WAC’s statement

“The need to implement structural political solutions to prevent unprecedented food insecurity and ensure sustainable post-crisis economic and social recovery”
We, the 12 Networks of Farmers' Organizations, civil society and value chain actors, members of the Watch and Action Committee, met in Thiès, Senegal, from 27 to 28 December 2021 under the meeting on the assessment, knowledge production and planning of a 2022 working agenda:

**Take note** of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions’ actions, in collaboration with the regional technical institutions (CORAF, CILSS-) for the implementation of ECOWAP and PAU in order to ensure food security and nutrition in West Africa; political actions and community-wide initiatives to strengthen the coordination of responses and support countries to face COVID 19 and proposals to build the capacities of the Regional Food Security Reserve;

**Take note of** the emerging regional and national initiatives aiming at strengthening the resilience of family farms in the face of climate and environmental crises, such as the Agro-Ecology program (PAE) implemented by the ECOWAS’ commission and the support developed by some States to facilitate the farmers’ access to the organic fertilizers and pesticides;

**Let us show our satisfaction** with measures and orientations taken by the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS held in Accra on September 16, 2021, aiming strengthening democracy in the region, ensuring a better comprehensive political governance, all that is necessary for the effectiveness of sectoral policies implemented for sustainable economic and social development and resilience at all levels.

**However, our 12 networks,**

**Noticing** the persistence, even the aggravation of the various food, security, health, climate and environmental crises, which each year generate an almost irreversible decapitalization of thousands of family farms in the region and exacerbate their vulnerability and this of the grassroots communities, especially women and youth;

**Noting**, through the reports of RPCA of those past years, a growing trend of structural food insecurity in many localities across West Africa, resulting in malnutrition in vulnerable communities, particularly affecting women and youth;

**Concerned** about the persistent violations of the community regulations regarding transhumance, the free movement of goods and peoples, right of residence and establishment leading to the various risks and important challenges for cattle mobility, intra-regional trade exchanges of the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries products and sustainable economic and social development of the cross-border areas;

**Noting** the current severe shortage of production factors in various countries across the region, especially fertilizers, essential for the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries production activities in most countries of the region; the soaring prices of staple foods, more specifically cereals (sorghum, millet, maize) which constitute a real threat in the short and medium-sized term for food and nutritional security for both urban populations and rural communities;

**Concerned** about the absence of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions in regional and international consultations on the evolution of food Systems, of which results have led to the strategic orientations relating to the agricultural and food policies in all the regions across the world with an implementation agenda of these recommendations in various countries, including ECOWAS member countries;

**Worried** about the uncertainties and constraints caused by the effects of climate change, which are becoming increasingly acute, in terms of massive degradation of fisheries and forestry resources, as well as soil fertility and biodiversity (cultivated, high or wild), while the scaling up of proven solutions of agroecology and organic farming to these challenges, under the sectoral development policies is making very slow progress;

**Concerned** about the lack of real proposals for sustainable structural solutions by the regional integration institutions, with a significant impact on youth employment and their massive integration into the value chains of the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector;

**Surprised** by the ongoing reforms regarding the technical departments of ECOWAS which advocate the integration of the department of agriculture, water resources and environment into a new, more comprehensive « macro-economic « department, which would cause according to us a potential risk of weakening the performance of the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector governance, a very strategic lever for the economic and social development of most of the countries and region;
Call upon ECOWAS and UEMOA to implement the Task Force they advocated at the beginning of the health crisis in 2020, in order to update and specify guidelines for development policies in the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector, agree on instruments for their implementation necessary for the improvement of their relevance and adequacy with the diversity, complexity and current scale of current crises (climate, environmental, health, security, etc.) and thus allow the development of structural solutions for resilience at all levels and for a real sustainable economic and social recovery of the local communities and countries in the region;

We invite ECOWAS and UEMOA to support the short-term establishment of financing mechanisms adapted to the Family Farms’ needs, social protection tools for family farmers helping strengthen their resilience and insurance mechanisms that fully cover major risks related to the activities of the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector value chains;

We strongly encourage the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions to grant more priority and a more ambitious political commitment to the effective implementation of ECOWAP and PAU, always ensuring a real anchoring of the interventions proposed by the partners with these reference frameworks agreed in a consensual manner with all the groups of key actors concerned by the development of the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector;

We invite the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of major policy instruments such as the Regional Fund for Agricultural Development (FRDA), the Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food (FRAA) and the Regional Food Security Reserve (RRSA) with its livestock feed component; the application of community acts aiming at a peaceful use of natural resources by the breeders, pastoralists, farmers, fishermen, loggers; the development/strengthening of the regional agricultural market through the free movement of goods and people;

We strongly ask to the UEMOA and ECOWAS Commissions to provide as soon as possible a substantial support to the States across the region which are in need, to ensure their supply of fertilizers and production factors, including organic inputs, in order to secure the 2022/2023 agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries production campaign; and initiate very quickly the formulation and implementation of more ambitious and appropriate policies and strategies to support a more sustainable implementation of the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries production systems, the sustainable management of the fisheries and forestry resources, restoration of the degraded soils and sustainable management of biodiversity, through the agro-ecological transition and organic farming.

Our 12 networks of Farmers’ Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and other value chain actors and private sector commit to,

- Supporting family farms and grassroots value chain actors in order to maintain and strengthen their activities in this context of multiple crises and strengthen the production of knowledge on FFs (Family Farms) and different situations related to their environment in order to contribute to a greater efficiency of analyses and assessments of production and marketing campaigns for the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries products, good orientation and better targeting of public interventions and partners for the development of the products from the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector;
- Jointly launching under the aegis, a High-level Conference on Family Farms with a view to strengthening collaborations with leaders of the national and regional policy-makers as well as development partners, promote solutions generated by the field actors faced with the current various crises; and explore their scaling up under the national and regional development policies of the agri-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector;
- Implementing a campaign to raise awareness, monitor and call upon policy-makers at the national and regional level on the implementation of the commitments they have made under the spaces at the national, regional and international level, to develop structural policy solutions in order to strengthen the resilience of family farms and rural and artisanal fisheries communities, value chain actors and private sector at the grassroots level and actors of the artisanal fisheries at national and regional levels.

Thiès, December, 28th, 2021

The CVA members below have signed:
AFAO, APELL, COFENABVI-AO, CORET, FEWACCI, NANTS, PANEPAO, RBM, ROAC, ROPPA, UOFA, WILDAF, SOS SAHEL