

The Farmers' Organizations of Africa address the G8

April 2009



Preamble

The tens of millions of agricultural producers organized in the five regional networks of farmers' organizations of Africa (EAFF, PROPAC, ROPPA, SACAU, UMAGRI¹) and united in the African Platform of Farmers' Organizations are well aware that the world is undergoing crucial moments of its ecological, economic and social history.

A century of industrialization has promoted climate warming resulting in drought, desertification, floods, etc...The global financial crisis has severely reduced the purchasing power of men and women, It has engendered massive unemployment and aggravated food insecurity. About 3 billion people are affected chronically today. Among them, two billion suffer from nutritional deficiencies and one billion keep company with hunger in their daily life. A large proportion of these people live in Africa.

Structural adjustment policies, the Bretton Woods financial institutions and multinational corporations have not improved the way of life of rural people in Africa. What is more, the present system of liberalization and globalization accentuates poverty in our countries and creates food dependency.

Yet Africa can feed its populations given its strong agricultural potentialities. In fact, according to FAO only 27% of its arable land is cultivated, and of the 42.5 million hectares which could be brought under irrigation barely a third has been.

The African Union has targeted an agricultural growth rate of 6% in the agricultural component of NEPAD (CAADP). Attaining this goal and reducing by half the number of persons who suffer poverty and hunger by 2015 would require exploiting Africa's resources and placing family farming and small scale producers at the heart of agricultural policies, as the agencies of the United Nations system agencies and the international financial institutions seem to have recognized.

A "green revolution" for Africa cannot be achieved without assuring an effective guarantee for producers' revenues, without considerable support measures, without protection of local markets and without consistent investments. It must not be pursued with GMOs and unbridled use of chemical products, to the detriment of Africa's biodiversity and the environment.

Africa's investment needs for agricultural development are far inferior to the millions of dollars it consecrates to importing food and making purchases on the residual stocks of other continents. They bear no comparison to the exorbitant amounts destined to arms or to the management of the current financial crisis. In 2006 the world spent \$1200 billion on arms. The G20 countries are injecting \$1000 billion to address the financial crisis in addition to the millions of dollars and Euros which the US and European governments have given to banks and industries.

Since 2001, we have witnessed a succession of G8 summits, each quite like the others. These forums may be spaces which open up from time to time to other countries and to non state actors, but they are above all moments in which the richest countries solemnly announce new commitments directed to themselves, to the world and to Africa. The April 2009 session on agriculture must depart from this rule in addressing world problems like the food crisis and food security.

Since the April 2009 G8 Summit is focused on issues of agricultural development and food security in its agenda, the African networks of farmers' organizations have determined that it is their duty to contribute the analysis and the proposals of food producers regarding these matters.

¹ **EAFF** : East African Farmers' federation; **PROPAC**: Plateforme Sous-régionale des organisations paysannes d'Afrique Centrale; **ROPPA**: Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest; **SACAU**: Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions; **UMAGRI**: Union Magrébine des Agriculteurs.

Declaration

1. On agricultural policies

We producers – women and men – members of the African platform of farmers' organizations,

Consider that

- The poverty, the dependence and the food insecurity which already afflicts Africa could be aggravated by liberalization without regulation and an even broader opening of our frontiers and agricultural and food markets as stipulated by the WTO agreements and as the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union seek to impose.
- The food security of African countries cannot be based on importations of residual international stocks and on markets where prices are highly volatile-
- Agricultural development cannot take place without security of land tenure. It cannot happen if family farms are excluded and the environment sacrificed. It cannot be promoted with technologies based on the use of chemical products and genetically modified organisms.

We therefore demand:

- Recognition of the right of all countries to adopt agricultural and trade policies which break with the past and are resolutely oriented towards food sovereignty and the satisfaction of food needs drawing on the products of the region.
- Recognition of the dominant role of family farming as the prime route to ensuring food security, fighting against poverty and for economic and social development in Africa.
- Adoption of land tenure laws which explicitly protect small producers and vulnerable groups (women, young people, minorities).
- The development of technology which respects the sustainable management of natural resources, the preservation of the environment and of biodiversity and prepares producers to adapt effectively to climate change.

2. On global governance of agriculture and the financing of agriculture

We producers – women and men – members of the African platform of farmers' organizations,

Consider that:

- Since the G8 includes only a minority of the countries of the planet, it cannot presume to legitimately take decisions regarding global agricultural governance.
- There is no need to create new ad hoc institutions to deal with the global governance of agriculture. Global agricultural governance should be conceived and ensured within the framework of the United Nations, in particular by the agricultural agencies based in Rome, with the participation of farmers' organizations. These institutions should play a dominant role in the coordination and management of resources to be mobilized in support of food security and increased production in Africa-
- The Bretton Woods institutions, which for a long time encouraged policy reforms which have led to the disorganization of agricultural production structures in Africa, cannot be given the responsibility of managing funds destined to get agriculture back on its feet.

Demand that

- The international community, the G8 countries in particular, demonstrate the same alacrity, the same commitment and the same will to combine their efforts in order to promote agricultural production and reduce poverty in Africa as they have in addressing the financial crisis.
- The African governments respect their engagement to devote at least 10% of their national budgets to agriculture as agreed at the African Union Summit of Maputo.

3. On the role of farmers' organizations

We producers – women and men – members of the African platform of farmers' organizations,

Considering that:

- The agricultural producers of Africa – women and men – have already demonstrated in the past their capacity to respond to the food needs of a rapidly increasing population. Agricultural production in Africa has doubled since 1990 and today, in a context characterized by adversities of all kinds.
- The agricultural producers of Africa should be able to live from their work while feeding the populations with which they share the same geographic space.
- Africa's rural societies should not be obliged to live from charity and food aid, however generous it may be.
- Over the past decades Africa's farmers have managed to organize themselves at local, national, regional and continental levels. They have demonstrated their capacity to build their organizations, to formulate sound proposals and to provide effective services to the base.

We demand:

- An intensification of investments in support of small holders and family farmers and of their organizations, in particular through the strengthening of their capacities to gain access to financial resources, to training and to technical innovations.

We commit ourselves to:

- Assume our responsibilities and to participate actively and fully in the formulation, the implementation and the evaluation of agricultural and rural development policies.

Rome, 15 April 2009

EAFF, PROPAC, ROPPA, SACAU, UMAGRI