

## PARTNERS

IDA  
CILSS/INSAH  
UEMOA  
IFDC/MISTOWA  
IPC  
Senegal Government  
Niger Government  
CTA  
Swedish Cooperation Agency  
French Cooperation Agency  
CCFD  
CSA  
OXFAM  
Projet Europafrique  
FARM  
AGRITERRA  
ECOWAS  
UPA DI  
CSAO/OCDE  
Hub  
Accord  
Dutch Cooperation  
Novib  
SOS-FAIM  
ActionAid - Sénégal  
VECO  
Belgian Cooperation  
Burkina Faso Gouvernement

## PARTICIPANT COUNTRIES

Benin  
Burkina-Faso  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Gambia  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Guinea-Bissau  
Liberia  
Mali  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Senegal  
Sierra-Leonne  
Togo



# NIAMEY CALL

FOR WEST AFRICAN FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

## Preamble

At the initiative of ROPPA (Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa) a dialogue concerning the food sovereignty of the sub-region took place in Niamey from 7 to 10 November among farmer organization leaders, members of parliament, officials of ministries agriculture and trade, and researchers from 13 countries of West Africa, together with the authorities of ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS, technical and financial partners, farmers' organizations from the North and NGOs.

In the course of this dialogue, the participants analysed the food situation in West Africa. From this analysis, the following points emerged :

- Despite the significant natural resources of which it still disposes and the know-how of the millions of men and women peasant farmers and agricultural producers who live and work in their family farms, the sub-region is highly dependent on the outside for its food.
- This contradiction is the result of national agricultural policies which are still insufficiently adapted to the West African situation and of inadequate social mobilization and organization on the part of farmers and agricultural producers. It also results from the insufficient effectiveness of forums and mechanisms of dialogue among national actors.
- The outcome of these factors is the increased vulnerability of West African countries and populations to natural dangers (drought, locusts, etc.)
- They have also engendered a deeper and more massive poverty of farmers and agricultural producers, making them the first victims of food insecurity.
- The poverty and the food insecurity in which West Africa vegetates can be overcome by policies based on food sovereignty, that is the " right of every country or group of countries to define their agricultural policies in the interests of their populations, to develop and protect their productions and their markets so that they can satisfy the populations' needs of healthy, sufficient food which is culturally and religiously acceptable and that they also constitute the basis for fair remuneration of the labour of family farms ";

Conscious of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the populations they represent, support, and accompany in their daily efforts, the Forum's participants adopted the present document which they entitled " THE NIAMEY CALL FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY OF WEST AFRICA ".

\*\*\*\*\*



Participants in Niamey Congress Palace



1. Considering that the agricultural sector of the sub-region is the basis of the well-being of the majority of the population, the wealth of the region, the conservation of its natural resources, the future of its young people, of its societies and social peace ;
2. Considering that the agricultural development of the sub-region depends on exploiting the complementarities among its agro-ecological zones ;
3. Considering that the national and sub-regional agricultural policies recognize the multi-functionality of family farming and the necessity of modernizing it ;
4. Considering that the agricultural development of the sub-region is a significant opportunity to provide employment for young people by supplying them with revenues and appropriate living situations within their territories ; thus promoting social peace and attenuating migration ;
5. Concerned by the importations of agricultural and food products which aggravate the food dependence and weaken the economy and the social tissue of West Africa ;
6. Worried by the inadequacy of public investments in agriculture ;
7. Convinced that West Africa has the potentialities and the capacities to be less dependent and more autonomous for feeding its populations ;
8. Convinced that our agriculture is the basis of industrial and economic promotion through its multiple sectors : vegetable production, livestock, fishing, forestry development ;
9. Convinced that the achievement of the sub-region's food sovereignty is the pedestal on which to build the internal market that will solve the recurring problems of food insecurity, rural poverty, massive exodus of young people, the desertification of soils and degradation of natural resources ;
10. Convinced that the sub-regional agricultural policy of West Africa (ECOWAP), which aims at the achievement of food sovereignty, is an opportunity to be seized in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals and those of the Detailed Programme for the Development of African Agriculture of NEPAD,
11. Convinced that food sovereignty will not be attained without an adequate protection of sub-regional productions and markets against any unfair competition by other countries and regions

**The leaders of the farmers' organizations and their networks, the members of parliament, the public officials of the agricultural and trade sectors are resolved and committed to work for :**

**A - the continuation of the process of the dialogue multi-actor initiated at Niamey** around food sovereignty and agricultural development in West Africa

The dialogue among all the actors showed that the forum of Niamey will have to continue at national level and consolidate the parallel exchanges which the actors of each country have had separately. This objective must be promoted by each national platform of ROPPA.

ROPPA's initiative in organizing the Forum was judged positively by the actors. It testifies to the maturity of the farmers' organizations, their sense of responsibility and their willingness to build, both in their countries and at sub-regional level, a coalition of actors for the economic, social, cultural and political progress of the populations.

This commitment to work to create forums of multi-actor dialogue has to continue and to be supported by the national and regional authorities. It is, after all, the pedestal of a durable and virtuous dynamics for the development of West Africa.

**B - the participatory formulation and implementation of a sub-regional charter of food sovereignty**, under the aegis of ECOWAS and with the cooperation of UEMOA and CILSS.

This charter will have to clarify the implications of food sovereignty for policies as well as the roles, the responsibilities and the commitments of all the actors. The charter will also define the means and the mechanism of a collective monitoring of the charter's implementation.

The Forum takes note of the commitment of the farmers' organizations and their sub-regional networks to mobilize their members, to sensitize them and train them in order to promote the widest appropriation of food sovereignty and of the charter. This is the only way to insure that all the stakeholders take into account the objectives of food sovereignty and the implementation of concrete actions which testify to the commitments of every concerned party.

**C - the definition and the application of a trade policy and protection measures corresponding to the objectives of the food sovereignty**

1. ROPPA undertakes to rapidly mobilize all its networks of collaboration to prepare, before February 2007, proposals corresponding to the application of food sovereignty within the framework of the Common External Tariff (CET).
2. ROPPA undertakes to mobilize the National Platforms of Farmers' Organizations so they work with the national administrative officials to make them the real promoters and the defenders of a CET which is not a tool that condemns thousands of family farms to ruin.
3. The farmers' organizations and their networks - ROPPA and the RECAO - are determined, if their concerns to protect the agricultural productions and the regional market are taken into account first by the States and then by ECOWAS, to organize social and peaceful mobilization of family farmers to support the legitimate decisions of the States and ECOWAS to develop harmoniously the sub-region of West Africa

**D - The adaptation and the effective application of the principles of food sovereignty and the charter in the agricultural and trade policies and measures of protection**

To do so, the participants in the Forum engage States, ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS to :

Open dialogue and negotiations, at national level with the National Platforms of farmers' organizations, at the sub-regional level with the ROPPA and the RECAO, with a view to defining and adopting a CET which can serve as a strong instrument for the protection of our productions and the development of our regional market. The same state of mind must apply to the negotiation and conclusion of trade agreements with the European Union, China, Brazil, etc.

**E - Respect for the commitments freely assumed by the African Heads of State in Maputo** to direct at least, 10 % of the national budget to financing agriculture (including livestock, fishing and forestry) and to implement programs agreed with the concerned actors in order to achieve an equitably distributed agriculture growth rate of at least 6 %.

**Niamey, November 10th, 2006**

**The Forum**