



# Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles - West Africa

## Rights to Land and Water, A Common Struggle



**GREEN BOOK OF CONVERGENCE**

**ADVOCACY  
DOCUMENT**

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## I. INTRODUCTION :

A peasant movement and a citizen's mobilization to defend the common goods and the rights of urban, peri-urban, and rural peoples.

### GLOBAL CONVERGENCE OF LAND AND WATER STRUGGLES

Land, water, peasant seeds, fish, and forest are vital natural resources that are part of our common heritage. These resources are "common goods", not commodities.

In West Africa, more than 70% of people depend on peasant family agriculture that feeds over 80% of the overall population.

Secured access to and control over land, water, peasant seeds, and all natural resources, by communities is critical.

**Protected access and community control over vital resources must be respected and guaranteed as a right**, because this is a requirement for the realization of other human rights: the right to adequate food and nutrition, the right to water and sanitation, the right to health, the right to culture, the right to housing, the right to work, and the right to self-determination of peoples.

Several grassroots social movements, together with civil society organizations that are engaged

in the defense of the rights to land, water, and seeds, met at the African Social Forum in Dakar. There, they protested against all forms of natural resource grabbing and the systematic human rights violations associated with these practices. Through this exchange of ideas, we recognized the essential solidarity between our struggles and decided to meet again in March 2015 at the World Social Forum in Tunis. At that gathering, we continued our dialogue with movements and organizations from around the world. **This led to the creation of a Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles.**

The declaration "Rights to Water and Land, a Common Struggle. Dakar to Tunis: Declaration of the Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles!" sets out the vision, principles and aspirations of the Convergence. It serves as the basis for building a strong and unified movement, fighting for policies that will promote our human rights and food sovereignty. The signatories of the declaration are committed to pursuing the process of shaping the Convergence - starting from the grassroots, and with the Declaration as a common base of principles and actions.

In this spirit, several organizations from eleven West African countries created the sub-regional platform of the Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles in June 2015. From the start, the Malian Convergence Against Land Grabbing (CMAT) was a strong force behind the process, connecting and strengthening existing alliances and regional networks in the fight against land grabbing.

### THE GLOBAL CONVERGENCE OF LAND AND WATER STRUGGLES - WEST AFRICA

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The Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles – West Africa is composed of more than 300 peasant organizations, including farmers, pastoralists, fishers, and forest workers. Its organizations represent victims of land and water grabbing in rural, peri-urban, and urban areas, including those evicted from popular neighborhoods, youth, women, and NGOs. The Convergence spans 15 countries within the ECOWAS and WAEMU territory and incorporates vibrant and well-respected regional platforms such as the Network of Peasant Organizations and Agricultural Producers in West Africa (ROPPA).

Movements and organizations are unified in national platforms where they initiate joint activities under the Convergence. The first action was the West African Caravan for Land,

Water, and Seeds, and was supported by sub-regional networks, including ROPPA, COPAGEN, COASP, RBM, La Vía Campesina Africa 2, No Vox Africa, AFSA, and We Are the Solution.

### OUR ASPIRATIONS:

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- **Raising awareness** on land, water, and seed grabbing - as well as the challenges and issues regarding these resources - throughout the countries of West Africa;
- **Mobilizing** West African social movements and organizations in order to build a strong movement based on peasant agroecology and food sovereignty that will affirm the rights of communities and promote family farming;
- **Taking** action for peace, social and environmental justice and equity, gender equality, public health, and the struggle against climate change;



➤ **Engaging** national political and administrative authorities, as well as sub-regional institutions (ECOWAS and WAEMU), on their obligations regarding the realization of human rights, and calling upon them to take up our demands and proposals in relation to:

- The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests adopted by the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- the African Union policy framework and guidelines on land policy in Africa and pastoral charters
- articles 5, 6, and 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), favoring the rights of peasants to their seeds, as well as their rights to reject GMOs and revise biotechnology laws promoted by WAEMU and ECOWAS;
- the human right to food and nutrition;
- the Declaration of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

➤ **Support** all activists and communities that are defending human rights linked to land, water, and seeds, and denounce their criminalization.

**Without land, without water, and without farmers' seeds, secured and managed by communities, there will be no future for humanity and the planet!**

**This Convergence booklet contains our own analysis of the reality we are living in West Africa in relation to peasants' land, water and seeds. This includes existing structural problems that are at the root of the abuse and violation of the rights of communities, jeopardizing a future West Africa that is prosperous and peaceful. It also contains our visions and concrete proposals for the management and use of our natural resources for the welfare of both urban and rural people.**



March against Monsanto (Burkina Faso)

## II. OUR REALITIES :

### NATURAL RESOURCE GRABBING:

We, the people of West Africa, are suffering mass grabs of our land, water, and peasant seeds, of our natural resources, and of our homes and our knowledge. This phenomenon has increased in our countries in the wake of the food price, financial, and energy crises that compounded in 2008.

### Grabbing our lands

According to a FAO<sup>2</sup> study on West Africa, foreign investors have sought to buy or rent 50-80 million hectares of farmland in developing countries over the last five years. The study indicates that two thirds of these lands are located in sub-Saharan Africa. Promoters have used the following arguments to justify these massive land grabs:

- Improved food security through increased food production (generally designated for export, and not for feeding local people);
- Modernized agriculture and more efficient use of so-called «unproductive and non-tenable» land;
- Environmental protection through the establishment of conservation areas for

climate change mitigation (not taking into account the needs of the people who depend on those areas for their livelihoods);

- Encouragement of infrastructure development through megaprojects and so-called «development» through «win-win» public-private partnerships, (but who really wins ?)

In reality, these land acquisitions do not contribute to development and well-being. On the contrary, local communities evicted from their lands become victims. These grabs are facilitated by the fact that:

### Senegal:

**Over 10 years, 650,000 hectares have been granted to 17 national and foreign private actors. This represents 16% of cultivable land in the country and pastoral spaces have not been spared: 45,000 ha of forest classed by KHELCOM has been granted to an old Khalif and dozens of Dara (agricultural enterprise + Quranic teaching). Overall, this impacts more than 1000 ha of land affected by the increase in cultivated areas. National sovereignty and family farms are under threat !**

- there are no laws for the effective installment and recognition of customary land rights;
- so-called modern laws are based on a colonial heritage and prevail over the customary laws that are practiced by more than 80% of the population;
- impunity prevails for fraudsters and those who abuse rights;
- rule of law is scarce.

Land grabbing is also taking place in different but equally harmful ways in urban and suburban areas. Evictions, destroyed houses, reduced public spaces (such as markets and green spaces diverted from their intended use), and land acquisitions with false land titles, all affect the living conditions of the victims. These practices are due to real estate speculation or (forced) resettlement with little or no compensation—contributing solely to the fortune of the promoters.

### GRABBING OUR WATERS

Grabbing of lands and river banks is always accompanied by water grabbing, be it through:

- Potential fertility of lands;
- Control of access to water sources and their use: lakes, rivers, lakes, water tables;
- Construction of dams;
- Diversion of waters for industry, industrial agriculture, oil drilling and mining,
- Development of tourism, urban development.

**Water and land are issues of tomorrow: multinationals know this and they are grabbing them!**

"These lands have no value", says Neil Crowder, from the British company Chayton Capital, which has bought agricultural land in Zambia. "The true value is in the water". Companies such as Chayton Capital think that Africa is the best place to find this water.

Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, Chairman of the Nestlé Group, (Nescafé, Nido, Maggi etc.) explains that these transactions are more concerned with the water than the land: "The lands come with the right to extract water that is associated with them; in most of these countries, it is a free supplement that could increasingly represent the most valuable part of the transaction."

All these activities are accompanied by pollution, which causes illness, destroys ecosystems, and further reduces access to rare and vital fresh water. Water must be controlled and managed by the communities, by users in rural and urban areas. The battle for water has truly started!



### **Water and industrial agriculture**

More than 70% of the fresh water withdrawals around the world are destined for agriculture. Irrigated agriculture represents 18% of agricultural lands, but at least 40% of global production using industrial agriculture for export. The green revolution rarely achieved results except at the price of a veritable “orgy of water” and pollution (hybrid varieties selected for high yield, GMOs, chemical inputs etc.). For example 4 to 7 times more water was needed to obtain a yield that was 3 or 4 times higher!

Supporters of the “green revolution” in India have made two grave mistakes by assuming that the quantity of water in the aquifers was unlimited and inexhaustible, and by underestimating the

costs and environmental impacts on drainage systems and numerous exhausted water tables.

### **Water and pastoralism**

Our areas have increasingly shrunk and been grabbed. Access to water points and the cost of productive water remains very high for livestock farming. The absence of access corridors to natural water courses and the fragility of usage rules are other elements of insecurity for mobile pastoralism. We need the water network to be strengthened and the cost of water to be reduced. An increasing number of countries in the subregion are confronted with and suffer from the consequences of a large-scale privatization of the water service that outweigh social concerns.



**Drinking water and water sanitation are critical for the nutrition, health, and dignity of every human being.**

The absence of access to drinking water, to sanitary facilities, and to hygiene practices compromises the nutritional status. This is due to waterborne diseases and to water-related chronic intestinal infections.

- 97.5% of the water on earth is saline.
- Just 0.3 % of the water on earth is fresh/potable water that is suitable for humans.

- 1.6 billion people do not have access to safe water and 2.6 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation.

**Water is the source of life and a fundamental right.**

Yet it is being grabbed, which endangers billions of people. The lack of access to and/or privatization of water distribution and management services - including drinking water, watering, and irrigation - are connected to price increases. Those who cannot afford water are prevented from accessing it.

**GRABBING OF OUR PEASANT SEEDS AND GENETIC RESOURCES**

As peasant communities, we have countless varieties of seeds that are adapted to our agricultural and food systems. This is because we have selected and maintained them for millennia.

The diversity of our peasant seeds guarantees our agroecological practices and our food sovereignty. But such diversity is threatened by the progressive invasion of industrial and commercial seeds that are incorporated into national and sub-regional laws and seed trade. Indeed, the catalogue and certification system promotes uniform and stable commercial crop

varieties and F1 hybrids - multiplied by chemical crop management techniques. This system requires farmers to pay for their seeds every year (or sometimes every two or three years). It gradually eliminates our traditional, local, peasant varieties that have been continually proven in our fields.

Also, by authorizing the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) food crops, such as sorghum and cowpea (black eyed peas), we risk the contamination of our native seeds - not to mention the health, environmental, economic, and social risks that have yet to be assessed.

With intellectual property rights, systems that uphold the interests of the seed industry, our agricultural and natural diversity is



The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) - which should enable governments to uphold our rights, recognize our knowledge, and foster the development of biodiversity in the fields - has been hijacked by the seed industry. This treaty now seeks to formalize the theft of our seeds and our knowledge. It works together with the Divseek program, which analyzes the genetic sequences of resources in gene banks in order to publish them in electronic databases. This program was not created for us: we do not analyze genetic sequences or "megabits", nor do we need this information. It is industry that will be able to patent genetic information, and these patents will prevent us from growing our own seeds—the same seeds that have been handed over to gene banks for free.

endangered. Varieties or plant genetic resources are appropriated through plant variety certificates and patents that are promoted by the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO). Such development of privatized varieties for profit is based on our own varieties. Genes have been collected in our fields and taken from our communities through public and private research.

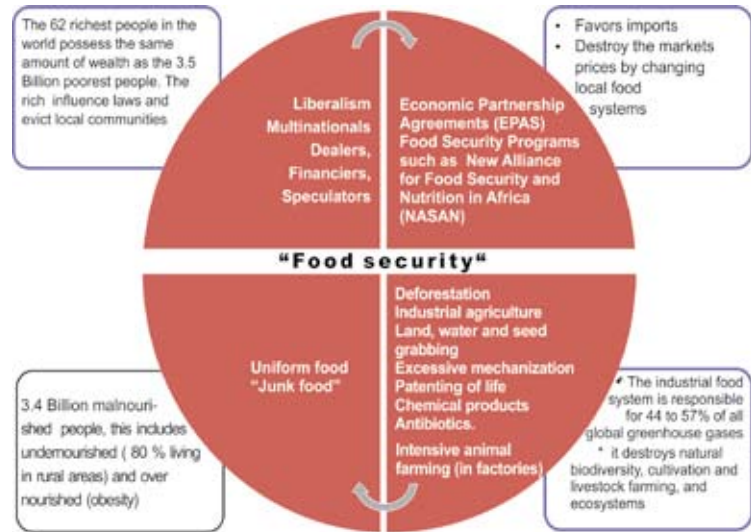
Peasant seeds and livestock are varieties that are local or are derived from exchanges and adaptations. They are selected, multiplied, stored, and disseminated (traded or sold) by farmers. Because they are able to multiply, our seeds allow us to remain autonomous. They are well suited to peasant agroecological practices.



## IN THE NAME OF FOOD SECURITY: A SYSTEM OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION FOR THE PROFIT OF A FEW

Based on «free trade agreements», investment projects are set up for the benefit of multinational companies that degrade and violate the rights of both urban and rural communities.

According to ETC Group, 3.4 billion people are sick as an outcome of “food security” and the



\* Hold-up sur le climat, GRAIN - Janvier 2016

spread of a uniform and standardized food system over the years. In rural areas, the majority of these people are undernourished, while in urban areas, most are excessively nourished or malnourished.

The industrial agricultural model is based on large farms (including livestock and fish farms) that are highly capital intensive, mechanized, and practice monoculture. Industrial farming with hybrid seeds or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and the massive use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and energy increases peoples' dependence—while at the same time exploiting natural resources. This unsustainable agricultural model also contributes to global warming, making farming systems more vulnerable to natural and climatic risks. At the same time, it reduces biodiversity and limits job creation.

Local communities are most vulnerable and the first to suffer from the harmful and often irreversible effects of industrialization: contamination and pollution of land, sea, rivers, and underground water (from pesticides, fertilizers, chemical, mining and industrial activities, etc.); destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity; desertification and salinization; and, global warming caused by the industrial and extractive economic model.

## Our nourishing food systems destroyed

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The industrial model of food production also enforces a change and homogenization of the population's consumption patterns. This is done through massive large-scale marketing of foods that are derived from standardized industrial production. It is strongly promoted by transnationals in order to increase their profits and by public-private partnership initiatives dominated by corporate interests (for example the Scaling Up Nutrition initiative [SUN]).

Products of low nutritional value (wheat flour, broken rice, oil, stock cubes, etc.) are often artificially enriched with vitamins and other nutrients, especially to attract governments and consumers. They are also in competition with agricultural products grown using natural farming biodiversity, including grains, tubers, and local crops (millet, sorghum, fonio, yam, cassava, etc.) or local condiments and spices (sumbala, datu, shea butter, and palm oil). Our products are derived from our natural agriculture and biodiversity, are free of additives, and are of high nutritional quality. Consumed in a diversified manner, they provide the essential nutrients for good health. The invasion of products from agro-industry destroys our markets and our food system that is adapted to our soils. It worsens global warming and destroys local market opportunities for peasant agriculture.

The agroindustrial system must be seen to be one of the key factors responsible for climate change; it is why it is vital to take food sovereignty into account for any lasting and just solution. [...] Changing the food system is certainly the best place to start [...] “cooling the planet” with agroecology [...] a great struggle against commodification of the world and life.

\*Extracts from The Great Climate Robbery,  
GRAIN /CETIM January 2016

Impacts include:

- The decline of agricultural and natural biodiversity, neglecting added value;
- Pollution within the production process and through long distance transportation;
- The deterioration of family health: high consumption of industrially produced and highly processed products from agribusiness spreads diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and forms of cancers.

### WHAT TYPE OF AGRICULTURE FEEDS COMMUNITIES IN A TRULY SUSTAINABLE WAY?

	Industrial food chain	Peasant food web (40% of the global workforce)
Food production	30%	70%
Biofuel production	80%	<20%
Agricultural water use	70%	30%
Arable land use	70% to 80%	20% to 30%
Plant species	12 species	7000 species
Breeds	<100 breeds	>7000 breeds
Greenhouse gas emissions	44 % to 57%	15% to 30%
Destruction of arable land	75 billion tons	Soil is enriched
Employment	Destroys 50% of family farmers	Creates employment + 30%

Source: ETC group

### **Kossam \* instead of reconstituted milk, breeders rather than industrial dairy!**

The pastoral and agro-pastoral economy is expected to have a promising future to support the population growth. It is the second most important sector in the GDP of many West African countries. Because of this, imported powdered milk should cost more than local milk. But in fact, it has been the opposite for quite some time. EU dairy industries can export their surpluses at very low prices and without limit. These dairy industries buy milk from European producers at prices that are well below their cost of production, and in turn transform it into mass quantities of powdered milk to sell on the African market. This is nothing less than dumping. For instance in Burkina Faso, powdered milk is now three times cheaper than local milk.

We need to take action: ECOWAS must increase customs duties. These are only 5%, and with the signing of EPAs will decrease to as little as 0%. What is the future? Kenya made a different choice, imposing tariffs of 60%, and thanks to this, was able to develop its local dairy economy.

*European dairy industry looks to West Africa - OXFAM Belgium / SOS FAIM June 2016 by Gérard Choplin*

**\* Kossam means milk in the Fulani language, indicating that local is best!**

### **THE FUTURE IS IN THE HANDS OF WOMEN**



From the Sustainable Development Goals, to the Malabo Declaration, to ECOWAP, land, water and farmers' seeds are key issues when it comes to resource legislation and/or management, particularly for women. In West Africa, rural women, especially young girls, continue to engage with policymakers, pressing them to turn words into actions. This includes empowering and securing access to land in a sustainable manner; applying decision-making powers to land use, distributing revenues from local agricultural products; protecting against illicit land acquisitions; reinforcing access to information and awareness of land laws;

establishing local arbitration land committees with a balanced gender composition; and, accessing public financing and credit. All of these are key issues that must translate into appropriate national legal provisions and regional directive on land in West Africa.

Women are the first victims of land and natural resource grabbing. They are first in line in the destruction of the family unit. When the roles and knowledge of women are ignored, our society's ability to respond to the challenges of building sustainable agricultural and food systems for now and the future are under threat. Women do more than playing major roles in the production, processing, and marketing of food. As guardians of local and traditional knowledge in the conservation of peasant seeds and natural resource management, they also play a critical role in transmitting such information to future generations. Women's contribution is essential in designing and implementing coherent and effective strategies for addressing current and emerging issues. Because of this, women should be leaders in our transition to sustainable agricultural and food systems.

According to experts, women account for more than 60% of the agricultural labor force in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in weeding, produce 60 to 80% of the continent's food production, and are invested in 80% to 90% in the processing, storage, and transport of food. Despite this vital contribution, only 15% of women are secure on their farms. While rural women are a powerful agricultural development force, their potential remains obstructed by gender disparities. If they had the same production facilities as their global male counterparts, they could increase their agricultural yields by 20-30% and help prevent millions of people from suffering from hunger.

(source FAO)

### **WHAT IS PEASANT AGRICULTURE WITHOUT YOUTH?**

Our youth are discouraged from practicing agriculture, because it is degraded, devalued and abandoned by public policy - they therefore tend to shy away from it. Yet young men and women are the key force and future for family farming, peasant agroecology, and food sovereignty. Together, we must build a framework that can fulfill true autonomy, income generation, conditions of fair inheritance, intergenerational exchange of knowledge,

and respect. Generally, youth do not receive remuneration for their participation in agricultural activities - even when they receive «gifts» in kind or money. Young people are frustrated. They have more and more needs and desires, and satisfying those requires monetary income and an environment in line with the demands of contemporary society, such as mobile phones, Internet access, etc.

Land grabbing and the monopolization of land, water, and peasant seeds make it even more difficult to make a living from agriculture - for farmers, breeders, pastoralists, fishers, forest workers, etc. Many young men and women do want a future in farming. Such a future depends on training and integration in professional networks and local organizations.



Due to rapid population growth, 17 to 25 million young people in sub-Saharan Africa are expected to join the labor market yearly. This will represent a workforce of 330 million by 2025, and two thirds of them (some 200 million) will be in rural areas. Since agriculture is seen as unattractive, industrial structures are weak and educational levels are low. Overall, job prospects for young people entering the labor market are limited. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), about 73 million jobs were created in Africa between 2000 and 2008, but only 16 million of those were for the 15-24 year old age group. Today, some 60% of Africa's unemployed are young people - and in the majority of African countries, the unemployment rate of youth is twice that of adults. A World Bank survey revealed that one in two young people who join insurgent movements said that unemployment was their primary motivation for doing so.

*Food sovereignty Bulletin - Interéseau September 2015*

The family also plays an indispensable role in preparing young people to be farmers, in terms of access to land and/or security of its tenure, and in terms of providing various kinds of support that are necessary for start-up activities. Each individual must be sensitive of his or her role in relation to the other.



## WHO REALLY GOVERNS?

We are outraged by the increasingly prominent role of corporations and the private sector, including transnational enterprises, in defining national, sub-regional, regional, and international priorities, and laws, and policies concerning food, agriculture, land, water, and seeds. This takes place, in part, through public-private partnerships and «multi-stakeholder» platforms that consolidate the roles of states and corporations—putting the interests of companies and of communities on equal ground. Although the secure access to and control over natural resources should be largely determined by local and national power structures, African countries are still subject to intense international pressure. This pressure comes from the richest countries and their organizations (G7/8, OECD, etc.), including multilateral institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO), etc.).

International trade and investment agreements, such as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), also exacerbate inequalities between countries and hinder the application of safeguard measures that are necessary for the protection of livelihoods. This is especially true for marginalized groups.

## LAND GRABBING



To add insult to injury, international development projects such as agri-business development centers ("agropoles") and the G7's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa (NAFSN), include measures in the areas of land, seeds, social policy, and nutrition. Above all, these measures serve the interests of transnational corporations rather than the needs of local communities.

The NAFSN is also closely linked to the Grow Africa Partnership, instituted by the World Economic Forum. It encompasses initiatives promoted by foundations that are linked to heavyweights in the business sector like Monsanto, Syngenta, Yara, and Cargill. Such is the case with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), promoted by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. They are well known for their willingness to

industrialize African agriculture by promoting GMOs, pesticides, and standardizations.

These new consortia have become increasingly powerful and harmful to natural resources - and the communities that act as their guardians - in West Africa and around the world. They put pressure on African governments to accelerate land, fiscal, and institutional reforms in order to create attractive and reassuring conditions for foreign private investors - instead of prioritizing secure land rights for communities and populations.

These initiatives reinforce unequal power structures and contribute to the further marginalization of disadvantaged groups,

such as women, youth, and children.

Our governments and local authorities are mostly responsible, but so are the regional and sub-regional bodies that they collaborate with, including the African Union (AU), ECOWAS and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). The context described above is, in large part, the result of flawed policy on the part of West African states and sub-regional institutions. At the heart of the problem are laws and policies developed and approved by our governments and institutions, perpetuating and aggravating inequalities and commodifying our resources.



## THE IMPACT OF THE WORLD BANK'S POLICIES ON AFRICAN AGRICULTURE\*

### → Doing Business / Ease of Doing Business Ranking

**The World Bank** is a financial institution with 5 main shareholders: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan.

The more that states grant tax incentives to businesses, the easier they make it to access land and exports. At the same time, when incentives increase, social and environmental standards decrease, making the Ease of Doing Business ranking more attractive.

Investor reliance on the ranking means that major investments flow to "good students", or in other words, the countries that have carried out the most reforms in favor of business. Around the world, the Ease of Doing Business report is a point of reference for investors and funders.

Countries often have no choice regarding their relationship with the World Bank: financial pressures, the need for cash, and (often illegitimate) external debts push them in the direction of rapid deregulation.

Under the auspices of the World Bank, investment promotion agencies and councils have been set up in various target countries, in part to make it easier to acquire land. (Examples include ANAPI in the Democratic Republic of Congo, API in Mali, NIC in Liberia, SLIEPA in Sierra Leone, etc.)

### → Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA )

While Doing Business already favors foreign investors at the expense of local populations, the World Bank is developing EBA indicators (Enabling the Business of Agriculture). These indicators encourage countries to make reforms that will improve the business climate in agriculture and strengthen "investor appeal and competitiveness". EBA was initiated in 2013 at the request of the G8 as a basic element of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN). In 2016, EBA published its second report, a study of 40 countries that provided scores across six categories: seeds, fertilizers, machinery, finance, markets, and transport. EBA awards better scores to the countries that make it easier to import chemical fertilizers and that establish frameworks for the private sector to patent seeds. Via EBA, the World Bank is imposing a development model based on the industrialization and intensification of agriculture. The EBA project, through its large-scale promotion of so-called "good practices" for reforming the agricultural sector, has the potential to enlarge the impact of the NAFSN. It goes against food sovereignty in Africa, directly threatening the millions of peasants that are the very heart of African agriculture and feed the continent.

\*Source: Oakland Institute, Our land, Our Business campaign

## DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES

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Everywhere in West Africa the situation is the same. To the detriment of local populations, taxpayers, and states, tens of thousands of hectares of land, or ocean, which have been under community management for generations, have been monopolized by single business enterprises that are awarded with numerous benefits. This concerns not only peasant communities, including farmers, livestock breeders and herders, fishers, and forest workers, but also people living in urban and peri-urban areas who are forced to move because of factors such as real estate speculation. Everyone is affected: men, women, and young people.

Natural resources grabbing, the imposition of an industrial food system, and the destruction of ecosystems cause the collapse of local food systems. This impacts a large number of local producers who feed the vast majority of the West African population. The communities whose rights are systematically violated and whose dignity is trampled upon, are left with families that are torn apart, or they are turned into refugees. Forced migration leads to a loss of cultural identity and the consequential disruption of cultural and social stability.

Women are more marginalized and their lives are made increasingly precarious. Despite empty promises from authorities and investors, land takeovers leave populations poorer and deprive them of education and of well-being. They suffer from hunger and malnutrition, from inadequate housing, and from unhealthy living conditions. They become increasingly vulnerable to illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancer that are worsened by the change in diet from locally-produced food to industrially-produced food.

The disastrous impacts of this adversity are also evident at the environmental level, including the effects of climate change (such as desertification), reduction in biodiversity, soil salinization, or decreases in rainfall. All of these issues have immediate and serious repercussions on agricultural production systems and on natural resources—with local communities as the first victims.

The loss of future prospects for the local population, particularly for youth, leads to migration and a rural exodus. Abandoning rural areas further increases poverty in urban working class neighborhoods. Those who migrate often end up enlisting in armed groups or are exploited in low-wage jobs, putting their lives at risk. Incomes decrease, and families are no longer able to meet their basic needs. Apart from food insecurity, a multi-dimensional poverty takes root, affecting income,

decrease, and families are no longer able to meet their basic needs. Apart from food insecurity, a multi-dimensional poverty takes root, affecting income, education, and health. Additionally, the loss of skills and knowledge forces local populations to look for employment in other sectors where the outlook is not promising. The absence of real public policies means that there is no encouragement for the kinds of opportunities that rural areas - and particularly agriculture - could offer. In those areas, current priorities do not include the repair and replacement of agricultural equipment, the restoration of soil fertility, the maintenance of seed stocks, and the preservation of biodiversity. Dependence on global markets exposes households to price fluctuations, making them more vulnerable.

When individuals and communities defend their rights by resisting natural resource grabbing and the imposition of an industrial food system, they are harassed, criminalized, imprisoned, and even assassinated<sup>3</sup>. Today, the criminalization of activists and communities that are fighting to protect the commons is a routine occurrence, despite being hidden by the authorities.

### III. WHAT WE PROPOSE:

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#### another path to well-being for everyone, women and men

In response to these threats to our lives and our welfare, we are resisting and struggling. We are asserting our rights and presenting real and credible solutions for food sovereignty, which is built on the rights of peoples to participate in decision-making, determining their own food and farming systems. The foundations of food sovereignty, family farming, and peasant agroecology are:

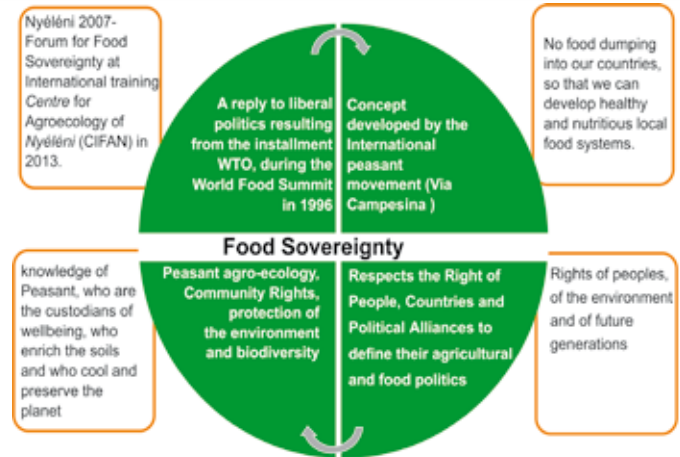
#### RESPECT FOR OUR RIGHTS AND CHOICES

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- The basic and essential rights to dignity and to well-being for all women and men, based on full respect for human rights, including the right to adequate food and nutrition, the right to water, the right to land, and the right to peasant seeds in the framework of peoples' food sovereignty.
- Gender equality and free movement of people, men and women, with corresponding rights.
- Dynamic local areas managed by and with communities through family farming that is

based on peasant agroecology, natural and cultivated biodiversity, and the knowledge, work skills, and life skills of the communities.

- Local food and production systems with communities in charge of the control, management, and access of peoples to land, water, peasant seeds, and other natural resources. Urban and peri-urban areas, surrounded by greenbelts, with commercial relations that are based on respect, cooperation, and mutual solidarity. These principles should apply to local markets and to international trade as well as to relations between rural, urban, and peri-urban areas.



Extrait des 11 modules de formation en agroécologie paysanne de la CNOP-Mali

**The Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, where the use of natural resources may be defined as their right to exert control over natural resources that are nearby and upon which they depend for their subsistence.**

**The right to make free use of their riches and their natural resources is recognized in international human rights law as a peoples' right. It is affirmed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.**

*Fian international note d'analyse décembre 2015  
par Priscilla Claeys*

Food sovereignty is based on peasant family farming. The major contribution of peasant family farming to feeding the world and to meeting the challenges of a sustainable food system—now and in the future—no longer needs to be demonstrated, especially with regard to climate change. This contribution has been widely recognized at the international level by many actors and institutions, including the FAO (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization), the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)<sup>4</sup>.

## Food sovereignty, which came from the demands of the international peasants' movement

La Vía Campesina during the world food summit organized by the FAO in 1996, has made its way across West Africa. It is included in the Agricultural Orientation Law in Mali, in the Agricultural, Forestry and Pastoral Orientation Law in Senegal, in the constitution of Nigeria and in the agricultural policy of CEDEAO thanks to the mobilization of national and regional peasant organizations

Food sovereignty is a newly emerging collective right that has been defined by the popular movements and civil society as:

«The right of peoples to healthy food, respecting cultures, made using sustainable methods that respect the environment». It implies peoples' right to participate in decision-making and to define their own food and farming systems».

It is not enough to write it down - it must be applied, and there is still a long way to go!

Fian International analysis note, 2015 by Priscilla Claeys

## FAMILY FARMING

Family farming is the backbone of the West African economy. It is based on peasant agroecology, which guarantees the sustainable use of land and other natural resources, positive social dynamics, and the production of local food with high nutritional value.

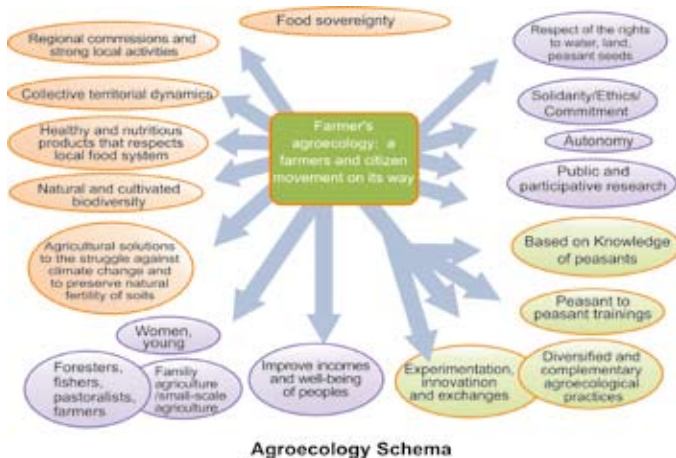
At the international level, it is also being increasingly<sup>5</sup> recognized, and 2014 was proclaimed the year of family farming by FAO.



Extrait des 11 modules de formation en agroécologie paysanne de la CNOP-Mali

## PEASANT AGROECOLOGY

“Agroecology outperforms large-scale industrial farming for global food security” Olivier de Schutter. The largest study ever conducted on agroecological approaches covered 286 projects in 57 developing countries, representing a total surface area of 37 million hectares: the average crop yield gain using agroecological approaches was 79%. The gain in Africa surpassed the world average to reach an increase of 116% (Jules Pretty, Essex University, U.K., 2006).



Peasant agroecology in harmony with its environmental, social and economic context is based on the knowledge, skills and way of life of peasants in agriculture, livestock farming, fishing and the forest, which have adapted, evolved and innovated ceaselessly and cool the planet with peasant agroecology. The Nyéléni Peasant Agroecology Manifesto is our common platform.

## PROMOTE AND SECURE ARTISANAL FISHING

There is a specific partnership agreement on fishing that allows the EU to set up fisheries agreements that permit European ships to exploit our seas, just as many Asian countries are already doing. In this way, our resources and small-scale fishing are disappearing little by little: the most affected fishing areas are Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Senegal. There, we see that the situation of small-scale fishers, men and women, gets worse each year. Yet our small-scale artisanal fishing is a very dynamic form of food sovereignty, feeding a large part of the West African population. At the same time, it protects our fisheries resources and provides income for many people through transformation and local





## PROMOTE AND SECURE PASTORALISM

Breeding remains essentially pastoral and agropastoral at the ECOWAS level, despite decades of policies to promote the intensification of breeding. It contributes to 40% to the agricultural GDP (ECOWAS; 2008), and pastoral systems provide 50% of meat production and 70% of milk production (De Haan et al. 1999). Stakeholders are unanimous in recognizing that pastoral livestock remains one of the few operating systems able to adapt to arid areas that are characterized by irregular rainfall and multiplying drought in the Sahel. This situation creates variations on resources over time and across different spaces. The maintenance of mobility is able to provide solutions to these

variables. However, globalization - as well as regional and national policies - has barricaded mobility to the point where the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of pastoral farming is brought into question. The reduction or extinction of local species due to policies that promote so-called genetic improvement through artificial insemination and through the introduction of new species is a huge danger. This strategy is being implemented by states to increase milk and meat production, and comes at the steep price of reducing the resistance and resilience capacities that have been demonstrated by local breeds.

Pastoral and fishery areas are **common goods** as the habitats of the villages; they are family territories. There must be a legal status recognizing communities that use these spaces to allow **them secure access to and control over resources (land, water, and pasture) and harmonious and fair**

**management by these communities.**

**We must protect all of these spaces**, by removing them from land lots that are likely to be allocated to private developers who will make exclusive use of them.

## IV. OUR DEMANDS :

We call upon States, local authorities, and sub-regional, regional and international institutions to:

### PROMOTE AND SECURE ARTISANAL FISHING

- Respect and act in accordance with the legal and constitutional mandate of the state, which is based on the sovereignty of the people: States derive their legitimacy from the

people, who confer upon them the mandate to serve the public interest on the basis of the principles of human dignity and respect for human rights. States are responsible to the people. States have the duty to refrain from adopting or entering into, and to oppose, any policies or treaties that threaten human rights and their own state sovereignty.

- Guarantee respect for the rights of the population to free, prior, and informed consent and to full participation in all of the processes and decisions affecting them, including those related to the management of land, water, peasant seeds, and other natural resources, as well as to food and nutrition. Our demands must not only be heard, but also taken into account. This includes our right to say “No” to the grabbing of land, water, and peasant seeds.
- Ensure that the policies and programs and the management of land, water, seeds, and other natural resources promote respect for human rights, social equity, gender equality, public health, and social and environmental justice.
- Recognize, and act in response to, the fact that land, water, peasant seeds, and other natural resources are not only vital natural



resources but also a part of our common heritage. The safeguarding and governance of this common heritage should be preserved for the common good of our societies and of the environment - now and for the generations to come. And it must be recognized that land, water, seeds, and food are not commodities; they are human rights and public goods.

- Recognize the close links that exist between, on the one hand, safeguarded and adequate access to - and control over - land and other natural resources for family farmers and communities, and, on the other hand, a truly sustainable use of these resources as a whole, which can only be achieved with a strong and sustained family agricultural system based on peasant agroecology in the context of food sovereignty.

#### **RECOGNIZE AND ACT IN ORDER TO:**

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- Guarantee the indivisibility of human rights and their obligations to respect, protect, promote, and implement human rights, particularly with regard to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, women, and youth. In all cases, they should refrain from committing human rights violations, and they should prevent and prosecute human rights abuses by other actors, including transnational

corporations and other business enterprises. This means making sure that all of their policies are in accordance with their human rights obligations, as these are outlined in :

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
  - The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
  - The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
  - The African Charter of Human Rights and Peoples
- Guarantee the historic and future role of all communities to manage and use natural resources in a sustainable manner, and first and foremost to feed the populations by means of family farming and food systems that are adapted to the ecosystem and in accordance with peasant agroecological practices.
  - The communities have always been the custodians and managers of resources, including natural and cultivated biodiversity and the biodiversity of livestock. They should continue to perform this role and to exercise their right to produce in territories that are protected by customary rights that are equitable, acknowledged, and capable of

being applied. Access to these resources and control over them only makes sense if they are used in a way that is ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable.

- To put into place participatory and collaborative research projects that respond to the demands of communities, involving them at all levels and excluding any form of intellectual property.
- Develop agroecological localities, recognizing the inalienable right of communities to declare their territories and their localities “GMO-free areas”.



### **CREATE, REVISE, AND/OR PUT INTO PLACE POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN ORDER TO:**

- Respect the rights and meet the needs of communities, peasant farmer organizations, and grassroots movements, both rural and urban, as well as those of civil society - all of whom should be the starting point of the reform process - while at the same time prohibiting any form of takeover or grabbing
  - Ensuring their real and effective participation and respect for their decisions both at the national and the sub-regional levels, such as the sub-regional (Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS and the West African Economic and Monetary Union UEMOA) variants of the African Union's policy guidelines framework for land tenure and for laws on seed and biotechnology.
- Ensure that there is internal coherence and coordination between sectoral policies (agricultural and livestock policies, land tenure policies, forestry and mining policies, environmental policy, food and nutrition policy, housing policy, energy policy, economic policy, trade policy, etc.) at both the national and sub-regional levels, on the basis of the relevant international texts - beginning by prohibiting any type of takeover or grabbing and ensuring respect for community rights and their conformity with human rights, through a participatory process.

- The African Union's framework and guidelines on land tenure policies in Africa.
  - The Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests, adopted by the United Nations World Food Security Committee<sup>6</sup>.
  - The FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries.
  - Article 9 of the IRPGRFA treaty, which defends the contribution of local and indigenous communities in the face of seed policies that are currently underway or will soon be revised.
- Articles 5, 6 and 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) which requires governments to enact policies favorable to the sustainable use of the biodiversity that has been maintained by communities, and to recognize the rights of farmers to save, use, exchange, and sell their peasant seeds. They should ensure that funders and partners are also in agreement:
- with their human rights obligations in all of their dealings and agreements with the so-called developing countries (extra-territorial human rights obligations, international texts), and in particular their interventions in the fields of agriculture, tenure, land, water, seeds, and other natural resources, including forests and

mines. With the involvement of the beneficiary communities, peasant organizations, and civil society in the development, implementation, and assessment of the support programs and policies, and to see that these programs and policies respond to real needs and promote community rights.

- By reforming policies on tenure, seeds, and water management, enforce effective laws that respect, give priority to, protect, and strengthen communities. This should be based on gender parity and rights for:
- Customary tenure rights and customary systems of management of land, water, peasant seeds, and other natural resources.
  - The natural water cycle and the ecosystemic functions of water, taking into account the recommendations on Water for Food Security and Nutrition, which were adopted by the World Food Security Committee during its 42nd session in October 2015. Respect, protect, and implement the





- human right to water and sanitation, which was recognized and articulated in United Nations General Assembly Resolution 69/2010, by adopting constitutional and legislative measures guaranteeing to everyone the availability and accessibility of water and sanitation services, as well as local and participative water and sanitation management, and the legal means for enforcement of the right to water.
- Biodiversity and the genetic heritage and genetic resources, protecting local peasant seeds and peasant rights against outside negative influences.
- Commit the ECOWAS Peoples Community to launching a regional policy process by means of a participatory memorandum so that West Africa can live in stability and peace by virtue of regulatory texts that protect rights, especially community tenure rights, and respect the fact that land, water and natural resources are public goods and not commodities.

## RECOGNIZE THE REALITIES OF THE COUNTRY AND REFUSE TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF MULTINATIONALS

### **Burkina Faso abandons GM cotton\*:** What Monsanto doesn't understand!

In 2001 a collaboration agreement for research and support regarding Bollgard II technology was signed by Burkina Faso and the Institut de Environnement et de Recherche Agricole (INERA - Institute of the Environment and Agricultural Research).

In this way the seed FK 95 (FK 37 + Bollgard II) was declared the joint property of Monsanto and the Association Interprofessionnelle du Coton du Burkina Faso (AICB - Inter-professional Cotton Association of Burkina Faso), with a commercial license contract signed between the two parties.

GM cotton was tested by producers in 2008 and it became more widespread from 2009. However, difficulties emerged from 2009. Cotton from Burkina Faso, once prized on the international market due to the length of its fibers, has been difficult to sell because it inherited the short fibers of the American seed on the basis of which the seed FK 95 was developed using the backcross technique. From 2011 to 2015 the cotton sector accumulated colossal losses. Burkina Faso demands damages from Monsanto in the amount of 39.2 billion CFA. The vain promise that BT cotton would increase revenues for producers was not kept. It was a harvest of disappointments. The license contract for the GM seed expired in January 2016 and it has not been renewed. BT cotton cultivation was suspended for 2016. The struggle is currently being organized in Burkina Faso for this suspension to be extended

to a definitive rejection of all GM programs still running in the country, and indeed everywhere.

*\*extrait d'un article de Maurice Oudet et Genewatch*

## TAKE MEASURES TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FAMILY AGRICULTURE SYSTEM THAT IS BASED ON PEASANT AGROECOLOGY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

- Respect the commitments on public investment in agriculture in the 2003 Maputo Declaration, which were renewed at Malabo in 2014, and of which 30% is for livestock raising and herding. We want these funds to go to family agriculture that is based on peasant agroecology, and we want transparent information on their disbursement to be made available to the public. The same stipulations apply to implementation of the sub-regional common agricultural policy, ECOWAP, which constitutes a point of reference for the implementation of the agricultural section of the NEPAD and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program, as to any other programs, such as the ODD. Direct public investment and support towards peasant family agriculture (farmers, livestock raisers and herders, fishers, forest workers) in order to promote a healthy, sustainable, integrated peasant agriculture that includes natural resource management and ensures the food sovereignty of the population. This support



should reinforce the investments made by peasant communities, who are the primary agricultural investors, and it should guarantee producers access to markets, credit, etc.

- Follow the recommendations from the Regional Meeting on Agroecology in Sub-Saharan Africa, which was jointly organized by the government of Senegal and the FAO and held in Dakar on November 5th and 6th, 2015, including:
  - Transform agricultural subsidy systems, and trade and investment policies, towards peasant agroecology, and adequately finance policies that allow for the development of peasant agroecology and family farming.
  - Recognize and support development of the knowledge and skills of communities; support inclusive and participatory

### RESISTING INVESTMENT PROGRAMS THAT ARE HARMFUL TO OUR DEVELOPMENT. WHOM DO THEY REALLY PROFIT?

The budgets of the World Bank, and in particular the agribusiness budget of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), have greatly increased. The IFC's agribusiness budget leapt from **less than 500 million dollars prior to 2005 to around 2 billion dollars in 2009-2012; it then doubled in 2013 to reach 4.4 billion dollars. The 2016 estimate is for it to reach 8 billion dollars.**

agricultural research in order to promote agroecological initiatives and practices.

- Develop agroecology in national and regional programs and policies, especially the regional economic communities—including the fishery, forest, and livestock raising and herding sections in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).
- Integrate agroecology into national research programs and into the curricula of higher education institutions, and at the level of pedagogical programs in formal and informal training centers for producers, such as field schools, farm schools, peasant to peasant learning, and school gardens.



- Follow the example of the African Union's model laws protecting the rights of communities with regard to traditional knowledge and the law on bio-security, in order to draft and implement laws for the protection of peasants' seed rights.
- Promote, develop, and support the decentralized production of renewable energy (solar and wind power) with full respect for the rights of communities at all levels of the farming, forestry, herding, and fisheries value chains.
- Promote pastoralism and pastoral charters and local conventions.
- Protect artisanal fishing.

### GOOD RIDDANCE !

International fisheries agreements, a modiation (lease) agreements to forests, contract for the exploitation of natural resources, the patenting of life, international standards destroying communities, the environment, health, local dynamics and the economies of our countries, which become prey and undergo permanent instability.

### REVIEW AND/OR HALT TRADE POLICIES AND CONTRACTS THAT ARE PREJUDICIAL TO PUBLIC INVESTMENT, REGIONAL INTEGRATION, AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS, AND THAT ARE DETRIMENTAL TO OUR OWN DEVELOPMENT.

- Particularly the economic partnership
- agreements that favor extractivism and the importing of food products, including products that have been genetically modified, which are harmful to public health and which are imported without respect for the regulatory process for their approval.
  - The implementation of the frameworks for cooperation of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa (NAFSN) and the negotiation of any new cooperation frameworks that undermine local food systems and sustainable food production by family farms.
  - The Grow Africa partnerships and platforms as well as USAID programs and the AGRA (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa), all of which are aimed at promoting industrial agriculture, GMOs, and their accompanying legal framework.



## SUPPORT AND BECOME PART OF THE STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTS

- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, which is now being drafted by the Human Rights Council, was initiated and is being carried forward by communities, peasant organizations, and social movements.
- The adoption process within the United Nations Human Rights Council of an international legally-binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights. This is in order to define clear and



compulsory norms with respect to the obligations of transnational corporations and other business enterprises - including rules for environmental impact assessments, due diligence and responsibility - while holding them responsible for their criminal acts and human rights abuses.

- The strengthening of mechanisms to combat corruption.



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

- AFSA: Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa;
- AGRA: Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa;
- API: Agency for Investment Promotion in Mali;
- ARIPO: African Intellectual Property Organization;
- AU: African Union;
- CMAT: Malian Convergence Against Land Grabbing ;
- COASP: West African Committee of Peasant Seeds ;
- COPAGEN : Coalition for the Protection of African Genetic Heritage;
- EBA : Enabling the Business of Agriculture;
- ECOWAS : Economic Community of West African States;
- ECOWAP: ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy;
- EPA : Economic Partnership Agreement;
- FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
- ILO : International Labour Organization;
- ITPGRFA : International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development;
- IMF : International Monetary Fund
- MDG : Millennium Development Goals
- NAFSN : New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa
- NEPAD : The New Partnership for Africa's Development
- CAADP : The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
- RBM : The Billital Maroobé Network (French: Le Réseau Billital Maroobe)
- ROPPA : West Africa Network of Peasant Organizations and Producers
- SUN : Scaling Up Nutrition
- WAEMU : The Economic Community of West African States
- WTO : World Trade Organization

1. [http://viacampesina.org/fr/images/stories/pdf/2015-04-Dakar%20to%20Tunis%20Declaration\\_FR\\_finalfinal.pdf](http://viacampesina.org/fr/images/stories/pdf/2015-04-Dakar%20to%20Tunis%20Declaration_FR_finalfinal.pdf); La Déclaration peut être signée ici : <http://goo.gl/forms/yhXa2Pb4c>.

2. <http://climatdeveloppement.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/4-cd-2012-accaparement.pdf>

3. Annual Report 2014 of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, "Nous n'avons pas peur. Attaque des défenseurs des droits à la terre qui s'opposent au développement effréné", disponible sur [https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/obs\\_2014-fr-web2.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/obs_2014-fr-web2.pdf).

4. Group of high level experts on food security and nutrition (HLPE) 2013: Investir dans l'agriculture des petits exploitants pour la sécurité alimentaire. Rapport du Groupe d'experts de haut niveau sur la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition. Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale, Rome, 2013, available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i2953f.pdf>.

5. See for example the international evaluation on agricultural knowledge, science, and technology for development (IAASTD, 2009), a major study a major four-year study involving more than 400 scientists from around the world and international institutions, or the report «Agroecology and the Right to Food» presented in 2011 by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter, in the 16th session of the human rights council of the United Nations.

6. See sites of La Via Campesina, Fian International, or FAO



# Land and water

## Same plight, same fight !

### GREEN BOOK OF CONVERGENCE

A document lobbying for improvement of and respect for policy and legislation on land tenure, water, and peasant seeds.

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