



Communique of the 1st Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference: Transforming Food Systems for Responsible Production, Consumption and Social Wellbeing Held from 21st -24th March 2023 at the Safari Park Hotel and Casino Nairobi – Kenya

Preamble

Biovision Africa Trust jointly with the African Union **Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative and Agroecology partners** organized the **1st Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference** under the **Theme: Transforming Food Systems for Responsible Production, Consumption and Social wellbeing**. The main goal was to provide a platform to facilitate a conversation on how to transform and establish more truly sustainable food systems in Eastern Africa by invoking dialogue on how to invest in interventions which can ameliorate the negative impacts of the current unsustainable food systems. The goal will be achieved by transitioning towards more environmentally friendly solutions with long-term vision and planning. The conference anchored its discussions on six thematic pillars: 1. Production, productivity, scaling up and sustainability of farming systems based on environmentally friendly technologies and methodologies, 2. Best practices towards food security, nutrition, consumption, and health: Soil health and farmer-managed seed systems, 3. Women and youth in agroecology, 4. Ecological organic trade, markets, and economy, 5. Institutional and policy drivers for agroecology transformations, and 6. Financing agroecological transformations.

In his opening remarks, Dr. David Amudavi, BvAT Executive Director on behalf of the Conference Organizing Committee **WELCOMED** the delegates to the conference and **APPRECIATED** them for honoring the invitation for participation and having come in great numbers. He noted that this is an indication of the importance the conference subject generates not only for Eastern Africa but also the Continent and the World at large. Dr. Amudavi **ACKNOWLEDGED** and **RECOGNIZED** the support from the Delegates, Speakers, Event Organizers, Donors, Partners and Exhibitors for giving the regional conference an international outlook and noting that the success of the conference depended on them.

Further, he **INFORMED** the delegates that the Conference was building on the success registered after the 1st International Agroecology Conference held in June 2019 at the same venue under the Theme: Transforming Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa, Reducing synthetic fertilizers and pesticides by scaling agroecology and promoting Ecological Organic Trade, and the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) held in 2021, to share national and regional food systems transformation paths in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). He **EMPHASIZED** the need to sustain the conversation on agroecology and its proven contribution towards sustainable agriculture and food systems.

On behalf of the conference he **APPLAUDED** the tremendous efforts currently happening on agroecology at the global, continental, regional, county and grassroot levels from research and development, adoption of innovations and technologies, trading in agroecology products, development of policy and regulatory frameworks, education and training including advisory on agroecology to consumption of agroecology products.

Statement by Dr, Sarah Osiya on behalf of the Director of Agriculture and Rural Development AUC (Dr. Godfrey Bahigwa)



In the speech read on behalf of the Director of Agriculture and Rural Development AUC, The Director **REAFFIRMED** the AUC's commitment to the implementation of The AU Heads of States and Governments' Decision on Ecological Organic Agriculture of 2011. He **INFORMED** the delegates that this commitment is reflected in the CAADP framework that has adopted ecological agriculture indicators for inclusion and tracking. The indicators measure the extent to which organic agriculture policies are being integrated into members' state development agenda. He **POINTED OUT** that one of the indicators relevant to agroecology and that has elicited interest in the conference is the recognition of farmers-managed seed systems indicators.

Statement by Chief Guest Minister of State Agriculture Uganda Hon. Fred Bwino Kyakulaga

In his address he **HIGHLIGHTED** the challenge the world is facing is feeding a fast-growing global population that has been made worse by climate change and associated exigencies (degradation of soils and biodiversity loss). He **STRESSED** the need for sector-wide approach that offers pragmatic solutions that will allow for sustainable supply of food, feed, and fibre for the people. He **APPRECIATED** that the fact that this conference affords the stakeholders an opportunity to share best practices, research, and proven scientific knowledge. He **POINTED OUT** Uganda's lead in embracing agroecology through the adoption of the National organic agriculture policy aimed at harnessing the potential of organic agriculture and enhancing investment in the entire organic agricultural value chain for enhanced livelihoods and environmental sustainability. By extension the government has enacted the organic agricultural law to operationalize the policy.

Following the presentations, discussions and recommendations at the Conference attended by more than 500 participants from 20 countries largely from Eastern Africa, West Africa, Southeast Asia, Europe, USA and other parts of the world, a Call to Action was made as presented below:

At the Global level

1. The conference **CALLS upon** the United Nations and all its allied Agencies to:
 - a) Sustain and enhance the campaign for continued adoption and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are due in less than 8 years from now. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form a sound basis for healthy and sustainable food systems.
 - b) Mobilize, target resources and coordinate investments in interventions that promote adoption and scaling out of agroecological principles and practices as core to its strategic pillars for funding and these include collaborative research and development, convening global dialogues on agroecology (knowledge sharing and learning), support to countries to promote food systems based on agroecology, dedicate special support towards youth and women in the agroecology supply chain.
 - c) Coordinate serious dialogues on agroecology at various level from local to global that allow for global support.
 - d) Develop and promote the application of tools for measuring the performance of agroecology-based food systems to provide evidence for decision making and enhance accountability.
 - e) Sustain agroecology advocacy at the global level by anchoring the FAO's ten (10) elements of agroecology and the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) thirteen (13) principles of agroecology in food systems.

At the Continental Level



2. The Conference **CALLS UPON** all African Governments through the African Union to:
 - a) Empower and invest in its established Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative to sustain its development in Africa.
 - b) Promote coherent and coordinated Mutual Accountability by Member States in aligning with respective commitments and declarations including the Agenda 2063, CAADP framework on Malabo Commitments, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in addition to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to implement the AU Heads of States and Governments' Decision on Ecological Organic Agriculture of 2011 as well as the African Common Position on UNFSS outcomes
 - f) Mobilize resources and coordinate investment in pushing for the implementation interventions and programmes drawing on research and development, convening dialogues from local to continental on agroecology for knowledge sharing and learning, supporting countries and regional blocks targeting agroecology, dedicating special support towards youth and women engaged in the agroecology supply chains.
 - c) Develop, Mainstream and Promote additional indicators for measuring the performance of EOA/ agroecology within the CAADP framework to provide evidence for decision making and accountability.
 - d) Review National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) and Regional Agricultural Investment Plans (RAIPs) to integrate into Ecological Organic Agriculture/ Agroecology.
 - e) Sustain agroecology advocacy at the continental level by anchoring its key messages on The AU's Decision on Ecological Organic Agriculture of 2011.
 - f) Enhance Co-creation and top-bottom exchange on key issues of agroecology related to responsible production, consumption, and social wellbeing.
 - g) Promote and strengthen trade in agroecological products within the opportunity provided by the biggest market in Africa, the AfCFTA and beyond while promoting mutual recognition

At the Eastern Africa Regional Level

3. The Conference **CALLS UPON** all Governments within the East Africa Community (EAC) to:
 - a) Embrace and institutionalize agency for coordinating the Ecological Organic Agriculture and Agroecology currently hosted by Pelum Kenya.
 - b) Comply with their commitments and in a coherent and coordinated manner align respective policies to the declarations and agreements including East Africa Community Trade Protocols and CAADP framework.
 - c) Sustain dialogue on agroecology at the EAC level.
 - d) Support the development, review, and implementation of existing East Africa Standards for agroecological products.
 - e) Facilitate trade within the region of agroecological products.
 - f) Mobilize resources and coordinate investment in joint agroecology interventions such as collaborative regional research and development, quality assurance and standards, knowledge sharing and learning.
 - g) Develop, review, and implement regional policies and regulations on agroecology.
 - h) Develop and promote the application of tools for measuring the performance of agroecology within the EAC frameworks to provide evidence for decision making.

At the Country Level

4. The Conference **CALLS UPON** Governments to:



- a) Comply with their commitments and in a coherent and coordinated manner align respective policies to the declarations and agreements including the global, continental, and regional commitments.
- b) Allocate budgets to Agroecology programmes and projects including special programmes that targets the youth and women (awareness creation, capacity building, advisory and extension, knowledge sharing and learning).
- c) Develop, review, and implement coherent policies supported with institutional frameworks for the promotion of adoption of agroecology principles.
- d) Develop and promote the application of tools for measuring the performance of agroecology within the country.
- e) Coordinate stakeholders in the agroecology space to harness synergies and to call for efficient utilization of available resources.
- f) Facilitate the implementation of adoption of standards for agroecology products and by extension facilitate trade in agroecological products.
- h) Support the convening of national dialogues on agroecology responsible production, consumption, and social wellbeing.
- g) Coordinate collaborative research on agroecology particularly in areas that have been identified in this conference: Biopesticides efficacy, Farmer-Research Centered models, agroecology business models.
- h) Coordinate the review of curriculum to incorporate agroecology from the elementary school to tertiary levels.
- i) Enabling environment

Call to Financial and Lending Institutions

We call upon development partners, financial institutions and donors globally to review mechanism and areas of priorities oriented towards supporting long term sustainable and resilient food systems.

All other Stakeholders

The Conference **URGES** all other Stakeholders to:

- a) Support development of sustainable and resilient food systems at various levels based on agroecology interventions, programmes, and policies.
- b) Support the implementation of the call to action of the 1st eastern Africa Agroecology conference.
- c) Commit to hosting every 2 years the Eastern Africa Agroecology conference.

We look forward to convening again for the second Eastern Africa Agroecology Conference.