservation.

How to Valorize and Conserve Traditional

Seeds Proposals were made to ensure that these seeds are not only disseminated but also that a sub-regional circuit is established for better monitoring and authentication. One of the key proposals during this panel was the creation of seed banks.

Entrepreneurship Panel: A Catalyst for

Agricultural Innovation The final panel of the day focused on entrepreneurship. It provided a unique opportunity to highlight the challenges of agricultural entrepreneurship and to encourage the emergence of new initiatives.

Benefits of Such a Panel for Farmer's Week By including this panel in the 3rd edition of Farmer's Week in Boko, CNOP-Congo is pursuing its vision of improving the conditions of Congolese producers. One way to do this is to encourage them to move towards agricultural enterprises to revitalize the

sector. The Farmer's Week in Boko was a resounding success. The discussions held during the event highlighted the importance of agroecology, traditional knowledge, and entrepreneurship for the future of agriculture in Congo and Central Africa.

Ruffin Georges TOUADI



The panel on entrepreneurship was a highlight of Farmer's Week

The success of Farmer's Week in Boko: A team effort

The success of Farmer's Week in Boko was the result of a collaborative and coordinated effort by numerous stakeholders, each contributing their expertise and commitment.

The Minister of Agriculture, as a leading figure in the agricultural sector, had intended to mark the opening ceremony with his presence. However, a last-minute impediment prevented him from attending. He delegated the Departmental Director of Agriculture for the Pool to represent him. His involvement in organizing the 3rd edition of Farmer's Week played a decisive role in the event's success. It helped to give the event national visibility and strengthen political support for agriculture.

The Departmental Director of Agriculture for the Pool, as the local representative of the ministry, was the conductor of the Farmer's Week organization in the department. He coordinated the actions of the various stakeholders and ensured the smooth running of the activities. He effectively fulfilled his role as the Minister's representative. His decisive role was particularly evident in his presence throughout all

the activities of Farmer's Week, as well as his involvement in the panels organized on the second day.

Sector heads played a key role in mobilizing farmers and promoting good agricultural

Law enforcement (police and gendarmerie) ensured the safety of people and property throughout the event. Their presence helped to guarantee the smooth running of the activities and prevent any incidents.



The Departmental Director of Agriculture, received in Boko by the President of CNOP-Congo.

practices. They also contributed to the success of the various events organized as part of Farmer's Week. Their participation alongside the panelists helped to strengthen exchanges between foreign guests at the agricultural fair and local producers.

The municipality of Boko was involved in the organization of this conference from the outset. It provided the infrastructure necessary to organize the event. It also played an important role in communicating about Farmer's Week.

Farmer's Week in Boko : A Synergistic Effort

The success of Farmer's Week in Boko is the result of a synergy between all these actors. Each contributed their part, demonstrating the importance of networking and interinstitutional collaboration.

Keys to the Success of this Organization

Careful planning of the event, the distribution of tasks, and regular follow-up were essential. Clear and regular communication with all stakeholders helped to mobilize energies and coordinate actions. Farmer's Week was designed for farmers and with farmers. Their involvement was decisive for the success of the event. The support of the Minister of Agriculture and local authorities was a key factor in its success.

Future Prospects

The success of Farmer's Week in Boko opens up new prospects for the development of agriculture in the region. It is essential to capitalize on this momentum by continuing collaboration efforts and strengthening partnerships between the various stakeholders. It is also an opportunity for us to say that CNOP-Congo must continue on this path to make this activity a major national event. This does not depend solely on CNOP-Congo; the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock must support the NGO's efforts and include this activity in its calendar so that Congolese producers can have such moments of exchange, sharing, and marketing their products.

Ruffin Georges TOUADI



Teamwork has given a sub-regional connotation to the 3rd edition of the Farmer's Week

Farmer's Week in the Departments: A boost for agriculture and entrepreneurship



In the departments, producers were present

While Farmer's Week in Boko made a significant impact from August 20 to 22, 2024, the activities of the 3rd edition were actually launched in the departments from August 10 to 14, 2024. CNOP-Congo teams were deployed across the departments. In all these localities (Sibiti, Madingou, Dolisie, Pointe-Noire, Makoua, Djambala, Ouessou, Impfondo, Mbama), similar events were organized, testifying to an unprecedented enthusiasm for agricultural development.

Each department brought its own unique touch to this week dedicated to rural actors. From agricultural fairs to demonstrations of innovative farming techniques and tastings of local food, the activities were numerous and varied. Rural women and youth were particularly honored.

Youth Entrepreneurship Forum:



The tasting of culinary specialties in the departments was a highlight of Farmer's Week.

A Springboard for the Future One event that particularly caught people's attention was the Youth Entrepreneurship Forum. Organized in several departments, this forum allowed young farmers and agro-entrepreneurs to share their experiences, discover the contours of entrepreneurship, and discuss the need for financing to launch an agricultural business. Round tables and workshops punctuated these days, offering participants the opportunity to develop their skills for their initiatives. A participant from the Bouenza department said:

"This forum was a real revelation for me. I was able to meet other young people who share the same passions and the same

challenges. The advice from the experts and the exchanges gave me a new impetus to reorient my project." By highlighting young entrepreneurs in the departments, Farmer's Week underlined the importance of renewing generations in the agricultural sector. Indeed, young people bring new ideas, new technologies, and renewed energy. However, they face many challenges: access to land, financing, training, etc. This is why it is essential to support them and provide them with the necessary tools to succeed. The activities of Farmer's Week in the departments have demonstrated once again that agriculture is a sector of the future, creating many jobs and opportunities for development.

By supporting local initiatives, promoting innovation, and strengthening links between the various actors in the value chain, Congo can build a more sustainable, more productive, and more inclusive agriculture. It is therefore up to everyone to continue this momentum and make agriculture a driver of development for our country.

R.G TOUADI

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They said... They said... They said... They said...

Séraphin Médard NTADY, President of CNOP-Congo

What was unique about this 3rd edition of Farmer's Week?



This year, we wanted to innovate. We involved authorities in charge of agriculture and livestock, local elected officials, etc. For the first time, we invited agricultural producers and researchers from Cameroon, Gabon, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. As you've seen, the enthusiasm was at its peak. Participation in the panels was a strong and enlightening moment, and we are grateful to the facilitators for the quality of their presentations. In short, I can say that we not only succeeded in the challenge of good organization but also made people feel the need to organize such meetings to build up our agricultural producers and consequently strengthen their capacities and boost their activities.

What are the follow-up mechanisms in place after Farmer's Week?

We are a national organization. We participate in drafting all programs implemented in Congo. And in most of these projects, we are members of the steering committees. Our job is to prepare arguments in favor of agricultural producers when setting up these projects. With such meetings, we take the opinions of producers to better guide our actions for the development of their activities. But we also want to encourage producers to be self-sufficient. By introducing panels on agroecology, seed conservation, and entrepreneurship, for example, we are promoting their awareness to first self-manage before the intervention of the state or projects. Young people, for example, think that there are no jobs. The panel on entrepreneurship made them understand that they can become entrepreneurs by putting in the will and what little they have.

What is your perspective on agroecology?

I don't have a specific perspective. But it must be said that at some point, we didn't use chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Our vision is to make sure that good practices return. That is to say, the use of natural products for clean agriculture. The themes of our panels in this 3rd edition were chosen intentionally.

Mbenza Anicet, Guest Chef invited by CNOP-Congo



"We have local products in every department of our country. As a chef, our role is to present them to the public, but with a certain added value. People sometimes prefer to eat what comes from abroad (manufactured or preserved under questionable conditions) while our local products are healthy and of good quality. For example, during the tasting at the opening of Farmer's Week, I

presented as a dish: cucumber boats with a salted fish filling (in the Pool department, salted fish has a

special connotation, hence this choice), with mango slices and "tsombé" (also very popular in this department). This can be served as a salad or simply as an appetizer. All the ingredients that make up this presentation are local." **Contact: 06.932.32.31**



Mr. Max NGAKOSSO, Sub-Prefect of Boko (2nd from the right) and Mrs. Nerva Pradesh ELENGA, Mayor of Boko (1st from the right), officially opening the

Lisez et faites lire LE PAYSAN

Quelques temps forts de la cérémonie d'ouverture



The bio-pesticide presented by the Cameroonian delegation at the Farmer's Week



The mayonnaise produced in Boko was honored



Mme Marie Jeanne KOULOUMBOU (en avant plan), Deputy of Boko la visit the products exposition



Mme Pradesh ELENGA, Maire de la Communauté urbaine de Boko (deuxième en partant de la dte) visit stands



Mr Germain Céphas EWANGUI, Secrétaire permanent du conseil consultatif de la société civile et des ongs visite des stands



The President and Vice-President of the CNOP-Congo were accompanied by several guests



The animation groups were part of it