

Four Points by Sheraton, Kampala: Declaration on promoting regional organic trade

Preamble

We, the 49 participants representing 16 countries in Africa from the East African Community Secretariat (EAC); the Economic Community of West African States Secretariat; the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries; the National Organic Agriculture Movements (NOAMs) of Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; the African Organic Network (AfrONet); the National Bureaus of Standards of Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania; Makerere University; Ugocert; Farmers Media; and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) are cognizant of the need to

- explore measures to increase the demand and supply of certified organic products within the EAC and the entire African continent, while increasing the formal trade of these products, and
- explore the possibilities of collaboration at the EAC level and with actors in other economic blocs: Arab Maghreb Union , Community of Sahel-Saharan States, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Economic Community of Central African States, Economic Community of West African States, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and Southern African Development Community to boost the formal trade of organic products beyond the EAC.

We express our gratitude to IISD, the EAC Secretariat, AfrONet, and the NOAM of Uganda, for supporting and organizing the workshop on **Leveraging Intraregional**

Trade of Organic Products from the Eastern Africa Region held at the Four Points by Sheraton hotel in Kampala, Uganda, from June 11 to 12, 2025.

We recognize that the sustainable supply of organic agriculture products is a prerequisite for efficient trade relationships; therefore, with regard to production, we declare that

- raising awareness and training farmers about organic agriculture production practices, processes (sorting, packaging, labelling), and benefits is vital to enhancing production capacity and reducing post-harvest losses while still fulfilling increasing demand; and
- it is critical that we accelerate and adopt Participatory Guarantee Systems through training on how to operate these tools to provide quality assurance, trust, and a guarantee of organic products.

We recognize that promoting the sustainable consumption of organic agriculture products is a key driver of the growing demand for organic products; therefore, with regard to consumption, we declare that

- increased awareness of consumers about health, environmental, and other benefits of consuming organic products is paramount to expanding local, national, and regional demand. For example, through the engagement of retailers, hotels, and eco-lodges; institutions (hospitals, schools); and development agencies (e.g. United Nations);
- functional platforms that bring farmers and consumers together—through, for example, farmers markets, trade fairs, symposiums and meetings—are key in ensuring strong trading relationships;
- recognition by the EAC of the Kilimohai label is a prerequisite for wider regional acceptance, utilization, and the consumption of organic products in the region and beyond; and
- the continuous promotion of the Kilimohai label will ensure we build a recognized brand by consumers.

We recognize the role of certification in confirming the existence of a credible guarantee of quality organic production and management systems; therefore, regarding certification,

- we call upon the EAC Secretariat to spearhead the creation of an affordable scheme for accreditation, inspection, audit, and certification that aligns with recognized international standards to certify vital organic production and facilitate the implementation of conformity assessments of organic standards.

Based on this scheme, we support the following actions:

- building the capacity of auditors and National Bureaus of Standards,
- recognizing NOAMs' role in endorsing the Participatory Guarantee System groups,
- increasing the number of local certification bodies and ensuring low cost for the certification body (to eventually reduce the cost of the standard for producers), and
- ensuring that the East African organic product standard is accessible to value chain actors.

We recognize that trade promotion of organic agriculture products is essential to both creating vibrant organic businesses and providing sustainable incomes for value chain actors; therefore, regarding trade, we declare the following:

- It is imperative that there is increased trade of bio-inputs within the EAC and other blocs to stimulate the supply of organic products.
- Promoting mutual recognition of national and regional organic standards within and outside Africa is key for diversifying markets.
- We must leverage the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement to formalize the trade of organic products within Africa.
- Establishing a system for organic agriculture data collection, analysis, and dissemination is paramount for future success.