

# BISSAU APPEAL

## “IT'S TIME FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN WEST AFRICA”

Crises have been building up and reinforcing each other in our West African region for more than a decade now. They create precarity and uncertainty for family farms and a situation of structural food insecurity. In 2021 the statistics of the regional PREGEC mechanism indicated that 27 million people would be food and nutritionally insecure during the lean season (June-August); this figure rose to 38.3 million in 2022. The crises in operation include ones of environmental, climatic, security, food, and financial nature. The latest is the soaring price of agricultural inputs.

At the international level, following the consequences of the war in Ukraine, we are witnessing an offensive by agro-exporting countries and multinational firms in favor of restoring world trade in wheat to guarantee the food supply of developing countries, particularly Africa, in the face of an unprecedented global crisis that is looming.

In reality, without minimizing the place occupied by wheat in the food habits of the cities, in our West African region the main staples continue to be maize, sorghum, millet, rice, cassava, yams, sweet potatoes, taro roots, plantains...

To avoid recurrent food crises, our West African region should strengthen the resilience of family farms, which provide more than 80% of the food consumed (FAO), through sectoral policies that are equal to the challenges posed by the current situation.

To this end, ROPPA, meeting in Guinea Bissau, renews its commitment to continue its work alongside public structures and other civil society actors to support the agro-ecological transition of family farms, enabling them to contribute fully to the development of sustainable food systems.

ROPPA launches an urgent appeal to the political authorities of West Africa to commit themselves to:

- Ensure greater coherence of sectoral policies (agricultural, trade, etc.), their strategic orientations (national and regional levels), and speedy implementation, with the ultimate objective of achieving food sovereignty;

- Invest in strategic value chains (plant, animal, fisheries, forestry), facilitating the marketing of food products in the region and increasing their consumption to ensure income for stakeholders and create jobs;

- Invest in initiatives for the installation of young people and the empowerment of women in agroforestry and fishery value chains, with secure access to land resources and technologies, in order to open up prospects for these vulnerable groups;

- Invest more ambitiously in the agro-ecological transition, local production of fertilizers and natural phytosanitary products in the region; sustainable management of biodiversity, and community forests; restoration of the environment and degraded land through community access to finance;

- Fulfill the Malabo commitments to devote at least 10% of state budgets to the agricultural sector for a growth rate of at least 6%. This commitment must be accompanied by an efficiency clause assigning at least 50% of these budgets to invest in family farms.

- Support national research systems and their regional coordination mechanisms to boost local wheat production in the region to meet local consumption needs and promote bread-making initiatives;

- We would like to invite His Excellency, General Umarou SISSOCO Embaló, President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau, current Chairman of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State, to mobilize his peers for structural policy reforms geared toward food sovereignty, with a view to finding lasting solutions to the multiple crises that are recurrently affecting our region.

We are convinced that these orientations constitute the path that we must take together to reverse the current trend in our region and ensure its progress towards peace, the tranquility of the populations, and the achievement of the objectives of food sovereignty and sustainable development.

*Done at Bissau, this day 28th of July 2022.*

### Our platforms

