

## **West African Peasant Seed Committee (COASP)**

### **4th edition of the West African Peasant Seed Fare**



### **Final Declaration**

On the occasion of the 4th edition of the West African peasant seed fare, held in Djimini, Senegal from March 11-13, 2014, 300 participants, representing 54 delegations from Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Niger, Mali, Togo, Senegal, Guinea, India, Europe and Canada assembled to promote peasant seeds.

Hosted by the local authorities in Vélingara, Senegal, the participants discussed, discovered and agreed upon the following points :

- a) Peasant communities benefit from an incredible diversity of many plant varieties adapted to their distinct agricultural and food production systems.
- b) Peasant seeds are reproducible. Peasant communities constantly renew their supplies through their harvesting systems, according to their ancestral practices.
- c) Peasant communities are professionals in the production, sustainability, conservation and multiplication of their seeds.
- d) Peasant communities develop and organize dynamic and self-managed seed networks firmly anchored to their rural bases.
- e) Peasant communities organize transnational and transcontinental alliances to exchange their knowledge, agricultural practices and rich biodiversity in an independent fashion.
- f) Therefore, the West African Peasant Seed Committee (COASP), established in 2011, has established a link with India for the promotion of agricultural production systems based on millets.

Despite their inherent richness, knowledge and potential, the participants of the 4th edition of the West African Seed Workshop note with regret the following points :

- a) The lack and insufficient nature of consultation with peasant communities in defining the agricultural and seed programs.
- b) The lack of consultation in the formation of the laws and restrictions related to seeds or research conducted on seeds.
- c) That the knowledge and seeds of rural peasant communities are appropriated by researchers without the consultation or approval of communities, which constitutes « biopiracy »

- d) That the international treaty on plants (TIRPAA) which recognizes the rights of farmers (article 9) and the sustainable use of cultivated biodiversity (article 5 and 6) has not been implemented by governments.
- e) That peasant seeds are being criminalized by current seed laws.
- f) That the initiatives of peasant communities are not being upheld, despite their leading to a true food sovereignty.
- g) That so-called improved certified seeds are being promoted despite the knowledge that they are often poorly adapted, lead to a situation of seed dependency and are protected by intellectual property rights.

The participants of the 4th edition of the West African Seed Workshop therefore denounce the fashion in which our states encourage the diffusion of GMOs and derived products and the promotion of industrial agriculture, with all the harm it has caused and continues to cause to our environment, health and economies. In fact, it has put immense pressure on all our resources : water, land, energy and both animal and vegetable biodiversity.

Due to our awareness of all the richness, knowledge and practices and the sustainability of peasant communities, and also of the negative and dangerous aspects of agroindustrial production systems, we, the participants of the of the 4th edition of the West African Seed Workshop of Djimini, recommend and call on the public institutions of Senegal, Africa, and the whole world to :

- Immediately stop all processes and patents of living organisms, as it is against the mentality of peasant communities, and it runs against their customs, cultures and ethics.
- Take their responsibilities to serve the common interest and not the interests of specific parties, particularly those of multinationals.
- Hold transparent consultations of a decentralised nature with peasant communities before beginning any programs or laws related to agriculture or seeds in particular. We are aware of the law in development on the free circulation of GMO seeds in ECOWAS, but we will not allow it to pass.
- Open a wide debate on GMOs to share the real information on these products with all concerned parties.
- Not let private institutions orient research and national programs such as AGRA, USAID, NASAN...
- Promote family agriculture, which consists of diversity, the reinforcement of peasant capacities, and to restore the fertility of ecosystems and soils.
- Magnify the role of women in all activities related to seeds, in which they hold the highest expertise. They are the guardians of seeds.

Djimini, Velingara, (Sénégal), March 13th 2014