

## **Corporate-Smart Greenwash: why we reject the Global Alliance on Climate-Smart Agriculture**

We, the undersigned civil society organisations, hereby manifest our rejection of the proposed Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture to be launched at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Change Leaders' Summit. This proposed alliance is a deceptive and deeply contradictory initiative.

Food producers and providers – farmers, fisherfolk, and pastoralists – together with our food systems are on the front lines of climate change. We know that urgent action must be taken to cool the planet, to help farming systems – and particularly small-scale farmers – adapt to a changing climate, and to revive and reclaim the agroecological systems on which future sustainable food production depends.

The Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture, however, will not deliver the solutions that we so urgently need. Instead, “climate-smart” agriculture provides a dangerous platform for corporations to implement the very activities we oppose. By endorsing the activities of the planet's worst climate offenders in agribusiness and industrial agriculture, the Alliance will undermine the very objectives that it claims to aim for.

Although some organizations have constructively engaged in good faith for several months with the Alliance to express serious concerns,<sup>1</sup> the concerns have been ignored. Instead, the Alliance is clearly being structured to serve big business interests, not to address the climate crisis.

We reject “climate-smart” agriculture and the Global Alliance for a number of reasons already articulated in previous efforts to interface with the promoters,<sup>2</sup> including:

### **1. No environmental or social criteria**

The final framework of the Alliance does not contain any criteria or definitions for what can – *or cannot* – be considered “climate-smart agriculture.” Industrial approaches that increase greenhouse gas emissions and farmers' vulnerability by driving deforestation, using genetically modified (GM) seeds, increasing synthetic fertiliser use or intensifying industrial livestock production, are all apparently welcome to use the “climate-smart” label to promote their practices as solutions to climate change.

### **2. Carbon trading**

The originators of “climate-smart” agriculture – the FAO and the World Bank – have a vision that “climate-smart” projects will be funded in part by carbon offset schemes. Many of our groups question the environmental and social integrity of carbon offsetting. Carbon sequestration in soils is not permanent and is easily reversible, and should be especially excluded from schemes to offset emissions. Carbon offset schemes in agriculture will create one more driver of land dispossession of smallholder farmers, particularly in the Global South, and unfairly place the burden of mitigation on those who are most vulnerable to, but have least contributed to, the climate crisis.

### **3. A new space for promoting agribusiness and industrial agriculture**

Companies with activities resulting in dire social impacts on farmers and communities, such as those driving land grabbing or promoting GM seeds, already claim that they are “climate-smart.” Yara (the world's largest fertilizer manufacturer), Syngenta (GM seeds), McDonald's, and Walmart are all at the “climate-smart” table. Climate-smart agriculture will serve as a new promotional space for the planet's

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<sup>1</sup> Civil society organisations have sought to engage with the Alliance through a number of different routes including a sign-on letter signed by over 80 organisations, participation in the Friends of the Alliance conference calls, and attending a meeting of the Alliance in the Hague in July 2014.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.climatesmartagconcerns.info>

worst social and environmental offenders in agriculture. The proposed Global Alliance on Climate-Smart Agriculture is just another carefully orchestrated strategy by powerful players to prop up industrial agriculture. It is nothing new, nothing innovative, and not what we need.

**We do urgently need climate action!** Unfortunately, the Alliance seriously misses the mark. Real climate solutions are already out there in farmers' fields – based on agroecological practices and the relocalisation of food systems to effectively fight hunger. Instead of creating one more body for business-as-usual, governments, funding agencies, and international organizations should be taking bold action: committing to shift resources away from climate-damaging practices of chemical-intensive industrial agriculture and meat production and towards investment in and commitment to agroecology, food sovereignty, and support to small-scale food producers.

The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development concluded in 2008 that business-as-usual in agriculture *is not an option*; instead, a thorough and radical overhaul of present international and agricultural policies is essential to meet the challenges of the future.

We reject the Global Alliance as one more cynical step by a small percentage of the UN's total membership to promote industrial agriculture and food as a commodity, contrary to the human right to food, against all the evidence of its destructive impacts on people, biodiversity, seed, water, soils, and climate. It is merely one more attempt to block the real change needed to fix our broken food systems and our broken climate, change which instead must be based on food sovereignty and agroecological approaches for agriculture and food production and the effective reduction of greenhouse gases.

ActionAid International

CCFD-Terre Solidaire

Earth in Brackets

EcoNexus

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

LDC Watch

Third World Network