

ANNUAL | 20 REPORT | 21



African Centre for Biodiversity



**AFRICAN CENTRE
FOR BIODIVERSITY**

The African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) is a research and advocacy organisation working towards food sovereignty and agroecology in Africa, with a focus on biosafety, seed systems and agricultural biodiversity. The organisation is committed to dismantling inequalities and resisting corporate industrial expansion in Africa's food and agriculture systems.

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Introduction

As the pandemic persisted into 2021, we have continued to strengthen our focus areas; namely, GM, biosafety and new technologies; seed sovereignty and farmers' rights; and corporate expansion in agro-food systems.

Our sustained engagement on critical issues impacting the continent's food sovereignty, through collaboration with both old and new partners, has not only deepened our work and increased our network base, but has also highlighted the importance of expanding partnerships and connections in order to bolster our outcomes and impact.

A key lesson we have taken on board from our research and engagements is the necessity for deepening how we situate our core work in terms of linkages to wider issues such as extractivism, trade, and democracy on the African continent, to name a few.

The need to disrupt many of the persistent myths and neo-colonial policies that underpin GM-based agriculture on the continent persists. Implicit in the GM push is the false narrative that smallholders are inefficient, unproductive and driving deforestation and ecological destruction. Thus, we continue with our struggle to have GMOs banned in Africa and prevent the displacement of local food and seed systems, which form the basis for smallholder farming systems and livelihoods. Therefore, we emphasise that the focus of reconstruction during the multiple crises we are facing must be on re-establishing just local socioecological systems, of which farmer seed systems are a central component.

Farmers' rights, agriculturally biodiverse farmers' seed systems and re-establishing farmer-to-farmer linkages need legalisation, urgent recognition and implementation. This urgency cannot be

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overestimated, in the light of compounding shocks and increasing chronic and acute disasters.

Key highlights

GM and Biosafety

Our continued monitoring and resistance against genetically modified organisms (GMOs) was most significant in South Africa, as well as providing support to various partners in West and East Africa.

- A coalition held strategic workshops on how to stop the commercialisation of GMOs in Kenya and made inputs into a submission to the local biosafety authority, which is developing environmental risk assessment guidelines for stacked events and food safety regulations.
- In West Africa, the ACB continues to support a campaign against GM Cowpea, based on the significance of cowpea as an African centre of origin crop and staple food.
- Deeper research on gene drives, the political economy of malaria and issues related to the capture of health systems in

Africa, was initiated, and we released a paper on genome editing in Africa.

- Locally, we released a briefing on 2,4-D maize in South Africa and an objection to the approval of commodity clearance of 2,4-D soya bean.
- Legal proceedings in regard to our appeal against the commercial release of Monsanto's GM drought tolerant maize variety MON 86470 are still underway.

The shaping of a network of African independent scientists progressed through online meetings.

Seed Sovereignty

We were active in the process led by the African Union (AU) to shape proposed Continental Seed Harmonisation guidelines, through submitting a critique, participating in stakeholder consultations and mobilising within broader social movement to block the attempted validation.

We were instrumental in building capacity and co-ordinating the African governments that participated on the Ad Hoc Technical Experts Group (AHTEG). Together with La Via Campesina's International Planning Committee's Biodiversity Working Group and farmer experts, we avoided a catastrophic outcome in August, where consensus was not reached on the Inventory and Options of legal measures. This stopped the protection and implementation of farmers' rights from being subjected to the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) 1991.

- We supported CSOs and the experts under the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) with preparation and participation, including formulating positions on agenda items.
- Further, we contributed to a fresh discussion that Article 9(2) creates legally



The ACB assisted with resources for peace-keeping and support to communities in informal settlements, to rebuild broken food systems and stop the insurrection spreading to other areas.

binding obligations on the state, and that these rights are inextricably linked with a bundle of human rights on the part of smallholder farmers.

- We participated in webinars that aimed to articulate farmers' rights, in terms of their role in conservation and development of plant genetic resources.
- We supported submissions to the Inventory on best practices to implement farmers' rights, from Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Ethiopia and a combined submission on Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The ACB co-convened a global alliance of CSOs and farmer-led movements mobilising against restrictions imposed on farmers' seeds, in the #StopUPOV campaign.

Our pivotal role in catalysing a seed sovereignty movement continues, through collaborative regional work.

- We supported processes against plant variety protection (PVP) laws and International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) 1991 in Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ghana, as well as continued our support to Malawi on CSO engagement with the Draft Seed Bill and Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) policy.
- We analysed Zanzibar's Seed Law and linked with Ugandans in their mobilisation on the utilisation and conservation of indigenous and traditional seeds.
- In Southern Africa, we continue to support Zimbabwean partners with their campaign against the Draft Plant Breeders Rights

(PBR) Act and the UK-Zimbabwe trade deal and a Malawian network to have FMSS recognised in a seed bill.

- In Zambia we co-convened a regional meeting on the Right to Food and Nutrition: Building a pan-African and decolonial Recovery Plan for Southern Africa.
- In South Africa, the ACB has continued to support provincial and national farmer seed and agroecology networks. Our comments were well reflected in the



Following the civil unrest that occurred in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces, in South Africa in July, sparked by the imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma for contempt of court, the ACB assisted with resources for peace-keeping and support to communities in informal settlements, to rebuild broken food systems and stop the insurrection spreading to other areas.

revised Draft Regulations, in terms of exemptions for smallholder and household producers, which means they may condition, save, exchange and sell protected varieties for further propagation.

- We criticised South Africa's proposed accession to the ITPGRFA, arguing that industry benefits from accessing plant genetic resources, while farmers' rights provisions and the benefit-sharing mechanism are not implemented.

Corporate expansion

In the Multiple Shocks in Africa series, we published the final two papers, with a focus on the systemic causes and drivers.

As part of counter-mobilisation activism against the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), the ACB played a leadership role

within the African regional coordinating committee.

When the African Union published their Green Recovery Plan, we responded with a commentary. We participated in sessions of the Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) process.

- We supported the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), in their preparation for and made submissions to SBSTTA on synthetic biology and risk assessment of GMOs, before releasing an African CSO statement.
- Our relationship with the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) expanded through our participation in a dialogue between the ACBA and the AGN and the

co-authoring of an article published in Science.

- We participated in the Third Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), to advance preparations for the development of the Post-2020 GBF, where the hot topic was digital sequence information (DSI) and issues of regulation and equitable sharing of benefits.

Rights of Nature: A Decade of Reflections, Debates and Experiences, was the third and final in a series of webinars we co-hosted, which reflected on the rights of nature, in light of the need to defend the commons from commodification and privatisation.

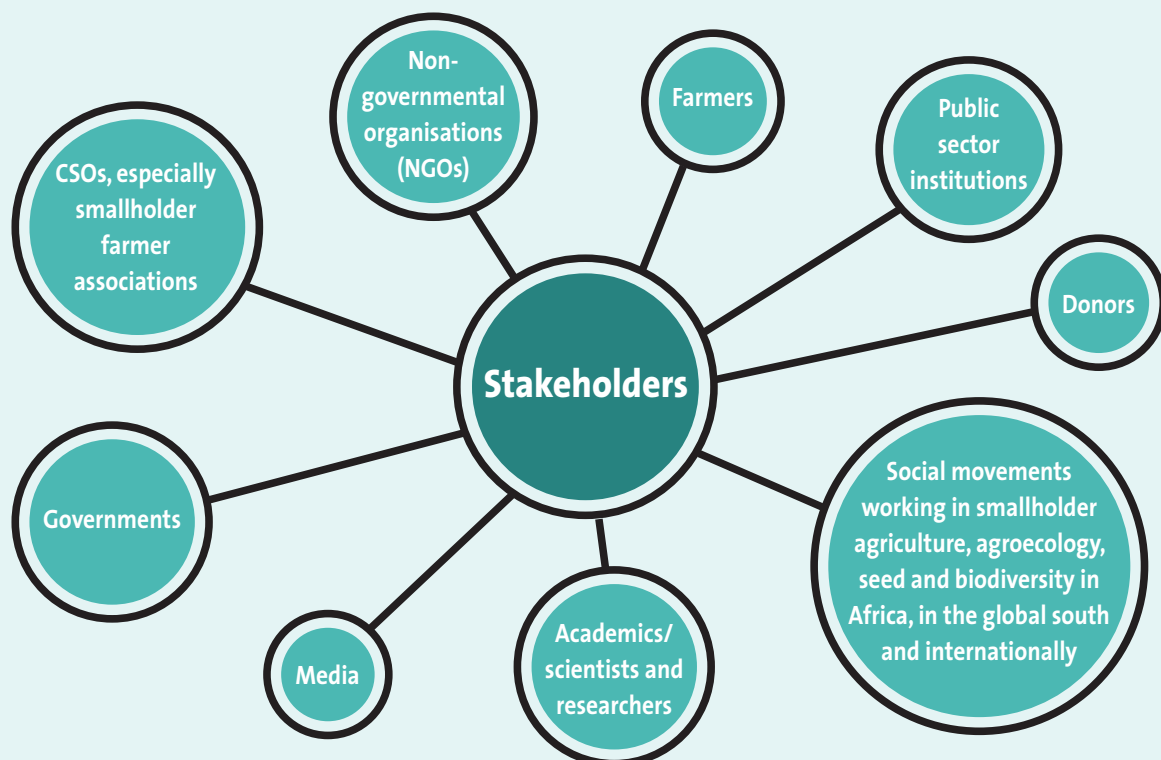
We submitted comments on the AU's secretly developed guidelines on the use of biotechnology.

Stakeholders & partnerships

We have significantly deepened our working relationship with the AGN under the CBD's programme, including the Post-2020 GBF discussions. Also in relation to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), since early 2021 we have formed a strong working

relationship with the ACBA. This alliance is made up of progressive conservationist organisations, scientists, academics and activists who carry significant agency and political capital on the continent, with governments, multilateral agencies, other

civil society networks, and are active in international fora and negotiation spaces. Their missing link was farmers' rights and agrobiodiversity, which is a key lever that we bring to ACBA, and this is therefore a critical new strategic partnership.



Through playing an instrumental role in the African coordinating committee of the global counter-mobilisation to the UNFSS, our network partner base grew substantially, not only with organisations on the continent but also organisations from other parts of the globe that participate in the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) under the Committee on World Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

We built new partnerships with organisations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, and Burundi, as well as with groups working on the issues of trade and climate change in Africa and internationally, linked also to discussions regarding carbon markets, financialisation, deforestation and debt.

Partnerships

Primarily, our network partners are CSOs and farmer organisations. We have a large number of partners in the South African Development Community (SADC) region, the rest of the continent, and internationally. Strong linkages to constituencies on the ground provides the basis for collective work on multiple regional processes, and also informs our advocacy in international policy spaces.

South Africa

Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD)
Biowatch South Africa
Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC)
Dzomo la Mupo
Earthlore Foundation

Eastern Cape Agroecology Farmers Association (ECAFA)
Friends of the Earth
Greenhouse Project (The)
Gumbu Community Seed Bank
GroundWork
Ilimi Lamafama
Izindaba Zokudla
Masifundise
Rainbow Maize Farmers
Seed And Knowledge Initiative (SKI)
South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)
Southern African Catholic Bishops Association (SACBC)
Justice and Peace
Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute (SAFCEI)
South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC)
Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE)
Ukuvuna
Women on Farms Project

Africa

Burkina Faso

Fédération Nationale des Groupements de Naam (FNGN)
Fédération Nationale des Organisations Paysannes (FENOP)
Terre A Vie

Cameroon

Plateforme Sous Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC)

Côte d'Ivoire

Copagen

Democratic Republic of Congo

Common Front for the Protection of the Environment and Protected Spaces of the DRC (FCPEEP)

Ghana

Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD)
Food Sovereignty Ghana (FSG)

Guinea

ACORD

Kenya

African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)
Biodiversity and Biosafety Association Kenya (BIBA)
Kenyan Peasants League (KPL)
Kenya Small Scale Farmers Forum
Mazingira Institute
World Forum of Fisher Peoples/
The Elmolo Forum

Mali

Biodiversité Echange et diffusion d'expériences (BEDE-asso)
Coalition des Femmes pour la souveraineté alimentaire (COFERSA)
Comité Ouest Africaine des semences paysanne (COASP)

Malawi

Commons for Ecojustice (CEJ)

Mozambique

Acção Acadêmica para o Desenvolvimento das Comunidades Rurais (ADECRU)
Associação Rural de Ajuda Mútua (ORAM)
Justiça Ambiental (JA)
Kaleididoscopio
Livanningo
Uniao Nacional de Camponeses (UNAC)

Nigeria

Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF)

“ We built new partnerships with organisations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, and Burundi, as well as with groups working on the issues of trade and climate change in Africa ”



Rwanda

Participatory Ecological Land
Use Management (Pelum)

Senegal

Environnement Développement
Action pour la Protection
Naturelle des Terroirs
(ENDA PRONAT)

Tanzania

Mtandao wa Vikundi vya
Wakulima (MVIWATA)
Mtandao wa Vikundi vya
Wakulima Mkoa wa
Kilimanjaro (MVIWAKI)
Sustainable Agriculture (SAT)
Tanzanian Alliance for
Biodiversity (TABIO)
Tanzania Organic Agriculture
Movement (TOAM)

Togo

Action Réelle sur
l'Environnement l'Enfance
et la Jeunesse (AREJ)

Uganda

Advocates Coalition
for Development and
Environment (ACODE)
Caritas
Eastern and Southern
Africa Small Scale
Farmers Forum (ESAFF)
Southern and Eastern Africa
Trade Information (SEATINI)

Zambia

Kasisi Agricultural
Training Centre
Zambian Alliance for
Agroecology and
Biodiversity (ZAAB)

Zimbabwe

Community Technology
Development Trust (CTDT)
Participatory Ecological
Land Use Management
Zimbabwe (PELUM)

Participatory Organic Research
& Extension Training (PORET)
Towards Sustainable Use of
Resources Organisation
(TSURO Trust)

Zimbabwe Seed Sovereignty
Programme (ZSSP)
Zimbabwe Smallholder Organic
Farmers' Forum (Zimsoff)

**Beyond the continent
Belgium**

International Panel of
Experts on Sustainable
Food Systems (IPES-Food)

Brazil

Centro de Tecnologias
Alternativas da Zona
da Mata CTA-ZM

Canada

Erosion, Technology and
Concentration (ETC) Group

Ecuador

Acción Ecológica

Germany

Testbiotech

Italy

Schola Campesina APS

Netherlands

Both ENDS

Peru

Asociación ANDES

Spain

GRAIN

Switzerland

Association for Plant
Breeding for the Benefit
of Society (APBREBES)

United Kingdom

AgroecologyNow! – Centre
for Agroecology, Water
and Resilience
Gaia Foundation

United States

AgroEcology Fund
Community Alliance for
Global Justice (CAGJ)
US Right to Know

Regional

African CSOs Biodiversity
Alliance (ACBA)
Alliance for Food Sovereignty
in Africa (AFSA) (Pan-Africa)
Rural Women's Assembly
(RWA) – Southern African
Southeast Asia Regional
Initiatives for Community
Empowerment (SEARICE)
Southern and Eastern
Africa Trade Information
and Negotiations
Institute (SEATINI)

International

Food First Information
and Action (FIAN)
Friends of the Earth (FoE)
Groundswell International
International Planning
Committee for Food
Sovereignty (IPC)
Network of Farmers' and
Agricultural Producers'
Organisations of West
Africa (ROPFA)
Nia Terro
La Via Campesina Africa (LVC)
Pesticide Action
Network (PANInt)
Third World Network (TWN)
World Rainforest
Movement (WRM)
CBD Alliance
Navdanya international

Programme 1: GM & Biosafety

Resisting the approval of 2,4-D resistant crops

In South Africa, the monitoring of GMOs and the interrogation of, and attempts to influence, decision making, and information sharing with the wider public, has continued, with a keen eye on 2,4-D GM maize varieties, including commercial planting of such crops as well as tracking commodity clearance of 2,4-D soya bean. We interacted with the SA government, biotech industry, and commercial farmers; conducted extensive research; and published a briefing on 2,4-D Maize in South Africa.¹

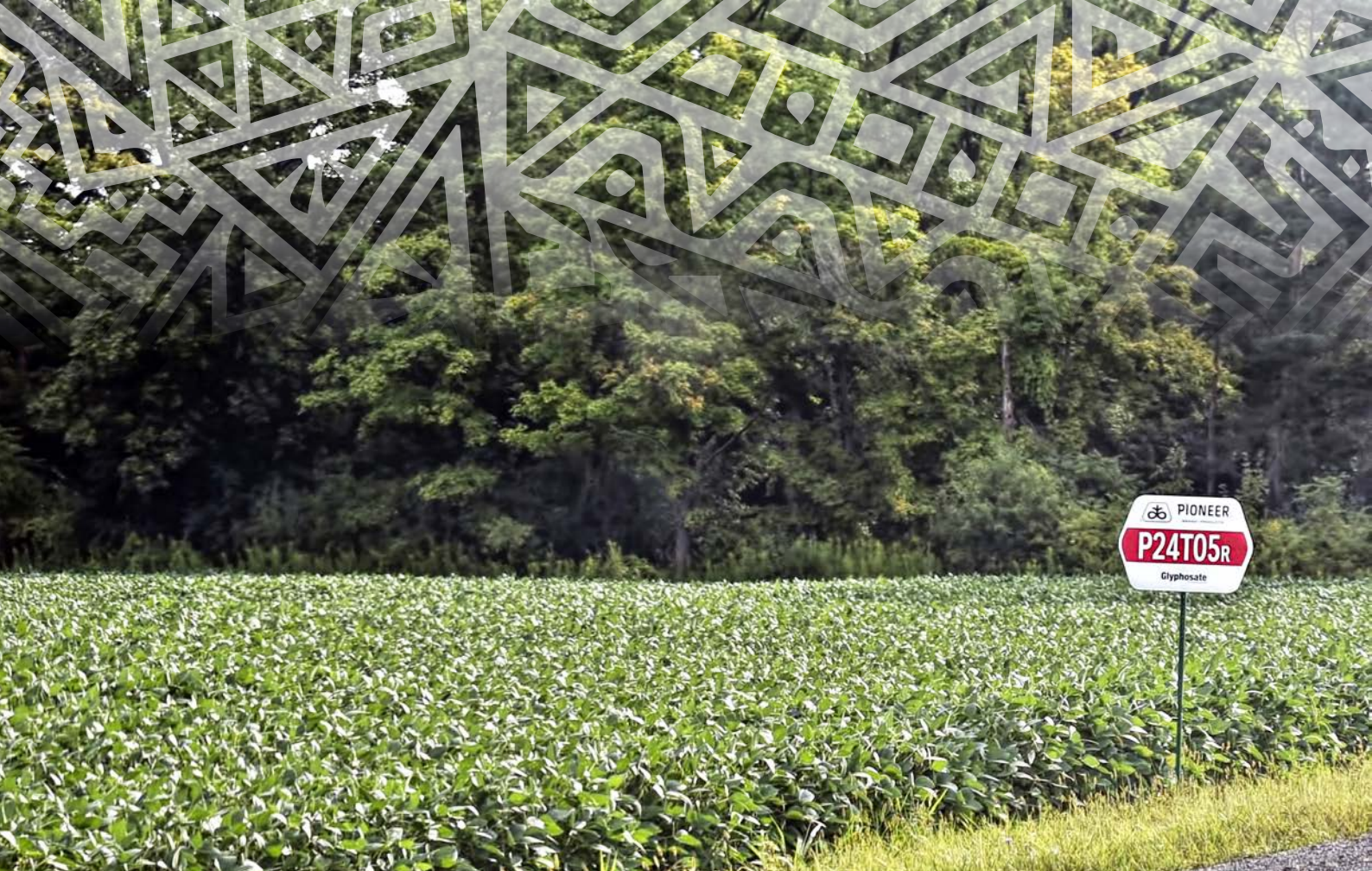


We noted that there were applications made by industry for commodity clearance of 2,4-D soya bean and for field trials and commodity clearance of 2,4-D maize. In response

to Pioneer's application for commodity clearance of 2,4-D soya bean (Pioneer Hi-Bred RSA GM soybean DAS- 814419- 2 x DAS-44406-6), in March the ACB responded with an objection² to the approval of introducing a variety using multiple herbicides into the South African food system, with its concomitant increase in pesticide residues. We drew attention to the risks posed to human and animal health, and the food system as a whole, and the lack of a comprehensive, independent and transparent environmental, socio-economic and food safety assessment of the combined effects of 2,4-D, glufosinate, glyphosate, and their adjuvants.

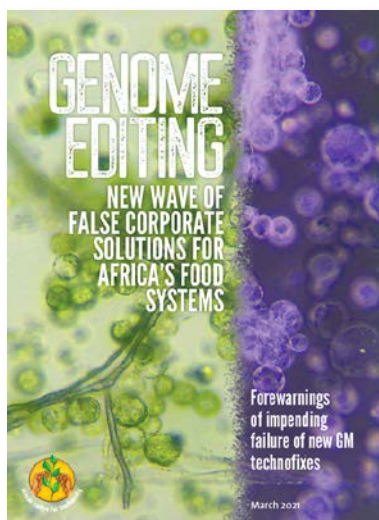
1. <https://www.acbio.org.za/regulators-blind-eye-corteva-toxic-spread-24-d-gm-maize-and-agrarian-extractivism-south-africa>

2. <https://www.acbio.org.za/objection-commodity-clearance-pioneer-hi-bred-rsa-gm-soybean-das-814419-2-x-das-44406-6>



New technologies and gene drives

As part of ACB's work ongoing work on GM, we have dedicated efforts to continuing our research on gene drives, and this is linked to new work on the political economy of Malaria and Gates funding and issues related to the capture of health systems in Africa, which will be published in 2022. As part of this work, we have published a briefing paper on the state of genome editing in Africa,³ a shorter version which was translated into German and published in that country. These papers outline why the latest GM technologies are more in the way of false



solutions for African health and food systems and should be vehemently rejected, or at the very least, stringently regulated. This work was also well received by groups working to oppose the United Nations'

Food Systems Summit and used in their advocacy work with the convenors of the UNFSS.

Appeal against Monsanto's stacked GM tolerant maize continues

The ACB continued with the appeal against the commercial release of Monsanto's GM drought tolerant maize variety MON 86470, and legal proceedings are still underway. Bayer filed further papers, intending to strike out the expert testimony of our experts. Then, we solicited further inputs from our experts to assist us with preparation to file further documents, and we expect a court date in late 2022.

3. <https://www.acbio.org.za/genome-editing-new-wave-false-corporate-solutions-africas-food-systems-forewarnings-impending>



Support of resistance to GMOs in Africa

The ACB continued to provide support to CSOs on campaigns against GMOs in East Africa, particularly in Kenya. In June 2021, we supported the Biodiversity and Biosafety Association in Kenya (BIBA-K) to host GMO Coalition strategic workshops with several other organisations, with the aim of devising a strategy on how to stop the commercialisation of GMOs in Kenya.

On the agenda was the possibility of legal action to stop or halt this commercialisation. The ACB shared its expertise and experiences on advocating

against GMOs, from a South African perspective. Further, the ACB is also supporting partners in Kenya with inputs and comments to the National Biosafety Authority (NBA), which is in the process of developing Environmental Risk Assessment guidelines for stacked events and Food Safety Regulations.

In West Africa, the ACB continues to support a campaign against GM Cowpea, based on the significance of cowpea as an African centre of origin crop and a staple food.

As part of our efforts to support partners, we are involved in the planning of a West African regional political campaign

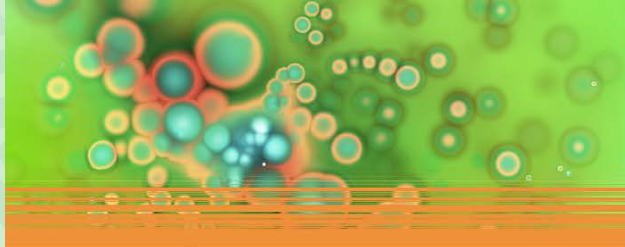

against GM cowpea, with our partners in Nigeria and Ghana.

African group of independent scientists

The process of convening an African group of independent scientists, to counter pro-GM African scientists and myths, and create a platform for collective scientific analysis and opinion, initiated by the ACB in 2019, has been revived after being stalled by the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020.

The ACB collaborated with Third World Network (TWN) and The European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility⁴ to begin a series of exchanges aimed at creating

4. <https://ensser.org/>





TWN
Third World Network

We are pleased to invite you to the first two of the
Nous avons le plaisir de vous inviter aux deux premières éditions de la




NEW GM TECHNOLOGIES
SERIES OF EXCHANGES
LES NOUVELLES TECHNOLOGIES OGM
SÉRIE D'ÉCHANGES

DATE:
Tuesday 5 and Wednesday 6 October, 2021
Mardi 5 et mercredi, 6 octobre, 2021



Corporate take over African food and agricultural systems

- Proposal to solve African food and agricultural challenges through more synthetic fertilisers, corporate seeds, digitalisation, genetic engineering, financialization of small-scale farming/food production






FIAN International
20 November 2021 · 🌐

FIAN International said the law would pave the way for the protection and promotion of commercial seeds and would make Ghana depend on these seeds grown with poison-laden pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

"Furthermore, there is a risk of biopiracy of Ghana farmers' seeds as these could be imitated by any plant breeder, who can seek protection of what could become his or her own variety," said FIAN International's Valentin Hategekimana.

<https://www.modernghana.com/news/...> See more



MODERNGHANA.COM

Ghana must protect seeds from corporate capture to ensure the right to food, nutrition



Food Sovereignty Ghana
1 December 2021 · 🌐

Interview with Edwin Baffour, Food Sovereignty Ghana

<https://www.msingiafrikamagazine.com/.../interview-with-.../>



MSINGIAFRIKAMAGAZINE.COM

Interview with Edwin Baffour, Food Sovereignty Ghana

Please could you tell us a little bit about what is going on in Afrik...

52 1 comment 7 shares

a space to raise awareness on new GM technologies and exploring the range of issues and concerns related to them, as well as exploring the possibilities for strategic and timeous precautionary scientific inputs and opinions. Two online meetings held in October 2021 brought together 37 participants, comprising trusted, independent African scientists, to discuss

experiences, realities and concerns around biosafety regulations and research on the continent.

We spoke about how a safe platform for connection, information sharing, and communication will be useful to promote science in the public interest, among scientists from across various disciplines. In terms of steps forward, it was

agreed that this highly valued first engagement should proceed in small steps that enabled further connecting, getting to know each other, and building trust. It was agreed that a smaller Convenors' group should be constituted from amongst the participants to organise the next engagement. Planning for a face-to-face meeting to be held in 2022 in Kenya is underway.

Programme 2: Seed Sovereignty

International treaty negotiations – more farmer representation

The ACB has continued to play a pivotal role in catalysing a seed sovereignty movement on the continent and to substantially strengthen regional movements through its support work in the various international spaces and interventions, such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), including participation on the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG). Due to our input, together with La Via Campesina's International Planning Committee's Biodiversity Working Group and farmer experts, consensus

could not be reached on either the Inventory or the Options of legal measures, which would have subjected the protection and implementation of farmers' rights to UPOV 1991.

The ACB's research on multiple shocks affecting Africa, particularly on Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, resulted in a joint submission with gene banks and other institutions from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, to the Inventory under the Treaty, on best practices to implement farmers' rights. The aim was to increase immediate and long-term food and nutrition security in cyclone affected communities, through improved national and regional planning and coordination, and assessing the loss of plant genetic resources for

restoring germplasm, thereby rebuilding and strengthening local seed systems.

We contributed to discussions of the fourth meeting of the AHTEG and supported CSOs with preparation, attendance and participation in these meetings (including interpretation), and also supported the experts under the AGN with preparation and participation, including formulating positions on agenda items. Some of the experts supported included those from Niger, Mali, Madagascar, and Malawi.

The Expert Group worked on various aspects of the "Options", with the resolution that the Inventory be updated by the Secretary and presented

Colombia

The Colombia best practice case (Seed sovereignty and agroecological scaling: Focus on two cases of seed recovery, conservation and defense in Colombia) is based on grassroots organisations that belong to Red de Semillas Libres de Colombia (RSLC). The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between seed recovery, conservation and defense and the expansion of agroecology.

Peru

The Peru best practice case is a 10-year moratorium preventing the entry and production of living modified organisms (LMOs) for the purposes of cultivation or breeding for further release into the environment. This will strengthen national capacities, develop infrastructure and generate baselines with respect to native biodiversity, to allow for adequate evaluation of LMO release activities.

Brazil

The case of Brazil is one of recognition of farmers' varieties/landraces. Small scale farmers have organised community seed banks since the 1970s, with the government adopting a seed bank policy from the 1990s. However, since the banks were filled with conventional seed, changes had to be made to preserve and conserve farmers' seed. Advocacy of social movements led to a state law being passed in 2002, which allows the government to buy farmers' seed and then support its distribution to the Semi-Arid Network Paraíba (ASA-PB), the regional branch of the National Agroecology Network, for further distribution through seed bank mediators to farmers for sowing.

Further, in 2003, the national government passed a seed law formally recognising "local, traditional and Creole" seed, with Article 48 expressly forbidding restrictions on the inclusion of these seeds in publicly-funded programmes for family farmers.

Venezuela

A new seed law was passed, with provisions including bans on GM seeds and the patenting of life forms, recognition of both formal and informal seed systems, and protections for the seeds of the country's peasant, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant communities.

Ethiopia

To safeguard the realisation of the rights of smallholder farmers, who comprise 96% of the farming sector, in 2013 a revised seed law exempted the use and exchange or sale of farm-saved seed from adhering to variety release, certification and other requirements

to the Ninth Session of the Governing Body (earmarked for September 2022, after being postponed yet again), and the recommendation that the Governing Body welcome the updated Inventory, and consider the draft Options for its further decision.

During the virtual meetings, the ACB and partners were extremely well prepared and helped raise a new discourse, ensuring that no PVP law can ever implement farmers' rights but only allow safeguards, based on the argument that almost all PVP laws, including ones, entrench industrial agriculture.

Further, we contributed to a fresh discussion that Article 9(2) creates legally binding obligations on the state, and that these rights are inextricably linked with a bundle of human rights on the part of smallholder farmers, which will inform future work on the implementation of farmers' rights and its linkages with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP). We also participated in a series of webinars on the ITPGRFA, which were aimed at the articulation of farmers' rights,

in terms of the conservation and development of plant genetic resources, which constitute the basis of food and agriculture production throughout the world.

Further, the ACB supported various further submissions to the Inventory under the Treaty on best practices to implement farmers' rights, from Colombia, Venezuela, Peru,



Brazil, Ethiopia and a combined submission on Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

We also critically analysed and mobilised against the proposed continental harmonisation of seed laws. A summary of this work comes under Corporate Expansion, below .

#STOPUPOV

The ACB joined with Alianza Biodiversidad, APBREBES, COPAGEN, ETC, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, La Via Campesina, and the Stop Golden Rice Network, as convenors of a global alliance of civil society organisations and farmer-led movements mobilising against restrictions imposed on farmers' seeds, which is largely driven by

the UPOV 1991 plant variety protection regime. This enables corporations to capture the world's farmers, funnelling them away from using their own seeds with dignity and for free. Furthermore, governments of developing countries are under strong pressure to internalise UPOV into their legal systems, either through trade agreements or direct pressure from the seed industry lobbies.

The global week of action was in early December, with key days being 2 December – UPOV's 60th birthday – and 3 December, which entailed a linked global Day of Action Against Agrichemicals.

This follows on from our successful #INTERNATIONALSEEDDAY

campaign of 2020,⁵ where 346 civil society organisations from 46 countries called for 26 April – designated World Intellectual Property Day – to be renamed International Seed Day. We condemned the unashamed greenwashing of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and their expedient promotion of the draconian UPOV plant variety protection (PVP) and patents, as a driver for a green future, when the opposite is the case.

We have also continued our resistance against draconian seed and intellectual property laws. In this regard, we have worked with our partners on solutions at national and regional level.

5. <https://cinemata.org/playlists/bWM7HqZUy>



Expansion of Farmer Seed Systems discourse

The term Farmer Seed Systems (FSS) is being adopted in the region and beyond, with almost all African governments starting to show recognition of the importance of conserving and sustainably managing biodiversity. This is evident in the positions of the Africa Group in the negotiations under the CBD, including the recognition of the importance of agricultural biodiversity, especially in light of declining biodiversity. However, linkages between agricultural biodiversity, small scale farmers, farmers' rights and FSS needs to gain more attention in these discussions and policies. Hence there is the imperative for more material support to strengthen smallholder farmers and their role in biodiversity conservation, adaptation and use.

Support of advocacy at regional and national level

Political and policy processes continue at regional and national level, in support of alternatives in farmer seed systems, farmers' rights and agricultural biodiversity. This included ongoing work on ensuring that exemptions in commercial seed laws are adequate to allow for the unimpeded development and support of FSS and securing of farmers' rights.

West Africa Ghana

Food Sovereignty Ghana (FSG) is engaged in a legal challenge to the country's Plant Variety Protection Act of 2020 and the ACB has assisted with analysis of this law and strategic inputs regarding opposing it. The ongoing legal challenge is a culmination of the CSOs long struggle against the country's PVP Act and the joining of UPOV 1991, as well as raising awareness on other issues impacting on

farmers' rights, such as the impact of the distribution of GMO seedlings to farmers. The legal challenge states that the UPOV 1991 Convention is an unnecessary infringement on farmers' rights since:

- The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement makes room for other *sui generis* models that do take into consideration related international conventions and the Human Rights System, as delineated in the ITPGRFA and the UNDROP.
- Affirmation of sovereign rights of States over their natural resources is delineated in CBD.
- Fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilisation of genetic resource and related traditional knowledge must be ensured.

Nigeria

Nigeria has adopted a draconian new PVP Act, based on the UPOV 1991 model, which provides legal and intellectual property rights to plant



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breeders who develop ‘new’ varieties. The Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) Act 2021 – set to be the first PVP law for the country – has been developed by the Nigeria Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) through the Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA), in collaboration with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), together with AGRA, has also been collaborating with UPOV to push for the adoption of the current 1991 version into law in Nigeria. In April 2019, Nigeria requested the UPOV council to examine its PVP Bill for conformity

with the 1991 Act and in 2021, there was an additional check for the adopted bill with some amendments.

The ACB supported CSOs with an analysis of their country’s PBR Law, to enable opposition to Nigeria joining UPOV 1991, which will entrench industrial agriculture and limit the political space to implement farmers’ rights (beyond the intellectual property lens), among other issues.

Central Africa Democratic Republic Of Congo (DRC)

As with organisations in East Africa, the ACB is supporting local organisations in the DRC to undertake joint regional work, which has included a series of preliminary teach-ins,

to enhance their capacity to engage in political discussions for the implementation of farmers rights, and to support other regional and international political processes. In the DRC we have also been supporting farmers’ organisations to resist their country’s seed bill.

East Africa Uganda

The ACB is supporting FIAN Uganda on policy, advocacy and capacity building activities on the Right to Food. CSOs aim to contribute towards the utilisation and conservation of indigenous and traditional seeds, as opposed to GMOs, through conducting research, policy advocacy, and capacity building.



Tanzania

Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania (MVIWATA) is a national network of smallholder farmers in Tanzania that aims to amplify the voices of farmers in the country and are our partners in Tanzania. ACB's research and advocacy officer Sabrina Masinjila was invited to attend to speak on issues related to seed and farm input subsidy programmes and their impacts on smallholder farmers.

Follow up work on quality controls in FSS was intended to include a planned multi-stakeholder exchange to Brazil, as well as possible exchange between Zanzibar and Togo, which have been postponed as a result of pandemic. The ACB is also currently undertaking an analysis of the Zanzibar Seed Law, which we hope will serve as an entry point into working with CSOs there, on seed and GMO issues.

Southern Africa

Zimbabwe

Our support has continued for partners in their campaign against the Draft Plant Breeders Rights (PBR) Act being

aligned to UPOV 1991 and the trade deal with the UK.

Following on from dialogues jointly hosted with Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) and the Zimbabwe Seed Sovereignty Programme (ZSSP), which resulted in the development of an advocacy action plan, a dialogue meeting and capacity building webinar was then co-hosted in collaboration with TWN, when an analysis document of the Draft PBR Act was to be submitted to UPOV. The ACB is supporting some of the advocacy and influencing activities, which include:

- Capacitation of lead farmers to enable smallholder farmers engage on seed and food sovereignty issues
- Dialogue with key national stakeholders
- Participation in key national processes
- Publication of key communication materials

Malawi

We continued to support efforts by the Malawi Agrobiodiversity Network (MAgNET) for recognition of

FMSS, through engagement with their government on the Malawi Seed Bill 2018 and a draft seed policy.

MaGNET developed and shared a concept note and Model Issues Paper with state actors to get the policy process moving and invited the ACB to make inputs. During an update meeting in March we shared some current thinking on farmers' rights and ongoing international processes.

Zambia

Addressing pandemics, land degradation and deforestation cannot be de-linked from building economies and food systems that are grounded in the needs of people, particularly smallholder farmers, and thriving ecosystems. The ACB, in collaboration with FIAN International and the Zambian Alliance on Agroecology and Biodiversity (ZAAB), planned and convened a regional meeting on the Right to Food and Nutrition: Building a Pan-African and decolonial Recovery Plan for the Southern Africa region in May. The aim was to strengthen regional movements, by helping



AREJ – an inspiring organisation that promotes agroecology and FSS

Action Réelle sur l'Environnement l'Enfance et la Jeunesse (AREJ)⁶ is a Togolese association working to support agroecology, which was started from a small hut in the village of Boadé, by Jacques Nametougli. He has worked tirelessly for years to promote the cultivation, use, conservation and exchange of farmer seed and the use of agroecology in agriculture. From humble beginnings, AREJ is now a flourishing hub that includes an Agroecological Technical High School that nurtures rural youth to become farmers. We interviewed him in Zanzibar, Tanzania, when the ACB hosted a discussion on FSS, bringing together members from farmer organisations, non-governmental organisations, academia and government institutions (specifically gene banks and research institutes) from 10 African countries and five countries beyond Africa.⁷

farmers to rebuild farmer seed systems linked to the right to food and nutrition. Those who were unable to travel, were able to participate online.

From discussions held at this meeting, the Seed and Knowledge Initiative (SKI) identified the need to conduct a policy mapping/update for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region to identify the key policy processes and frameworks

affecting the network partners, in terms of current status and where countries are, especially regarding agrobiodiversity and farmers' rights, but also within the broader framing of agroecology and food sovereignty as a political agenda.

In collaboration with the ACB and ZAAB, the SKI is planning to convene a series of exchanges on international and regional processes (mainly the ITPGRFA

and the CBD) that may affect the future of agrobiodiversity, farmers' seed and seed systems.

South Africa

Our comments on the draft regulations dealing with exemptions to allow smallholder farmers to reuse farm-saved seed of protected varieties are well reflected in the revised Draft Regulations, in terms of exemptions for smallholder and household producers, which means they

6. <https://arejtogo.wordpress.com/>

7. <https://www.acbio.org.za/changing-discourse-policy-and-practice-farmer-seed-systems-africa>

may condition, save, exchange and sell protected varieties for further propagation.

We anticipated that the regulations of the Plant Improvement Act (PIA) and the PBR would be published for comment in 2021, but this has not yet happened. The ACB works very closely with Biowatch and other partners in this regard.

In January, in a significant move, the ACB took a position against South Africa's proposed accession to the ITPGRFA, in a submission to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD). We argued that the Treaty was fundamentally flawed: industry benefits from accessing plant genetic resources through the multilateral system (MLS) while farmers' rights provisions and the benefit-sharing mechanism remained a dead letter.

Importantly, in the current context and the ACB's deeper learnings of the Treaty, the ACB expressed concern that accession could be used as leverage to press for South Africa's accession to UPOV 1991, which we have also publicly opposed.

Despite the ongoing challenges posed by Covid-19, the ACB has continued to engage

with national farmer seed and agroecology networks through virtual meetings with groups in Limpopo and Eastern Cape, and one in-person engagement in Limpopo.

During the lockdowns, the ACB gave support to the two provincial networks in Limpopo and Eastern Cape provinces, to assist farmers with their agroecology work. A total of nine farmer groups from the two provinces benefited from this funding, and activities supported included:

- Promoting community agroecology and ecotourism alternatives through community agriculture (village-level farmer forums) and community-led and owned ecotourism in the Eastern Cape
- Training of over 200 network members on indigenous and traditional seed preservation, as part of strengthening local food and community systems in Limpopo
- Construction of a seed library for purposes of saving local seed in Giyani, Limpopo
- Procurement of irrigation equipment for an agroecology training centre, in Limpopo
- Capturing seed and agroecology farmer stories for shared learning in Limpopo
- Procurement of farming inputs for members of

various networks which were lacking these inputs due to challenges brought on by Covid19 lockdowns.

With this extensive support from the ACB, farmers groups have not only been able to continue with their activities on agroecology and securing local food systems – some of which were not possible without external support – but they have also been cushioned against the many challenges brought on by Covid-19 lockdowns, such as limited access to seed and other farming inputs, and soaring prices of inputs.

Following the civil unrest that occurred in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces in July 2021, sparked by the imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma for contempt of court, the ACB made contributions to relief efforts through donations to various initiatives. This has opened up new political relationships that will further expand ACB's political framing and concrete work on seed and food systems. This spurred two site visits to meet with organisations involved in local agroecology projects, in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, to inform the broadening of our research, policy, and advocacy role.

Programme 3:

Corporate expansion in African agriculture

The ACB collaborated and partnered with various organisations on key processes and activities against corporate expansion, capture and control of African seed and food systems.

United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) counter mobilisation process

During the pre-summit, over 300 organisations in civil society, including small-scale producers, researchers, and Indigenous Peoples, rallied online from 25-28 July, in rejection of the UNFSS. A coalition of scientists also petitioned to boycott the

UNFSS. The ACB was part of a regional coordination committee that jointly hosted an online event, on 27 July, which can be viewed online.⁸ The ACB was also instrumental in the drawing up and dissemination of a common statement proclaiming Africa's rejection of the Summit,⁹ which was launched at the event. This statement was a key outcome, in which a collective of African organisations rejected the UNFSS and called

8. <https://youtu.be/cAUKMuyEwrl>

9. Africa responds to the UN Food Systems Summit. Let's reclaim our food sovereignty and reject the industrial food system



Sabrina Masinjila, Tanzania
Research and advocacy officer
The African Centre for Biodiversity

“The ACB was also instrumental in the drawing up and dissemination of a common statement proclaiming Africa’s rejection of the Summit, which was launched at the event

”

for a reclamation of African food sovereignty and the transformation of African food systems, in the interests of people and planet rather than corporate players.

Another of the 15 online sessions was titled, *Seed is power: Reclaiming African Seed Sovereignty*, which featured a presentation: *Africans speak out against corporate hegemony over seed and food systems*, by ACB Research and Advocacy Officer Sabrina Masinjila.¹⁰

In July, the draft of the position statement¹¹ of the African Union was leaked to civil society. This was intended to be launched at the Summit, which was held on 23 September. Again, the ACB spearheaded a process to draw up an open letter,¹²

rejecting this alleged common position, which we launched at an event held on 16 September, a few days before the Summit.

In this letter, we critique the lack of truly consultative and participatory processes that led to its creation. To date, over 150 organisations have signed on to endorse this letter. You can watch the full event online¹³ or a video of the highlights.¹⁴ Information on the global counter mobilisation is housed on a website created for this purposed.¹⁵

Through this process the ACB developed and strengthened new political relationships, which bodes well for further extending our seed and food systems work on the continent.

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD)

Continuing our support of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), which is participating in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) negotiations to shape a new global deal on biodiversity, in February the ACB attended the AGN preparatory sessions for the informal sessions of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA). This subsidiary body provides the Conference of the Parties (COP) with relevant consultation relating to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

10. <https://youtu.be/yMEOR1kcFb8>

11. https://t2m.io/Draft_African_Position

12. https://t2m.io/Open_letter_reaction_AU_UNFSS_position.

13. <https://youtu.be/kA--SjdUqdc>

14. <https://youtu.be/fIZBE57rxKU>

15. [foodsystems4people](https://foodsystems4people.org)

The SBSTTA-24 series of meetings, which was originally scheduled to take place from 18-23 May 2020, in conjunction with the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) of the CBD, was ultimately postponed and held virtually in September 2020 and then in February and March 2021.

During the informal sessions, we made a submission on synthetic biology and risk assessment of GMOs and also released a statement, on behalf of civil society organisations in Africa. We also made input to the AGN on agenda item seven on biodiversity and agriculture. Then we also participated in the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI), held between May and June.

We continue to nurture and strengthen our role in this space by maintaining our relationships with the AGN and civil society and advocating for the rights of African smallholder farmers in these international spaces.

Since March, we have developed a working relationship with the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA), a network of progressive conservationists, scientists, academics and activists. This is helping to further shape our approach to work at the CBD and, importantly, we are also shaping the ACBA's work and approach. This relationship with ACB has proven critical in strengthening African alliances that will push for progressive outcomes in terms of farmers' rights, agrobiodiversity and the rights of indigenous, small

farmer and local communities in the Post-2020 GBF.

In July, we participated in a dialogue between the ACBA and the AGN, on perspectives on the first draft of the CBD's Post-2020 GBF. The ACBA's focus and approach is primarily through the lens of Goal B – Sustainable Use – and striving for a balance between the three objectives of the Convention (conservation of biodiversity; sustainable use of the components of biodiversity; and sharing the benefits arising from the commercial and other utilisation of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way).

Further, in another milestone in ACB's work, and in our relationship with ACBA, we contributed as authors to an article published in the journal Science, titled 'Integrate biodiversity targets from local to global levels', which offers a framework for the integration of new and diversified approaches to conserved areas and the development of other, less formal conservation mechanisms, with improved conventional biodiversity conservation approaches. As a result of our contribution, agrobiodiversity and agroecology feature as part of this agenda in the article.

Within the African context, ACBA's premise is that alignment of Sustainable Use of nature by people, within the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is necessary, hence for the GBF to be successful, conservation must deliver benefits to people. Farmers' rights and agrobiodiversity

are critical elements to framing the importance of sustainable use in the post-2020 conservation agenda. The ACB aims to continue to give inputs and give its own positions on the various issues in this process, and to ensure that African CSOs are adequately informed and capacitated to fully engage in this process and have their positions reflected.



Third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG)

As part of our work on the Post-2020 GBF, and building progressive African alliances around it, we also participated in the meeting of the OEWG. This was convened to advance preparations for the development of the Post-2020 GBF.

The issue of digital sequence information (DSI) continues to be a major and complex part of the discussions, with a focus on regulation and equitable sharing of benefits still being central to the successful conclusion of the Post-2020 GBF.



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FIAN
INTERNATIONAL

RIGHTS of NATURE: A DECADE of REFLECTIONS, DEBATES and EXPERIENCES

In addition, we hosted webinars on the Post-2020 GBF, framed within the context of the current Covid-19 pandemic and the biodiversity crisis, which sought to inform, update, and present research and analysis on key issues, and to facilitate interactive participation. Most of the webinars in this series were held in 2020, with the last one in February 2021: Rights of Nature: A Decade of Reflections, Debates and Experiences, which reflected on the rights of nature, in light of the need to defend the commons from commodification and privatisation, and, in relation to the threats and opportunities

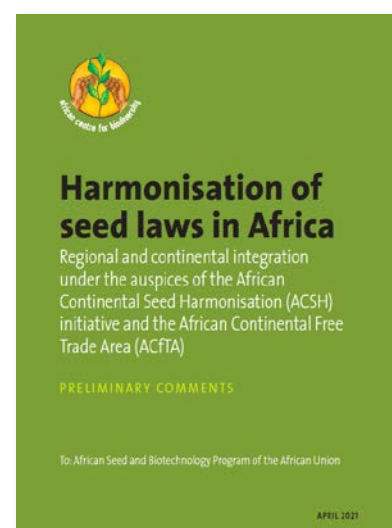
that present at national, regional and international level.

Resistance against harmonisation of seed laws in africa

In 2021, the African Union (AU) embarked on a mission towards harmonising seed regulatory frameworks across the continent, beginning with the establishment of an African Continental Seed Harmonisation Framework, for adoption by member states that have signed onto the African Continental Free Trade Areas Agreement (AfCFTA).

Our active engagement in the seed harmonisation guidelines began in April, when we attended an online stakeholder consultation and then made preliminary comments on behalf of African CSOs, which we published on our website and circulated to partners,¹⁶ and then made submissions on behalf of African civil society, in which we raised concerns on the process, especially the lack of articulation on farmers' rights and agricultural biodiversity.

In August, the ACB was invited to input into documents, as well as participate in a meeting regarding the sub process aiming to push the development of guidelines specifically on FSS, held by the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform (ASBP). Through a letter to this cluster,¹⁷ we made further substantive inputs into the Draft Guidelines, raising concerns that despite the emphasis on FSS, the discussions tended to focus almost exclusively



16. <https://www.acbio.org.za/sites/default/files/documents/202105/submission-regional-and-continental-integration-under-african-continental-seed-harmonisation-acsh.pdf>

17. <https://www.acbio.org.za/sites/default/files/documents/202108/response-draft-report-development-continental-guidelines-harmonisation-seed-regulatory-frameworks.pdf>

On the continent, over 90% of seed is sourced through FSS, including local markets, which therefore provide the base for food and nutritional security to the African population. Why then does the AU seed harmonisation process focus exclusively on private sector growth, seed certification, and restrictive quality and marketing controls standards?

on the commercialisation of FSS and Farmers' varieties, which does nothing to ensure that adequate resourcing is provided to the ground, to promote, maintain and develop local solutions regarding the conservation and sustainable use of farmers' seed, and through the realisation of farmers' rights. We added that we did welcome the establishment of the proposed Task Force to look at how to integrate FSS, while stressing the need for processes that ensured inclusive consultation within a reasonable timeframe.

That same month we found out that the AU Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Development had scheduled what they termed a validation meeting, not only for the "Continental Guidelines for the Harmonisation of Seed Regulatory Frameworks in Africa", which we had commented on, but that they had also drafted a second set of guidelines; namely, "Continental Guidelines for the Use of Biotechnology to Enhance Agricultural Productivity for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa".

This was highly problematic. In terms of the seed harmonisation frameworks, while we had commented on an earlier draft, we found that the latest version included the promotion of UPOV 1991 seed laws. And in terms of the biotechnology guidelines, we only found out about them six days before what was described as a validation meeting – the ACB had had no previous notification of them nor the ability to submit comments.

In response, the ACB was instrumental in galvanising a group of organisations to quickly analyse the revised seed harmonisation draft, as detailed in a joint discussion document,¹⁸ available in English and French. We then collectively attended the meeting, to raise our substantive comments about how these Guidelines facilitate the expansion of the seed industry on the continent and point out deficiencies in how these processes were determined: behind closed doors between industry and the AU, with the majority of small-scale farmers shut out.

We made a call for African social movements to block

the validation at the meeting, citing, among other reasons, the insufficient time for adequate consultations, their link to the AfCFTA and other efforts seeking to harmonise corporate-centred laws on the continent to facilitate trade and investment; that the current version of the draft Guidelines presents many dangers as it situates FSS and Farmers' Rights within the context of a commercial seed sector agenda; and the fact that they promote UPOV as a means for harmonising plant variety protection on the continent, which is an authoritarian approach that undermines the rights of farmers and citizens.

The ACB also sent a formal letter¹⁹ to the AU about our not participating in these captured and undemocratic processes, which was endorsed by many African organisations.²⁰ In the letter, social movements rejected both sets of guidelines and urged the AU to start a proper democratic and inclusive consultative process that ensures that the guidelines reflect the needs of the African continent, smallholders, and ecologies.

18. <https://www.acbio.org.za/sites/default/files/documents/202108/au-seed-harmonisation-call-african-social-movements19-aug.pdf>

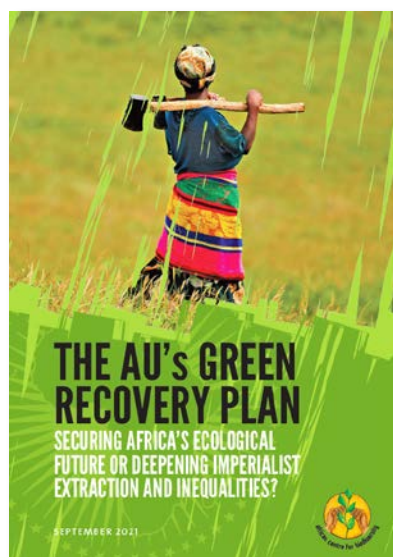
19. <https://www.acbio.org.za/sites/default/files/documents/202108/letter-asbp-technical-working-group-farmer-managed-seed-systems-regarding-eoa-fms-cluster-groupo.pdf>

20. <https://www.acbio.org.za/african-social-movements-demand-au-suspends-undemocratic-and-pro-industry-seed-and-gmo-guidelines>

As a result of our collective voices speaking out at the meeting, the process of validating the guidelines appeared to be stalled. This engagement has highlighted the importance of continuing to engage with the AU, given its key role in advancing corporate-centred laws and policies on the continent, which often disregard farmers' rights.

African Green Recovery Plan

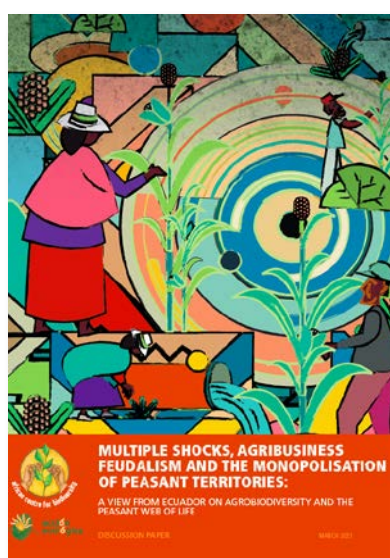
In July, the AU released a Green Recovery Action Plan for the continent, in the context of Covid-19 and climate change. The basis of the plan is that a “clean and resilient recovery in Africa will lead to employment in the industries of the future whilst ensuring that we address the linked challenges of public health, prosperity and climate change.” The plan is a blueprint to encourage AU member states to align or develop national programmes



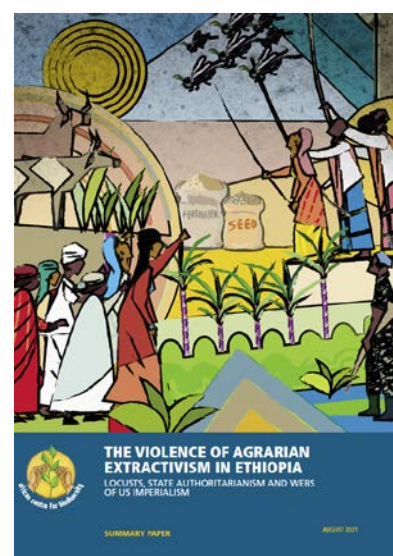
and policies related to climate and biodiversity, along five priority areas. The ACB made initial comments on the Action Plan,²¹ first providing general reflections and then deeper analysis of each priority area.

Multiple Shocks in Africa Series

Continuing the series started in 2020, in March the ACB published: Multiple shocks, agribusiness feudalism and



the monopolisation of peasant territories: a view from Ecuador on agrobiodiversity and the peasant web of life.²² The paper, done in collaboration with Acción Ecológica and published in English and Spanish, looked at how shocks are used to further industrialise maize production in Ecuador, through the provision of “farming kits”, which undermines the ecological basis of peasant seed and farming systems.



This was followed by the final paper: *The Violence of Agrarian Extractivism in Ethiopia: Locusts, State Authoritarianism and Webs of US Imperialism*,²³ which explores how the locust infestations in the Horn of Africa and the conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia are the latest in a series of interconnected shocks to hit smallholders and rural dwellers in the region over the last few years. Through the prism of the Ethiopian experience, a key outcome of the paper was to hone in on the role of the African state in supporting and facilitating the industrialisation of African food systems, and its associated undermining of smallholder farmers, in the form of both large-scale agricultural investments and the Green Revolutionisation of smallholders, in alliance with actors like the Gates Foundation and World Bank.

21. <https://www.acbio.org.za/african-union-green-recovery-action-plan-securing-africas-ecological-future-or-deepening>

22. <https://www.acbio.org.za/multiple-shocks-agribusiness-feudalism-and-monopolisation-peasant-territories-view-ecuador>

23. <https://www.acbio.org.za/violence-agrarian-extractivism-ethiopia>



Global Network on Food & Nutrition bi-annual meeting

The ACB attended and contributed to shaping the outcomes of the bi-annual meeting of the Global Network on the Right to Food & Nutrition in June, after which we were asked to sit on the Coordinating Committee, a platform that provides an opportunity for us to share our work on farmers' rights and seed sovereignty. In addition, this role links our organisation more extensively to a global network that work on intersecting issues, providing a space for further contribution to the platform while simultaneously learning.

Regional food networks

We have continued supporting processes aimed at strengthening regional food sovereignty networks. One

example is the facilitation of the thinking on Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa's (AFSA) food policy dialogues in South Africa. From this, we then helped facilitate a linkage with the Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE), for a partnership to host the dialogues. We have also provided support to various local communities, where requested.

Rapid Response Fund

We were able to access funds to facilitate participation in unanticipated national and regional policy and political processes on commercial seed laws and farmer seed systems. African civil society organisations were supported to participate in the following policy and political processes:

- Fourth meeting of the AHTEG (preparation and attendance), including submissions to

the Inventory under the Treaty on best practices to implement farmers' rights.

- Regional Meeting on the Right to Food and Nutrition: Building a Pan African & Decolonial Recovery Plan for Southern Africa held in May, following which a number of activities have been initiated to assist partners in East and Southern Africa, including support to Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, among others.
- Support to Niger CSOs to organise training and consultation of farmers for the recognition of FSS and the implementation of farmers' seed rights in national and community legal frameworks in West Africa.

Staff & Board Members

As of December 2021, the ACB had a staff compliment of 13 (92% full-time, 79% women, 64% black), consisting of:

Six research and advocacy (five women, four black)

Three communications and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) (three women, two black)

One human resources (one woman, one black)

Four administration and finance (one part-time, two women, two black)

Total operational staff: 14 (11 women, nine black)

Programme team

Mariam Mayet	Executive Director
Sabrina Masiinjila	Research and Advocacy Officer (based in Tanzania)
Linzi Lewis	Research and Advocacy Officer
Rutendo Zendah	Research and Advocacy Officer
Rifqah Tifloen	Research and Advocacy Officer
Andrew Bennie	Research and Advocacy Officer

Human Resources

Fatima Karodia	Human Resources Officer
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Monitoring and Evaluation

Juliet Mwale	M&E Officer
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Communications

Deidre May	Communications Coordinator
Tamara Reddy	Communications Officer



Admin and Finance team

Vinern Naidoo

Rosanne van der Merwe

Naeemullah Mohammed

Hettie Dreyer

Administration Officer

Administrative Assistant (part-time)

Accounting Officer

Accounting Officer (contract being phased out)

Staff changes

Andrew Bennie shifted from being part-time to full-time as a research and advocacy officer at the ACB in 2021, after some months of being a part-time researcher in 2020.

In July, a new research and advocacy officer, Rifqah Tifloen joined the ACB and then in November, a human resources officer with extensive project management experience came on board, Fatima Karodia.

Our senior Accounting Officer Hettie Dreyer's part time contract continued in 2021 and into 2022, to oversee the current financial year-end audit and to ensure stability and well-functioning of our financial management systems.

ACB Board Members

John Wilson

Famara Diedhiou

Mariann Bassey Orovwuje

Ray Patridge

Mariam Mayet

Chairperson, based in Zimbabwe

Senegal

Nigeria

South Africa

Non-executive board member, based in South Africa

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