



- Mexican triumph over Monsanto
- Rescuing humanity's hope for a sustainable global future
- Indigenous crop management, soil health and food security in Uganda

**Dearest Justice networkers,
Good news on victory against Monsanto.**

Rosaurora

[In our last Bulletin, May 2024, we published an article titled *Mexico's right to restrict GM corn*, reporting on chemical company Monsanto's challenge to the Mexican President's ban on genetically modified (GM) corn and its associated pesticide glyphosate. Now we can happily send you this message (in Spanish and English) from Rosaurora Espinosa.]

1 COMUNICADO PUBLICADO EL 27 DE JUNIO DEL 2024

La empresa transnacional Monsanto Company mantuvo hasta el pasado martes 25 de abril una demanda en contra del Decreto Presidencial— que ordenó prescindir del glifosato y el maíz transgénico para consumo humano—

México obtuvo un triunfo en una batalla jurídica en la que prevaleció la razón a favor de la vida, la salud, la naturaleza, la riqueza biocultural y la soberanía alimentaria.

El Consejo Nacional de Humanidades, Ciencias y Tecnologías (Conahcyt) del Gobierno actual, presentó un enorme número de pruebas científicas para lograr el glifosato y del maíz transgénico queden fuera de los alimentos de las familias mexicanas.

2 STATEMENT PUBLISHED JUNE 27, 2024

Until last Tuesday, June 25, the multinational enterprise, Monsanto Company, was involved in a legal contest challenging the 2020 Presidential Decree, which ordered the elimination of glyphosate and genetically modified corn for human consumption.

Mexico achieved triumph in a judicial contest where logic reigned supreme, advocating for the preservation of life, health, the environment, biocultural diversity, and the autonomy of food production.

The National Council of Humanities, Sciences and Technologies (Conahcyt) under the present administration introduced a vast array of scientific evidence to confirm the exclusion of glyphosate and genetically modified corn from the diets of Mexican households.

Source: Gobierno de Mexico. CONAHCYT Consejo Nacional de Humanidades Ciencias y Tecnologías Rosaurora Espinosa rosaurora5@gmail.com

RESCUING HUMANITY'S HOPE FOR A SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL FUTURE

Our future is being decided today. If countries, rich and poor, continue unsustainable approaches to development and economic growth, it is a future in peril.

Almost a decade ago in 2015, the United Nations (UN) identified **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and agreed to implement them by 2030. Once the targets were met, 169 UN member states would have made the transition to sustainability. However, with that vision a receding horizon, the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, used the latest SDGs summit last September to urge world leaders to undertake a rescue plan for the Goals at a yearly cost of \$500 billion.

Responding in typical diplomatic fashion, wealthier countries, such as Germany, offered long lists of commitments and individual actions, while poorer member states, such as Ethiopia, lamented the low flow of development finance that developing countries need to implement the goals. They simultaneously 'reaffirmed' commitments, and then chided themselves – 'the achievement of the SDGs is in peril'. And they went away. There is a desperate need to overcome this paralysis, with less than 7 years left to implement the SDGs.

The first antidote to inaction is a critical rethink of the social and political problems the goals are trying to solve. **The overall thrust of the SDGs is to change development approaches, improve general wellbeing and at least reduce environmental degradation.**

But, particularly in wealthier countries, existing approaches are so entrenched that it is hard to imagine anything other than unsustainable consumption driving rates of production made possible by unsustainable extraction of nature's resources.

Politicians get anxious about the impacts of meaningful changes on the lifestyles and standards of living that the people in their electorates have come to expect. This constrains them from facing specific problems the SDGs aim to address. Take SDG 7 as an example: '*Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.*' Attainment of this goal will contribute to reducing global fossil-fuel emissions linked to environmental degradation. This is a 'public good' much like healthcare, to which access is a right in most countries. **Politicians fail to understand the distinction between a commodity, bought and sold, and what is, or should be, treated as a public good.** For example, while Africa has an 'unlimited potential of solar capacity', the continent has also long contained the largest number of people in the world without access to electricity. As long as politicians insist that private money – rather than public investment – must play a major role in meeting public challenges, failure is guaranteed.

Since 2015, a team of Dutch scientists have been studying how the SDGs are being implemented worldwide, pointing to inequities in social gains between countries. Take SDG 2, on '*zero hunger*', as an example. Since 2000, the '*prevalence of undernourishment*' has been an indicator of progress towards this Goal. In Germany this has been at the acceptable global value of 2.5. In Mali, on the other hand, it was last measured at 9.8. This makes a nonsense of the UN cliché that the aim of the SDGs is to '*leave no one behind*'.

Peace and stability are preconditions for any development. However, the African continent remains plagued by conflicts. At least 15 armed conflicts across the continent

currently disrupt development. For example, in Sudan (which the UN describes as a ‘crisis of epic proportions’), Ethiopia (where ‘mass killings continue’) and drought-stricken Somalia (where famine was narrowly averted last year). Setting a single, universal goal to attain and maintain peace and stability would have been better for the world than 17 failing SDGs.

Political scientist, Frank Biermann, and his team at the Global Goals project, who will provide scientific contributions to the Summit of the Future, argue that ‘the current framework needs to be strengthened in a way that commits high-income countries to stronger and more concrete action.’ This requires **politicians in industrialized countries** to recognize that private capital often stubbornly flows to conflict-free regions; and so they **must commit public monies to their stated Goals, not rely on private finance.**

Source: Michael Davies-Venn, Public Policy Analyst, Berlin, in ‘Social Europe’, May 31, 2024. Condensed and edited by Mary Boyd.

INDIGENOUS CROP MANAGEMENT, SOIL HEALTH, AND FOOD SECURITY IN UGANDA

Uganda’s rich agro-ecological diversity enables farmers to grow a wide variety of crops, such as sorghum, millet, maize, cassava, beans, sweet potatoes, bananas and various vegetables. These crops not only play a crucial role in ensuring food security for the local population and refugees, but also contribute significantly to livelihoods.

However, despite the importance of agriculture in the country, there are growing concerns about the sustainability of current farming practices, particularly in relation to soil health. The indiscriminate use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, coupled with poor land management practices, has led to soil degradation and reduced crop yields in most parts of the country. This raises questions about the long-term viability of agriculture in the country and its ability to support the growing population.

Policies for promoting soil health

In response to these challenges, various policies have been put in place at the national and regional levels to promote sustainable agriculture in the country. The African Union’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), established in 2003, is one such initiative that emphasises the importance of sustainable agriculture in ensuring food security and reducing poverty. Under CAADP the 55 member countries are required to develop National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) that prioritise investments in sustainable agriculture practices, including integrated soil fertility management.

The Ugandan Government has implemented several policies and programs. The National Agricultural Policy (NAP) of 2013 and the National Adaptation Plan for Agricultural Sector (2018) both highlight the importance of sustainable land management, including crop rotation, agroforestry and the use of organic fertilisers. These policies aim to increase agricultural productivity, enhance food security and promote environmental sustainability. While implementing its agricultural policies the Government has addressed specific challenges faced by farmers in particular districts. For example, the promotion of indigenous

crop varieties and conservation practices, and the establishment of farmer field schools to provide training on sustainable farming techniques. By prioritising indigenous knowledge and traditional crop management systems, these policies aim to enhance soil health and promote food security across the country.

These Ugandan policies set an example for other countries of “building soil health critical for transformation of a sustainable food system in the African Continent. However, despite these efforts from Government, as well as from citizens and non-Governmental organisations (NGOs), there are still challenges that need to be addressed.

Challenges and Recommendations

Main challenges are:

- inadequate infrastructure;
- the impact of climate change on crop production.

To address these challenges, it is essential:

- to increase investments in agricultural research and extension services;
- to improve access to credit for smallholder farmers; and
- to promote traditional and innovative climate-resilient farming practices

Conclusion

There is a need to strengthen collaboration between different stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs and community-based organisations, to promote integrated solutions. By working together and sharing knowledge and resources, it is possible to develop holistic strategies that address the complex challenges faced by farmers. A more resilient and sustainable agricultural sector can support the livelihoods of the local population for generations to come.

Source: Rodgers Mwansa and Alfred Avuni, Missionaries of Africa, posted by the Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN), 1 May 2024.

¹ This UN Summit, 20-23 September 2024, aims to forge a new international consensus on how we deliver a better present and safeguard the future.

**Contributions to the Bulletin and responses to its content
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