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ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

ADAPTATION, RESILIENCE AND MITIGATION THROUGH AGROECOLOGY

*A position paper for enhancing climate
adaptation and resilience through agroecology*

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Introduction

This position paper details the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa's COP27 vision and priorities - including themes, goals, targets, and indicators - for the thematic areas of agriculture, climate action on land, finance, adaptation, and gender. It provides an opportunity for AFSA to communicate its position based on stakeholder engagement and consultations over one year.

Launched in 2011, AFSA is a broad alliance of civil society actors who are part of Africa's struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology. These include African food producer networks, African CSO networks, indigenous people's organisations, faith-based organisations, women and youth groups, consumer movements, and international organisations that support the stance of AFSA. It is a network of networks with 35 members active in 50 African countries, reaching around 200 million people. AFSA works in four thematic areas: Climate Crisis and Agroecology, Resilient seed systems, mobilising citizen support for sustainable food and nutrition systems and strengthening community land rights and healthy soils.

Our work on **Climate Change & Agroecology** is focused on integrating agroecology into climate policies and negotiations. It is hinged on research conducted at the regional (RECs and AU) level and in 12 African countries where AFSA is implementing a campaign "agroecology for climate action. The objectives are to build civil society capacity, advocate for government adoption of sustainable climate actions, and ensure civil society voices are heard in climate policy spaces. AFSA works with farmers, pastoralists, fishers, civil society organisations, government ministries, agencies and departments and the African Group of Negotiators on Agriculture, Adaptation and Gender.



Summary

With around 70% of Africa's population dependent on rain-fed farming, hundreds of millions do not have the same safety net afforded those in wealthier, industrialised nations. Climate change also affects livestock and fish breeding impacting the livelihoods of millions of pastoralists and fishers. AFSA's climate goal is to strengthen Africa's resilience to climate change by integrating agroecology into regional and national climate policy spaces.

In this, we prioritise adaptation actions that put small-scale food producers (small scale farmers, fishers, pastoralists, hunter gatherers) and local and indigenous communities at the centre of climate solutions blending local and indigenous knowledge with cutting-edge science without threatening biodiversity and food security.

We prioritise agroecology which encompasses a model of agriculture based on diversifying farms and farming landscapes, transitioning from chemical inputs to bio-inputs, optimising biodiversity and stimulating interactions between different species as part of holistic strategies to build long-term healthy and climate-resilient agroecosystems and secure livelihoods.

Themes covered

Agriculture

Adaptation

Climate Action on land

Finance

Gender

Our position

We acknowledge with concern the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II report findings, which show that extreme weather events will increase risks of food insecurity, food price rises, reduced food diversity, and reduced income for agricultural and fishers' livelihoods preventing Africa from achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 2) by 2030.

We, therefore, call for an urgent need for a just transition globally away from high-emitting industrial agriculture, corporate monopolies of food systems, and false climate solutions – towards agroecology and self-food sufficiency. Africa can lead the rest of the world in sustainable food systems.

The transition to agroecology – drawing on indigenous knowledge, innovating with science, providing diverse culturally appropriate diets, and embedded in communities – empowers Africa to solve hunger and ensure human and soil health, social justice, and resilient livelihoods. Most importantly, by embedding diversity and resilience, agroecology provides the ability to absorb carbon and adapt to the

existential threat of climate change – as the IPCC acknowledges.

AFSA's position is aligned with the African Union strategy for climate resilience and development, which Emphasises production toward an agroecological transition to reduce GHG intensity (including methane and other gases) and dependencies on external inputs.

It is also aligned with the IPCC WG II report, which recognises in the summary report for policymakers, with high confidence, that ***Agroecological principles and practices, ecosystem-based management in fisheries and aquaculture, and other approaches that work with natural processes, support food security, nutrition, health and well-being, livelihoods and biodiversity, sustainability, and ecosystem services.***

AFSA's position is also aligned with national development plans, policy frameworks, climate policies and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) frameworks, which recognise agroecology, such as for Uganda, Senegal, Togo and Zambia.

We continue calling for all parties to integrate agroecology within agriculture and climate policies and strategies, including climate action on land.



Key demands

Agriculture

Prioritise agroecology to transform the agri-food system, build resilience, and enable small-scale farmers, pastoralists, and fishers to adapt to climate change. Include agroecology in the UNFCCC COP27 climate decisions on agriculture as it offers clear adaptation benefits and co-benefits when addressing food insecurity and the impacts of climate change.

Institutionalise agriculture within the UNFCCC– Recognising the importance of agriculture to climate change, we call for a permanent body to precisely coordinate agriculture negotiations and monitor the implementation of decisions within the UNFCCC.

Climate adaptation

Put small-scale food producers at the centre of climate adaptation– Meaningfully engage small- scale food producers and indigenous communities, including women and youth, in the COP27 negotiations and beyond – they manage landscapes across Africa.

Utilise Indigenous knowledge to design interventions that are locally driven and respond to national circumstances.

Climate Action on Land

There should be a strong focus on protecting lands and forests, notably the Congo Basin, from degradation and deforestation for extractives and large-scale agriculture/carbon trading projects, and the recognition of the massive potential of agroecology to cool the earth.

Establish and restore community-based management of natural resources like forests, rangelands and fishing grounds and abide by established legal and ethical principles such as the rights to free, prior, and informed consent, fair compensation, and a clean and healthy environment.



Key demands

Finance

Direct new and accessible climate finance to sustainable climate actions that support the needs of people and local communities- The time is now for an appropriate and deliberate increase in financing for small-scale farmers, fishers, pastoralists, and indigenous communities, especially in developing countries, to deliver sustainable food systems and adapt to climate change through agroecology. *According to IPCC, 3.6 BN, people live in vulnerability hotspots in developing countries.*

Improve and simplify access to existing climate finance funding mechanisms so local communities and civil society organisations can more easily use and benefit from these funds.

The global north should pay the ecological debt it owes to the global South, and Climate finance should be in the form of grants rather than loans.

Improve transparency and tracking of climate finance disbursement to strengthen checks and balances and improve climate governance.

Gender

Operationalise the UNFCCC's Gender Action Plan – including planning, monitoring and budgeting to enable women and girls to make the best economic decisions to sustainably steward their lands, produce and market diverse foods, and support and feed their own families.

Placing our position in the UNFCCC

The themes in this position paper are aligned with the following articles:

Article 2b of the Convention calls for increasing the ability to adapt to adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production.

Article 7, paragraph 5 of the Paris Agreement, parties acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrate adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where applicable.

Decision 1/CMA.3 invites parties and observer organisations to submit their views on how to enhance climate action on land under the existing UNFCCC Programmes and activities set out in paragraph 75 of the report on the dialogues on the relationship between land and climate change adaptation-related matters and requests the SBSTA chair to prepare an informal summary for consideration at COP27.

Decision 3/CP.25 acknowledges the continuing need for gender mainstreaming through all relevant targets and goals in activities under the convention as an important contribution to increasing their effectiveness, fairness and sustainability.

Next Steps

AFSA engages with stakeholders, including civil society and national ministries, departments and agencies, to consolidate national positions on climate adaptation and mitigation within National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). In three years, AFSA has supported national climate policy research in 12 African countries, one regional level policy research, over 30 national climate dialogues, participated in the review of the African Union climate strategy, development of national agroecology strategies and co-organised up to three meetings with the African Group of Negotiators on Agriculture, Land and Gender. In 2022, AFSA has organised an Africa-wide convening, bringing voices from 30 African countries to develop a joint position for COP27 and beyond.

AFSA will continue supporting national-level climate dialogues in preparation for COP28, capacity building on the NAPs, NDCs and relevant climate policy frameworks, regional-level dialogues, and capacity building on decisions from COP27. We will develop cutting-edge research on agroecological systems and climate resilience and engage with the African Group of Negotiators through joint meetings and capacity building. AFSA will co-organise several side events and exhibitions at COP27 and subsequent UNFCCC conferences.



COP27 is critical to the financing and implementation of climate decisions. We are aware that climate action will remain relevant beyond COP27. As we look towards reducing emissions, ***this paper calls for the recognition and adoption of agroecology as a sustainable approach towards climate adaptation and mitigation.***