



**AFRICAN
CLIMATE
DIALOGUES**

Newsletter

following the

'Food Systems, Agriculture & Adaptation'

Second African Climate Dialogue

August 10th, hosted on Zoom

The following organizations are part of the African Climate Dialogues steering committee



Sketch by Andrew Baingana

INTRODUCTION

Million Belay, General Coordinator for the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) started the session by welcoming the audience to the second African Climate Dialogue session focusing on Food Systems, Agriculture and Adaptation in particular the role of agroecology. The purpose of this virtual online dialogue is to create an avenue to discuss the African context, and local solutions to be scaled up to address the climate crisis. The event organisers recognise the importance of localising climate action by ensuring that the voices of smallholder farmers, in particular women farmers, are heard. The participants discussed transformative local solutions that enhance climate change adaptation while respecting the climate, biodiversity, and human rights.

HIGHLIGHTS

Father Leonard Chiti (SJ), First Provincial for Southern African Province began by highlighting the church's concern with the negative impact of climate change on food production and the environment. He reminded us that in Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, we are being called to undergo ecological conversion which is the transformation of our hearts and minds toward greater love of God, each other, and creation. Through this process, we acknowledge our contribution to the social and ecological crisis and act in ways that nurture communion, healing and renewing our common home. Fr. Chiti also emphasized the need to question how we can individually address the plight of the poor in line with the gospel of Mathew 25:34-36 where the Lord instructs us to come to the aid of those who are hungry, thirsty, unclothed, ill and in prison. He added that it is not enough to just cite statistics about the dire straits of the poor. Instead, he encouraged us to always be willing to help those in need despite our differences much like the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37.

Vanessa Black, an Advocacy, Research and Policy Coordinator at Biowatch, started off by saying that the green revolution brought with it industrialised agriculture that would increase profits through mass production for Multinational Corporations (MNCs). She added that seeds have been genetically modified to produce high yields and uniformity for ease of transport & processing. However, she warned that this new way of producing crops is water intensive, produces more waste than ever recorded in history, mechanisation consumes large amounts of energy, chemical inputs destroy soil life, and rapid biodiversity loss results in the exploitation of resources, climate change, and the occurrence of more natural disasters. Additionally, Black stated that a lot of food production is no longer nutritional as food has become a product that is extremely processed and planting these crops has resulted in the clearing of land and indigenous territories. Commercialisation and industrialisation in the food system contribute to one-third of global Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. Ultimately Black concluded that we need to tackle the systems and power relations manipulating our food systems to achieve transformation in the current food system through agroecology and food sovereignty.

- See her presentation [here](#).

Morris Kiriimi, Diocesan Caritas Director of Caritas Meru, began by formally introducing agroecology to positively transform food systems from the harmful conventional food systems toward farming practices that mitigate climate change, reduce emissions, recycle resources, and prioritise local supply chains. They identified a policy and legislative gap to support agroecology. Through their experience from the fields, they managed to influence policy-makers to integrate agroecological approaches to county policies. He added that policies toward agroecology should enable the inclusion of agroecology in-county plans and budgets (allocation of resources and promoting adoption) and establish agroecology demo farms. Lastly, policies should encourage the development of a curriculum and training of agriculture extension staff on agroecology, awareness raising among farmers and adoption of agroecological practices.

- See his presentation [here](#).

KEY MESSAGES AND CALLS OF THE DIALOGUE

(coming from discussions among participants in small group sessions)

What policies and strategies in relation to Food, Agriculture and Adaptation do we need to drive transformational change at the National Level?

- More resources need to be allocated to smallholder farmers and family farms so that they too can move toward agroecology.
- There is a need for clarity and definition of terms used ahead of COP27 and in its publications.
- Education and training at a local level on agroecology are needed to ensure that communities stay committed to the urgent need for climate action.
- We need to move away from a focus on efficiency, and profit maximisation in the food system and instead focus on food nutrition, human rights, food justice, seed sovereignty and sustainable farming practices.
- African Negotiators must be very knowledgeable in climate change and how it specifically affects Africa as well as possible solutions through policy change toward agroecology.
- The use of the term agroecology needs to be more prominent in COP27 as it presents important strategies to address food insecurity and the impact of climate change. Governments and policy-makers need to recognise agroecology as a true solution to climate change and environmental degradation.
- It is necessary to be able to demonstrate success stories on agroecology studied at the economic and environmental level, which will in return inspire governments to pass laws that promote this model for the sustainable use of the earth's resources.

What are the funding priorities and how can we finance subsidies, loans, and fiduciary risks?

- All governments around the world, especially in Africa should keep their financial commitments toward transformation in the agricultural sector. Additionally, governments must repurpose the financial resources for investments in a just, resilient and sustainable manner.
- Appropriate mechanisms to channel private financial resources toward agroecology should be better defined and sustained.
- Climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund should be better targeted and more accessible to smallholder farmers and grassroots organisations that contribute toward climate change adaptation.
- We need to tackle the issue of policy coherence on food security and to address in an efficient and sustainable way the issue of excess financial speculation in the food systems through legislative and taxation mechanisms.

How can we ensure the inclusion and participation of smallholder farmers in policy dialogue on Food Systems, Agriculture and Adaptation?

- Experiential learning through shared policy dialogue and the use of practical examples like demo farms, is needed to engage local farmers so they can see their contributions toward agroecology.
- Decision-makers and government need to work with communities, smallholder farmers, civil societies, and faith-based organisations to reach more people in the promotion of agroecology. The inclusion and participation of these various entities should continue beyond that COP27.
- Indigenous knowledge by indigenous groups must be included in agroecology policy-making. This knowledge can be documented and can be used to shape policies ahead of COP 27.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Million Belay concluded the session by stating that the emphasis of all the presentations is that we need to move toward a more action-based approach to addressing food insecurity and environmental degradation. Furthermore, more dialogue between different actors like smallholder farmers, faith-based groups, civil societies, governments to corporations needs to take place so we can implement policies that promote agroecology. Additionally, agroecological systems should be at the forefront of protecting, restoring, and improving agriculture and food systems in the face of climate change and natural disasters. Lastly, participants will organize national and international advocacy initiatives to engage their governments on agroecology and food insecurity ahead of COP27 in Egypt.

- ✓ Letter prepared by Sheila Pires, Production Assistant- Programing, Radio Veritas SA and Michelle Pires, intern rapporteur with Archbishop Peter Wells, the Apostolic Nuncio To Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland.
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