

# **JOINT STATEMENT OF CSOs IN AGROECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT TO GOVERNMENTS OF AFRICA AT THE 2019 AFRICA CLIMATE WEEK HELD IN ACCRA, GHANA FROM THE 18<sup>TH</sup> TO 22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH, 2019**

## **SUBJECT: PLACING AGROECOLOGY AT THE CENTER OF CLIMATE ACTION IN AFRICA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As governments of Africa, Private Sector Actors, Civil Society Organizations and Farmers have all convened here in Accra, Ghana for this important Climate Change event in the continent, we have all been articulating climate actions towards building resilience of our communities and demonstrating commitment to do the continent's fair share of climate change action. Considering that African countries have very low contribution to the current climate crisis, yet it is adversely affected by it, it will be strategic for the governments of the continent to be leaving the discussion table, speaking a 'common language' in their climate actions. This common language should not fall short of placing stronger emphasis on climate change adaptation for protecting its citizens, transitioning its current agriculture and food production system to agroecology as the most appropriate model for agriculture and advancing a strong argument to commit industrialized and wealthy countries to provide adequate climate financing for the implementation of its adaptation and mitigation plans.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

We, Civil Society Organizations promoting agroecology, young environmental movements, Activista (movement of young activist), women farmers movement, acknowledge that the theme for the event, "Climate Action in Africa: A race we can win" is appropriate to the extent that African governments pay attention to the most appropriate and urgent climate actions. It is common knowledge that Africa is one of the most highly vulnerable regions to the effects of climate change, and we have seen in the last week in Zimbabwe and Mozambique people are getting hit hard and the pattern will continue and worsen. Yet it is evident that the continent has contributed little to this global problem. As advocates for agroecology we have made the following observations that needs critical attention from African governments and all:

1. Rural communities who depend on farming for food and income are especially vulnerable to climate change. Farmers who depend on predictable rainfall patterns are harvesting lower yields due to poor soil quality, pest invasions, droughts, floods and waters are drying up in many communities.
2. In most cases, these trends hit women and girls the hardest. Women farmers face discrimination when they try to access finance to make the investments needed to cope with the impacts of climate change. Climate change effects also increases the burden of

women unpaid care work and further devastate their ability to cope with the brunt of climate change. Women who lack fixed properties to use as collateral security are often turned away from accessing bank loans for any meaningful investment in agriculture.

3. Global warming is always increasing at an exponential rate and scientists are warning that, we have less than a decade, and that considerable efforts are required to keep global temperatures as close to 1.5° above preindustrial levels as possible, to avert a looming global climate catastrophe. Thus, requiring all countries of the world to honour their fair share in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as their contribution to climate change mitigation through their implementation of the Paris Agreement, yet unfortunately, the Paris Rulebook falls short of compelling governments to decrease emissions in line with their fair share.
4. Due to different levels of emissions and capacity to finance the negative effects of climate change, countries and more especially those with high emission levels must be guided by the principle of equity in order not to accept or take upon themselves an undue or disproportionate burden for climate change mitigation. According to the principle of equity, a country's fair share of contribution to climate change mitigation should be based on its history of industrialization and its economic strength. In this regard therefore, the more industrialized countries and economic powers such as the United States of America, Japan and other European countries, should take on more of the responsibility for mitigation.
5. We encourage Africa, with less industrialized and poorer countries should be allowed to channel much of their resources to adaptation programmes. In addition, the wealthier and more industrial countries should commit to providing funding to support the implementation of national adaptation and mitigation plans of African countries.
6. There is strong and factual evidence that agroecology systems, as nature-based solution, are superior to external input industrial and commercial agriculture, and are highly productive, highly sustainable, empower women, create jobs, engage youth, provide greater autonomy, build climate resilience, and multiple social, cultural and environmental benefits for women, youth and men in both rural and urban communities.

## **OUR KEY ASKS**

At this Africa Climate Week therefore, we call on African governments' attention, as a matter of urgency, to the act on the following:

1. Transform the current industrial agriculture by prioritizing agroecology strongly at the center of their climate change actions and create the enabling environment through

policy and public support programmes for the scale up and scale out of agroecology as an alternative, nature-based solution to the failed industrial and commercial model of agriculture and food production system.

2. Prioritize and place stronger emphasis for climate change adaptation in NDCs whiles unanimously demanding of the industrialized countries to do their fair share of climate action in providing adequate climate finance for the implementation of the continent's national adaptation and mitigation plans.
3. Enforcing existing environmental laws and implementing policies and programmes to halt the rate of environmental degradation, restoration of degraded areas and conserve the ecological systems.
4. Support women farmers with less labour intensive innovations and technologies that reduces the burden of women and girls unpaid care work whiles also contributing to mitigation measures of climate change.
5. Provide adequate budgetary support with specific targets for women and translate national policies into local actions for effective implementation
6. Challenge false solutions being put forth by actors with commercial interest which will further entrench inequality within our citizenry. We remain deeply skeptical of false solutions such as – climate smart agriculture, carbon markets, geo-engineering and recognize that climate insurance has a limited role to play in building resilience.
7. Facilitate and support non-market approaches to climate action. Carbon markets are dangerous distractions from developing real people-center solutions to the climate crisis. It is well documented that carbon markets have failed in achieving their environmental objectives and that many carbon offset projects have a devastating social impact. Carbon markets will never be able to meet their environmental and social objectives and should be abandoned for alternatives that fit the needs of peoples at the frontline of the crisis.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, as discussions around countries on climate pledges – known in UN jargon as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) - is featuring prominently in the deliberations of African climate actions, we hope to see countries taking a balanced and fair approach to adaptation and mitigation, and prioritizing their finance, programmes and policies appropriately by placing a far stronger emphasis on prioritizing the adaptation needs of vulnerable citizens. We are urging governments in Africa to use the Africa Climate Week to announce their efforts on their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

## Signatory Organisations

1. ActionAid Ghana
2. ActionAid Nigeria
3. Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)
4. African Biodiversity Network (ABN)
5. African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB)
6. Association Ouest Africaine pour le Développement de la Pêche Artisanale (ADEPA)
7. Biodiversity and Biosafety Coalition of Kenya (BIBA)
8. Centre for Indigenous knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD)
9. Coalition pour la Protection du Patrimoine Génétique Africaine (COPAGEN)
10. Comité Ouest Africain de Semences Paysannes (COASP)
11. Community Alliance for Global Justice (CAGJ) 8. Comparing and Supporting Endogenous Development (COMPAS Africa)
12. Corporate Accountability
13. Eastern and Southern Africa Pastoralist Network (ESAPN)
14. Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)
15. Environmental Rights Action
16. Fahamu Africa
17. Faith & Justice Network of the Mano River Basin (FJN)
18. Farm-Saved Seeds Network (FASSNET)
19. Fédération Agroécologique du Bénin (FAEB)
20. Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA)
21. Food Sovereignty Ghana
22. Friends of the Earth Africa (FoEA)
23. Global Justice Now!
24. Groundswell West Africa (GWA)
25. Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)
26. Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC)
27. Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social (INADES-Formation)
28. Institut Panafricain pour la Citoyenneté, les Consommateurs et le Développement (CICODEV Africa)
29. International Tree Foundation
30. Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (JVE International)
31. John Wilson
32. La Via Campesina SEA
33. Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organizations of West Africa (ROPPA)
34. Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association
35. Peasants Farmers Association of Ghana (P FAG)
36. Plate-forme Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC)
37. Réseau Africain pour le Droit à l'Alimentation (RAPDA –Togo)

38. Rural Women's Assembly (RWA)
39. Tanzanian Alliance for Biodiversity (TABIO)
40. Thousand Currents (formerly IDEX)
41. Union Africaine des Consommateurs (UAC)
42. Vision for Alternative Development
43. We are the Solution (WAS)
44. World Neighbors
45. Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity (ZAAB)