**1ST INDIGENOUS SEEDS AND FOOD CULTURE HARVEST FAIR**

**DATE: 12th to 14th OCTOBER 2022**

**VENUE: NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA, HEADQUARTERS.**

**CALL TO ACTION**

The 1st National Indigenous Seeds and Food Culture Harvest Fair recognise that food production is an economic and socio-ecological system that links people with nature. Based on the discussions over the last three days, stakeholders ranging from government, CSOs, private sector, farmers, Indigenous People and Local Communities and general public have come up with the following call to action.

**Action 1: Conservation of agrobiodiversity including Pollinators**

 **We urge the government to:**

* Execute programmes aimed at training farmers and sensitizing the general citizenry on how to conserve, protect pollinators, educate them on the role of pollinators in seed and food production;
* Support National Museums of Kenya to map the pollinators diversity and identify/locate where they are;
* Incorporate pollination ecology in curriculum at all levels as it is currently not elaborate in Kenya;
* Promote, support, adopt innovations and appropriate technologies that can be used to monitor the pollinators;
* Urgently invest in agro-biodiversity and agro-ecological practices, promoting diverse indigenous seeds and local food systems for a healthy population and climate resilience;
* Withdrawal of harmful agrochemicals, which have been banned elsewhere yet they are still finding their way in the Kenyan market.

**Action 2: Recognise and protect indigenous seeds and associated traditional knowledge**

**We urge the government to:**

* Review local seed policies and regulations which curtail farmers freedom and rights to save, exchange, share and sell their indigenous seeds as envisaged 11(3) (b) to ensure they are favourable to the small-scale farmers and the Farmer Managed Seed System (FMSS);
* Introduce separate certification and quality assurance systems for indigenous seeds which does not follow the DUS system, including but not limited to Quality Declared Seeds (QDS), Open-Source Seed Systems (OSSS) licence, true to label, Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), etc;
* Invest in FMSS by allocating adequate resource to support indigenous seeds, including through support to community seed banks at both national and county;
* Strengthen Genetic Resources Research Institute (GERRI) through adequate budgetary allocation and institutional independence;
* Domesticate international treaties and agreements by developing local policies and legislations to ensure that they are consistent with farmers rights and indigenous seed and food production systems and preferences. We particularly call on the need to domesticate the Nagoya Protocol on ABS and the ITPGRFA to ensure protection of the intellectual rights of farmers to their genetic resources.

**Action 3: Strengthen and upscale participation of women in seed security and in the overall food sovereignty and nutrition.**

**We urge the government to:**

* Facilitate sharing forums for women across all ages (including young women). Such forums will provide opportunities for sharing information, knowledge and skills on seed conservation, protection, farming methods and nutrition knowledge that have been used over generations;
* Strengthen support mechanisms, structures such as land ownership, access to finance and credit and hold leadership positions that will put them at the centre of decision-making to influence policies;
* Sensitize and create awareness across the population on importance of indigenous seed conservation, multiplication, nutrition and benefits of indigenous food;
* Review the education curriculum from primary school level to include content that covers indigenous seeds, food and nutrition towards a more food and nutrition sovereignty;
* Support outreach programs and activities of different institutions that encourage people including school children to produce food to help them appreciate the indigenous food as source of nutrition;
* Partner with the media in the awareness creation, education and sharing of information. The media will also be encouraged to give positive narratives around indigenous food.

**Action 4: Promote the use of food as preventive and curative medicine**

**We urge the government to:**

* Design and implement public campaigns aimed to promote the farming of indigenous foods, appreciation and consumption of these foods;
* Organise multi-sectoral forums that bring the different stakeholders (such as this Fair) to discuss pertinent issues around indigenous food, disseminate research findings and share information;
* Start mentorship programs.

**Action 5: Indigenous seeds and GMOs**

**We demand the government:**

* Shares publicly the report of the task-force used to lift the ban on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs);
* Constitutes a taskforce to undertake public participation and public education and awareness creation before implementation;
* Commissions an independent and impartial scientific study to gauge public opinion and perception on GMOs;
* Establishment of GMO-free zones before implementation of the lifting of the GMO ban GMOs are a threat to our indigenous seeds due to the risk of contamination.

**To our consumers and farmers:**

We recognize the role of farmers and communities in protecting and promoting our biodiversity and cultural heritage over time. We urge them to continue. We call upon the consumers to make wise choices by consuming indigenous foods as they’re healthy, nutritious, safe and climate-resilient.