



Supporting the West African peasant struggle to accelerate transformation of family farming and livestock in 2015 with ECOWAP + 10

GROW¹ in West Africa celebrates the International Day of Peasant Struggle launched by Via Campesina², on 17th April 2015, and supports the various initiatives in the countries of the sub-region.

2015 is a pivotal year for family farmers whose concerns are at the heart of the GROW campaign. Following commitments made at the AU Summit in Malabo in June 2014 (eradication of hunger by 2025, halving poverty, increasing agricultural productivity, improving accountability of agricultural policies, boosting the domestic African market), West African States now have the opportunity to take advantage of 10 years of the common agricultural policy (ECOWAP) launched by ECOWAS in 2005 to conduct a comprehensive assessment and review the progress made but also difficulties and delays in implementing and achieving agricultural transformation and shared prosperity.

The GROW campaign is particularly interested in the impact of the Common External Tariff (CET), effective since January 2015, on agriculture, as well as the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in West Africa the same year. Are ECOWAS and its member states ready to take the plunge into the world economy while the agriculture and livestock sectors still require significant support and guidance? Have regional leaders adequately assessed the expected benefits compared to expected losses?

For GROW, the priority remains support to small scale holders in agriculture and livestock, and to ensure the fruits of their labour can take "produce local, eat local" from slogan status to a fact of agricultural transformation in the sub-region. Indeed, it is these millions of people who work to produce our food who should be at the heart of ECOWAS's efforts and not the smoke and mirrors of international trade or public private partnerships (PPP), favouring large investors and marginalizing local operators. The GROW campaign believes that it is time that ECOWAS pulls its weight to influence the agenda of its member states around four key issues:

Responsible Investments for Family Farmers

" While endorsing the renewed commitments to increasing agricultural public investment made in Malabo, the challenge now is to adopt clear and transparent monitoring mechanisms to analyze the performance of agricultural policies and budgets. ECOWAS and its members should focus on the definition, shared ownership and the systematic use of strong indicators of the effectiveness of agricultural development programs for the benefit of the qualitative transformation of family farming in its priority value chains " explains Godswill Aguiyi, Head of Agriculture Department of the National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS)

Equitable access to land for rural women

"Contrary to popular belief, rural communities are willing to be agents of change for women farmers to effectively enjoy their rights of access to resources and participate in decision making for the

¹ The GROW campaign is a global campaign coordinated by Oxfam. Present in West Africa since 2011, the campaign has just set its priorities for 2015-2019 at its strategic planning meeting held in Ouagadougou (31March-2April 2015). The campaign includes more than 70 national and regional organizations, including: POSCAO, WILDAF, APESS, RBM, IPAR and Inter-Réseaux, and is active in six countries in the region: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Mauritania and Senegal.

² #April 17 was declared International Day of Peasant Struggles to commemorate the tragic murder of 19 members of the Peasant Landless Movement of Brazil, April 17, 1996

development of the whole potential of the rural world. Let's offer them the opportunity to act by removing traditional and societal constraints that limit women's access to land. This space should be negotiated within communities while adopting incentive policies, from national to ECOWAS levels" says Kafui Kuwonu, Head of programs in WILDAF West Africa

Effective mechanisms for a real "Zero Hunger" strategy

"To eradicate hunger from the continent by 2025, it will do more than focus on increasing agropastoral productivity. A real 'Zero Hunger' ambition involves performing up social protection systems that guarantee the satisfaction of basic needs of over 20 million people at risk of going to sleep hungry much of the year. Similarly, it is important to increase local food reserves, more accessible to communities, and link them to national and regional reserves. Finally, improving the responsiveness of warning systems, from community level up to national and regional levels, relies mostly on involving all stakeholders, including farmers' organizations, and on States' engagement to ensure full efficiency» details Sidy Guèye Niang, Regional Food Security Advisor for Oxfam.

A proactive policy to promote livestock and pastoralism

"Despite popular belief, Sahelian countries have diminished their investment in agriculture, especially in animal husbandry, over the years. This sector only receives about 10% of agricultural expenditure when it contributes between a third and half of agricultural GDP of the Sahel countries, livestock being one of the main exports to coastal countries. Worse, when taking into account investment in livestock, pastoralism is largely under-represented, it appears as a marginal expense line. However, pastoralism dominates animal production and is the only means of generating resources and protecting the environment in vast semi-desert areas of the Sahel. It is time to develop and implement proactive policies to remedy this injustice" concludes Aliou Ibrahima, Secretary general of the Association pour la Promotion de l'Élevage en Savane et au Sahel (APESS)

GROW therefore asks ECOWAS and its Member States to boost the common agricultural policy and build the next 10 years around concrete implementation of the commitments made in Malabo and elsewhere! To support the peasant struggles around these four major issues, GROW and its members are launching independent assessments and analyzes of the first decade of ECOWAP. GROW and partners will provoke debate, convene meetings and be extremely vigilant to ensure that the choices made by ECOWAS and other players do not deviate from the objective of qualitative transforming of family farming and livestock, the eradication of hunger and the general improvement of living conditions in West African countries.

Abuja, Accra, Cotonou, Dakar, Lomé, Niamey, Nouakchott, Ouagadougou,
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