



ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

THE FOOD WE WANT:

AFSA Endorses the Global Call to Action Against UPOV

On 8 December 2021, the Alliance for the Food Sovereignty in Africa met in Nairobi, Kenya. As representatives from 55 African countries, and over 30 million smallholder farmers, pastoralists, hunter/gatherers, indigenous peoples, faith-based institutions, women and youth networks, consumer networks and civil society from across Africa, we join in the global call of action against the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), and thoroughly reject its imposition on our continent's food systems.

UPOV is at the heart of the drive to privatize and restrict access to seed, and thus food. UPOV was initiated in 1961 by a few European countries to allow plant breeders to impose patent-like intellectual property rights over seeds. The regime of plant variety protection has been imposed on our national seed systems through harmonised policy and trade agreements requiring our countries to adopt or mimic UPOV's rules, with coercion and co-option of our public institutions and seed services.

UPOV promotes uniformity in seeds, and therefore uniformity in food supply. It grants a small group of transnational corporations the means to appropriate and control seeds. UPOV serves the industrial and corporate food system. This is the primary cause of biodiversity destruction in Africa, of mass displacement from territorial lands and of our territorial markets, whilst driving climate collapse, and rising poor health and malnutrition across Africa. For an agroecologically diverse continent like Africa, this uniformity undermines our historical socio-ecological relationships with our land, our food and our cultures.

As AFSA launches The African Food Policy Initiative¹, which is a process endorsed through national dialogues held in 23 countries across the continent, pursuant of a shared vision for a Food Sovereign Africa, we call for an end to UPOV in Africa. The spirit of the Food Policy initiative, in collaboration with the African Union, speaks to the very core of what we want for the development of our agriculture systems and policies – centred on inclusive, participatory and bottom up decision making, that puts African smallholder farmers, consumers, and our diverse agro-ecologies at the very centre of our existence.

¹ The African Food Policy initiative was opened through auspicious authority of *Dr Simplicie Nouala Fonkou, Head, Agriculture and Food Security Division, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE), African Union Commission*, in Nairobi, on this day, 8 December 2021.

The African Food Policy initiative is aimed as an authoritative, Africa-driven rallying point for asserting Africa’s policy directions that safeguard Africa’s food sovereignty and protect the right to food. Building on this initiative and upon this basis, it is profoundly clear that UPOV and UPOV imposed seed and PVP regimes, have no place in Africa’s seed system and governance mechanisms.

In the light of this, we say: No to UPOV, no to corporate interference in our food systems, and nothing for us without us!

Endorsed by the Members of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa:



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 36 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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