



## **The Kigali 2023 Declaration from the 5<sup>th</sup> African Organic Conference**

### **ON THE THEME**

**“STRENGTHENING RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS IN AFRICA THROUGH ORGANIC AGRICULTURE”**

"We, the 300 attendees (both in person and virtually), comprising farmers, scientists, policy makers, students and entrepreneurs in the organic business sector from all over Africa as well as Europe, Asia, and Oceania, discussed during the 5th African Organic Conference, which took place at Marriott Hotel, in Rwanda, from 12 - 15 December, 2023.

**AGREE** that organic agriculture plays a significant role in creating a resilient and sustainable food system in Africa and supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the African Union's Agenda 2063, while preserving systematized traditional knowledge and African-based scientific evidence that supports policies that address issues such as poverty, the impact of climate change, food insecurity, loss of biodiversity, market access barriers, unemployment, and gender inequality for a prosperous Africa.

### **APPRECIATING**

- The Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources for having accepted to host the 5<sup>th</sup> African Organic Conference in Rwanda.
- The African Union Commission (AUC), which has taken the lead in promoting the adoption of the African Heads of State and Government Decision on Organic Farming (Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII)).
- The advancements achieved by the African Organic Network (AfrONet) in promoting collaboration and information exchange between the continent's organic agriculture players.
- The Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement (ROAM) that hosted the 5th African Organic Conference.
- Partners of the 5<sup>th</sup> African Organic Conference such as Agence Française de Développement (AFD), SWISSAID, GIZ, African Union Commission, Biovision Africa Trust/EOA-I Secretariat, Naturland Association for Organic Agriculture, IFOAM Organics International Asia, International Society for Organic Agriculture Research (ISO FAR) and Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL)





### **RECALLING**

- The impact of Agenda 2063 of the African Union on the growth of agriculture in Africa, which organic agriculture aligns with.
- The enormous unrealized potential for the sustainable growth of organic agriculture in Africa, which is predicated on the continent's diverse and supportive agro-ecosystems.
- The organic agriculture production and business development levels in Africa that are still far from achieving the desired level of impact on the decision of the African Heads of State and Government on Organic Farming (Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII)).
- The numerous stakeholders in organic agriculture in Africa that continue to face numerous obstacles that are impeding their progress.
- The new Ecological Organic Agriculture/Agroecology (EOA/AE) indicators under CAADP that represent an opportunity for contribution of the organic stakeholders to the achievements of targets at country level.
- The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) that represents a great opportunity for boosting the business of the organic products on the continent.

### **WE RECOMMEND**

- Appropriate national, regional, and continental policies should encourage the growth of organic agriculture in Africa, including boosting availability, access and promotion of the use of organic inputs (seeds, organic fertilizers, soil amendments, and bio-pesticides).
- At all governmental levels in Africa, appropriate measures should be implemented to prevent Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) from contaminating the production of organic agriculture and contributing to the loss of indigenous seeds.
- In order to promote the availability of organic products for local and regional markets in Africa, there should be a greater focus on building capacity of different value chain actors (farmers, processors, traders/retailers and experts about organic farming and implementing/strengthening the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) to ensure that organic agricultural products are of high quality and comply with the certification requirements.
- Appropriate networking of African researchers engaged in ecological organic agriculture/agroecology for synergy, as well as greater emphasis on participatory action research in organic and agroecological agriculture as opposed to traditional disciplinary research.
- Establishment of a database for scientific publications and mapping of institutions working on ecological organic agriculture/agroecology in Africa and incentives/awards for high quality presentations during the future African Organic Conferences.
- Developing organic agriculture at the national level through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) will ensure the sustainable development of organic sector in Africa.
- Conducting farmer-led research in order to provide an informative guidance to smallholder farmers, as well as a close collaboration involving Farmers' based organizations, Civil

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Society Organizations (CSOs), Governmental Institutions, and service providers is necessary.

- To allocate more funds (grants, affordable loans, subsidies):
  - to develop adequate infrastructure and technology that enable the development of the value chains of organic produces;
  - to boost production and last-mile distribution of organic agricultural inputs and extension services, in order to avail affordable organic inputs to producers in Africa.
  - to promote an enabling environment for facilitating regional and continental market integration.
- Realizing that customers make up the final component of the organic equation, coordinated efforts are required to raise consumer knowledge of organic products and increase the market opportunities available to organic producers throughout the continent by taking advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.
- Offering options that would make it easier for financial institutions to get involved in enhancing the availability of financing for businesses engaged in organic agriculture.
- The inclusion of organic agriculture into the national investment programmes in Africa.
- The AU Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative should review its current Strategic Plan (2015–2025) and develop its next Strategic Plan (2025–2035) based on the insights and recommendations from the Declaration of the 5th AOC. Additionally, it should be aligned with the Post Malabo recommendations and actions.
- Governments allocate research funds for promoting organic research, data collection and management procedure, information, and knowledge sharing including data pertinent to the African Heads of State and Government on Organic Farming.
- Develop creative and inclusive strategies to attract and keep young people and women in organic and agroecological farming operations.

### ***WE CALL UPON***

- To strengthen the continental umbrella organization (AfrONet) and provide necessary financial support to enable it fully achieve its mission.
- To strengthen National Organic Agriculture Movements (NOAMs) and other networks at countries' levels and provide necessary financial resources to enable them to fully realize their missions.
- A variety of continental, regional, and national players in African organic agriculture to domesticate the Participatory Guarantees System (PGS) as a means of improving output, streamlining market access, fostering rural development, and resolving issues raised by organic regulations in intended domestic and export markets.





- The establishment of suitable criteria for quality control in the organic production systems by the African Union, national governments, and regional economic communities in Africa.
- National governments in Africa to integrate organic farming within their departments of agriculture, trade, environment, and other pertinent fields.
- African National Governments to integrate the organic farming practices in their agricultural extension programmes.
- Long-term organic and agroecology research/studies/experiments in Africa to be funded by the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities in Africa, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and other concerned national organizations.
- African governments should devote funds of their national agrarian budgets to organic agriculture including organic inputs, infrastructures, market development, organic research, information exchange, data collection and management procedures, and sharing of knowledge, including data with other Heads of States Government of Africa's on the choice of organic farming.
- African governments working with the African Union to promote the growth of domestic and international markets, get rid of regulations and other obstacles that organic farmers face, and increase the exposure of organic goods on the market.
- The African Union Commission and the Secretariat of the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative to review the current Strategic Plan (2015–2025) and develop the next Strategic Plan (2025–2035) based on the suggestions and understandings from the 5th AOC Declaration.
- African governments should develop creative interventions to attract and maintain youths' and women's participation in organic and agroecological farming and businesses, as well as incentives to increase the production, accessibility, and availability of organic inputs.
- African Union and Governments should take a unified stance on GM seeds that is contaminating and eroding the integrity of seed system in the countries and the continent.
- Regional Economic Communities should take a unified stance on hazardous agricultural inputs (chemicals) that are prohibited worldwide and detrimental to organic farming, and should not be imported into any of their member states.

**WE** express our gratitude to the following core partners of the 5th African Organic Conference: The African Organic Network as the convenor of the 5<sup>th</sup> African Organic Conference, the Government of Republic of Rwanda for the permit and logistical facilitation of the conference including providing the Guest of Honour, the Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement (ROAM) as the local host organization of the 5<sup>th</sup> African Organic Conference, the Inter-continental Network of Organic Farmers Organization (INOFO) which was overseeing the Farmers' and Seeds Track, the Network of Organic Agriculture Researchers in Africa (NOARA) which was overseeing the Research Track and chaired the Continental Planning Committee, the Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN) which was in charge of the Trade/Exhibition (Afro Organic Fair) Track and the African Union

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Commission`s Continental Secretariat of the Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative which was overseeing the Policy Track; other partners including Agence Française de Développement (AFD), SWISSAID, GIZ, African Union Naturland Association for Organic Agriculture, IFOAM Organics International Asia, International Society for Organic Agriculture Research (ISO FAR) and Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL); also other continental, regional and national organic agriculture movements in Africa and all other organizations that contributed funds and technical support.

**WE AGREE** that Zambia is a candidate to host the 6<sup>th</sup> African Organic Conference in 2026 after submitting a duly filled application file to the AfrONet Board for final decision.

**Mr. Chariton B. Namuwoza**  
**President**  
**African Organic Network (AfrONet).**

