



The 2nd African Organic Conference

May 2-4, 2012. Lusaka, Zambia

Lusaka Declaration on Mainstreaming Organic Agriculture into the African Development Agenda

We, the 300 participants from 35 countries gathered at the 2nd African Organic Conference (AOC2) held in Lusaka, Zambia 2-4 May 2012 on the theme “Mainstreaming Organic Agriculture in the African Development Agenda”.

We agree that organic agriculture¹ plays a key role in sustainable development, food security, poverty reduction, environmental security, climate change adaptation, human health, preservation of indigenous knowledge, plant varieties and animal breeds as well as socio-cultural development. We shared international research results confirming that the adoption of organic agriculture practices significantly increases yields and improves livelihoods and food security in Africa. Based on locally available renewable resources instead of purchased chemical inputs (over 90 percent of which are imported in sub-Saharan Africa), organic producers are less vulnerable to international input price volatility. Moreover organic agriculture is climate smart agriculture, as it produces lower emissions and also provides much greater resilience in times of climate extremes such as drought and heavy rains.

We applaud the great efforts made by all national, regional and international organizations to support the development of organic agriculture in Africa.

We welcome the institutionalization of AfroNet (African Organic Network) - the umbrella organization uniting and representing African ecological/organic stakeholders. We encourage all stakeholders to engage in and support AfroNet. We also welcome the strengthened networking within African subregions as well as the Network for Organic Agriculture Research in Africa (NOARA).

We call for the implementation of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government Decision on Organic Farming (Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII)). The Summit decision requests that the African Union Commission (AUC) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) to initiate and provide guidance for an AU-led coalition of international partners on the establishment of an African organic farming platform based on available best practices; and to provide guidance in support of the development of sustainable organic farming systems.

We call upon the AU to mainstream organic agriculture into all areas of its work, including the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and to take the lead in implementation of the African Organic Action Plan (and its associated Pillars), in close collaboration with AfroNet and other partners.

¹ See Appendix 1 for definition of organic agriculture. In Africa, organic agriculture is also referred to as “ecological organic agriculture” and “ecological/organic agriculture.”

We highlight the importance of the six pillars of the African Organic Action Plan:

1. Research, training and extension: To conduct participatory, interdisciplinary, multi-cultural research that informs stakeholder training and offers appropriate knowledge and skills and innovative solutions to the community.
2. Information and communication: To develop information and communication strategies to sensitize the stakeholders and the general public on the value and practices of ecological organic agriculture.
3. Value chain and market development: To increase trade in organic products from Africa on domestic, regional and export markets.
4. Networking and partnership: To strengthen synergies among stakeholders and beneficiaries to support ecological organic agriculture through networks and partnerships.
5. Supportive policies and programmes: To support the development and implementation of enabling policies and programmes.
6. Institutional capacity development: To establish, develop and support ecological organic agriculture institutions in Africa

We appreciate all support received to date. We note that the coordination and implementation of the African Organic Action Plan will require strengthening the capacities of AfroNet, the AU Commission and other institutions.

We call upon all African stakeholders and development partners to support the implementation of the African Organic Action Plan from technical, financial and institutional perspectives. These partners include but are not limited to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Trade Centre (ITC), World Bank, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), the European Union (EU), the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Sida, HIVOs, Grow Organic Africa, NORAD, Swiss Development Cooperation and the Government of Austria.

We request continued funding of existing initiatives falling under the framework of the Action Plan, including the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative. We further encourage the design and implementation of more initiatives at every level, from continental to grassroots communities.

We call upon the Regional Economic Communities to mainstream organic agriculture into existing Regional Agricultural Frameworks and Initiatives including the Regional Compacts, research for development, advocacy, outreach and communication, publications, capacity building, technical cooperation and intergovernmental meetings.

We applaud the efforts made by the increasing number of African member States that have embraced the concept of organic agriculture and in developing policies and programmes to support the organic agriculture sector.

We urge all African Governments to include organic agriculture in their policies and agricultural development agenda, including their CAADP Country Compacts and Investment Plans, in consultation with the organic agriculture stakeholders in their countries. The UNCTAD-UNEP "Best Practices for Organic Policy" (UNCTAD/DITC/TED/2007/3) can provide useful guidance.

We urge African stakeholders developing national or regional organic standards/ regulations to use the principles of harmonization and equivalency to facilitate the flow of organic products in Africa in order to support the growth of the African ecological organic sector.

We request the EU, other global trade partners and international organizations to take all possible steps to facilitate the participation of Africa in global organic markets in particular by applying equivalency. This includes a request to recognize as equivalent the East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS), which was developed through a consultative regional public-private partnership and adopted as the official East African Community organic standard in 2007. We also request that all possible steps be taken to ensure that equivalency agreements among regulators of major organic markets directly improve the market access of organic products from Africa and other developing countries.

We express interest in exploring and harnessing the potential of possible synergies with other related initiatives, programmes and projects in Africa, while remaining true to our core values.

We thank the organizers of this conference, including the AU Commission, Organic Producers and Processors Association of Zambia (OPPAZ), Zambian Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, UNCTAD, IFOAM, FAO and those who provided financial and technical support.

We express our sincere appreciation of the support and attendance of Kenneth David Kaunda, OPPAZ Patron and First Republican President of Zambia.

We look forward to continuing our work together as one open, united and ever-growing African Organic Team.

Appendix 1

The definition of organic agriculture

Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.

The principles of organic agriculture

- **Principle of health:**
Organic agriculture sustains and enhances the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible.
- **Principle of ecology:**
Organic agriculture is based on living ecological systems and cycles; it works with, emulates and helps sustain them.
- **Principle of fairness:**
Organic agriculture builds on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.
- **Principle of care:**
Organic agriculture is managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.