



Agroecology equals healthy soil

WORLD SOIL DAY (WSD) 2020

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Soil is one of the main resources of the biosphere and essential factor in the production of crops as well as sustainability for animals. Soil degradation is widely recognised as a severe problem, and its environmental consequences impact the livelihood of very many people in Uganda, mainly small-scale farmers. This is mostly because soil degradation causes soil quality decline, crop yield reduction, economic crisis, poverty, unemployment, and rural-urban migration. Currently, it's estimated that about 47 percent of the soils in Uganda are gradually moving towards highly degraded.

On this 5th day of December, ESAFF Uganda joins the entire world in commemorating the World Soil Day (WSD) to highlight the importance of healthy soil. To ESAFF Uganda, this year's theme, which is 'Keep soil alive, protect soil biodiversity' acts as a call to continue our policy and practice campaigns to protect soil biodiversity which is under threat. We believe that only healthy soils will be able to enable small-scale farmers to fulfil the task of growing healthy food which is required both now and in the future. Having healthy soils would ensure the achievement of Goal 15: Life on land and Goal 2: Zero hunger of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

To be able to 'Keep soil alive, protect soil biodiversity', agroecology becomes the ultimate solution because it restores ecosystem functioning by maintaining soil health through understanding and working with interactions among soil, plants, animals, humans and the environment within agricultural systems. Small-scale farmers have attested to the fact that agroecological approach restores soil life and improves the multiple soil-based biological processes. Many stakeholders, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), have alluded to the fact that agroecology is key to transforming food and agricultural systems and as well embraces the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

In 2018, FAO launched the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative which aims to accompany and support national agroecology transition processes through policy and technical capacity. When implemented by Uganda, this initiative would then foster the transition to agroecology hence resulting in healthy soils and ensure soil biodiversity. To achieve this, we call on the government to do the following;

1. Build strong and strategic alliances among different stakeholders, including policymakers and private sector to allow co-creation of knowledge and knowledge sharing.
2. Create an enabling environment that promotes coordinated action and collaboration through reviewing and developing policies and strategies that promote agroecology in the agricultural system.
3. Provide the political and economic support needed in promoting agroecological approaches in education system, extension system, market systems, among others at national and local levels.
4. Support research that promotes agroecology as an approach that ensures food security and sustainable agricultural systems.

ESAFF Uganda strongly believes that agroecology equals healthy soil. Healthy soils produce healthy crops that, in turn, nourish people and animals. On that note, we condemn any other actions farming or non-farming that are destroying and polluting the soils.

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About ESAFF Uganda

Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF) Uganda is the largest small-scale farmer-led policy influencing movement in Uganda. ESAFF Uganda was established to bring together small-scale farmers into a social movement to build common aspirations, learnings and linkages. ESAFF Uganda which is a membership organisation with members in 54 districts works to enhance the small-scale farmers' ability to make informed decisions and participate meaningfully in development processes at local, national and regional/global level. ESAFF Uganda is also part of a bigger network of small-scale farmers' organisations (ESAFF) in other 15 countries in eastern and southern Africa.

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