

POSITION STATEMENT

A CALL FOR A TRUE AGROECOLOGY-BASED FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION TO ENSURE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND RESILIENCE IN THE CAADP STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2026 - 2035.

We, the participants of the two-day convening on the CAADP strategy and action plan 2026-2035 draft document (dated September 15, 2024), held in Kampala, Uganda, on October 3-4, 2024, including representatives from civil society organizations, smallholder farmers, environmentalists, researchers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, women, youth, and faith-based institutions, hereby issue this collective position statement. This statement reflects our shared vision and commitment to shaping the future of food systems in Africa, with a focus on agroecology, sustainability, and food sovereignty.

Cognizant of the shared commitment by African leaders to agricultural transformation through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), initiated in 2003 and reaffirmed in the Malabo Declaration of 2014, we appreciate the multistakeholder consultative nature of the development of the post-Malabo agenda towards the CAADP Kampala Declaration (2026-2035).

Mindful that Africa is the most food-insecure region globally, with one in five people—around 278 million—facing hunger, it is evident that existing agricultural frameworks have not met the expected targets. To address these systemic challenges, we must radically rethink our approach, prioritizing inclusive, agroecological solutions that serve the needs of smallholder farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, and rural communities.

Recognizing that the CAADP strategy and action plan 2026-2035 draft document (dated September 15, 2024) emphasizes key objectives such as using the food system approach, farmer-managed seed systems, the preservation and promotion of indigenous crops, seeds, and foods, African heritage, the inclusion of youth, women, and marginalized groups, a circular food economy, as well as the promotion of public investment in Africa's self-driven development.

Deeply concerned by the persistent disconnect between policy directives and the real needs of small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, and rural communities, and recognizing that past frameworks have often failed to adequately address the needs of Africa's smallholder food producers—the backbone of our food systems—we note that the CAADP strategy and action plan 2026-2035 draft document (dated September 15, 2024), much like its predecessors, remains dominated by private sector and external corporate interests.

Troubled by the discrepancies in the document, where critical strategic interventions in the objectives are written in the draft document but excluded in the plan of action, such as the promotion of farmer-managed seed systems, climate-resilient indigenous seeds, and African food systems.

Concerned that agroecology and food sovereignty—principles and practices that resonate deeply with Africa's small-scale producers and rural communities—are excluded in the draft document, despite all farmer organizations and CSOs requesting their inclusion through memoranda, physical meetings, and other forms of consultation.

Alarmed at the inclusion of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and the increasing dependency on synthetic inputs, which threaten biodiversity, food sovereignty, water, health, and the resilience of Africa's ecosystems.

Our Call for True Transformation

We urge the African Union Commission (AUC), member states, and all stakeholders to seize this crucial moment and adopt a truly inclusive and transformative vision for agriculture in Africa. Specifically, we call for:

1. **The Inclusion of Agroecology as Central to the CAADP Kampala Declaration Vision:** We strongly call for agroecology to be a core strategy in the Kampala Declaration to safeguard African biodiversity, improve nutrition and health, enhance soil health, increase resilience to climate and other crises, and strengthen local food systems. Agroecology presents an opportunity to transform African agriculture sustainably, with practices rooted in the knowledge and traditions of smallholder farmers.
2. **Correcting the Discrepancy Between Objectives and Plan of Action:** We call for immediate and decisive action to ensure that key elements of the objectives, such as the recognition of farmer-managed seed systems, farmer-led research, and African food systems, are fully integrated. It is imperative that future strategies prioritize these objectives to reflect the needs of Africa's farmers and communities.
3. **Genuine and Meaningful Participation for Smallholder Farmers:** We demand an end to the tokenistic inclusion of smallholder farmers and allied civil society organizations in key policy processes. The post-Malabo process must ensure that the voices of small-scale food producers are not only heard but are integral to shaping Africa's agricultural policies.
4. **Establishment of an Inclusive Advisory Role for Food Producers:** To address inclusivity, we propose creating an advisory council for smallholder farmers and African civil society organizations within the CAADP framework, mirroring the role currently afforded to private sector stakeholders.
5. **Opposition to Genetic Modification and Corporate-Controlled Food Systems:** We call for stronger biosafety protocols and protection against corporate control of African genetic resources. We reject the inclusion of GMOs and corporate-driven technologies in the Kampala Declaration. These technologies promote dependency on multinational corporations for seeds and inputs and threaten local seed sovereignty and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.
6. **Prioritization of Public Investment in Smallholder Agriculture:** We urge a shift away from overreliance on private sector investments toward increased public investment in smallholder agriculture and agroecological practices. We call for a recommitment to the 10% public investment enshrined in the Maputo and Malabo Declarations. Investments must prioritize small-scale farmers, women, youth, and rural communities to ensure a resilient and self-sufficient African food system.
7. **Investment in Farmer-Managed Seed Systems and Biofertilizers:** We call for public sector investment and subsidies for farmer-managed seed systems, as well as for organic and biofertilizers, to ensure healthy soils and resilience.

We believe that the future of African agriculture and food systems must reflect the needs and aspirations of its farmers, communities, and cultural and environmental heritage. We call upon the AUC and all stakeholders to ensure that the Kampala Declaration is not merely another document, but a turning point that puts people, communities, and the environment at the heart of African agriculture and food systems.

We commit to continuing collaboration and support for the successful implementation of the CAADP Kampala Declaration.

Signed:

1. African Biodiversity Network (ABN)
2. African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB)
3. Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)
4. Association Ouest Africaine pour le Développement de la Pêche Artisanale (ADEPA)
5. Biodiversity and Biosafety Coalition of Kenya (BIBA)
6. Civil Society Agrarian Partnership (CSAP)
7. Coalition pour la Protection du Patrimoine Génétique Africain (COPAGEN)
8. Comité Ouest Africain de Semences Paysannes (COASP)
9. Community Alliance for Global Justice (CAGJ)
10. Comparing and Supporting Endogenous Development (COMPAS Africa)
11. Eastern and Southern Africa Pastoralist Network (ESAPN)
12. Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF)
13. Faith & Justice Network of the Mano River Basin (FJN)
14. Farmers Union Network Liberia (FUNL)
15. Fédération Agroécologique du Bénin (FAEB)
16. Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa (FECCIWA)
17. FIAN Uganda
18. Food Rights Alliance
19. Friends of the Earth Africa (FoEA)
20. Groundswell West Africa (GWA)
21. Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)
22. indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC)
23. Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social (INADES-Formation)
24. Institut Panafricain pour la Citoyenneté, les Consommateurs et le Développement (CICODEV Africa)
25. Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (JVE International)
26. La Via Campesina Africa (LVC Africa)
27. National Alliance for Agroecology the Gambia (NAAG)
28. North African Food Sovereignty Network (NAFSN)
29. Nous Sommes La Solution (NSS)
30. Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO)
31. Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association
32. Plate-forme Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC)
33. Population Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium (PHE-EC)
34. Regional Schools and Colleges Rermaculture Programme (ReSCOPE)
35. Réseau Africain pour le Droit à l'Alimentation (RAPDA -Togo)
36. Ripple Effect
37. Rural Women's Assembly (RWA)
38. Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network (RCCDN)
39. Seed Savers Network, Kenya (SSNK)
40. Shirikisho La Vyama Vya Wakulima Tanzania (SHIWAKUTA)
41. Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI)
42. Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)
43. Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity (TABIO)
44. Union Africaine des Consommateurs (UAC)
45. Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Association (UEWCA)
46. World Neighbors
47. Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity (ZAAB)