

PELUM KENYA NETWORK CALL TO ACTION
NOVEMBER 3, 2023
GITORO PASTORAL CENTRE, MERU.

WE, Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Kenya Network comprising of 61 Member Organizations working with small scale farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolks in 47 counties. We have met here at Gitoro Pastoral Centre, Meru today 3rd November, 2023 for the Network Annual Country Working Group forum to showcase agroecological products and practices. As a network promoting agroecology, we would like to issue this call to action.

First and foremost, we would like to underscore the important role that the agri-food sector plays in Kenya. The agri-food sector is indeed a key pillar to Kenya's economy, accounting for 22.4% of the overall GDP and employing more than 40% of the workforce and more than 70% of Kenya's rural workforce (Kenya Economic Survey, 2022).

We also **appreciate** that Kenya has great potential for change and prosperity due to its rich natural resources and its large pool of innovative young people.

While this is so, the agri-food sector has been vulnerable to various multiple crisis including climate crisis, covid 19 impacts, high food and commodity prices and the war on Ukraine impacts, increased taxation that have worsened the food security situation in the Country. We are afraid, Kenya is also not on track to achieve SDG 2 and Vision 2030 on "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition ". 'The number of people in need of food assistance has increased from 3.5 million in 2022 to 5.4 million in June 2023. Acute malnutrition has also been noted across the counties with 942,000 cases of children aged 6-59 months acutely malnourished and 134,000 cases of pregnant or lactating women acutely malnourished in need of treatment² .

Informed and aware that food and nutrition security is not only a basic necessity but also a right as per article 43 (1) (c) of the 2010 Kenyan constitution, we hereby make this Call to Action to the National and County governments and stakeholders in the agriculture and related sectors:

² <https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/kenya-acute-food-insecurity-situation-february-2023-projection-march-june-2023>

Call to Action #1: Strike a balance between revenue generation and enhancing a sustainable and resilient food system.

Aware that the government is increasing taxation to raise more revenue. We are **concerned** that affording basic commodities has increasingly become an illusion to Kenyan citizens.

The high taxation has discouraged entrepreneurship and investment in agriculture sector, hence hindering growth of agricultural activities at grassroot level resulting to ^{un}availability, ⁱⁿaccessibility and ^{un}affordability of locally produced food.

We hereby call the government to explore alternative measures to ensure viability of small-scale farming and promote affordability of nutritious food.

Call to Action#2: Mainstream agroecology in policies, strategies and action plans

Referring to the study by Central Bank of Kenya 2023 the productivity for all key crops – cereals, vegetables and pulses – was lower than their potential. The low productivity has been attributed to poor soil health, poor agricultural practices, deteriorating ecological status of environment and climate change.

We call for urgent and comprehensive shift to agroecology across the entire food system with particular emphasis on integration of agroecology in the policies, strategies and action plans.

Call to Action #3: Urgent Transition to Biological Farm Inputs

COVID 19 pandemic, the War in Ukraine compounded with climate change has truly exposed the vulnerability, fragility and dependency of the food system in Kenya.

We further recognize that farm inputs are an important input in food production and 4.5 billion was allocated to Fertilizer Subsidy Programme. However, **We Urge the governments to also consider organic fertilizers as an** alternative method to soil fertility management which also offers more benefits to farm health and the nutritional value of agricultural products than chemical fertilizers and hence reduce dependency on imported synthetic fertilizers. Farmers should be encouraged to adopt other options to reduce exposure to ever-changing global market scenarios regarding imported farm inputs. As a network we are willing to provide a platform for learning and experience sharing of the various biological farm inputs which have successfully been utilized by our farmers throughout the Country over the years.

Call to Action #4: Increase budgetary allocation to agriculture

Notably, the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda prioritized agriculture transformation as a strategy to revive the economy. We are concerned that in the budget, for fiscal year 2023-2024 agriculture was allocated less than 10% of the total budget. We are further concerned that the budget for crop development has been reduced by 4%, YET is strategic in ensuring the cost of living stabilizes. We therefore **URGE** the government (both national and County) to increase their agriculture budget allocations to 10% of the total budgets, as per the Maputo declaration with at least 5% being dedicated to agroecological practices, including research and extension.

Call to Action # 5: Enact A Legal Framework to Implement the Constitutionally Guaranteed Right to Food

Recalling that the Food Security Bill in Kenya was tabled in parliament due to the need for legislation in 2014, and then again in 2017, and the law has never been enacted. Yet it was to create a legal framework that would give effect to Article 43 (1) (C) of the Constitution and actualize the right to food by enhancing food production and ensuring that all access to adequate and nutritious food at all times.

We call upon the government to demonstrate the political will to improve food security in the country by enacting legal framework that Constitutionally Guaranteed Right to Food.

Call to Action #6: Ban harmful agrochemicals

The copious use of expensive agrochemicals, including synthetic fertilizers, is not only impoverishing farmers, it is literally killing them and the citizens who consume the resultant unsafe foods. Compounded with their unaffordability and long-term negative effects on soils calls for more sustainable inputs and promotion and adoption of agroecology practices. We **urge** all stakeholders to heighten awareness and education on the adverse effects of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers and promote trade and consumption of affordable organic and eco-friendly products by all. We further **URGE** the government to issue an immediate **BAN** on all harmful agrochemicals which have been banned elsewhere yet they are still finding their way into the Kenyan market.

Call to Action # 7: Invest in water harvesting and conservation at household level

The rains are here with us. **Realizing** that Agriculture in Kenya is largely (98%) rainfed and thus extremely vulnerable to increasing temperatures, droughts, and floods. **Noting that in the budget for fiscal year 2023-2024, Ksh 1.4 billion has been allocated to small scale irrigation.** We **call upon** the government to prioritize water harvesting at household levels.

Call to Action#8: Conserve Genetic Resources and Promoting Indigenous Seeds

The COK 2010 Article 11(3)b: calls for the Parliament to enact legislations and recognize and protect the ownership of indigenous seeds and plant varieties, their genetic and diverse characteristics and their use by the communities of Kenya.

Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) support between 70 – 100% of small-scale farmers in Kenya, yet existing seed laws developed in collusion with the private sector seed players do not recognize this fact and severely restrict farmers rights to save, sell and make profit from their indigenous seeds like the commercial seed companies.

We **call for urgent** attention to the critical role that indigenous seeds play in promoting and conserving our genetic resources. We, therefore, **call** for a speedy recognition and protection of farmer-managed seed systems including through a review of and enacting of legislations that recognize and protect indigenous seeds and as envisaged by the constitution. We also **call** for stricter adherence to the safeguards enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity and its expansion to regulate new bioengineered technologies including genome editing.

Call to Action #9: Agroecology for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Realizing the global trends of climate change, we call upon stakeholders to prioritize agroecology as a major strategy for addressing climate change in sustainable Agricultural systems. With a growing global focus on agroecology, the time is now for deliberate and increased financing, investments in agroecology for the health of its people and ecosystems at large. Adopting agroecology practices will mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing dependency on fossil fuels and enhancing carbon sequestration. Agroecological practices will enhance farms and communities' resilience to climate-related disasters and risks. As agroecology practitioners, we have the knowledge, practice, and experience for effective adaptation, building resilience through diversity on the land and in our communities. Our experience tells us that agroecology - drawing on traditional knowledge, innovating with science, and embedded in communities is the solution for Kenya's adaptation in the agriculture sector.

Call To Action #10: Women and Youth in Agriculture

The average age of a farmer is that above 55 years in Kenya yet the biggest population is that of the youth. Youth participation all along the value chain is vital to the growth of the agriculture-based economies- from agricultural research and development, to food production, storage and handling, to agro-processing, through to marketing and distribution in local, regional and international food markets. Channeling the energy, strength, and dynamism of the youth into productive, competitive and profitable agribusinesses (including food production) will boost agricultural productivity, ensure sustainable food production system, create jobs, and generate incomes.

Gender inequality poses threats to ways of life, livelihoods, health, safety and security for women and girls around the world. women and girls face particular vulnerabilities resulting from cultural norms and their lower socioeconomic status in society. Women's domestic roles often make them disproportionate users of natural resources such as water, firewood and forest products.

We call for urgent attention to the role of youth and women in agriculture and indeed adaptation and climate change discourse.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

For more information please contact:

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Signed by PELUM Kenya Board of Directors

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7.	ROSINAH MBENTA	SECRETARY
8.

JOSEPH LENTUNYOI
JOHN KAGUKU
ROSINAH MBENTA

ENDORSED HERE BY:

1. Action Africa Help International (AAH-I)
2. Agency for Cross Border Pastoralists Development (APaD)
3. Agriculture Community Empowerment Programme (ACEP)
4. Aid link- Ireland
5. Anglican Development Services Eastern
6. Anglican Development Services Mt. Kenya East
7. Anglican Development Services Western (ADSW)
8. Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN)
9. Baraka Agricultural College (BAC)
10. Benevolent Institute of Development Initiatives (BIDI)
11. Bio – Gardening Innovations (BIOGI)
12. Busia Environmental and Resource Management (BERMA)
13. CARITAS Meru
14. CARITAS Nairobi
15. CARITAS Nyahururu
16. CEFA-KENYA
17. Christian Impact Mission (CIM)
18. Community Action for Rural Enhancement (CARE), Murang'a
19. Community Initiatives for Rural Development (CIFORD)
20. Community Mobilization Against Desertification (C-MAD)
21. Community Rehabilitation and Environment Protection Program (CREPP)
22. Community Sustainable Agriculture and Healthy Environmental Program (CSHEP)
23. Community Sustainable Development Empowerment Program (COSDEP)
24. Development In Gardening (DIG)
25. Dryland Natural Resource Centre (DNRC)
26. Effective IPM Alliance (AIA)
27. Emayian Integrated Development Organization (EIDO)
28. FH Kenya
29. Grow Bio – Intensive Agriculture Centre of Kenya (GBIACK)
30. INADES Formation – Kenya (IFK)
31. Institute for Peace Development and Innovation (IPSIA) Meru
32. Institute of Culture and Ecology (ICE)
33. Katoloni Community Based Organisation
34. Kenya Institute of Organic Farming (KIOF)
35. Kenya Organic Agricultural Network (KOAN)
36. Kitui Development Centre (KDC)
37. Laikipia Permaculture Centre (LPC)
38. Maendeleo Endelevu Action Programme (MEAP)
39. Manor House Agricultural Centre (MHAC)
40. Nainyoiye Community Development Organization (NCDO)
41. Neighbors Initiative Alliance (NIA)
42. Network for Eco farming in Africa (NECOFA)
43. Organic Agriculture Centre of Kenya (OACK)
44. Pastoralists Community Initiatives and Development Assistance (PACIDA)
45. Resources Oriented Development Initiative (RODI – Kenya)
46. Ripple Effect
47. Rural Initiatives Development Program (RIDEP)
48. Seed Savers Network
49. Self Help Africa (SHA)
50. Slow Food Convivia Association of Kenya (SFCAK)

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51. Support for Tropical Initiatives (STIPA)
 52. Sustainable Agriculture Community Development Program (SACDEP – Kenya)
 53. Sustainable Mobilization of Agricultural Resource Technologies (SMART) Initiatives
 54. Strategies for Agro Pastoralist Development (SAPAD)
 55. Taita Taveta Wildlife Forum (TTWF)
 56. The mission of Tenwek Hospital Community Health & Development
 57. Trans Community Organization (TRANSCOM)
 58. Tharaka Children & Women Welfare Programme (TCWWP)
 59. Utooni Development Organization (UDO)
 60. Vi Agroforestry (VIAFP)
 61. Youth Action for Rural Development (YARD)