

NGO statement on AFRICA at the IPM 26 February 2009

1. There has been a selective interpretation of Africa and this needs to be changed. Africa became a template for hunger politics following the structural adjustment programmes foisted on her in the late 70s and in the 80s.
2. The presentation by Ms Kobie Brand on the panel hit the target when she said that education is needed for the development of leadership. She also stressed the role of indigenous knowledge in education. We have a question for Mr Sebunya with regard to his prescription of large-scale conservation and tourist destinations for Africa. NGOs believe that this recommendation would alienate communities from their land and could cause conflicts and deepen poverty that the speaker sought to fight. What does Mr Sebunya say to this interpretation of his presentation?
3. Much has been said about the need for a GR for Africa, but the revolution that African agriculture needs is a radical emphasis on the smallholder family farm. The farmer must remain at the centre of efforts, including policy making, to revitalise African agriculture. For this to happen, farmer organisations should be supported and allowed to develop independently.
4. We believe that the promotion of agro-ecological approaches hinged on changing management of plants, rangelands and livestock to ensure abundance of biodiversity. We particularly object to the artificial manipulation and resultant contamination of the genetic resources on the continent.
5. Recognise and enhance the ecological services that animals and plants produce besides food sovereignty and cultural identity
6. In order to eliminate avoidable conflicts and aid sustainable development, urgent actions are needed to bring about agrarian and overall land reforms to ensure access to land as well as security of tenure, especially for women.
7. Beyond food security, food and energy sovereignty as promoted by farmers' movements, civil society groups and governments must be a key anchor for all efforts. In this regard policy should be aimed at promoting and supporting staple food production aimed primarily to meet local and regional needs. This should also include the integration of indigenous crops in national research programs, and increased research on drought-tolerant crops.
8. Increased public investment in agriculture and rural development, particularly in demand-driven initiatives, ensuring that these benefit smallholder women and waged agricultural workers. Land grabs and other unjust/underhand deals to appropriate African land under any guise should be actively repudiated.
9. Local economies should be promoted by processing agricultural products in small enterprises and factories in rural areas. This also includes the diversification of farmers' incomes through livestock development, agro-processing, and fisheries.
10. According to the FAO, 1.3 billion people are employed in the livestock industry and roughly one billion of the world's poor depend directly on animals for income, social status and security as well as food and clothing, and the welfare of their animals is essential for their livelihoods. There must be increased consideration of animal welfare helps to improve and safeguard food security, human health and social development. In this regard, we propose that livestock and their welfare must be included in all future discussions on sustainable development
11. Capacity building of farmers' organizations engaged in sustainable agriculture practices, to diffuse and replicate successes.

12. Africa needs structural, economic and political changes to enable sustainable development in drylands, backed by economic investment, and stemming from collaborative research with local communities.
13. Encourage increased role of local authorities and smallholder producers to link to markets with local procurement for institutions such as the model of Home Grown school feeding in Malawi and other NEPAD pilot countries actions in support food self sufficiency.
14. Finally, the IAASTD report provides a good resource for policy on agriculture in Africa and elsewhere. Delegates are invited to make use of the invaluable document.