

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

amplifying  
**AGROECOLOGY**



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AFSA, June 2018

About the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa: AFSA brings together smallscale food producers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, farmers' networks, faith groups, consumer associations, youth associations, civil societies and activists from across the continent of Africa to create a united and louder voice for food sovereignty.

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For more information visit [www.afsafrica.org](http://www.afsafrica.org) or connect with us on Twitter (@Afsafrica) - Facebook (AFSA) - Email ([afsa@afsafrica.org](mailto:afsa@afsafrica.org))

# About AFSA

AFSA is a broad alliance of different civil society actors who are part of the struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology in Africa. These include African farmers' organizations, African NGO networks, specialist African NGOs, consumer movements in Africa, international organizations which support the stance of AFSA, and individuals. Its members represent smallholder farmers, pastoralists, hunter/gatherers, indigenous peoples; faith based institutions, and environmentalists from across Africa. It is a network of networks, currently with 35 members operating in 50 countries of Africa.

## AFSA's Vision

- Africa developing just and equitable ways of life for her people in harmony with nature.
- Africa continually harnessing and enhancing her traditional knowledge systems.
- African peoples controlling their territories, livelihoods and governance systems and related decision-making processes.
- African peoples holding their governments and corporate powers to account for their legacy to the future generations.

## AFSA's Mission

The core purpose of AFSA is to influence policies and to promote African solutions for food sovereignty. AFSA will serve as a continental platform for consolidation of issues pertaining to food sovereignty and together marshal a single and louder voice on issues and tabling clear workable solutions.

## Our Reach

AFSA has 35 members. The Alliance potentially represents and reaches about 200 million African smallholder farmers, fisher folk, pastoralists, indigenous people, women, youth, faith-based groups, and consumers across 50 African countries.

**New members accepted in 2017** – Biodiversity and Biosafety Coalition of Kenya (BIBA), Faith & Justice Network of the Mano River Basin (FJN), We Are the Solution / Nous Sommes la Solution (WAS/NSS), Rwanda Climate Change Network (RCCN), Eastern and Southern Africa Pastoralist Network (ESAPN).

Find out more about AFSA at [www.afsafrica.org](http://www.afsafrica.org)



# Message from the Chairperson

Dear Comrades,

While welcoming and congratulating the new members who have joined AFSA, permit me to also specially welcome all the old members holding and flying the AFSA banner high, the AFSA staff, working round the clock, the AFSA Board, helping and supporting the secretariat in the background, our partners, allies and supporters for making it back on board despite the very tough tasks and days that we must confront.

## Challenging and Changing Times

The new year is unfolding with unique challenges for our countries and the continent at large. The ongoing convulsions and crises in the world continue to manifest in social, economic and political spheres. Through climate change, conflicts, migration, land grabs, job losses, corporate control of our seeds, crops and livestock, and other negative manifestations, Africa yearns for rebirth, for transformation. One sobering lesson from the ongoing events in Africa is that while theorising and planning are essential and provide solid platforms for interventions, it is acting in solidarity that will effect the changes we dream of. As we watched events unfold on the streets of Gambia, Togo, Kenya, South Africa, Liberia, Zimbabwe and others, we see clearly that People Power remains Potent.

## AFSA on the Front Line

The days may be tough, but the resilience of our groups is unmistakable. Budgets are shrinking. No doubt. But our resolve is not! We are undaunted in hope and in focus. It is a time for increased creativity and diversification of our outreach for support. We shall not give in to those determined to destroy our food, agriculture and our food sovereignty! We will not accept agribusiness deciding the future of our food systems.

The situation demands that we resolve to be more strategic in our work. This requires our being more watchful and being better informed. It also means building strong alliances and networks. It equally means watching each other's back.

## Looking Ahead and Pushing on

The days ahead will not be easier than those that have passed. But we shall certainly weather the storms. With our commitment and dedication to the cause of developing Africa in harmony with nature, harnessing its traditional knowledge and systems, with our people in control of our resources and related decisions, there will be marked positive changes and there will be an irreversible build up on the positive path for our peoples.

We may not expect easy victories, but we will push on, with our faces set as flint. And collectively we will succeed. Until victory!

**Mariann Bassey Orovwuje**

Chair AFSA



# Message from the Coordinator

2017 was a very productive year for AFSA - in so many tangible and intangible ways.

This is a year where membership has increased, with more networks joining us, a faith-based organisation, a women's movement, and others, strengthening our diverse and inclusive family. AFSA has contributed to the emergence of a network of pastoralists and it was gratifying to see them coalesce and become our members. We also reflected on our structure and reorganized ourselves as Land and agroecology working groups, Climate Change and agroecology working group, Consumers for agroecology working group and Seed and agroecology working group. These yearly reflections have contributed to the clarity of our purpose as well as the strength of our solidarity.

Perhaps one of the ground-breaking initiatives that we have started is the training of trainers program on agroecology for farmers. We brought a world-renowned professor of agroecology, Jairo Restrepo, from Colombia; he has been researching, practicing and spreading these techniques all over the world. The farmers expressed their happiness in learning these innovative techniques and have started to implement them. This will continue over the coming years and will contribute significantly to the spread of agroecology in Africa.

We also did research and produced a range of significant policy publications. The publications were distributed in key policy spaces, including the meeting organized by the AU Land Policy Initiative.

We also started a potentially significant relationship with Africa policy institutions including the Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa (SDGCA) as well as the AU Land and Policy Initiative. We will continue building these relationships in the coming years. AFSA was invited to key policy meetings on food systems and agroecology and its publications are sought by influential international Institutions including UN FAO.

We increased the frequency and regularity of our messages this year and we are doing it in the two major languages in Africa - French and English. This has significantly increased our reach to our members, friends, supporters and interested others. We hope that our communications materials have increased the awareness of African society on issues related to the challenge and alternatives we present to the industrial food system.

The new year is bringing a lot of opportunities. We are delighted to retain our funders and continue to build relationships with more partners. The year 2018 will bring our much-awaited Conference on Food Systems in Africa. We will explore the impact of urbanization, complexity and policy making on our food systems. We will also use the opportunity to highlight the value our African food systems. We will use Art as a methodology to look at issues in our food system. This has all happened due to the work of our members, the staff as well as our partners and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.



# Introduction

This annual report provides an overview of AFSA's engagements in the year, progress made at both programme and institutional level, challenges faced, and a way forward. AFSA has continued to grow as a network, despite the various challenges faced.

AFSA is growing and becoming more recognised in policy spaces. AFSA membership continues to spread the message for agroecology in various policy spaces. As highlighted in sections of the report, AFSA's contribution to policy discussions has been felt with our engagements in global and regional policy arenas: with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa, and the Land Policy Initiative among others. In the course of the year the different working groups continued to engage in various activities.

In the course of the year the secretariat has continuously reported on progress made, achievements and challenges. This is through various forums and meetings organised and attended, through the weekly and quarterly newsletters and project reports (quarterly and mid-year) among others. The annual report is hence not a complete and bit by bit narrative of all activities undertaken by the network but rather a highlight of what transpired in 2017 and an overview of plans for the coming year.



# Milestones in 2017

## Training for farmers and farmer trainers on biofertilisers.



Biofertiliser training in Thika, Kenya

AFSA organised a training course for 50 farmers and farmer trainers. The training was held in Thika, Kenya at SACDEP which is a training centre for sustainable agriculture practices. It was facilitated by Dr. Jairo Restrepo, a seasoned educator and activist in the field of sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty. It focused on regenerative agriculture, including the theory of soil fertility and the practice of revitalising soil fertility using inputs such as bokashi, bio-activated charcoal, fermented bio-fertilisers, and phosphites.

The training involved practical hands-on lessons in regenerative agriculture such as making bio-fertilizer from local materials within the ecosystems and naturally boosting the immune system of plants to increase yields. The farmers and farmer trainers also received training materials to guide their efforts in reproducing the same work in their own farms and transferring to others what they had learnt, to ensure that the same techniques can be spread far and wide.

The training was highly welcomed by the participants as it has been a long standing proposal from the members that AFSA as a continental network also needs to create opportunities for members' constituencies on the ground, to build their capacity in relation to food sovereignty.

Below is some of the feedback from those who participated in the training.

**"As a trainer and a manager of an organic training centre, the training was very helpful in building my skills and I am eager to replicate the same at my training centre which mainly targets the young people." Samuel Nyanzi, Executive Director, Rural Community Initiatives for Development (RUCID) Uganda.**

**"After Thika, we at BIOGI organised a training workshop for 20 farmers in one of BIOGI's community partner sites and for 6 staff at the organization gardens. The farmers were exposed to practicals, making bokashi, barrel fermentations, lactic acid and biocharcoal. They also prepared native microbes which really excited them. Some were wondering, 'This type of farming where you prepare manures and also eat part of it is very interesting.' They made action plans and all of them got into twos and top on their list was making bokashi, keeping a food forest (for native microbes) and seed coating. At the office we made phosphate from bone meal, bokashi, native microbes and the ferments. After three months it's a dry season and we have observed crops growing from use of the new products. Most farmers used their bokashi to grow cowpeas, kales and pumpkins. They all report healthy growth. Some are having their third heap. Ferdinand Wafula, Bio Gardening Innovations (BIOGI), Kenya.**



# AFSA members' strategy meeting and AGM

AFSA members and guests gathered in Thika, Kenya in October 2017 to focus their collective attention on advocacy. The meeting brought together representatives of 25 core member networks, 3 associate member organisations, and 5 applicants for membership, plus friends of AFSA and consultants, to reflect on AFSA's advocacy work, to identify what works, and what does not, and to review and refine AFSA's advocacy strategy for the coming few years.

The four-day meeting brought together views and perspectives from across civil society, both from experts in policy advocacy and farmers on-the-ground, to ensure that AFSA - as a continental voice for food sovereignty - is accurately reflecting the voices of its base, the diverse constituencies of small scale food producers, indigenous peoples, youth, women, and consumers from across Africa.

A major outcome from the meeting is the revision of the AFSA strategy which is now focusing on four working groups i.e. Land and Agroecology, Climate Change and Agroecology, Consumers for Sustainable Food Systems, and Resilient Seed Systems and Agroecology.

The AFSA Annual General Meeting was held immediately after the 3-day strategy meeting; four new members were brought on board and one member changed from associate to core member status.



Annual General Meeting, Thika, Kenya

## AFSA strengthens relationships with the media

AFSA organized a communication meeting between agroecology activists from AFSA membership and journalists from identified media houses within Africa. The two came together to discuss the major challenges faced by agroecology activists and leaders in getting their messages across through the media, and how journalists could help activists shape their agroecology messages for the media to capture.



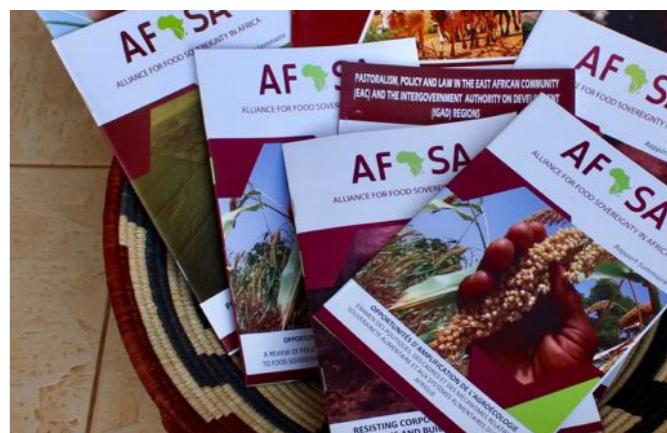
This interaction also strengthened the capacities of African journalists from 10 countries to appreciate agroecology as a subject within the broader topic of agriculture. Journalists were able to raise key questions around the topic of agroecology, helping to overcome the challenges they face when reporting.

The agroecology leaders and journalists worked together to identify key issues that would guide African journalists reporting on agroecology. During this interaction for example the two groups discussed tips on improving reporting on the topic of agroecology. Discussions were also held around the need to continuously define key terminologies such as Food Sovereignty. Other tips were centred on the need to identify relevant media personnel and continuously building their capacity to appreciate and report on agroecology.

From the meeting the journalists and agroecology leaders agreed to develop a Journalist guide on agroecology. This will be published in 2018.

## AFSA commissions three new studies on agroecology, seed and land policy in Africa.

In 2017 AFSA carried out three policy research studies to better understand the legal frameworks around Land, Agroecology and Seeds. These identified advocacy issues, policy spaces and entry points for AFSA to advance community voices on these issues. The studies provide useful information and guidance to civil society organizations involved in supporting and advocating for food producers' rights across Africa.



AFSA publications

- 'Policy Trends and Emerging Opportunities for Strengthening Community Land Rights in Africa. A review of relevant international and regional policies and frameworks to empower community land rights advocacy'. This is available in English and French at <http://afsafrica.org/land-policy-report-policy-trends-and-emerging-opportunities-for-strengthening-community-land-rights-in-africa/>
- 'A Study of Policies, Frameworks and Mechanisms Related To Agroecology And Sustainable Food Systems In Africa'. This is available in English and French at <http://afsafrica.org/agroecology-policy-report-a-study-of-policies-frameworks-and-mechanisms-related-to-agroecology-and-sustainable-food-systems-in-africa/>
- 'Resisting Corporate Takeover of African Seed Systems and Building Farmer Managed Seed Systems for Food Sovereignty In Africa'. This is available in English and French at <http://afsafrica.org/francais-afsa-seed-policy-report-resisting-corporate-takeover-of-african-seed-systems-and-building-farmer-managed-seed-systems-for-food-sovereignty-in-africa/>

Summaries of all three of the studies were published in hard copy and online, in English and French. They are available at <http://afsafrica.org/category/resource/publications-resource/>.

In 2017 AFSA also published the report 'Pastoralism, Policy and Law in The EAC and IGAD Regions'. The aim of this desk study was to identify and analyse policy and regulatory and legal frameworks in IGAD and EAC regions of Africa, and their implications for the practice of pastoralism and food sovereignty, so as to inform civil society and pastoralist groups' advocacy on pastoralism and food sovereignty in the two regions. The study was carried out with the financial support of The Open Societies Foundations. It is available at <http://afsafrica.org/pastoralism-policy-and-law-in-the-eac-and-igad-regions/>

Also in 2017 AFSA became an officially registered publisher, with the ISBN:978-9970.



AFSA members and biofertiliser trainees

## AFSA holds a round table dialogue during the 2nd African Union Land Policy Initiative Conference

The continent-wide conference was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Several AFSA members from the Land and Agroecology working group participated making presentations and plenary contributions. As part of the conference AFSA organised a round table dialogue on "Defending community land rights in Africa". The discussions were guided by a presentation on the state of community land rights in Africa highlighting challenges of land grabs among smallholder producers including farmers, pastoralists, fisher folk and hunter gatherers. From the conference a number of recommendations and actions were agreed by the participants from the different sectors including civil society, academia, governments and funding institutions among others. One of the key recommendations advanced by AFSA is the need to recognise and streamline agroecology in land policy discussions.

### Strengthening AFSA influence with key policy actors and spaces.

Whereas it is still challenging to AFSA and many other civil society organisations to achieve effective participation within government policy spaces, in this period AFSA has further strengthened its working relations and has accessed policy spaces at the African Union and Regional Economic Community (RECs) level. AFSA for example strengthened its relations with the African Land Policy Center (ALPC) and the SDG Centre for Africa based in Kigali, Rwanda. This has been through continued policy engagement.

## State of the Alliance

**Visibility-** This has increased with more publications, weekly news bulletins, speaking at different fora such as the Abidjan francophone conference on land management, Connect Event, Land Policy Initiative conference, and GTAE meeting among others, and social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp.

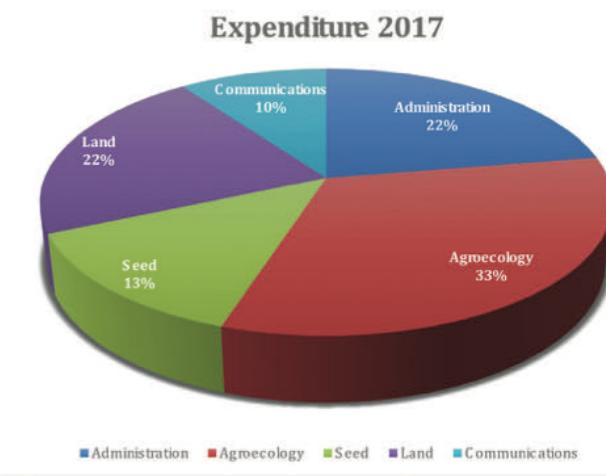
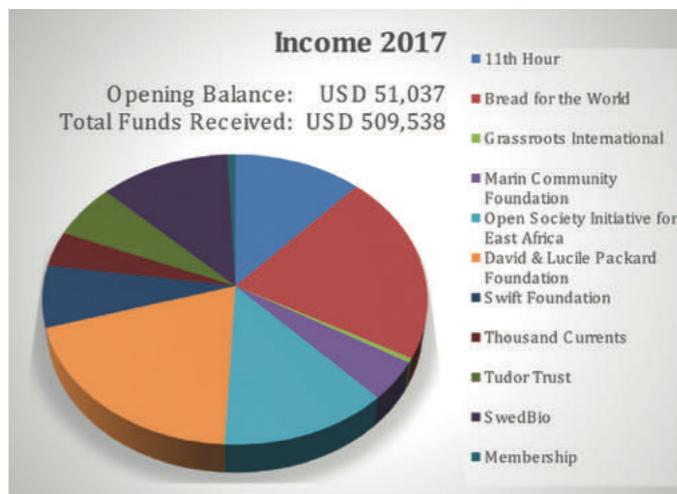
**Strengthened Partnerships-** With key institutions such as the SDG Centre for Africa, the Land Policy Initiative and the West Africa Conference of Bishops. These new collaborations enhance our ability to influence decisions and advocate for change.

**Membership-** Four new members joined the AFSA family, the West African women's movement "We are the Solution", the Eastern and Southern Africa Pastoralist Network (EASP), Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya (BIBA), Faith and Justice Network of Mano River Basin countries, each adding new dimensions to AFSA's broad and diverse base.

**Institutional Building-** AFSA funding for this year has increased although challenges still exist; for example funding for the different working groups is not balanced.

One of the staff (Yonas Yimer) left for further studies and two new staff have come on board; Michael Farrelly (Program Officer), Famara Deidhiou (Program Officer-West Africa). Michael previously worked with Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement in Dar-es-Salaam Tanzania. He brings on board a broad spectrum of expertise and experience in advocacy, communication and fundraising in agroecology and food sovereignty. Famara previously worked with Fahamu in Senegal and is currently working to strengthen AFSA liaison with West African members especially from the francophone countries. Famara who has years of experience in food sovereignty related advocacy, also came on board as part of the ongoing efforts to bridge and elevate participation of francophone members in AFSA activities. The new staff have together further strengthened the work and output of the secretariat which is now comprised of five staff members.

### Financial Report for the year ended Dec 31, 2017



# Way Forward

AFSA will continue working on the critical issues of seed sovereignty, land rights, climate change and consumer rights.

2018 is expected to be a very productive year for the network. One of the most critical activities is the African Food Systems Conference to happen in Yaoundé, Cameroun. As in 2016, AFSA will organise this meeting in partnership with the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative for Africa (EOA-I), AfrONet, IFOAM – Organics International and others. This will be a big meeting and technical and financial support and partnerships will be sought from different likeminded organisations organisations/individuals.

AFSA will also build on the partnerships created in the last year to strengthen its reach in regional and continental policy spaces.

The two new working groups - on Climate Change and Consumers - present an exciting challenge for the Alliance; these have to be further refined with concepts developed, activities planned and funds raised to support the work of the new groups. These are expected to move in alignment with the existing two working groups on Seeds and Land.

## Our theory of change



AFSA's Theory of Change recognizes that engagement with the formal policymaking processes is an essential but insufficient condition for change. AFSA has identified the following components of a package of action that needs to happen to achieve our goals.

### Evidence Collection

AFSA develops a clear and well-backed-up-with-evidence narrative on seed, land and agroecology. This will justify the call for a transition to agroecology.

### Raising Consumer & Public Awareness

AFSA reaches out to African consumers to become much more active in the food sovereignty movement advocating for Farmer Managed Seed Systems, farmers and citizen rights to land and for the transition to agroecology.

### Policy Advocacy

AFSA influences critical decision-makers among Africa's elite to endorse and promote agroecology. AFSA demonstrates the benefits of agroecology to decision makers by exposure to farmers' experience and views. AFSA gains access to an increasing number of critical decision-makers amongst Africa's elite.

### Building the Movement

AFSA brings more continental cohesion to the food sovereignty movement and is felt at grassroots level across the continent. The genuine farmers' voice for Food Sovereignty in Africa grows and becomes more cohesive across the continent. AFSA will keep learning: to be more strategic, taking up opportunities, and improving capacity to run an effective continental network.

If AFSA can

- gather a variety of evidence on the transition to Agroecology and disseminate this effectively
- strengthen the consumer movement in Africa around issues of food sovereignty
- help strengthen the genuine farmers' voice for Agroecology at national and regional levels;- bring stronger cohesion and collaboration amongst civil society players and
- engage policy makers across the continent in an effective way

Then AFSA will

- influence policy towards a transition to Agroecology and food sovereignty
- contribute significantly to the Food Sovereignty citizen movement across Africa



## Our Board of Directors

AFSA has a unique board of directors led by women and having a majority of women. Mrs Mariann Bassey Orovwuje is the Chairperson while Mrs Ali Ali Shatou is the Treasurer; Mrs Elisabeth Mpofu and Mrs Josephine Atangana are board members. Mr Faustin Vuningoma is AFSA's Secretary and Mr. Chris Macoloo and Mr. Jean Paul Sikeli are board members.

The AFSA board met a number of times over Skype and had a three-day face to face meeting in Nairobi Kenya before the AFSA advocacy capacity building and AGM took place. The board usually conducts its meetings back to back with other meetings to save the scarce funding. The board also deliberates regularly over various issues raised for their consideration.



**Mariann Bassey  
Orovwuje**  
Chair



**Ali Aii Shatou**  
Treasurer



**Faustin Vuningoma**  
Secretary



**Elizabeth Mpofu**



**Jean Paul Sikeli**



**Josephine Atangana**



**Chris Macoloo**

## Our Members

### AFSA has three categories of membership:

**The Core Members of the Alliance** are regional farmers' organizations, regional indigenous peoples' organizations, and regional NGO networks.

**The Associate Members** include specialist NGOs and national networks that are not able to be core members of AFSA through a regional network.

**The Friends of AFSA** category includes organizations based outside Africa who support what AFSA stands for and are keen to work with AFSA.



\* Not official logo. \* Individual membership is given for outstanding contributions to the Alliance.

# Acknowledgement

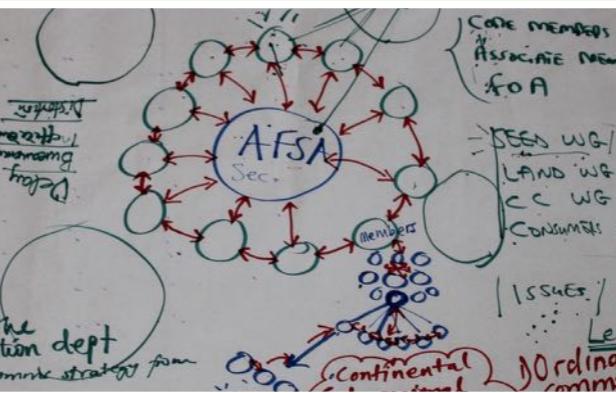
The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) will look towards strengthening existing and building new partnerships in the coming years.

Special thanks to AFSA members who have taken leadership of the working groups.

AFSA acknowledges and gives thanks to our partner organisations for their support, encouragement and generous contribution to the cause of food sovereignty in Africa.



## Our Partners



# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

P. O. Box 571 Kampala, Uganda  
Email: afsa@afsafrica.org  
Website: [www.afsafrica.org](http://www.afsafrica.org)  
Tel: +256 414 499 169

