

February 10, 2020

António Guterres
Secretary-General, United Nations
New York, NY USA

Call to Revoke AGRA's Agnes Kalibata as Special Envoy to 2021 UN Food Systems Summit

Dear Secretary-General Guterres,

We, the undersigned 176 organizations from 83 countries, write to condemn and reject the appointment of Agnes Kalibata, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), as your Special Envoy to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

With 820 million people hungry and an escalating climate crisis, the need for significant global action is urgent to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Given the history of AGRA, the appointment of its President to lead, prepare, and design the Summit, will result in another forum that advances the interests of agribusiness at the expense of farmers and our planet.

Founded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, AGRA's efforts have centered on capturing and diverting public resources to benefit large corporate interests. Their finance-intensive and high input agricultural model is not sustainable beyond constant subsidy, which is drawn from increasingly scarce public resources. Since 2006, AGRA has worked to open up Africa – seen as an untapped market for corporate monopolies controlling commercial seeds, genetically modified crops, fossil fuel-heavy synthetic fertilizers and polluting pesticides. This is an ill-conceived approach focused on mono cultural commodity production by large agribusiness at the expense of sustainable livelihoods, human development, and poverty eradication.

Ignoring the past failures of the Green Revolution and industrial agriculture, AGRA continues to promote the same, orienting farmers into global value chains for the export of standardized commodities. Vast power imbalances in these global chains means multinational grain traders, silo owners, transport companies, feed manufacturers, and financial institutions extract and retain the majority of value for themselves, while farmers remain trapped in cycles of poverty and debt.

Furthermore, this model of fossil fuel-based industrial agriculture is laying waste to the environment. Synthetic fertilizers are responsible for a significant share of greenhouse gas emissions. Nitrogen from these fertilizers is poorly absorbed by plants, and subsequently leaches into water systems and escapes into the atmosphere in the form of nitrous oxide. Long distance transport adds carbon emissions. Family farmers, pastoralists, and Indigenous communities, who are the stewards of the land and guardians of agricultural biodiversity, are marginalized and forced off their land, replaced by pesticide-reliant monocultures.

If the Food Systems Summit truly aims to “generate momentum, expand the knowledge and share experience and approaches worldwide to unleash the benefits of food systems for all people,” Agnes Kalibata is unfit and the wrong candidate to lead it. The world must shift gears on food and agriculture in order to tackle the major challenges of our time. Beyond increasing agricultural yields, we must produce and consume better. We need diversified and nutritious crops, produced in a truly sustainable manner,

preserving and restoring the health and fertility of our soils, managing our water efficiently, ensuring resilience to climatic shocks, and providing adequate food and income to family farmers. Mrs. Kalibata's appointment is a deliberate attempt to silence the farmers of the world who feed, nurture, and protect the planet.

As stated by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, the priority should be to strengthen food sovereignty, the fight against climate change and the conservation of biodiversity. This requires a rapid transition from corporate-dominated industrial agriculture to family farms working in harmony with nature and maintaining diverse ecosystems. Agroecology is a practical solution for systemic change to ensure dignified rural livelihoods and the right to healthy food and nutrition for all, while freeing farmers from cycles of debt and dependency.

AGRA and Mrs. Kalibata, who also sits on the board of the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), are puppets of agro-industrial corporations and their shareholders. Led by Mrs. Kalibata, the Summit will be nothing but a tool for further corporate predation on the people and natural systems. We therefore call on you to immediately revoke Mrs. Kalibata's appointment.

Sincerely,

Signatories:

ACT NOW!, Papua New Guinea

Action Aid International, International

Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN), International

African Women's Network for Community management of Forests (REFACOF), Cameroon

Agroecology Research-Action Collective (ARC), International

All India Kisan Sabha, India

All India Union of Forest Working People, India

Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture (ASHA), India

Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV, INC), Philippines

ATTAC Hungary Association, Hungary

Autre Terre, Belgium

Banana Link, UK

Biowatch South Africa, South Africa

CELCOR, Papua New Guinea

Center for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, UK

Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera (CDPC), Philippines

Centre d'études et d'expérimentations économiques et sociales de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, International

Centre International de Formation en Agroécologie Nyéléni, Mali

Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." (CSMM), Ecuador

Centro Interdisciplinario de Investigación y Desarrollo Alternativo, U Yich Lu'um, Mexico

Cercle pour la Défense de l'Environnement (CEDEN), Democratic Republic of Congo

CCFD-Terre Solidaire, France

Community Alliance for Global Justice/AGRA Watch, USA

Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes (CNOP), Mali

CNCD-11.11.11., Belgium

Cultural Survival, International

Eat for the Earth, USA

Eco Custodian Advocates, Papua New Guinea
Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium
Environmental Monitoring Group, South Africa
Eclosio, Belgium
Ecological Solutions Foundation, Solomon Islands
Ecumenical Academy (Ekumenická akademie), Czech Republic
ETC Group, Global
Europe Third World Center, Switzerland
Fair Food Alliance Brisbane, Australia
Farmworker Association of Florida, USA
FOCO Foro Ciudadano de Participación, Argentina
Food Connect Foundation, Australia
Food Sovereignty Ghana, Ghana
Forest Peoples Programme, UK
Federation of Friends of the Earth International (76 national organizations)
Fundacion para Estudio e Investigacion de la Mujer, Argentina
Global Aktion, Denmark
Global Forest Coalition, International
GRAIN, International
Gram Bharati Samiti (GBS), India
Green Development Advocates (GDA), Cameroon
Green Scenery, Sierra Leone
Groundswell International, Global
Health of Mother Earth Foundation, Nigeria
Human Rights Defenders Network, Sierra Leone
Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF), India
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (Iowa CCI), USA
Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sangathan, India
Jubilee Australia, Australia
La Route du Sel et de l'Espoir, France
La Via Campesina, Denmark
Iles de Paix, Belgium
Inyanda National Land Movement, South Africa
Louvain Cooperation, Belgium
Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), Brazil
Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation, Inc. (MISFI), Philippines
National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE), Uganda
Network Movement for Justice and Development, Sierra Leone
Never Ending Food, Malawi
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, USA
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS), International
Plateforme Nationale des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles du Bénin (PNOPPA), Benin
PLANT (Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples), Brazil
Popular Education & Action Centre (PEACE), India
PROSALUS, Spain
Rapad Maroc, Morocco
Regional Center for International Development Cooperation (RCIDC) International, Uganda

Rural Initiative on Participatory Agriculture Network (RIPAN), Kenya
Rural Women's Assembly Southern Africa, South Africa
Sahara Bahuuddeshiay Sanstha Kinhi, India
Sahayak Trust, India
Send a Cow (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia)
Social Watch, International
Solidagro, Belgium
Solidarité des Femmes Burundaises pour le Bien Être Social et le Progrès au Burundi, SFBSP, Burundi
SOS Faim Belgique, Belgium
Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA), Sierra Leone
Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute (SAFCEI), South Africa
Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN), Uganda
Tamil Nadu organic farmers federation, India
The Oakland Institute, USA
The Trust for Community Outreach and Education, South Africa
ToxicsWatch Alliance, India
Undral Gombodorj, Democracy Education Center (DEMO), Mongolia
United for the protection of Human Rights (UPHR-SL), Sierra Leone
Washington Biotechnology Action Council, USA
World Animal Net, International
World Family, UK
Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity, Zambia