



PRESS RELEASE: ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA: PRESS RELEASE

World Soil Day 2020: Connecting the dots between soil and agroecology for food security and climate action.

Digital Campaign on Agroecology for Healthy Soil

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- Agroecology provides the most favorable soil conditions for plant growth, particularly by managing organic matter and enhancing soil biodiversity
 - Agroecology promotes the type of farming that feeds the soil and revitalizes the ecology.
 - Healthy, nutrient-rich, biodiverse soil is the basis for a healthy ecosystem, healthy and nutritious food, and a natural way to mitigate and adapt to climate change
 - Agroecology is Africa's future for healthy, nutritious, and resilient food systems
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[Kampala, Uganda, December 4, 2020] – The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) joins the international community for the observance of World Soil Day on December 5, 2020, that celebrates healthy soils for a food-secure future. This year's campaign, "**Keep soil alive, Protect soil biodiversity,**" aims to highlight the growing challenges in soil management and soil biodiversity loss and the pressing need to improve soil health worldwide.

AFSA strongly believes conserving agricultural biodiversity and maintaining soil fertility is among the most urgent and grave challenges of the global fight for food security and climate action.

To this end, AFSA launches a two-day social media campaign to join the international community on World Soil Day 2020 (#WorldSoilDay) and lead the African voice for agroecology and food sovereignty. The theme of our campaign, "**Agroecology for Healthy Soil,**" intends to establish the urgency of embracing agroecology to solve the soil crisis and restore soil fertility and territorial landscape degradation.

Dr. Million Belay, General Coordinator of AFSA, said, *“Soil is the foundation of life. Our life on earth depends on the life and health of our soil. No aspect of human life is more dependent on soil than agriculture. A farming system that doesn't care and nourish the soil will collapse agricultural productivity and contribute to climate change. Agroecology offers the best and systemic soil biodiversity and water resource management solution. Agroecology is the future to cool the planet, nourish our soils and feed the world with healthy and nutritious food.”*

The industrial model of agriculture is the primary driver of climate change. Fossil fuels, chemical fertilizers, and loss of organic matter in soils due to intensive cultivation and high input poisonous agrochemicals are significant sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. About 14-24 percent of anthropogenic GHG emissions are attributed to agriculture, and industrial agriculture accounts for more than 80% of the fossil fuel emissions to only produce 30% of the world's food.

Dr. Chris Macoloo, AFSA Chair, said, *“Agroecological farming practices increase soil organic matters, enrich the soils with nutrients, increase local agrobiodiversity, protect landscapes, and other local ecological resources. By increasing the biodiversity of soils through agroecological practices, smallholder farmers and food producers in Africa could sustain food and water security while contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.”*

Hence, this year's World Soil Day celebration is critical to highlight how the industrial agriculture paradigm is poisoning the soil, polluting the air and depleting biodiversity by excessive use of agrochemicals and intensive, high-input, monoculture farming.

Bridget Mugambe, Program Coordinator of AFSA, said, *“The campaign for “Agroecology for Healthy Soil” is particularly relevant to AFSA to show the urgent need to transition to agroecology to save our soils, solve the climate crisis, revive biodiversity, improve food security and create a pathway for a healthy and resilient future for humans and all life forms on earth.”*

The two-day digital campaign will start on December 4, 2020, and join a Twitter storm on December 5, commemorating World Soil Day. The official hashtag for our campaign is **#Agroecology4Soil**. It is a perfect day to join citizens of the world in their quest to raising soil awareness and encouraging governments, organizations, donors and individuals around the world to commit to proactively improving soil health.

AFSA was launched in 2011 with the vision of creating a concerted voice for agroecology and food sovereignty movements in Africa. It is the biggest network of networks in Africa with over 30 network members in more than 50 African countries with a combined potential reach of up to 200 million Africans. Its membership embraces farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, hunters and gatherers, indigenous people's organizations, faith-based organizations, women and youth groups, consumer movements and civil society organizations.

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