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COMMUNIQUE

Preamble

ActionAid Nigeria (AAN) and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) organised the official launch of the Strategic Partnerships for Agroecology and Climate Justice in West Africa (SPAC-West Africa), Nigeria Project and Stakeholders Meeting on Agroecology and Climate Justice at Hawthorn Suites, Abuja, 5th - 6th June 2023.

The meeting is aimed at officially launching the project and having conversations amongst key stakeholders on how to scale up agroecology as a sustainable and resilient nature-based solution towards food and nutrition security in the face of climate change in Nigeria.

The Strategic Partnerships for Agroecology and Climate Justice in West Africa (SPAC-West Africa) Project is a 3-year project funded by ActionAid International (AAI) through its Transformative Impact Fund (TIF) will be implemented in Liberia, Nigeria, & Senegal, with regional engagement of stakeholders in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission. ActionAid Nigeria is implementing in Nigeria and coordinating the ECOWAS region engagements and continental engagements. In Nigeria, the project will improve food and nutrition security and enhance agroecological skills of 120,000 Smallholder Women Farmers (SHWF) and Young People by facilitating access to early maturing seeds, seedlings, livestock, and poultry, thus supporting agroecological practices, indigenous seeds, and agrobiodiversity preservation for increased farm yields. Through agroecology budget monitoring, tracking and advocacy towards the expansion of the fiscal spaces, rightsholders will significantly benefit from budget increases and allocations in agriculture. 26 model agroecological farms will also be set up and scaled by SHWF to increase adoption of agroecological practices. This project will be implemented in Ondo, Delta, Ebonyi, Jigawa, the FCT and at the National Level.

A total number of 136 participants attended (92 physical while 50 participants participated actively through the Zoom platform). These participants included House of Representative Committee on Agricultural Production and Services, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), Ecological Project Office, and 36 States and the FCT Agricultural

Development Programme (ADP) Managers. Also present were the Small-Scale Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria (SWOFON), Be The Help Foundation, Heinrich Boll Stiftung Foundation, ECOWAS Commission, Nigeria Agribusiness Group, United States African Development Foundation (USADF), All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Media, Academia, Research & members of the various Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

COMMENDATIONS

- The Permanent Secretary, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), the Director, Planning and Policy Coordination, other Directors, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors, and all staff of FMARD for being committed to achieving food and nutrition security and willing to collaborate with ActionAid Nigeria all the time.
- We commend all the 36 States and the FCT Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Managers for their commitment to scaling up agroecology across Nigeria towards our food and nutrition security.
- We commend development partners and donors on their work in Nigeria towards climate change mitigation and Adaptation.
- We commend the private sector and civil society organisations for their contributions towards Nigeria's food and nutrition security.
- We commend smallholder women farmers and young people for their resilience.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

During the meeting, participants made the following observations:

1. Nigeria is faced with daunting food and nutrition insecurity caused by low public investments in agriculture, late budget releases, insurgency, armed banditry, farmers herders clashes and when you add floods across the country that has ravaged farmlands and livelihoods and our high post-harvest losses of N3.5 trillion annually, the situation becomes more damning.
2. The Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index (2022) released in November 2022 further reiterates the need for us to rethink our approaches to achieving food and nutrition security in Nigeria. The report shows that out of Nigeria's 200million population, 38.6% which is 77.2million citizens are faced with food insecurity, while 28.7% which is 57.4million are faced with nutrition insecurity and 50.6% which is 101.2million citizens lack access to cooking fuel which contributes largely to climate change and health issues. Remember the national measure of

multidimensional poverty was conducted between November 2021 and February 2022 and things are worse than these statistics at the moment considering even just the recent floods. Hence, as many as possible of these types of projects on Agroecology and Climate Justice are needed to help communities to produce nutritious food sustainably.

3. This project is timely because although developing countries like Nigeria, use only 25% of chemical pesticides produced worldwide, we experience 99% of pesticide deaths. Research shows the World Health Organization estimates that 385 million farmers fell victim to acute poisoning in 2019, most of them in Asia and Africa.
4. 75% of smallholder women farmers surveyed in 2022 experienced some health challenges that they attributed to pesticide use. Symptoms like difficulty in breathing, dizziness, headaches, nausea, vomiting, eye problems, skin rashes, catarrh, diarrhea, and respiratory problems were among the most common health effects reported.
5. Nigeria's population is increasing, and the quantity of land remains the same, it is therefore extremely important that we take action to develop technology that will improve our farmlands, especially strategies to recycle nutrients within our lands to ensure sustainable agroecological management. Despite land degradation, the soil can heal itself and regenerate, therefore it is possible to grow our food 100% without chemicals.
6. Nigeria loses about \$362.5m yearly in terms of foreign exchange to the ban on the exportation of beans in the last eight years, hence the importance of this project to help the country save money and export good and acceptable agricultural produce in the global market. Bearing in mind that every Nigeria's food rejected is Naira lost and unemployment increased.
7. On access to Extension Services, smallholder women farmers have access to only 5.26% farm demonstrations and 19.47% of farmers field schools and these areas needs massive investments to scale up agroecology.¹

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We call on Federal and State Executives, National and State Houses of Assembly to scale up agroecology and extension services yearly budget, and ensure timely consideration, passage, and total budget releases as a strategic approach to increase food production, reduce hunger and poverty and achieve the CAADP Commitment to Enhancing Resilience of Livelihoods & Production Systems to Climate Variability and Other Shocks.

¹ ActionAid Nigeria Non-State Actors Value Addition Biennial Review Toolkit (NSAs VBAKIT) Report 2021.

2. The Ecological Project Office should support the scale up of agroecology across communities in Nigeria towards climate change mitigation and adaptation.
3. As approved by the 44th National Council on Agriculture and Rural Development (NCARD); the three tiers of government should commit 10% of their annual budget to the agriculture sector to meet the 10% Maputo/Malabo Declaration required to support at least 6% growth rate for the sector as postulated in the CAADP framework. There should be political will to allocate at least 10% of annual budgets and actuals of revenues to the agriculture sector with appropriate budget lines so that Nigeria will be on track in the next Biennial Reporting to the African Union Heads of States and Government in line with the Malabo Declaration and Commitments of 2014.
4. Federal and State governments should allocate more public investments in agriculture to address the strategic areas of investments that would increase the agricultural GDP to at least 6%. These strategic areas of investments include Extension Services, Access to Credit, Women in Agriculture, Youth in Agriculture, Appropriate Labour-Saving Technologies, Inputs, Post-Harvest Losses Reduction Supports (processing facilities, storage facilities, trainings, market access, etc.), Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA)/Agroecology, Research and Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, as well as Coordination.
5. Government should strengthen Extension Services with mobility, incentives and resources for field visits and employ more extension agents especially women and youths.
6. The GES should be re-introduced, and the budget should be increased to address the inputs gaps experienced by smallholder farmers, especially women and young people and to provide access to early maturing seeds, seedlings, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, and poultry, thus supporting agroecological practices, indigenous seeds, and agrobiodiversity preservation for increased farm yields.
7. The National Agricultural Development Fund should have a major component on supporting and scaling up agroecology across communities in Nigeria.
8. FMARD should begin to develop pesticide policies and legislation that ensure that the most toxic pesticides are prohibited, and phased out in Nigeria, and a significant shift made towards sustainable farm systems like agroecology. To achieve this, the government needs to develop a safe sustainable food strategy that reduces the use of highly toxic synthetic chemical pesticides by 50% by 2030; 25% by 2040, a maximum of 5% by 2050 and strong support to be given to farmers in their transition towards agroecology.
9. The private sector through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) that benefit smallholder farmers especially women and young people should promote agroecology and play a robust role in facilitating market access for agroecologically produced agriculture produce in Nigeria.

10. Development Partners and Donors should increase their fundings and programmes on agroecology and climate justice in Nigeria.

NEXT STEPS

- AAN to transmit Communique to relevant Policy Makers, MDAs, and Institutions as well as all participants.
- State teams headed by the 36 States and the FCT Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Managers present at the meeting will lead advocacy and scale up of agroecology at state-levels.

Endorsed By

List of Organizations, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, CSOs and Institutions that participated in the Official launch of the Strategic Partnerships for Agroecology and Climate Justice in West Africa (SPAC- West Africa), Nigeria Project and Stakeholders Meeting on Agroecology and Climate Justice.

1. House Committee on Agricultural Production and Services
2. Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD)
3. ActionAid Nigeria
4. Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS)
5. United State African Development Foundation (USADF)
6. Small Scale Women Farmers Organisation in Nigeria (SWOFON)
7. All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN)
8. Nigerian Agribusiness (NABG)
9. Women Environmental Programme (WEP)
10. National Agency For The Great Green Wall
11. Alliance For Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
12. Ecological Project Office (EPO)
13. Guardian Newspaper
14. Savanna Express
15. African Independence Television (AIT)
16. Silverbird TV
17. Ray Power FM
18. Radio Nigeria
19. Blueprint Media
20. The 36 States and the FCT Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) Managers
21. Organic and Agroecological Initiative in Nigeria (ORAIN)
22. Babe Azimi Foundation
23. She Matters Foundation
24. Environmental and Rural Mediation Centre (ENVIRUMEDIC)
25. Farm Radio International
26. Ripple Heights Development Initiative, Ibadan Nigeria
27. Nigerian Forum for Agric Advisory Services (NIFAAS)
28. Safe Food Awareness Initiative (SFAI)
29. Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative, Baringo, Kenya
30. Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (NACCIMA)
31. Rural and Urban Stewardship Initiative for Sustainable Development (RUSISD)