



AGROECOLOGY CONSERVES OUR SOILS: WHERE FOOD BEGINS

**WORLD SOIL DAY (WSD) 2022
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Kampala | Uganda

The World Soil Day (WSD) is intended to draw attention to the value of good soil and to promote the sustainable management of soil resources. One of the primary resources of the biosphere, soil is crucial for both the sustainability of animals and the production of crops. It is commonly acknowledged that soil degradation is a serious issue, and that its effects on the environment have an impact on the livelihood of many people in Uganda, primarily small-scale farmers. This is primarily because soil degradation results in a decline in soil quality, a decrease in crop yields, an economic crisis, poverty, unemployment, and rural-urban migration.

In Uganda, it is thought that over 47% of the soils are progressively becoming extremely degraded. Despite campaigns to raise awareness of the value of soil, very little has been done to protect it; instead, those who work to encourage soil deterioration, such as chemical firms, are rewarded with laws that keep them safe. The government and some actors both exhibit neglect toward soils since they are perceived as inferior resources.

Agroecology emerges as the best way to protect and restore our soils because it maintains soil health by comprehending and addressing interactions among soil, plants, animals, people, and the environment within agricultural systems. This improves ecosystem performance and restores ecosystem functionality through maintaining soil health, which is essential for guaranteeing food security. From the seed to the fork, agroecology particularly attempts to increase the sustainability of every component of the food system, including ecological awareness, commercial viability, and social justice. If soils aren't healthy, small-scale farmers won't be able to produce the nutritious food that will be required in the future. Healthy soils are necessary for achieving some Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) like Life on Land, No Hunger and Climate Action. Healthy soil helps to control the planet's temperature and stores more carbon than all of the world's trees combined hence reducing the impact of climate change. Small-scale farmers have experimented with and created Agroecological farming methods that restore soil life and the accompanying ecosystem services.

On this World Soil Day (WSD), small-scale farmers made the following calls;

1. Given the current evidence on the role of agroecological farming methods in soil protection and preservation, government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) should promote such practices that keep the soil healthy. Healthy soils produce healthy crops that, in turn, nourish people and animals and condemns any other actions farming or non-farming that are destroying and polluting the soils.
2. Government should create powerful and strategic relationships across stakeholders, including decision-makers and the commercial sector, to enable knowledge generation and sharing, review and develop policies and practices that support agroecology.
3. Government should recruit and equip soil scientists at sub-county level to support small-scale farmers in basic soil services which are in line with agroecology principles.

This year to commemorate ESAFF Uganda is planning the following;

1. Host a practical session with small-scale farmers on soil management techniques in the community and showcase practically proper soil management techniques.
2. Launch a poster showcasing how agroecology protects and preserves soil health.
3. Join the social media campaign on #Soil4Nutrition to raise awareness on the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the key challenges related to soil fertility, soil health and nutrient imbalance.

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