



ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

## **DIVERSITY, NOT FALSE SOLUTIONS, IS KEY TO ACHIEVING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND RESILIENCE IN AFRICA**

As 34 heads of state and 70 ministers return home after three days of ‘food and agriculture delivery compact’ negotiations in Dakar, we reflect on the outcome of the Dakar 2 Summit “Feed Africa: Food Sovereignty and Resilience”, organised by the African Development Bank.

We endorse wholeheartedly the commitment to free Africa from hunger and the shared resolve for Africa to feed itself with dignity and pride. We celebrate the increased investment and the renewed commitment of governments to allocate 10% of public expenditure to agriculture. We applaud the resolve to escape from the shame of dependency on food imports and handouts.

We share the recognition of the need and benefits of engaging youth in agriculture and the appreciation of the fundamental role of women in food production. We acknowledge the vibrant catalytic role of the African Development Bank in mobilising such widespread African government support and enthusiasm.

However, we reject the continued reliance on colonial thinking - to raise production of staple crops using imported farm inputs, chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and hybrid and GMO seeds. Food sovereignty is freedom from external control. A country dependent on imported fertilizer has lost its sovereignty as much as one that depends on food imports or donations.

We question the focus on monocrop agriculture – wheat and maize – which rejects the vast catalogue of nutritious indigenous crops and local varieties. Resilience comes from diversity - in crops, food sources, soil amendments, and supply chains.

We are deeply concerned about the proposed significant increase of African land under agriculture. Wherever large-scale land acquisitions occur, we see failure to gain community consent, failure to compensate, forced evictions of indigenous people, women’s loss of access to productive land, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and land degradation.

We denounce the reliance on a top-down, public-private partnership approach to agricultural development. Where were the voices of African farmers and citizens at this food summit?

We lament the failure of government leaders to see beyond the colonial narrative that African agriculture can only be modernised by adopting the practices of the Global North. Africa has its own resources and know-how to produce healthy food using effective, low-cost, chemical-free inputs, regenerating the soil sustainably.

“This summit propagates the idea that African farmers don’t produce enough food because they don’t use enough chemical fertilisers,” said AFSA General Coordinator Million Belay. “The implication is that if we pump our farms with agrochemicals, we will grow more food. Even though this might serve as a short-term strategy, in the end it means polluting the soil, making farmers dependent on external inputs, endangering the health of farmers and

consumers, robbing people of their right to healthy, culturally appropriate and nutritious food, and increasing vulnerability to climate change.”

Africa faces the triple burden of malnutrition – hunger, micronutrient deficiency, and obesity/non-communicable diseases. Zambia showed us the failure of hybrid monocrops, which produced back-to-back maize surpluses yet became the most undernourished country in Africa, with 40% of young children stunted. In South Africa, the continent’s most industrialised country, GMO maize is the staple food, and fast food is the urban norm. Now, half of all adults are overweight (23%) or obese (27%), and NCDs like diabetes and hypertension cause life-altering illnesses, disabilities, and premature death.

The authentic African solution is a commitment to agroecology and food sovereignty - the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and the right to define one’s own food and agriculture systems.

Kenyan farmer leader Ferdinand Wafula was emphatic in his plea, “We urge policymakers, governments, and donors to provide more funding to agroecology, which offers clear solutions to nutrition challenges, the climate crisis and food insecurity.”

AfSA calls on African governments and donors to redirect funding away from failed ‘green revolution’ approaches towards proven agroecological alternatives. Uniting generations of indigenous knowledge, farmer-driven and science-based innovations, and the ecosystem’s natural processes, agroecological food systems can adapt to and help solve the climate crisis. Farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples and local communities use agroecology to steward their land sustainably, produce nourishing food that celebrates cultural heritage, and strengthen local markets and economies. This way, together, we can feed Africa.

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AfSA is a broad alliance of civil society actors in Africa’s struggle for food sovereignty and agroecology. It is a network-of-networks with 41 members active in 50 African countries. These include African food producer networks, indigenous people’s organisations, faith-based organisations, women and youth groups, and consumer movements.

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