

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FAIR TRADE GHANA NETWORK ON THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THEIR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS HELD AT BETHEL HEIGHT HOTEL, MADINA, GREATER ACCRA REGION ON THE 24TH and 25TH NOVEMBER, 2021

Preamble

The Fair Trade Ghana Network (FTGN), with support from Agronomes et Veterinaires Sans Frontieres (AVSF) and Fairtrade Africa held our 3rd. Annual General Meeting from November 24 to 25, 2021 at the Bethel Heights Hotel in Madina in the Greater Accra Region to strengthen the network governance system and assess the impact of climate change on the operations of our member organisations.

The Fair Trade Ghana Network is made up of 32 certified producer organisations made up of various products including cocoa, banana, fruits (fresh and dry), and crafts that are either Fairtrade, Organic or WFTO certified. These include eight (8) cocoa producer organisations with a total membership of 129,000, Eighteen (18) producer organisations involved in fruit (fresh and dry) production with a collective membership of 7,714 and 35 members involved in shea. 214 members of the artifacts and pottery sector are also part of the network. The operations and membership of these certified producer organisations spread across almost all the 16 administrative regions of Ghana.

The third AGM dedicated a special session for deliberations on the impact of climate change on its members and after an exhaustive discussion of the following core issues:

- Climate Change and its impact on certified producer organisations in Ghana
- Local and national level adaptation mechanisms available for farmers
- Strengthening other improvement and support system for farmers and other primary producers
- Involvement of primary producers and their communities in climate adaptation and mitigation measures
- Afforestation, reforestation and local participation in forest governance
- Time for full-scale implementation of initiatives such as REDD+, Forest Improvement Programme (FIP) and the Cocoa and Forest Initiative (CFI)
- Localizing climate change communication to the benefit of primary producers by the government and private sector
- How Government and private sector can leverage strategic partnership to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes

Has resolved as follows:

- I. We the Fair Trade Ghana Network express our appreciation to the government for instituting the Greening Ghana Initiative that resulted in the planting of five million trees this year and additionally targeting to plant twenty million trees next year.
- II. We further commend the government of Ghana, UNDP, FAO and UNEP for the effort at making sure Ghana made it with four other countries to sign letters of intent at the COP26 to access part of the \$1 B mobilised by the LEAF coalition for countries committed to increasing their ambitions to protect forests and reduce deforestation. We further acknowledge the great efforts of the Government in strategic bilateral partnership with the World Bank Sweden and Switzerland to actualise down on our emission levels.
- III. We commend the Seed Production Division of Ghana COCOBOD for nursing and distributing 92 million hybrid cocoa seedlings for the rehabilitation of diseased and overage farms, establishment of new farms as well as filling of vacancies in existing young cocoa farms for the 2020/2021 Crop Season as part of the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme.
- IV. We commit to strengthen climate change education and support our members to establish mechanisms to reduce the carbon foot print within the product chain of our members' operations.
- V. We agreed to commit ourselves to advocate the establishment of systems and implementation of initiatives that would enhance the resilience of farmers and craft artisans as well as other vulnerable farming communities.
- VI. We commit to holding government accountable in the delivery of climate change pledges, international agreements and national policies especially that which relates to our members' operations.
- VII. We the Fair Trade Ghana Network commit to partner government, Civil Society Organisations, International Development Agencies and the private sector in the area of research and implementation of localised climate change adaptation and mitigation measures.

However, participants noted the following issues and wish to draw the attention of government, development agencies, private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations to:

1. Climate change has impacted negatively on our members engaged in cocoa production, fruits and nuts (fresh and dry) as well as the craft industry and hence threatens the sustainability of their livelihoods. The high incidence of fruit flies partly due to the effects of climate change has increased post-harvest losses and lowered marketable yields. Farm revenues have averagely reduced by 15-25 per cent for the 18 producer organisations of our members involved in fruit (fresh and dry) production.
2. Galamsey, illegal lumbering, sand winning and other environmentally degradable activities that contribute to climate change are further increasing the vulnerability of our 121,900 members involved in cocoa farming and 214 in the craft and pottery business. The ecological disturbance caused by these activities reduces soil quality and result in increased incidence of pest and diseases. The extinction of some tree species and other forest products also poses a threat to the livelihoods of our members who are into artifacts and pottery.
3. Mostly, agricultural policies and initiative are generalised in terms of target and implementation, hence neglecting peculiar challenges of women, PVVD and other vulnerable farmers. This lack of equity further deepens the plight of the aforementioned producers.
4. Increased cost of production of their produce due to pest and disease prevalence, low yield resulting from unpredictable rainfall pattern and declining soil fertility.
5. Inadequate localised and diffused climate change early warning systems for farmers and vulnerable communities,
6. Lack of empowerment of forest fringe communities resulting in their inability to prevent the activities of illegal chain saw operators and other timber contractors
7. Both past and present studies have revealed that crop production and agriculture as a whole faces serious existential threat due to extreme climate variabilities and very limited resilience mechanisms by farmers and other vulnerable communities.
8. There exists greater challenge regarding the access and quality of climate change awareness and communication to farmers and artisans in the craft industry.
9. Lack of active engagement of farmer-based organisations and cooperatives in the implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures such as REDD+, FIP and CFI.
10. Inadequate consultation and inclusion of private sector and NGO efforts on climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Ghana Climate Change Ambitious Reporting Programme (G-CARP).

Make the following proposal:

1. Public institutions such as the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Ghana COCOBOD must intensify extension service delivery in climate smart agricultural practices.
2. Design very simple and user-friendly climate change awareness tools to improve climate change communications in the communities and the media.
3. Government and relevant stakeholders must adopt and upscale remote sensing and GPS methodology to improve monitoring and prevention of encroachment into Protected Areas.
4. Recognition of the efforts of private sector and NGOs in the Ghana Climate Change Ambitious Reporting Programme.
5. Government must partner with the private sector to nationalise climate change early warning systems that can be easily accessed by all producers including vulnerable farmers and their communities.
6. Effective functioning of a national support system to help farmers organisations and other vulnerable communities affected by the negative impact of climate change instead of the current ad hoc approach.
7. Ensure the voice and concerns of vulnerable farmers and communities are amplified in national Climate Change platforms other than the current one being dominated by the elite "stakeholders".

Signed by



Florence Ewuraba Blankson
(Acting Board Chair, FTGN)