



ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

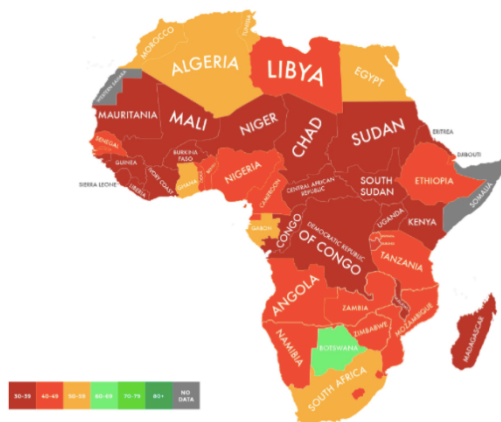
AGROECOLOGY – THE SUSTAINABLE RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN AFRICA

THE PROBLEM

Countries in Africa continue to increasingly experience climate change and variability with vast threats to agriculture and food production. According to the IPCC 2013 report, all four dimensions of food security (food availability, access, utilization and stability) are potentially affected by climate change. These impacts will be high in areas where low yields go hand in hand with poverty and in areas where households are highly dependent on rain fed agriculture.

Africa is clearly the continent most vulnerable to climate change effects. Already the hottest continent, Africa is expected to warm

1.5 times faster than the global average, according to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - the recognized global authority on climate science. With around 70% of Africa's population dependent on rain fed farming, hundreds of millions of people do not have the same safety net afforded those in wealthier, industrialized nations. Climate change also affects livestock and fish breeding and migratory patterns (OECD) impacting the livelihoods of millions of pastoralists and fishers.



It is therefore not surprising that climate change is increasingly recognized as one of the major economic, environmental and social challenge of our times. Scientists, policy makers, farmers and researchers alike are acknowledging the challenges of climate change to food production, the environment and human life. Africa suffers the injustice of being the continent hardest hit by climate change, while contributing the least to its cause –

accounting for less than 4% of the world's annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

With increasing evidence that climate change impacts food security and other aspects of human life, there is need for clarity on how to address such impacts. While the urgency of dealing with climate change has been acknowledged by governments, many of the proposed solutions increase pressure on small scale food producers to take up new initiatives such as Climate Smart Agriculture, using hybrid and GMO seed, and increasing the use of chemical inputs.



We see these as false solutions which act largely to the detriment of food sovereignty, environmental conservation and livelihoods, and are ultimately likely to worsen the impact of climate change by further degrading the soil, destroying biodiversity and using chemical fertilizers, generating even more greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, big companies especially from developed

countries are given a pass to pollute by offsetting their contribution to climate change through carbon credits earned from REDD+ projects.

THE SOLUTION

Research: Climate research priorities and funding tend to be more focused on new technologies to deal with mitigation – aimed at reducing emissions. Research needs to be undertaken towards strengthening the resilience of food producers including small scale farmers, pastoralists and fisher folk to the impacts of climate change. More research funding should also be directed towards scaling up of existing proven technologies at the local level.

Raising consumer and public awareness: There's need to educate people on the challenges around some of the proposed solutions especially pertaining to Climate Smart Agriculture and

at the same time on sustainable agriculture practices that we are promoting through agroecology.

Advocacy: It is that evident that to deal with the challenges of climate change we require a conducive policy environment and therefore we need to engage in climate change policy making processes at different levels. We need to advocate for the recognition of agroecology as a solution in climate change policy

negotiations and in National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Building the movement:

There's need to mobilise African citizens to take action in calling their national governments to develop climate change policies and legal frameworks that support



sustainable agriculture practices. Mobilization of communities also need to happen to popularize the concepts of agroecology as a solution to climate change.

KEY MESSAGES

- Agroecology contributes to the achievement of many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including Climate action, Sustainable cities and communities and Responsible consumption and production. Agroecology can also potentially contribute to other initiatives such as the Climate for Development in Africa joint initiative by the African Union, UNECA and the African Development Bank.
- Where industrial agriculture aims to eliminate biodiversity, agroecology depends on diversity, and builds upon it. Where industrial agriculture pollutes and degrades, agroecology regenerates and restores, working with nature, not against her.
- Governments must be held accountable in meeting their commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement, which brings all nations together to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, keeping a global temperature rise this century well below

2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.

- African governments have their primary responsibility towards their people and should therefore promote climate solutions that work for their citizens. Those that have been time tested and proven to support environmental protection, food security and sustainability. Agroecology does this, protecting and providing for the next generations and the future of Africa.
- Building climate resilience in agricultural systems means taking care of soil health. It means increasing the agricultural biodiversity of farms, by expanding the range of crops being grown, in particular those naturally adapted to climate stress, e.g. sorghum, millet, cassava, and cowpeas, and through community seed production and sharing.
- Climate change stresses not only food production systems, but social systems as well. Resilience-building efforts to create new livelihood opportunities will enable people to avoid out-migration and stay in their communities and prosper. Community seed banks, home-bakeries using local products, and self-help groups are examples of social resilience.



AFSA is a broad alliance of civil society actors who are part of the struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology in Africa. It is a network of networks, currently with 37 members active in 50 African countries. These include African food producer networks, African NGO networks, indigenous people's organizations, faith based organizations, women and youth groups, consumer movements, and international organizations that support the stance of the alliance.

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