

## **Agroecology at the cutting edge of climate change action?**

### **Civil society organizations' statement September 2014**

We warmly acknowledge the efforts of the FAO to specifically address agroecology<sup>1</sup> and we praise the UN organization for hosting an International Symposium on Agroecology for Food Security and Nutrition.

The IPCC 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report's Working Group II shows that impacts of climate change on crop and food production are already evident in several regions of the world. A Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA) is about to be launched at the Ban Ki Moon Climate Summit the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September. This Alliance has missed the mark on how to realistically achieve resilience to climate change within agriculture. Most importantly, the final Framework Document relating to the proposed Alliance does not mention either agroecology or the IAASTD report<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, we invite participants at the Symposium to formally transmit the following views to the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki Moon, requesting that they be tabled at the Climate Summit discussion on agriculture:

- Clearly affirm that agroecology holds appropriate and farmer-led solutions that: 1/ address climate change challenges in agriculture, regarding both adaptation and mitigation; 2/ open new pathways to invest in site-specific low external input agriculture that can improve rural livelihoods; 3/ build farming community resilience in the aftermath of natural disasters and strengthen food and nutrition security during the slow onset of climate change; and 4/ raise both yields and incomes for farmers. This acknowledgements are currently absent from the Framework of the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA).
- Reaffirm the critical importance of developing action plans based on IAASTD conclusions on agroecology as reviewed and ratified during the Intergovernmental Plenary Meeting held 7–12 April 2008, in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Reaffirm agroecology's contribution to the realization of the Right to Food. Indeed, Olivier De Schutter, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, has identified “agroecology as a mode of agricultural development which not only shows strong conceptual connections with the right to food, but has proven results for fast progress in the concretization of this human right for many vulnerable groups in various countries and environments.” (A/HRC/16/49)

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<sup>1</sup> We can define agroecology as “a type of agriculture that: i) makes it possible to reproduce, or even improve, the productive potentialities of the cultivated ecosystem; ii) is mostly independent of non-renewable resources; iii) produces diversified and good-quality food; iv) does not contaminate the environment or people; v) contributes to the fight against climatic warming. In the end, it is a matter of maximising the positive externalities of agriculture (i. to iii.) and of minimising the negative externalities (iv. and v.), keeping in mind that, for these last two points, the externalities can also be positive in the cases of recycling contaminating elements or of positive carbon footprint.”(Cf. Levard L. and Apollin F., *Agroecology: A Response to the Agricultural and Food Challenges of the 21st Century*, Coordination Sud, 2013, p.11.)

<sup>2</sup> The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) is a three-year collaborative effort (2005 - 2007) that evaluates the relevance, quality and effectiveness of agricultural knowledge, science, and technology (AKST); and effectiveness of public and private sector policies as well as institutional arrangements in relation to AKST. Its *Global Report* was published in 2009.

- Commit to strong and long-term support to equitable ecological approaches to agriculture that contribute to regenerating natural resources. Any future approaches must also ensure the protection of small scale farmers' access to and control of natural resources.
- Governments, donors, international institutions, and philanthropies commit to support the scale up of agroecology, including shifting agriculture investment and policies to do so.
- Recall the need to increase participation of small-scale farmers in decision-making at all levels, which is vital for fully and equitably addressing climate change.
- Reaffirm the need for caution in relation to the top-down approach adopted by the GACSA advocating instead in favour of a truly participatory and small-scale farmer demand-led approach which “builds on the resource-conserving aspects of traditional, local, and small-scale agriculture”<sup>3</sup> as agroecology does.
- Insist that any new mechanism relating to food security and agriculture, such as the proposed GACSA must be fully accountable to the Committee on World Food Security and must incorporate in its foundational principles full support of the Right to Food, the UN Zero Hunger Challenge, the Voluntary Guidelines developed by the Committee on World Food Security and the Global Framework for Food and Nutrition.

To sign this letter, send an email to [agroecology4climateaction@gmail.com](mailto:agroecology4climateaction@gmail.com).

**Signatories:**

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<sup>3</sup> Gliessman S., *Agroecology: The Ecology of Sustainable Food Systems*, 2007, p. 18.