



**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AND NATURAL RESOURCES

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE TOURISM AND NATURAL
RESOURCES ON THE CAPACITY BUILDING SEMINAR ON AGROECOLOGY**

13TH - 15TH NOVEMBER, 2024

KAMPALA, UGANDA

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ACCRONYMS

ACALISE :	The African Centre of Agro-ecology and Livelihood Systems
AECID :	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
CAET :	Characterization of the Agro-ecology Transition
DKP :	Digital Knowledge Platform
FIBL :	Research Institute of Organic Agriculture
FAO :	Food and Agriculture Organization for United Nations
FSN :	Food Security Nutrition
HPLE :	High-level Panel of Experts
ICIPE :	The International Centre of Insect Phycology and Ecology
IFAM:	Organic International
KCOA :	Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agro-ecology in Africa
KHEA:	Knowledge Hub in Eastern Africa
KPs:	Knowledge Products
NEAOS:	National Ecological Organic Agriculture Strategy
NSPEA:	Ecosystem Approach to Crop Production Intensification
UMU:	Uganda Martyr's University
PARLATINO:	Latin American and Caribbean Parliament
ROAM:	Rwanda Organic Agriculture Movement
SDGs:	The Sustainable Development Goals
SDC:	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TAPE:	Tool for Agro-ecology Performance Evaluation
TOAM:	The Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement
TOTs:	Training for Trainers
WFP:	UN World Food Programme

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Experience has demonstrated that the social and political advancements of agroecology, as an approach to inclusive and integrated rural development, largely depend on the creation and adoption of new enabling institutional frameworks. These institutions must possess the capacity to interpret and regulate the structure and functioning of agrifood systems while ensuring continuity and sustainability in processes. Additionally, they should serve as tools to guide and centralize the development of agroecology, leading to tangible outcomes such as laws and policies, training programs, alliances and networks and assessment reports.

Parliamentarians, through their powers in supporting policy adoption, establishing appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks, raising awareness, promoting dialogue between relevant stakeholders, allocating resources for the implementation of policies and programs, and fostering policy coordination and coherences across sectors and agencies, can also make a significant contribution to the adoption of measures aimed at promoting the development of appropriate institutional frameworks for the promotion of agroecology at local, national and global levels.

Building on the fruitful collaboration in the region through the Eastern Africa Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (EAPA-FSN), the East African Legislative Assembly, (EALA) a member of EAPA-FSN, solicited the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Centre for Food and Adequate Living Rights (CEFROHT) of Uganda to strengthen the capacity of the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources (ATNR) on agroecology for food systems transformation in the East African Community. The capacity building seminar was conducted from 13th to 15th November, 2024 at Imperial Royale Hotel, in Kampala, Uganda.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this activity were:

- a) To strengthen the capacities and understanding of parliamentarians in attendance, regarding agroecology and the significance of developing an appropriate institutional framework for promoting and ensuring the monitoring and implementation of progress in this field.
- b) To raise awareness among parliamentarians about existing processes and experiences that facilitate their engagement in agroecology aimed at transforming sustainable food systems.
- c) To develop a pilot seminar on agroecology training for parliamentarians, establishing a foundation for a potentially replicable working methodology in other regions.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The following methodology was used during the capacity building seminar:

- i. Presentations from experts followed by discussion sessions with questions and answers;
- ii. Roundtable segment where current cases and experiences on agroecology were presented; and
- iii. Conducted a field visit to a local agroecological project at Kisoga, Mukono in Uganda which involved observing practices that integrate ecological principles into agriculture.

4.0 PRESENTATIONS FROM EXPERTS

4.1 Agroecology: A Transformative Pathway Towards Sustainable Food Systems & SDGs' Achievement

The presentation argued that agroecology is a crucial pathway to achieving sustainable food systems and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It highlighted the failures of current food systems and presented agroecology as a more sustainable and equitable alternative.

Key Points:

- a) **The Global Challenge:** Current food systems face complex, interconnected challenges like population growth, biodiversity loss, climate change, and price volatility, which current agricultural practices exacerbate.
- b) **Unsustainable Food Systems:** Existing food systems contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, pollution, and social inequity.
- c) **East Africa Context:** The presentation recognizes the specific challenges in East Africa, including climate change impacts, unemployment, food security issues, and gender inequality in agriculture.
- d) **Definition of Agroecology:** It's a holistic approach applying ecological principles to optimize interactions within agricultural systems, emphasizing social aspects and bottom-up, territorial processes.
- e) **Agroecology Principles and Elements:** The presentation referred to the 10 Elements of Agroecology as a framework for transitioning to sustainable systems. These elements are linked to various levels of food system transformation and principles.
- f) **Benefits of Agroecology:** Agroecology can diversify food production, promote safe and healthy food, safeguard natural resources, and create employment.
- g) **Agroecology & the SDGs:** Agroecology is presented as an accelerator for achieving the SDGs, contributing to poverty reduction, food security, climate action, and more.
- h) **Examples of Agroecology at Scale:** The presentation cited examples of successful agroecology initiatives in various regions like the Sahel, West Africa, Andhra Pradesh, and countries with national agroecology strategies.

- i) **FAO's Role:** The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is actively promoting agroecology through its strategic framework, knowledge dissemination, policy dialogue, and integration into projects.
- j) **Online Learning:** The FAO provides various online learning tools and resources related to agroecology.
- k) **Policy Support:** Highlighted various policy approaches that governments can take to support agroecology.

In essence, the presentation advocated for a shift towards agroecological practices as a way to address the interconnected challenges facing our food systems and to achieve a more sustainable and equitable future. It showcases FAO's commitment to this transition.

4.2 Agroecology in the Promotion of Seed Equity and Food Sovereignty

The presentation highlighted that Agroecology promotes seed equity and food sovereignty. Seed equity ensures fair access to seeds, especially indigenous varieties. Food sovereignty allows communities to define their food systems. Farmer-managed seed systems (FMSS) are vital as Agroecology and FMSS empower farmers and promote resilient, equitable food systems.

Key Points:

- a) **Agroecology Definition:** A holistic approach integrating ecological and social principles for sustainable agriculture and food systems. Aims for socially equitable food systems with local control over food production.
- b) **Seed Importance:** Seeds are fundamental for human sustenance, repositories of genetic potential, embodiments of cultural heritage, and crucial for food security and sovereignty. Seed security directly impacts food security and sovereignty for farming communities.
- c) **Problem:** Local farmers face vulnerability due to climate change, market pressures, and seed privatization. GMO seeds introduced by multinational corporations erode local seed systems. A few large corporations control a significant portion of the global seed market, creating economic monopolies. GMOs lead to farmers being dependent on buying seeds and costly fertilizers/pesticides. Corporate control and GMO dependence undermine farmer autonomy and increase production costs.
- d) **GMO Impacts:** Negative impacts on food security, biodiversity, and insects. Concerns about human health (allergies, cancer, antibiotic resistance, DNA changes), risk of outcrossing, economic inequalities, and reduced farmer autonomy. GMOs have broad negative consequences, including health risks and loss of biodiversity.
- e) **Challenges:** Policies favoring seed homogenization and privatization undermine FMSS efforts. Corporate-driven policies threaten local seed systems.

- f) **Legal and Policy Framework:** Highlighted the UDHR, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, UNDROP, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and EAC Treaty provisions supporting the right to food, seed diversity, and regional cooperation. Existing legal frameworks provide a basis for protecting farmer rights and promoting sustainable agriculture.
- g) **Efforts at the EAC Level:** Mentioned Kenya lifting the ban on GMOs and CEFROHT's work to promote smallholder farmers' rights to seed/food security, including filing a public interest case; Activism and legal action are necessary to challenge policies that undermine seed sovereignty.

The presentation called for policy changes through regional policy and law that protects farmers from third parties, supports agroecology, and promotes local and indigenous seed systems, as well as increased investment in agroecological research and community seed banks.

4.3 Advocating for Agroecology and Highlighting the Need to Establish Appropriate Institutional Frameworks for its Effective Development

This presentation focused on the importance of capacity building for parliamentarians, specifically the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism, and Natural Resources (EALA-ATNR), to promote agroecology. It emphasized the need for appropriate institutional frameworks to ensure the effective development of agroecology.

Key Points:

Premise of the Capacity-Building: Social and political advancements in agroecology largely depend on creating and adopting new enabling institutional frameworks. The capacity building aims to:

- a) Enable interpreting and regulating agrifood systems.
- b) Ensure continuity and sustainability.
- c) Guide and centralize agroecology development (laws, policies, etc.).

New Approach: Advocated moving beyond traditional law promotion to address the "dilemma of temporality," acknowledging that legislatures have limited time to achieve concrete results and ensure sustainability.

In short, the presentation stressed the necessity of building the capacity of parliamentarians to understand and promote agroecology through the development of supportive institutional frameworks. It proposed a methodology that includes thematic sessions, roundtable discussions, and practical field visits to foster a deeper understanding and commitment to agroecological principles. The core message is that lasting progress in agroecology requires more than just laws; it requires sustained effort, strong institutions, and knowledgeable policymakers.

4.4 FAO Parliamentary Networks Team

This presentation outlined the activities and strategies of the FAO Parliamentary Networks Team in supporting parliamentary action related to food security and nutrition (FSN). It described the team's key functions, areas of focus, and mechanisms for promoting effective parliamentary engagement.

Key Points:

- i. **What is FAO doing:** The FAO Parliamentary Networks Team focuses on:
 - a) **Creation/Strengthening of Networks:** Building alliances and collaborations among parliamentarians.
 - b) **Capacity Building:** Providing training and support to enhance parliamentarians' knowledge and skills.
 - c) **Knowledge Tools Development:** Creating resources and materials to inform parliamentary action.
 - d) **Promote Legislative Processes:** Supporting the development and implementation of relevant legislation.
 - e) **Global Parliamentary Summits and Pact Mechanism:** Organizing events and initiatives to foster global commitments.
- ii. **Examples of Activities undertaken:**
 - a) **Creation/Strengthening of Networks:** Support for Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum and AFROLAC.
 - b) **Capacity Building:** Workshops on CFS RAI (Committee on World Food Security, Regional Approach and Initiative).
 - c) **Knowledge Tools Development:** Development of E-Learning on Nutrition, Publication on Agroecology, and Handbook on Gender.
 - d) **Promote Legislative Processes:** Supporting East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and PARLATINO.
 - e) **Global Parliamentary Summits and Pact Mechanism:** Organizing the third Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition in Africa by 2026.

Pact Implementation Mechanism: The Pact Implementation Mechanism has various components; Creation and Strengthening of Networks, Knowledge Management (Production) Knowledge Systematization (Organize) and activities in the mechanism include - Database, Thematic Sections, Tools//Materials, Events.

- **How the Mechanism Promotes Parliamentary Action (PACT, ACT, REACT, IMPACT):**
 - a) **PACT:** Through the Pact, parliamentarians commit to transforming agrifood systems to ensure the right to adequate food.
 - b) **ACT:** Promotes knowledge development and exchange to prioritize FSN topics.

- c) **REACT:** Provides a platform (HUB) for gathering, organizing, and disseminating data related to parliamentary activities.
- d) **IMPACT:** Aims to drive sustainable transformation of agrifood systems to address hunger and malnutrition.

In short, the presentation highlighted the multi-faceted approach of the FAO Parliamentary Networks Team in empowering parliamentarians to address food security and nutrition challenges. It focused on building networks, enhancing capacity, developing knowledge tools, supporting legislative action, and promoting global commitments through summits and collaborative mechanisms. The ultimate goal is to drive sustainable transformations in agrifood systems to combat hunger and malnutrition.

4.5 AECID – FAO: Framework for collaboration between the EALA-ATNR and the FAO- Catalysing parliamentary action on agroecology for food systems transformation in the Eastern Africa Community

The presentation highlighted the collaboration between AECID (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation) and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) in their effort to support agriculture and food security.

- a) **The Project:** The FAO-AECID project "Parliamentary work towards SDG-2 in Africa" aims to enhance parliamentary work related to Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) with the overall objective to equip parliamentarians with the tools to advocate for effective food security policies.
- b) **Strategic Alignment:** The project aligns with FAO's new Strategic Framework, emphasizing engagement with parliamentary networks, promoting sustainable food systems, and aiming for better production, nutrition, environment, and livelihoods.
- c) **Urgency:** It emphasizes the urgency for enhanced engagement from all stakeholders to achieve the 2030 Agenda goals.

4.6 Transforming Food Systems through Agroecology

This presentation by the Agroecology Coalition addressed the need for food systems transformation and presented agroecology as a sustainable solution. It outlined the problems with current food systems, highlight the benefits of agroecology and showcased the work of the Agroecology Coalition in promoting agroecological transitions. It explained the role of parliamentarians in advancing Agroecology.

Key Points:

- a) **Current food systems are not sustainable: -**
 - a. Produce about 1/3 of greenhouse gases;
 - b. Are responsible for 80% of biodiversity losses;
 - c. Use up to 70% of freshwater resources;
 - d. Pollute the soil, air, and water;
 - e. Are vulnerable to climate change;

- f. Do not address the triple burden of malnutrition;
 - g. Maintain social inequity and the loss of cultural values.
- b) **Agroecology:**
- a. Science, practice, and social movement;
 - b. Addresses the entire food system (production to consumption);
 - c. Takes the best of all innovations that are compatible with the 13 principles of agroecology;
 - d. Changing social relations, empowering farmers, adding value locally;
 - e. Holistic approach to achieve economic, environmental, climate, health, social and cultural objectives.
 - f. Aims to achieve the sustainable development goals in an integrated manner.
- c) **The Agroecology Coalition: -**
- a. Accelerates food systems transformation through agroecology;
 - b. Facilitates collective action and empowers members;
 - c. 51 Member States;
 - d. 3 Regional commissions;
 - e. 2 Regional/Sub-national authorities/governments;
 - f. 250+ Organizations.
- d) **What are we Observing:**
- a. A growing space for agroecology;
 - b. Food systems take center stage;
 - c. Thinking through transformation;
 - d. More holistic picture of the food systems;
 - e. Multidimensionality.
 - f. Agroecology funding on the rise;
 - g. Recognition of the catalytic role of frontline food system actors;
 - h. A growing emphasis on national policies.
- e) **Role of Parliamentarians in Advancing Agroecology: -**
- a. Engage and collaborate with agroecology practitioners and advocates;
 - b. Stay vigilant regarding greenwashing and conflict of interest;
 - c. Take stock of and analyse bills related to agroecology;
 - d. Establish clear mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effects of laws.
- f) **National Agroecology Strategies in East Africa:** Presented information about how Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda promote Agroecology in their countries.
- g) **Global policy and science documents and reports cite the transformative nature and potential of agroecology.**

In essence, the presentation advocated for a shift towards agroecological food systems, highlighting the Agroecology Coalition's role in facilitating this transformation. It emphasized the importance of collective action, policy support, and increased investment in agroecology to achieve more sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems.

4.7 Policy Recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) on Agroecological and other innovative approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that enhance Food Security and Nutrition

This presentation provided an overview of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and its work on promoting agroecological and other innovative approaches to enhance food security and nutrition. It highlighted the importance of addressing global food system challenges through policy recommendations based on scientific evidence.

Key Points:

- i. **Committee on World Food Security (CFS):**
 - a. An inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to ensure food security and nutrition for all.
 - b. Develops and endorses policy recommendations and guidance on food security and nutrition topics.
 - c. Based on scientific and evidence-based reports.
- ii. **High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE):** Aims to facilitate policy debates and inform policy-making by providing independent, comprehensive, and evidence-based analysis.
- iii. **CFS Policy Products:**
 - a. Developed through a multi-stakeholder, inclusive approach.
 - b. Based on scientific and evidence-based reports produced by the HLPE and/or through technical support from FAO, IFAD, WFP, and the CFS Advisory Group.
 - c. Example: Focus area No. 5 Strengthen institutions for stakeholders' engagement, create an enabling environment for empowering people most at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition and people in vulnerable situations, and address power inequalities in agriculture and food systems
- iv. **Why the HLPE report on Agroecology?** The global food system faces challenges:
 - a. Demographic changes, climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and competition over renewable resources.
 - b. Agriculture accounts for 60% of terrestrial biodiversity loss and 33% of soil degradation.
 - c. 733 million people are hungry, and an estimated 3.1 billion are unable to afford a healthy diet.

- v. **HLPE report on Agroecology development process:** UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) requested its High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) to produce a report on "Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition".
- vi. **Objectives of the policy recommendations:**
 - a. Provide guidance to Member States and stakeholders in strengthening agroecological and other innovative approaches
 - b. Support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and pay particular attention to the promotion of family farming
 - c. The policy recommendations are voluntary and non-binding
- vii. **The policy recommendations:**
 - a. Lay or strengthen the policy foundations for agroecological and other innovative approaches (14 actions)
 - b. Establish, improve & apply comprehensive performance measurement & monitoring frameworks to encourage the adoption of agroecological & other innovative approaches (4 actions)
 - c. Foster the transition to resilient and diversified sustainable agriculture & food systems through agroecological & other innovative approaches (25 actions)
 - d. Strengthen research, innovation, training, and education & foster knowledge co-creation, knowledge sharing & co-learning, on agroecological & other innovative approaches (14 actions)
 - e. Strengthen institutions for stakeholder engagement, create an enabling environment for empowering people most at risk of food insecurity & malnutrition & people in vulnerable situations & address power inequalities in agriculture & food systems (5 actions).

In short, the presentation outlined the role of the CFS in addressing food system challenges through evidence-based policy recommendations that support agroecology and other innovative approaches. It emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement and collaboration to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security for all.

4.8 Legislating to Promote Agroecology Guidelines for a Model Law on Agroecology. Case: The Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO) Model Law on Agroecology

The presentation discussed FAO's support for the parliamentary sector in promoting agroecology, focusing on the case of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO) and its development of a model law on agroecology.

Key Points:

- i. **FAO's Support:** FAO provides support to parliamentarians through:
 - a. Facilitating the exchange of information.

- b. Providing technical support for legislation development.
 - c. Training parliamentarians on food security and nutrition.
 - d. Facilitating links and alliances between parliamentarians.
- ii. **PARLATINO:** The Latin American and Caribbean Parliament aims to promote integration and economic/social development in the region while respecting human rights.
- iii. **Model Law Opportunity:** A model law on agroecology offers opportunities to:
 - a. Influence the region's public and political agenda.
 - b. Contribute to regional legislative unification.
 - c. Redesign agricultural production models.
 - d. Unify dispersed legislation and advance the SDGs.
 - e. Eradicate hunger and food insecurity.
- iv. **Institutional Process:**
 - a. FAO study on "Legislating to Promote Agroecology" (2021)
 - b. PARLATINO request for FAO to develop a Model Law Project (2022)
 - c. Public consultations, systematization of results, and draft Model Law
 - d. Approval by the Agriculture Committee (July 2024) and General Plenary (December 2024)
- v. **Structure and Contents of the Model Law:** The Model Law includes chapters on:
 - a. General Provisions
 - b. Institutional Framework
 - c. National Policy
 - d. Monitoring System
 - e. Education, Innovation, and Food Culture
 - f. Representation and Participation of Civil Society
 - g. Jurisdictional Protection
 - h. International Cooperation
 - i. Financing, Promotion, and Incentives
 - j. Final Provisions
- vi. **Main Reflections and Lessons Learned:**
 - a. Legal frameworks are a concrete opportunity to redesign agricultural models and harmonize laws.
 - b. A successful governing body requires political leadership, multisectoral coordination, and an advisory social participation council.
 - c. Enacting a law is essential but not sufficient; implementation requires enabling institutional frameworks.

In summary, the presentation highlighted the importance of legislative action to promote agroecology, emphasizing FAO's role in supporting parliamentarians and the ongoing effort to develop a model law within PARLATINO. It stressed the need for a comprehensive approach that integrates various sectors and ensures effective implementation.

4.9 Promoting Agroecology using the Legal and Policy Frameworks within East African Region

The presentation discussed the promotion of agroecology (AE) in Africa, with a focus on the East African region. It explored the concept of agroecology, its benefits, barriers to its realization, and the international, regional, and national legal and policy frameworks that support it.

Key Points:

- i. **Understanding Agroecology:** Agroecology is a holistic and integrated approach that combines ecological and social concepts for sustainable agriculture and food systems.
- ii. **Ten Elements of Agro-ecology:** These include diversity, co-creation of knowledge, synergy, efficiency, recycling, resilience, human and social values, culture and food tradition, responsible governance, and circular and solidarity economy.
- iii. **Benefits of Agro-ecology for Africa:**
 - a. It provides a lifeline for long-lasting food systems.
 - b. Combines social justice, ecological science, and indigenous knowledge.
 - c. Offers a way out of vulnerability caused by monocultures and dependency on external inputs.
 - d. Promotes community bonds.
 - e. Minimizes reliance on energy-intensive external inputs.
 - f. Offers a pathway to food security, biodiversity preservation, and community empowerment.
- iv. **Barriers to Realizing Agro-ecology in Africa:**
 - a. Lack of policy directions and institutional support.
 - b. Lack of knowledge about agro-ecology.
 - c. Lack of political will.
 - d. Lack of access to credits and markets.
 - e. Limited extension services and weak land tenure systems.
- v. **International and Regional Frameworks on Agro-ecology:**
 - a. Agenda 21 of the Rio Declaration (1991)
 - b. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1993
 - c. Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) (2003)
 - d. Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Food (VGRtF) (2004)
 - e. International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) (2001)
 - f. SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and related targets
 - g. CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ATs)
 - h. Paris Agreement on Climate Change
 - i. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
- vi. **Regional Policy Frameworks on Agro-ecology:**

- a. AU Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food (2003)
- b. Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) (2004)
- c. Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation (2014)
- d. Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa (F&G) (2009)
- e. African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) for 2015-2025
- f. Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA)
- vii. **Policy Framework on AE in East Africa:**
 - a. EAC Treaty (1999) and the Agricultural and Rural Development Policy (ARDP) (2005-2030)
 - b. Articles 105-110 of the EAC Treaty related to agriculture.
 - c. EAC Vision 2050 on Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development (2016).
- viii. **Other Relevant Development in EAC:** The East African Organic Products Standard (EAOPS), growing domestic markets, and the presence of organizations alter alia ROAM, KOAN, TOAM, and NOGAMU, PELUM, Tabio, Kebio, etc.
- ix. **Examples of Good Practices:**
 - a. Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy (KCSAS)
 - b. Madagascar's National Strategy for Organic Agriculture (SNABIO)
 - c. Uganda's National Organic Agriculture Policy (NOAP)
- x. **Concluding Remarks:**
 - a. Agroecology is critical for food security and sustainability in Africa.
 - b. Developing laws and policies to enhance AE is indispensable.
 - c. EAC members must collaborate and demonstrate political will.
 - d. EAC members should pool resources to integrate AE into agriculture and food security plans.
 - e. Continued engagement with EAC organs is necessary.

In essence, the presentation advocated for the promotion of agroecology in East Africa by leveraging existing legal and policy frameworks. It highlighted the benefits of agroecology, acknowledged the barriers, and emphasized the importance of political will and regional collaboration to achieve sustainable food systems.

4.10 Uganda's experience in Developing the National Agroecology Strategy

The presentation indicated that Uganda is actively developing a National Agroecology Strategy through research and comprehensive consultations to address issues in current farming systems. The strategy aims to create agricultural systems that sustainably feed the growing population with quality food while conserving natural resources.

- a) **Problem Statement:** Uganda faces increasing degradation and diminishing biodiversity due to deforestation and wetland loss and major issues affecting agroecology in Uganda.

- b) **Agroecology as an Alternative:** Agroecology is presented as a farming system that prioritizes nature's goods and services without causing damage and promotes ecological balance, as opposed to conventional methods that rely on genetics, inorganic inputs, and may lead to pollution.
- c) **Strategic Direction:** The vision is a sustainable food system and resilient livelihoods for all. The mission is to scale up the use of agroecological principles and practices to boost production, value addition, and market access.
- d) **Priority Strategies:** The strategy involves enhancing the availability of agroecological inputs, strengthening research and innovation, promoting value addition, enhancing social equity, and strengthening systems for agroecology transitioning.
- e) **Expected Outcomes:** The anticipated outcomes include improved food quality and safety, increased competitiveness of agroecological products, reduced production costs, increased farmer incomes, reduced vulnerability to climate change, and improved biodiversity.
- f) **Financing:** The strategy will be funded through government resources, private investments, non-tax revenue, low-interest credit, equity/shareholder loans, and development partner grants/loans.

The presentation called upon EALA to play a role in promoting agroecology in the EAC through advocacy, cross-border collaboration, policy development, accountability, and resource mobilization.

4.11 The National Ecological Organic Agriculture Strategy 2023-2030 in Tanzania

The presentation introduced the National Ecological Organic Agriculture Strategy (NEOAS) of Tanzania, outlining its vision, mission, strategic objectives, and development process. It emphasized the importance of ecological organic agriculture for environmental conservation, human health, climate resilience, and national economic growth.

Key Points:

- i. **Vision:** To establish Tanzania as a *leading* ecological organic agriculture subsector.
- ii. **Mission:** To develop and implement supportive policy instruments, investments, and partnerships to scale up ecological organic agriculture interventions.
- iii. **12 Strategic Objectives:** These objectives cover a wide range of areas, including:
 - a. Enhancing the capacity of institutions.
 - b. Promoting the availability and accessibility of EOA inputs.
 - c. Strengthening ICT systems for EOA information dissemination.
 - d. Facilitating the development of EOA value chains.

- e. Ensuring compliance with EOA standards and certification.
- f. Strengthening environmental conservation.
- g. Increasing business and trade volumes.
- iv. **Process of Development:** The NEOAS was developed through a multi-stakeholder process, including:
 - a. Initiation by the Ministry of Agriculture
 - b. Consultations with relevant stakeholders
 - c. Field Visits in ecological zones
 - d. Feedback from committees
 - e. Validation by stakeholders
- v. **Supportive Partners:** The strategy development was inclusive by both private and public institutions.

In summary, the NEOAS aims to promote and develop ecological organic agriculture in Tanzania through a strategic and collaborative approach, with the ultimate goal of enhancing sustainability, food security, and economic growth. The engagement of parliament and other stakeholders is crucial for its success.

4.12 Uganda Martyrs University and their contribution in the development and promotion of agroecology in the region and Reflections on how parliamentary action can contribute to the expansion of Agroecology

This presentation focused on Uganda Martyrs University's (UMU) contribution to the development and promotion of agroecology, specifically through the African Centre of Agroecology and Livelihood Systems (ACALISE). It also reflected on how parliamentary action can further expand agroecology.

Key Points:

- i. **Theme:** Advocating for agroecology and highlighting the need to establish appropriate institutional frameworks for its effective development.
- ii. **Problem Statement:**
 - a. High engagement in crop production (93.4%), but limited access to arable land (20-25% of family farms).
 - b. Low food stocks (only 21% of households), leading to food stress and crisis.
 - c. Low adoption of research findings
 - d. High levels of vulnerability/low levels of resilience to shocks
 - e. Agriculture accounts for about 52% of Uganda's GDP and is the main source of income, employing 90% of the population.
 - f. The country derives about 85% of its export earnings from the sector
 - g. Women account for about 70% of the farming labour.
 - h. Challenges include low production and productivity, lack of sustainability systems, and inadequate funding for research.

- iii. **Uganda Martyrs University and ACALISE:**
 - a. Aims to streamline the production of a high level of well-motivated agroecology experts.
 - b. Focus areas:
 - Training of M.Sc. and Ph.D. students.
 - Integration of ecological approaches in agriculture.
 - Initiation of critical regional collaborations.
 - Promotion of Public Private Partnerships (PPP).
- iv. **ACALISE output**
 - a. Train 60 PhD, 40% female, 30% should be regional students
 - b. 300 M.Sc, 40% of which female, 30% of which should be regional students
 - c. train 200 other critical experts.
- v. **The bigger picture Actions** are complementary to other local and international initiatives like Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 21, Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).
- vi. **Synergy with Industry UMU** has trained top notch Agroecologists
 - award was given to the faculty of agriculture, was the winner of the Agriculture extension and advisory services award by MAAIF in conjunction with UGANDA FORUM FOR AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY SERVICES (UFAAS).
- vii. **How parliamentary action can contribute to agroecology expansion:**
 - a. Increasing climate finance for smallholder farmers.
 - b. Prioritizing support for the female gender.
 - c. Helping farmers engage with markets and wealth creation.
 - d. Addressing high cost, adulteration, and low application of key inputs.
 - e. Prioritize food sovereignty and agroecology over "business as usual" in curricula, policy, and financial investments.

In short, the presentation highlighted Uganda Martyrs University's dedication to agroecology through ACALISE and emphasized the critical role of parliamentarians in fostering sustainable agriculture by increasing investment, prioritizing gender equity, connecting farmers to markets, and tackling input-related challenges. The ultimate message is the need to prioritize agroecology in curricula, policies, and financial investments to ensure food sovereignty.

4.13 Knowledge Hub in Eastern Africa (KHEA) and Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture & Agroecology in Africa (KCOA)

The presentation focused on the focus areas of the two organisations and their achievements in promoting agroecology:

Key points:

- a) **KHEA and KCOA:** These are initiatives focused on promoting organic agriculture and agroecology in Eastern Africa.
- b) **Structure:** KHEA has a structure involving various partners like Bio vision Africa Trust, PELUM Uganda, TOAM, ROAM, and others.
- c) **International Partners:** Organizations like IFOAM Organics International, ICIPE, FIBL, and Access Agriculture contribute through capacity development, information gathering, and video translation.
- d) **Coverage:** BvAT (Biovision Africa Trust) and PELUM Uganda have specific geographical coverage areas.
- e) **Focus Areas:** The presentation highlighted key focus areas:
 - Knowledge Assembly
 - Capacity Building & Dissemination
 - Market Development
 - Policy & Advocacy
- f) **Digital Knowledge Platform (DKP):** An online platform (kcoa-africa.org) serves as a knowledge database, with links to Infonet Biovision, Access Agriculture, and the Africa Organic Manual.
- g) **DKP and KPs:** The DKP has seen user engagement, content development, and utilization metrics.
- h) **ToTT Cascade:** A training model involving Master Trainers, Multipliers, and Community Trainers to reach farmers.
- i) **Know What You Eat Campaign:** A campaign to raise consumer awareness.
- j) **Policy Advocacy:** Efforts to integrate agroecology into policies and strategies in Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, and Madagascar.

4.14 Development and Promotion of Agroecology in East Africa by Slow Food Movement

The presentation focused on the work of Slow Food movement in East Africa in developing and promoting agroecology. It outlined Slow Food movement's mission, priorities, and various activities aimed at supporting local food systems and promoting sustainable agriculture.

Key Points:

- a) Slow Food's movement Mission: To ensure good, clean, and fair food for all.
- b) Slow Food's Priorities:
 - a. Defend biological and cultural diversity.
 - b. Educate, inspire, and mobilize citizens.
 - c. Influence policies in the public and private sectors.
- c) Slow Food Collaborative on Agroecological Food Systems Transformation in Eastern Africa: Works to boost local economies and improve livelihoods through agroecology in Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

- d) Activities Slow food focus on Agroecological food systems
- e) Slow Food Farms: Plots of land cultivated for agricultural purposes according to the principles of agroecology.
- f) Slow Food Communities: Local groups who share Slow Food values and unite around specific objectives, such as protecting and promoting a particular local food.
- g) Slow Food Gardens: Incubating Agroecological knowledge and supporting biodiversity and food sovereignty.
- h) Slow Food Agroecological Farmers' Markets: Meeting points where local producers offer healthy, quality food directly to consumers at fair prices.
- i) Slow Food Cooks Alliance: Network of cooks and chefs preserving biodiversity and supporting small-scale producers.
- j) Slow Food Travel: Sustainable tourism model connecting travellers with local food producers and communities.
- k) Community Seed Farmers and Saving Networks: Preserving indigenous seeds through growing and seed banking.
- l) Community Agroecology Knowledge Incubation and Sharing Centers: Serve as hubs for fostering sustainable agricultural practices and promoting food sovereignty.
- m) Learning Exchanges and Academies: Programs promoting knowledge sharing and skill development among food producers

In summary, the presentation emphasized the diverse initiatives undertaken by Slow Food in East Africa to promote agroecology, build resilient food systems, and support local communities. It highlighted the organization's commitment to preserving biodiversity, fostering knowledge exchange, and creating market opportunities for sustainable food producers.

4.15 Preliminary TAPE Results: Impact Assessment of Ecological Organic Agriculture in Walmera, woreda, Ethiopia

The presentation discussed the preliminary results of the TAPE (Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation) assessment on the impact of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) in Walmera Woreda, Ethiopia. The assessment is part of the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative (EOA-I) in Ethiopia, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The EOA-I aims to sustain soil health and mainstream ecological organic agriculture into national agricultural systems by 2025.

Key Points:

TAPE Tool: The TAPE tool is used to assess the agroecological transition among EOA beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries and to evaluate the relationship between EOA and multidimensional sustainability.

Findings:

- a) EOA beneficiaries showed slightly better performance in agroecological transition, with statistically significant differences in overall CAET score, diversity, synergy, efficiency, recycling, and co-creation and sharing of knowledge.
- b) More advanced agroecological farms correlate with higher value of agricultural production and better food security.
- c) Beneficiaries presented better performance in soil health.
- d) Proven use of several EOA practices for horticultural activities and synthetic fertilizers are negligible, and pesticides are limited within the EOA plots.

Recommendations:

- a) Provide continued technical support, expand knowledge-raising activities, promote crop/tree growth for biomass, support leguminous species, and explore animal raising opportunities.
- b) Further study women and youth empowerment, assess credit access needs, support informal producer groups, promote awareness campaigns, and restore local markets.

In essence, the presentation highlighted the positive impacts of EOA on agroecological transition, agricultural production, food security, and soil health, while recommending further support and expansion of the initiative. The assessment indicated a positive correlation between agroecology and economic and environmental performance.

4.16 Agroecology Performance Evaluation of Farms in Teso:

A case of Amuria and Katakwi in Uganda

This presentation discussed the findings of an agroecology performance evaluation conducted on farms in the Teso subregion of Uganda (Katakwi and Amuria districts). The evaluation, conducted by Dan Church Aid (DCA), assessed the extent to which agroecology is practiced and its impact on the farms.

Key Points:

- i. **Dan Church Aid (DCA):**
 - a. Works with partners in North-Eastern Uganda and the West Nile districts.
 - b. Implements 3 core goals: Build Resilient Communities, Save lives and Fight Extreme Inequality.
 - c. Implements Agroecology as a strategy for adapting and mitigating climate change.
 - d. Agroecology initiatives have promoted restoration of degenerated landscapes, created micro-climates, improved biodiversity, incomes and livelihoods.
- ii. **Agroecology Definition:**

- a. A science, practice and social movement applying ecological concepts and principles to manage interactions and design sustainable agriculture and food systems.
 - b. Combines local and scientific knowledge.
 - c. Based on four main practices: Farm planning & design, soil and water conservation, soil fertility management, integrated disease and pest management.
 - d. Considers the entirety of the agricultural food system.
 - e. Based on the 10 elements (FAO), 13 principles (HLPE) and the 6 levels (Gliessman).
- iii. **Objectives of the Evaluation:**
 - a. Assess the extent to which agroecology is practiced among farmers in the Teso subregion.
 - b. Analyze the context and enabling environment for transitioning to agroecology.
 - c. Examine the current agroecological status of farms, highlighting gaps, strengths, and weaknesses.
- iv. **Methodology:**
 - a. Used the Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE) to assess agroecology across farms in Amuria, Katakwi, and Kapelebyong.
 - b. Desk study and focus group discussions (FDGs) with District local government.
 - c. Out of 1032 farmers, 120 farmers and 12 farms were randomly selected.
- v. **TAPE Steps:**
 - a. Step 0: Description of systems and context.
 - b. Step 1: Characterization of Agroecological Transition (CAET).
 - c. Step 2: Core Performance Criteria.
 - d. Step 3: Joint Analysis of Step 1 and 2 and Participatory Interpretation.
- vi. **Description of Context and Systems:**
 - a. Katakwi, Amuria, and Kapelebyong are in the Northeastern Savannah grasslands with two rainy seasons.
 - b. Land use includes agriculture for crop production (cassava, groundnuts, sweet potato) and livestock production.
 - c. Production systems include cropping, mixed crop-livestock, agro-pastoral and agro-silvo-pastoral.
 - d. 80% of land is under customary ownership.
 - e. Environmental challenges include prolonged drought, flash floods, pest, and diseases.
 - f. No policies on agroecology enacted.
- vii. **Results:** Overall score was below 50% across all farms and districts. Scores greater than 50% were observed for human and social values and culture and food traditions.

viii. **Recommendations:**

- a. Support farmers in transitioning to agroecology by improving production assets, technology use, and market access.
- b. Take advantage of human and social values, cultural traditions, good soil health, and biodiversity.
- c. Develop strategies to improve productivity and value addition and create price-responsive market linkages.
- d. Leverage national policy and government frameworks to strengthen local/community engagement.
- e. Examine factors affecting the productivity of cassava, sorghum, sweet potato, and maize.

ix. **What Parliamentarians Can Do:**

- a. Push for promotion of agroecological products and entrepreneurs.
- b. Promote Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS).
- c. Preserve food and traditions through saving indigenous seed.
- d. Popularize and disseminate the National Organic Agric. Policy and Agroecology strategy.

In summary, the presentation provided an overview of DCA's work in promoting agroecology in the Teso subregion of Uganda. The evaluation results highlighted the potential of agroecology to improve livelihoods and food security. It recommends supporting farmers in the transition to agroecology. Parliamentarians have a crucial role in advocating for policies and strategies that support these changes.

4.17 Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from all the presentations and interactive discussion are as follows:

1. **Agroecology is a Solution:** Agroecology is not just a farming practice but a science, social movement, and policy framework that integrates ecological principles, local knowledge, and social equity. It addresses the failures of current food systems by promoting biodiversity, soil health, and climate resilience while empowering farmers and communities.
2. **Enabling Policy and Institutional Frameworks are crucial:** The seminar emphasized the need for supportive policies and legal frameworks to mainstream agroecology. Examples include Uganda's National Agroecology Strategy, Tanzania's Ecological Organic Agriculture Strategy, and the PARLATINO Model Law on Agroecology. These frameworks provide a foundation for scaling up agroecological practices and ensuring their sustainability.
3. **Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building are important:** Initiatives like the Knowledge Hub in Eastern Africa (KHEA) and the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture & Agroecology in Africa (KCOA) play a pivotal role in disseminating agroecological knowledge, building capacity, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. Training programs, digital platforms, and farmer networks are essential for scaling agroecology.

4. **Evidence of Impact and Case Studies:** Evidence from TAPE (Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation) assessments in Ethiopia and Uganda demonstrated the positive impacts of agroecology on soil health, food security, and farmer livelihoods. These case studies highlight the potential of agroecology to transform food systems at the local level.
5. **Advocacy and Social Movements play a critical role:** Organizations like FAO, the World Committee on Food and Security, the Agroecology Coalition and the Slow Food Movement are driving advocacy efforts, promoting seed equity, and empowering farmers to reclaim control over their food systems. Their work underscores the importance of grassroots movements in advancing agroecology.
6. **The role of Parliamentarians and Policymakers is essential:** Parliamentarians have a critical role in advocating for agroecology, developing supportive legislation, and ensuring accountability. Their engagement is essential for integrating agroecology into national and regional policies, mobilizing resources, and fostering cross-border collaboration.
7. **Research and Education have an important role to play:** Institutions like Uganda Martyrs University are contributing to agroecology through research, training, and innovation. Strengthening agroecological research and integrating it into educational curricula are vital for building a skilled workforce and driving systemic change.

5.0 KEY OBSERVATIONS

- a) The Committee adopted a resolution in recognition of agroecology as a Strategic Priority of the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources of EALA for formulating and recommending sustainable policies in Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources Management in the East African Region. A copy of the Resolution is hereto attached as **Annex 1**.
- b) There is need for an assessment of the existing laws of EAC to ensure the agricultural priorities are oriented to our needs.
- c) Parliamentary action is crucial for achievement of sustainable food security by shaping public policy and promote government sustainability.
- d) To effectively foster agroecology, an enabling environment needs to be created through legal and policy framework. This involves developing policies and laws that support agroecological practices and ensuring access to resources.
- e) There is a critical need to transform food production systems to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change. This transformation involves adopting sustainable practices across the entire food chain, from production to consumption.
- f) There is need for parliamentarians to work with research institutions and empower them with resources to conduct research on our soil and climate. This is crucial for informed policymaking and effective resource management.

- g) The Committee welcomes FAO commitment to conducting capacity building on agroecology for all members of the East African Legislative Assembly. This support is focused on strengthening the capacity of legislators in promoting sustainable agricultural practices and policies, including agroecology.

6.0 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- a) To commend the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Centre for Food and Adequate Living Rights (CEFROHT) of Uganda for their financial and technical support offered to the Assembly and the Committee during the organization and undertaking of this activity.
- b) There is need for a regional legislation on agroecology within the Community which will promote sustainable agricultural practices and improve food security by ensuring institutions adhere to agroecological principles.
- c) There is need to advocate for policies and laws within the East African Community that prioritize the protection of local seeds and food systems.
- d) Parliamentarians should actively advocate for increased resource allocation towards transforming food systems, emphasizing food safety and better solutions.
- e) Parliamentarians should strongly advocate for the establishment of Community seed banks to improve food production, nutrition. These banks are crucial for preserving local crop varieties, enhancing biodiversity and promoting sustainable agriculture and ultimately contributing to food security and sovereignty.
- f) Parliamentarians should champion increased research budgets for food systems to foster innovation and address challenges in food production, distribution and consumption. This will lead to evidence-based policies and sustainable solutions for food security and nutrition.
- g) Parliamentarians should actively advocate for the inclusion and empowerment of women in agroecology, as they are crucial actors in food production and play a vital role in achieving food security and sustainable agricultural practices.
- h) There is need for Parliamentarians to advocate for policies that will expand agricultural scholarships to include research and academia. This would foster a more robust and innovative agricultural sector by ensuring a pipeline of skilled professionals and driving advancements in agricultural science and technology.
- i) There is need to lobby for and implement regional -level programs that support food safety. Such programs should focus on building capacity, sharing best practices and harmonizing regulations to enhance food safety standards and practices.
- j) There is a recognized need for capacity building on agroecology for all members of parliaments in East Africa. This is because agroecology offers a sustainable approach to food production that can enhance food security,

improve livelihoods and promote environmental sustainability in the region play a crucial role in policymaking and resource allocation, their understanding of agroecology is vital for its successful implementation and scaling up.

- k) A comprehensive review and analysis of existing EAC legal frameworks related to agroecology is crucial to identify gaps and ensure effective implementation for sustainable agricultural practices.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The capacity building seminar on agroecology and sustainable food systems highlighted the need for a multi-faceted approach to promoting agroecology that targets various stakeholders, including farmers, policymakers, researchers, and civil society organizations. Agroecology is not just an alternative but a necessity for achieving sustainable food systems in the East African Community and beyond. By embracing agroecology, we can create resilient, equitable, and sustainable food systems that benefit both people and the planet. The seminar served as a call to action for all stakeholders to collaborate, innovate, and advocate for agroecology as a cornerstone of food systems transformation.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We express our profound gratitude to the leadership of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) for their unwavering support and commitment to the Agriculture, Tourism, and Natural Resources Committee (ATNR) in facilitating the successful capacity-building initiative on agro-ecology in Kampala. Your visionary leadership has been instrumental in advancing sustainable agricultural practices across the region.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all stakeholders who contributed to the success of this capacity-building program. In particular, we acknowledge the invaluable partnership of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-Rome) through its Parliamentary Partnerships Department, whose expertise and resources enriched the initiative. Similarly, we are deeply grateful to the Centre for Food and Human Rights Training (CEFROHT) for their significant contributions and collaborative efforts in making this event a success.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the Council of Ministers for their pivotal role in enabling policy reforms and implementation, which will undoubtedly take the lead for a strong foundation for the integration of agro-ecological principles into

regional frameworks. Your dedication to fostering an enabling environment for sustainable development is truly commendable dear Council as we appreciate the support by the Secretariat. I take this opportunity to appreciate my fellow Members of the Assembly for their high level commitments, especially Members of the ATNR Committee for their dedication, passion and resilience in delivering ATNR Committee Mandate. Together, our collective efforts will strengthen our shared commitment to promoting agro-ecology and sustainable development in the East African region.

Thank you for your dedication and partnership.