

Statement on the Dakar 2 Summit: “Climate smart agriculture” will worsen the climate crisis

January 25, 2023

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our deep concern at the aims and assumptions that appear to underlie the 2nd [Dakar Summit on Agriculture and Agribusiness](#) (Dakar II), to be held from January 25 to 27, 2023 in Senegal.

The stated aim of the summit, organized by the African Development Bank (AfDB) together with the government of Senegal, is to raise agricultural productivity and support infrastructure and “climate-smart” agricultural systems using private sector investments in order to “help turn Africa into a breadbasket for the world.” The organizers of the summit claim that this will require between \$28.5 billion and \$36.6 billion annually.

However, the underlying structural problem with food insecurity in Africa is not simply one of insufficient land being cultivated in Africa, or of an overall shortage of food, as stated by AfDB.

Over the last ten years enormous swathes of land across the continent of Africa have been grabbed by agribusiness interests, [resulting](#) in oil palm plantations that have razed forests in Liberia and Sao Tomé, and waste from sugarcane plantations destroying the environment in Nigeria. The Land Matrix [estimates](#) that 50 per cent of land investment deals in Africa have taken place on land used by small scale farmers, mostly in Ethiopia, Senegal, Ghana, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The Summit’s assertion that “climate smart agriculture” (CSA) is required to address food insecurity is also not supported by the evidence. [As explained](#) by GRAIN, CSA includes practices which claim to reduce greenhouse gases, but avoids addressing the root causes of the climate crisis including the industrial food system: for instance, CSA can include spraying a field with toxic herbicides as a way to avoid plowing the soil and releasing carbon into the atmosphere. It can also include harmful practices such as turning land into soybean plantations which can be labeled as “climate smart” since soybeans do not require nitrogen fertilizers. GRAIN explains how CSA was devised by agribusiness corporations to counter growing support for agroecology in international forums on agriculture and climate change, with the term propelled into the mainstream by fertilizer companies, through a lobbying campaign and a global alliance of corporations, governments and multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank and FAO. Today, CSA can include a range of destructive practices such as large-scale monoculture, factory farming, or GMOs.

Among the CSA technologies promoted at the Dakar 2 summit include [climate smart water efficient maize](#), which is being pushed by the African Development Bank’s Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT)’s [Maize Compact](#). Such technologies include the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA). According to the bank, drought tolerant maize helped farmers in Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia to survive the drought in 2019. However, the African Centre for Biodiversity, ACB, [has revealed](#) how the WEMA project, which has been shrouded in secrecy, aims to build a private-sector seed industry in Africa and to spread the adoption of hybrid maize varieties. Both Monsanto and BASF have donated to the WEMA project. ACB explains how WEMA is being used to smooth the path toward the introduction of GMOs in African countries and to weaken biosafety regulations for instance in Tanzania and Mozambique. The Dakar II summit is also promoting [heat tolerant wheat varieties in Sudan](#) and in Ethiopia in partnership with seed companies.

While climate change is a serious threat to farmers in Africa, with 70 per cent of farmers depending on rain-fed farming, CSA approaches, including WEMA and drought tolerant maize varieties, are not the solution. Not only does CSA strengthen the very agribusiness and seed companies responsible for destroying farmers' livelihoods and the agricultural biodiversity which is needed for robust food systems, but it also contributes to, rather than solves, the climate crisis by strengthening the industrial food system. [According to](#) GRAIN and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), the world's five 8 largest meat and dairy corporations are responsible for an even greater volume of greenhouse gas emissions than oil companies like Exxon, Shell, or BP.

The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) whose members include smallholder farmers, pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and indigenous people have explained how [agroecological and indigenous practices](#) are the right way forward for African farmers to survive the climate crisis.

We urge participants to the Dakar II Summit to i) consider ways of eliminating land-grabs from farmers, ii) reject CSA-based approaches that strengthen large seed and agribusiness companies and iii) support the organizing initiatives of African farmers and organizations who are fighting for food sovereignty and agroecology, and those who are fighting back against land grabbing by agribusiness and private investors.

Signed by:

1. The African Technology Assessment Platform (AfriTAP)
2. Terre à Vie, Burkina Faso
3. Collectif Citoyen pour l'agroécologie (CCAIE) Burkina Faso
4. La Coalition pour la protection du patrimoine génétique africain (COPAGEN)
5. Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) Nigeria
6. CESA0-AI, Burkina Faso
7. Institute for Research and Promotion of Alternatives in Development (IRPAD) Bamako, Mali
8. Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN)
9. The African Centre for Biodiversity (ACBio)
10. The ETC Group
11. Congo Basin Conservation Society (CBCS Network) DRC
12. Fédération agroécologique du Bénin (FAEB)
13. Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity (ZAAB)
14. Justiça Ambiental JA! Mozambique
15. Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)
16. Eco Defenders Network, Nigeria
17. Les Amis de la Terre, Togo
18. Conseil National de l'Agriculture Biologique (CNABio), Burkina Faso
19. Eastern and Southern Africa Small scale farmers Forum
20. Community Development Advocacy Foundation (CODAF)
21. Zero Waste Ambassadors (ZeWA)
22. Isoko Environment Monitoring Committee
23. Africa Center for Environment and Rural Development (ACERD)
24. Community Environmental Monitoring Committee
25. Community Forest Watch
26. Yasuni Association
27. Abotokio Agro Village Farmers Association, Abotokio, Nigeria
28. Worldwide opportunities on organic farms, Nigeria
29. African Union of Consumers, Ndjaména/Chad
30. CIDSE, International family of Catholic social justice organizations (International)
31. Biowatch South Africa, Durban, South Africa
32. ReSCOPE Programme, Lusaka, Zambia

33. Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya (BIBA Kenya)
34. Bees Abroad UK
35. Réseau Africain pour le Droit à l'Alimentation au Togo (RAPDA-Togo)
36. BFA Food and Health Foundation
37. Student Environmental Assembly Nigeria (SEAN)
38. Host Community Network, Nigeria (HoCoN)
39. Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA)
40. The Young Environmental Network (TYEN)
41. Civil Society Agrarian Partnership (CSAP)
42. Committee on Vital Environmental Resources (COVER)
43. Women and Children Life Advancement initiative
44. Community Alliance for Global Justice/AGRA Watch
45. Urban-Rural Environmental Defenders (U-RED) Nigeria
46. Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network (AEFJN)
47. AFRICAN WOMEN COLLABORATIVE FOR HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS
48. African Women and Youth Environmental Initiative
49. SPEAK Nigeria
50. Network of Women in Agriculture Nigeria (NWIN)
51. Nous Sommes la Solution
52. Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity (TABIO)
53. Eastern and Southern African Pastoralists Network (ESAPN)
54. Regional Schools and Colleges Permaculture Programme (ReSCOPE)
55. Kenya Peasants League
56. La Via Campesina Africa
57. Indigenous women and girls initiative
58. Food Sovereignty Ghana (FSG)
59. Youth for Environmental Sustainability and Development (YESD) Nigeria
60. Center for Food and Adequate Living Rights (CEFROHT) Uganda ug
61. Friends of Earth Africa (FoEA)
62. GRAIN
63. Centre for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE), Kenya
64. Eco Index Agro Solutions Limited
65. World March of Women, South Africa
66. Women Collective Kenya
67. Foi et Justice, Cameroun
68. Confédération Paysanne du Faso, Burkina Faso
69. Société Civile Environnementale et Agro Rurale du Congo
70. Secrétariat Permanent des ONG (SPONG), Burkina Faso
71. Mouvement Africain pour les Droits Environnementaux dans la région de l'Est (MADEE), Burkina Faso
72. COASP Burkina, Burkina Faso
73. Fédération nationale des sociétés coopératives des Éleveurs du Burkina (SCOOP-CA/FEB), Burkina Faso
74. Diobass, Ecologie et Société/Plate forme du Burkina Faso
75. Urban-Rural Environmental Defenders (U-RED), Nigeria
76. Association Tunisienne de Permaculture, Tunisie
77. Association des Agriculteurs Sans Frontières, (AASF) Bukavu RDC
78. Association des femmes et enfants sans voix, (AFEV) RDC
79. Centre d'appui au développement et à la gestion de l'environnement (CADGE) RDC
80. Association pour la défense des droits des aides ménagères et domestiques (ADDAD) Burkina Faso
81. Les Jardins d'Hambe, Mali
82. COASP-Mali, Comité Ouest Africain des Semences Paysannes, Mali
83. Institut Panafricain pour la Citoyenneté, les consommateurs et le Développement (CICODEV), Sénégal