African Friends of the Earth

Members of FoE Africa from Ghana, Togo, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Nigeria, Mauritius, Tunisia and Swaziland met for five days in Accra, Ghana reviewing issues that confront the African environment. A particular focus was placed on the current food crisis and agrofuels on the continent.

FoE Africa groups deplored the characterisation of Africa as a chronically hungry continent; and rejected the projection of the continent as an emblem of poverty and stagnation and thus as a continent dependent on food aid. FoE Africa reiterated the fact that the agricultural fortunes of the continent have been dimmed by externally generated neoliberal policies including Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed on the continent by the World Bank, IMF and other IFIs.
FoE Africa expressed disgust at the manner by which the burden for solutions to every crisis faced by the North is shifted the Africa. Examples include the climate change and energy crises wherein the burden has been inequitably placed on the continent. Africa is forced to adapt to climate impacts and she is also being targeted as the farmland for production of agrofuels to feed the factories and machines in the North.

FoE Africa resolved as follows:

1. Africa contributed very little to climate change and the North owes her an historical debt to bear the costs of adaptation without seeking to further burden the continent through so-called carbon finance mechanisms.

2. Africa must no longer be used as a dumping ground for agricultural products that compete with local production and destroy local economies.

3. Africa must not be opened for contamination by GMOs through food aid and/or agrofuels.

4. Africans must reclaim sovereignty over their agriculture and truncate attempts by agribusiness to turn the so-called food crisis into money-making opportunities through price fixing, hoarding and other unfair trade practices.

5. We reject the promotion of conversion of swaths of African land into monoculture plantations and farms for agrofuels production on the guise that some of such lands are marginal lands. We note that the concept of marginal lands is a cloak for further marginalising the poor in Africa through their being dispossessed and dislocated from their territories.

6. Africa has been subsidising world development for a long time and this has to change and African resources must be used for African development to the benefit of local communities.
FoE Africa calls on all communities of Africa to mobilise, resist and change unwholesome practices that entrench servitude and exploitation on our continent.

Signed: Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Swaziland, South Africa, Mauritius

Statement by Friends of the Earth Africa at her Annual General Meeting held at Accra, Ghana, 7-11 July 2008.