



**REPORT OF THE SAFSC ASSEMBLY
13 NOVEMBER 2016**

1. Introduction

For the past two years, the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC) has been about building trust amongst alliance partners, critiquing the dominant corporate controlled food system and supporting a food sovereignty alternative through building unity with over 50 organisations. SAFSC has and will continue to translate food sovereignty into South African conditions, including marrying it to solidarity economy building and ultimately laying the basis for an anti-systemic logic.

On 17 October 2015, SAFSC hosted its second assembly, which assessed the campaign for 2015, and undertook planning for 2016. This kicked off an exciting year of grassroots and national campaigning during 2016, with a number of key events taking place to raise the question of hunger, the drought and the climate crisis, grassroots building, and broaden social media platforms. The assembly that took place on 13 November 2016 therefore had the following objectives:

- 1. To assess the grassroots and national campaign building network for 2016**
- 2. To plan the key focus of the campaign for 2017**
- 3. To consolidate coordination of the campaign for 2017**
- 4. To discuss the way forward for the SAFSC**

The assembly took place on the back of the high spirits from the previous day, 12 November on which the SAFSC hosted its second annual Food Sovereignty Festival under the banner: *Celebrating Food Sovereignty in Africa*, at the Greenhouse Project in Johannesburg. Patrick Tshikana, a member of the National Coordinating Committee, opened the Assembly by welcoming everyone, summarising the year and explaining the objectives of the Assembly. He then facilitated a short open session in which participants -from the region and locally- who were at the Assembly could give feedback on the festival that had taken place the previous day. The overall view was that the festival was engaging and educational, and participants from the region highlighted that they would like a similar festival in their areas where people will learn how to engage with government on issues around food and how to build a strong network of farmers and organisations working together.

Bridget Mugambe, from the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), then made a short presentation about AFSA, a pan African network of farm organisations and NGOs

etc. She explained that the purpose of AFSA was to influence policies and promote African solutions for food sovereignty. AFSA was also created to counter the narrative, which has influenced policy across the continent in favour of agroecology and away from industrial agriculture. Many African countries have adopted these laws and policies at a regional level, however, AFSA seeks to create this platform at continental level. Out of the strategising with other African allies, SAFSC agreed to consider affiliating to AFSA in order to deepen social media links, continuing with learning exchanges and actively championing indigenous knowledge systems and the science of agroecology.

The remainder of the Assembly focused on assessing the campaign for 2016 and planning for 2017. This short report presents the key outcomes of the assembly. It does not present in detail the discussions that happened on the day, but rather a consolidated summary of proceedings to provide a strategic guide for campaigning into 2017.

2. Campaign Report and Assessment

In this session, NCC members, Vishwas Satgar and Davine Cloete assessed campaigning for 2016 by sharing with the assembly the campaigning report. Excerpts from this report and their presentations are provided below to highlight national and local level achievements of the SAFSC:

2.1 National level campaigning achievements

On the national level, a significant impact was made and included the following activities:

- **Drought Speak out:** The drought speak out and national bread march took place in May as planned with over 2500 people present with farmers from affected provinces, from the region, movements and community organisations. This enabled solidarity links with mining affected communities and resistance to coal as a fossil fuel. Ultimately, food sovereignty was championed as a response to the drought and the foundation for a climate justice movement was laid. The drought speak-out and bread march also changed the narrative around the food crisis. It exposed industrial production's hand in reproducing the drought and also highlighted the inadequate response of government during the drought. The government was called to prioritise the plight of the poor by promoting a food commons with an emphasis of developing urban food gardens and farms that

are cultivated on the principle of agroecology, food sovereignty and the solidarity economy. Corporations profiteering from food and bread prices were called out. This gained support on social media, in the national media and raised the profile of the SAFSC.

- **Food Sovereignty Law:** Two pieces of research were commissioned by COPAC. The first assessed the policy in the SA food system and critiqued it from the perspective of food Sovereignty. The second piece assessed international experiences of food Sovereignty laws (Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Mali, Senegal) to see what we can learn from these experiences. The research was presented in forums and its legislative agenda was discussed. SAFSC took this agenda to progressive lawyers and finally, the Act was launched at a peoples parliament and the food sovereignty festival. We need further grassroots consultation on this Act in 2017, which must culminate in an engagement with the state at a national, provincial and local level.
- **Food Sovereignty Activist Schools:** Capacity has been built amongst campaign partners to strengthen the SAFSC through sharing education tools on food sovereignty, agro-ecology, solidarity economy, worker cooperatives and seed saving. Through food sovereignty activism, an anti-systemic alternative has been championed and is evolving a South African approach to food sovereignty and more.
- **Seed Guide:** A seed guide has been developed as an activist tool to promote community seed banks as cooperatives and to promote household and community seed saving. There is an urgent need to build community based seed bank tools in order to build peoples power in the food system and to control production and consumption. This tool has to be utilised to build a national network of seed banks.
- **Animation:** To support campaigning on the drought, high food prices and hunger, an animation entitled: *The Hidden Story behind Hunger* was developed by COPAC for the campaign. It is a resource to be used for community and grassroots building conversations. It was launched at the Food Sovereignty Festival.
- **Knowledge commons:** SAFSC has also developed activists and seed saving guides to promote food sovereignty and the Solidarity Economy. A webpage was also launched to profile SAFSC partners and promote networking and disseminate knowledge.

- **Social Media:** A Twitter and Facebook page has been very active; with Facebook reaching over 1300 followers and Twitter over 400 followers.
- **Media engagements:** Over the year the SAFSC has gained significant media coverage. This has included radio interviews, television interviews, and newspaper articles.
- **Food Sovereignty Festival:** On 12 November, the second national food sovereignty festival was held, which aimed to be a celebration of peoples alternatives to the unjust food system. It involved a comprehensive programme of panel discussions, documentary screenings and practical demonstrations.

2.2 Local level campaigning achievements

- **Promoting agro-ecology** through training and initiation of production. This has been one of the most prevalent campaign building activities
- **Social media and youth involvement:** this has involved discussions and information sharing on Facebook and Twitter to create a buzz on different campaigning tools and events and also to invite the youth to get more involved in issues around climate change, food sovereignty, hunger and the importance of seeds. In some places, special gardens have been created in order to attract the youth, in Ivory Park, 'cook outs' to attract young fathers were also planned, and in Nqamakwe, gardens where children can learn and grow their own vegetables have been formed.
- **Land struggles-** in some places, the campaign has also been used to mobilise farmers for land, such as in Namaqwe where comrades were able to mobilise for access to land from Induna and in Limpopo where mobilisation for land that will be used to establish local seed banks from municipality is ongoing.
- **Advancing cooperatives and the solidarity economy-** many organisations within the campaign have taken forward cooperative building linked to food sovereignty. For example, The Mt Frere food sovereignty forum has held a number of workshops on worker cooperatives and encouraged household gardening so that communities can collectively undertake food production for food sovereignty through agro-ecology.
- **University organising** – The Inala students forum from Wits have established an organic food garden on campus. Inala also sent out a petition for a food commons on campus and managed to get over 2000 signatures.

3. Campaign Planning and Priorities for 2017

It was agreed during this session that the campaign will be run differently during 2017. While during 2016, four priorities were identified and championed throughout the year, it was decided that the national campaign focus would be made up with contributions from each alliance partner for the following year. These contributions are listed below and all organisations are expected to report on their contributions.

- **Limpopo Development Stakeholders Forum Network:** has committed to engage with the department of rural development and land reform in order to fast track land claims and to engage with mining companies about transparency. They have also committed to train community members who will monitor mining company's environmental impact.
- **7th Generation:** has committed to train people around agro ecology with a focus on local farmers and also targeting kids from primary schools and crèches. They have also committed to share knowledge on indigenous seeds and create a platform for seed sharing.
- **Thuso community development:** has committed to helping people in Gauteng to obtain state owned land.
- **Giyani PGS:** committed to impart knowledge about organic certification and production to small-scale farmers.
- **MSECC:** has committed to establishing a farmers market and building more monthly forums of coops locally. They have also committed to breaking down and localising the government's climate change commitments.
- **Kwazakhele Transition Township:** has committed to promoting alternative energy and food production.
- **Lamosa:** committed to teaching people about land and supporting land claims.
- **Mopane Farmers Association:** committed to raising awareness about harvesting rainwater, reusing water and saving water in the areas that have been declared dry areas. They have also committed to continue to train farmers on agro ecology and campaign against deforestation.
- **Matatiele-READI:** committed to using unemployed graduates to assist on training communities around issues of land, and food sovereignty and; promoting agro ecology.

- **Action voice:** on a national level, they have committed to hosting exchange programmes with other mining affected communities where they can learn from each other on how they have addressed and overcame problems related to climate change and mining. They have also committed to teach communities about the effects of climate change, on food and on agriculture.
- **Women in the kraal:** have committed to mobilise communities to use all available land to produce food organically.
- **JDF:** committed to launching a children's booklet in 2017 on agro-ecology and climate change.
- **Matatiele FS forum:** committed to continuing to educate communities on agro-ecology.
- **Nthinga Ntaba ka Ndoda:** committed to training cooperatives and hosting exchange visits on seed banks.
- **Slow Food Youth Network:** committed to popularising indigenous food and hosting events where they will be able to engage the youth about food sovereignty and get them involved in advancing food sovereignty in their communities.
- **LIPM:** committed to encourage people in their communities to grow their own food and to break away from the dependency on the government and lastly, they have committed to encouraging other organisations to join the FS movement.
- **350.org:** committed to continue to work on issues around climate change in SA.
- **PYM:** committed to teaching pensioners on how to start their own vegetable gardens and engage the youth on food sovereignty.
- **COPAC:** has committed to continue to be the secretariat for the SAFSC while it is transitioning. It has also committed to contribute to national and local consultations on the Food Sovereignty Act, and will work with Inala to establish a food sovereignty center at Wits. In addition to this, COPAC has committed to generate a water management activist guide.
- **Ilizwi Lama Farmer:** Committed to commissioning research on seed sharing and seed banks. Additionally, they have committed to developing 10 household principals of agro-ecology and forming links with climate change movements.
- **Soweto Market Place:** Committed to establishing markets ekasi and in urban areas. They are also committed to mobilise and educate youth towards living healthier lifestyles.
- **SCLC:** committed to support agro-ecology production and lobby for access to land with Tshintsha Amakhaya. They have also committed to sharing and raising

awareness on policy using four platforms: environmental justice, environmental women's platforms, farm and forestry workers and national producers.

- **Inala:** committed to developing a food commons on campus and conscientise students on FS gardening and hunger. They will also continue to teach students about organic gardening and expanding their volunteer base. Lastly, INALA, in collaboration with COPAC have started a dialogue with Wits to establish a food sovereignty center on campus.
- **ASK Agricultural Coop:** committed to establishing a FS forum and to raise awareness on Food sovereignty.
- **Tshintsha Amakhaya:** have committed to hosting an agro-ecology caravan trip.
- **COMM potential movement:** committee to creating a 'drop box' where villagers will be able to buy and share seeds.
- **CIPSET and NMMU FS forum:** have identified and formed links with 5 schools where they will teach on agro ecology and permaculture. They have also committed to linking with forums around the Nelson Mandela bay to create their own food market.
- **African Centre for Biodiversity:** Committed to commissioning research on corporate mergers and submit applications to the competition commission. They will also continue to undertake research on seed law and policy.

4. Way forward for SAFSC

Comrades were divided into three groups in order discuss the way forward for SAFSC that is activist driven and ruled by everyone on the ground.

In discussing the way forward, it was important to consider the: (i) Organising strategy needed to achieve this, (ii) resourcing SAFSC and lastly, (iii) the steps that should be taken in order to constitutionalise the SAFSC. The following suggestions and commitments came out of each of the three discussions:

4.1 Organising strategy

-How do we develop transformative activists to advance the SAFSC? What skills and training is required?

It was agreed from the discussion in this group that an ideology of the SAFSC should be generated, which should emerge from the issues that are faced in each community.

Marcus for instance proposed that this should include something like “one motherland, one humanity” or “one home, one planet”.

The comrades who were part of this group discussion also highlighted that training on legal frameworks such as the laws governing protests, policies on agriculture and other legal frameworks, were important because they will give activists avenues to advance their activism. They mentioned the prospect of developing a tool on this that will educate activists and communities on how to use the law strategically. Additionally, they highlighted the need for media training where they would be educated on how to write press statements, how to use local newspapers and radios for campaigning and how to design pamphlets. This will help in developing a ‘journalist’ capacity within the campaign.

[-How to strengthen forums?](#)

The comrades in this group highlighted that in order to strengthen forums, activists with advanced knowledge on particular issues in the different forums need to be brought in to train communities. For instance, if people need knowledge on seed saving, communities who have knowledge on this can be brought into the forum to impart their knowledge and share their experiences with others involved in similar practices.

It was also expressed that resources within forums were scarce; therefore, each forum needs to develop a pool of resources, which will be easily accessible to all its members. An example illustrated was a resource space housed in each forum that would have books, movies and seeds.

Lastly, in order to strengthen forums, the comrades in this discussion highlighted that multiple social forces in the community such as churches, the CPF, schools and other community associations should be involved in the forums. Importantly though, the comrades stressed that forums should have/identify key issues that they can use to build mobilisations around, for example, a fruit tree planting campaign etc.

[-How can social media be used to strengthen the campaign?](#)

Comrades suggested that the existing social media like Twitter, Facebook etc must be used regularly but that traditional media such as newspaper articles, writing to editors etc should not be abandoned.

Imbizos were also flagged as key; particularly using face to face/ word of mouth to spread messages to those who may not have access to social media in the different communities.

-Provincial coordination

The comrades highlighted that there was an urgent need to think about the finances and how these would be utilised to bring the different provinces together.

-The role of the national assembly

It was agreed that the national assembly should play the same role as it did in the previous year however; it should also ensure that it is very clear on delegating responsibility and accountability. Additionally, it was suggested that the NCC should take the lead in guiding the formalisation process of institutionalising the SAFSC.

4.2 Resourcing SAFSC

-What resources (human, organisational, community and financial) can each alliance partners offer the SAFSC?

The comrades who were part of this discussion highlighted that it was important for alliance partners to each contribute on sharing knowledge, skills, training materials on agro ecology, climate change etc.

Comrades from JDF highlighted that they would share knowledge and lessons on how they went about to get their resources and would be happy to contribute some resources to the SAFSC.

-How do we mobilise resources, can we approach funding agencies?

It was suggested that funding agencies should be approached, but at the same time the discussion highlighted that there is a need for each partner organisation to contribute what they could because of the recognition that organisations are not equally resourced. The comrades highlighted that those that have the capacity to contribute should contribute what they can to SAFSC however, a guideline on how this would work should be developed.

-What should SAFSC fundraise for?

The comrades in this discussion highlighted that SAFSC should fundraise to fund the activities already on the programme, and to expand them to more community projects. Additionally, it was stressed that SAFSC should fundraise for the national activities that will take place in the year.

-Who should we target?

Organisations within the SAFSC, funding organisations such as the NDA as well as international organisations with similar visions and goals were identified as possible targets that could assist the SAFSC with funds.

-How should finances be managed in the SAFSC- constitutionally, policies and finance management principles?

The general agreement that came out of this discussion is that the National Coordinating Committee should manage the finances, guided by a constitution and a set of financial guidelines. Additionally, it was stressed that the NCC needed to elect a team who would be responsible for fundraising and financial reports. This way, the SAFSC would build the capacity to fundraise on its own.

4.3 Institutionalising the SAFSC

-Should the SAFSC become a member based cooperative?

The general agreement from the discussion was that SAFSC should be institutionalised in order to provide structure and to ensure equity however, it was highlighted that it would be good to have a member based coop that could be a model for other coops to adopt.

- What type of membership- organisational, individual and finance?

The comrades in the discussion agreed that a finance driven membership would lead to lack of commitment from different individuals and organisations therefore it was proposed that the SAFSC should be organisational and individual driven. In this way, it will be led from below by activists and organisations.

5. Campaign Coordination

After discussing and planning the way forward for the SAFSC, the Assembly focused on national coordination. After a discussion it was agreed that given it is new campaign, the NCC had to be modified. The SAFSC chose to compose its NCC with greater participation from grassroots forums and small-scale farmers. This meant that eight out of the sixteen spaces on the committee would be represented by small-scale farmers and forums, while four positions would to NGOs and four to community organisations. As such, the NCC for 2017 are as follows:

NGOs:

Vishwas Satgar (COPAC)
Itumeleng Mogatusi (Greenhouse Project)
Imraahn Mukaddam (Consumer Action Network)
Marcus Solomon (Children's Resource Centre)

Small scale farmers and forums:

Mzimasi Ndongeni (Mt Frere Food Sovereignty Forum)
Davine Cloete (Community, Northern Cape)
Thammy Dlamini (Asikhutulisane Cooperative)
Magda Adonis (Farmer, Beacon Organic Garden)
Moeketsi Monaheng (MSEEC)
Sipho Baloyi (Tshintsha Amakhaya)
Sindile Baza (BFPP)
Norah Mlondobozi (7th Generation)

Community organisations:

Tholakele Skosana (Progressive Youth Movement)
Nosintu Mcimeli (Nqamakwe Farmers)
Patrick Tshikana (United Front)
Xolisa Banagani (Slow Food Youth Network)

6. Way forward for SAFSC

Coming out of the Assembly, it was agreed that COPAC would use its own food sovereignty commitment to assist the SAFSC and remain the secretariat for another year. At the same time, COPAC will actively play a role in ensuring SAFSC is institutionalised as a formal campaign. Key elements will be put in place in 2017 with COPAC's assistance: common campaigning from below, a constitution, an organising strategy and a resource mobilisation strategy. At the same time, local organisations will undertake campaign building in their communities.