

- ❖ **The animation mechanism created at the level of each country draws inspiration from the one that already exists at regional level. It shows as follows:**
 - **A National Forum**, which regroups every year the Representatives of all the Movement members at national level to prospectively assess the actions of the campaign.
 - **A National Focal Point** that serves as connecting point between the different actors and ensures the secretariat of the Coalition at national level. Therefore, it co-ordinates the activities of the Coalition.
 - **An Animation Group of the Coalition** that in each country is made up of five (5) member Organisations. It helps the National Focal Point to orient and realise the actions of the Movement at the level of the concerned country.
 - **A Scientific Committee**, which also supports and wisely advises the Animation Group and the National Focal Point; it plays the same roles as the one set up at regional level.

7. Conditions and procedures of admission

- ❖ **Membership**
 - Be an Organisation of the African Civil Society that takes an active part in Africa or be an African recognised as capable of being a resource person for the Coalition
 - Concerning the Organisations, be an officially registered organisation
 - Accept the Charter of the Coalition
 - Be proposed by a member Organisation
 - Have a written application for membership selected by the Animation Group and accepted by the National Forum.
- ❖ **Partnership**
 - Accept the Charter of the Coalition
 - Share the values laid down in the Charter
 - Negotiate and establish with the Coalition a written partnership agreement
- ❖ **Alliance /Association**
 - Accept the Charter of the Coalition
 - Live the values laid down in the Charter
 - Be a resource person, which the Coalition recognises to be useful
 - Accept in writing to get involved in backing up the Coalition.

8. Current Representation of the Coalition

- ❖ **Regional Focal Point**
Inades-Formation International, 08 BP 08 Abidjan 08
Tel: +225 22 40 02 16, Fax: +225 22 40 02 30
Email: ifsiege@inadesfo.ci
- ❖ **Focal Point in Benin**
Jinukun Network, 06 BP 2083 Cotonou - Benin
Tel.: + 229 33 79 50, Fax: + 229 33 79 15
Email: rseqbenou@yahoo.fr
- ❖ **Focal Point in Burkina**
Inades-Formation /Burkina, 01 BP 1022 Ouagadougou 01
Tel.: +226 50 34 03 41, Fax: +226 50 34 05 19
Email: inadesb@fasonet.bf
- ❖ **Focal Point in Côte d'Ivoire**
ANOPACI, 20 BP 937 Abidjan 20
Tel: +225 22 44 11 76
Email: anopacicom@yahoo.fr
- ❖ **Focal Point in Guinea Bissau**
Tinguena- Apartado 667
Tel.: + 245 25 19 06
Email: tinis@qtelecom.gw
- ❖ **Focal Point in Mali**
Coalition nationale pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine Génétique du Mali, CCA-ONG, BP E 3216
Tel.: +223 229 2311, Fax: +223 229 04 14
- ❖ **Focal Point in Senegal :**
Enda Pronat, BP 3370, Dakar
Tel.: + 221 822 55 65
Email: pronat@enda.sn
- ❖ **Focal Point in Togo**
Inades-Formation/Togo, BP 12472 Lomé
Tel.: +228 225 92 17, Fax: + 228 225 92 17
Email: inadesformation@ifrance.com
- ❖ **Point focal in Guinea :**
ACORD Guinée, BP 1653 Conakry
Tel. : +224 60 58 86 42
Email : mackybahqui@yahoo.fr
- ❖ **Point focal in Niger :**
Plate-forme paysanne du Niger, BP 11729 Niamey
Tél. : +227 938 146 124
Email : cnfp@intnet.ne

Coalition of the Organisations of the Civil Society for the Protection of the African Genetic Property (COPAGEN)

1. Why has such a Coalition been created?

The idea to launch this Coalition emerged from the tendencies of the current world context marked by the privatisation and the genetic engineering of the living. The genetic resources that formerly belonged to the local communities are increasingly turning into private properties. This privatisation of the living becomes more pronounced because it is sustained by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which obliges the States to legislate in priority so as to protect the rights of intellectual property (DPI/RIP) of the individuals and mainly the multinational companies. Undoubtedly, the latter are in the forefront of all-out privatisation and are essentially preoccupied about accumulating profit.

Besides, the production of GMO and their commercialisation during the past few years raises the fundamental question of a political supervision of both agriculture and food in the current context of economic globalisation. GMO bring about serious environmental problems linked to agriculture as well as economic, political, cultural, ethical, and health problems that affect men and animals.

All the foregoing constitutes true threats to the survival of grassroots communities.

And that's why since January 2004 the Organisations of the Civil Society aware of their responsibilities for the protection and the valorisation of this common heritage of Africa, decided to form a Coalition and adopt a common Charter, owing to the slow reaction of the African decision-makers to take the necessary steps and face up to the plunder of the Continent's genetic property.

2. Who we are

The Coalition for the Protection of the African Genetic Property (COPAGEN) is first of all a social and civic movement that has decided to join forces with the grassroots communities in order to launch a campaign for the protection and the valorisation of their heritage that is more than ever exposed to the dangers of spoliation and genetic contamination. It is a grouping of the Organisations of the Civil Society of French-speaking Africa South of Sahara; this group shows an interest in sustainable management and valorisation of the Continent's genetic resources. The main actors are Farmer Organisation, NGOs, consumer Associations, Development Associations, Trade Unions, Movements of Human Rights, Youth and Women Organisations, etc. We are all united and determined and we support the collective rights of local communities and producers on the African genetic property, and we refuse genetic engineering in food and agriculture.

3. Our common message

« We agree with independent scientific research that valorises local biological resources as well as traditional and modern knowledge for the benefit of the African small-scale producers and consumers. And we disagree with patenting the living and with GMOs in agriculture and food, considering all the current established and potential risks linked to them. We agree with the local communities' rights on their biological resources. »

4. Vision, mission and objectives of the Coalition

The Coalition dreams of an African Continent where lastingly managed genetic resources are owned by both the State and the local communities, and are profitable to everybody for the well-being of the present and future generations.

The mission of the Coalition is to work for safeguarding the African genetic property and for a sustainable utilisation of the African biological resources by protecting the rights of the local communities and producers.

The main objectives of the Coalition are as follows:

- Inform, sensitise, and train the populations and public opinion to the true stakes of genetic engineering and patenting of the living.

- Develop alternative solutions aimed to valorise the local genetic resources, and the locally available related technologies and knowledge.
- Use in agriculture modern biotechnologies, exclusive of genetic engineering in order to respect the interests of small-scale producers
- Bring the African decision-makers to formulate, vote and apply in a participatory way laws that protect the African genetic property and the related traditional knowledge, and that ensure the strategic interests of local communities; inspiration shall be drawn from the two standard laws of the African Union (AU).

More specifically the Coalition intends to work in the areas below:

- Sensitise public opinion to the dangers and the potential and established risks related to patenting the living and the promotion of GMOs, by circulating as widely as possible information especially at the level of Farmer Organisations, grassroots community Organisations, and all the main development actors in general : scientists, political decision-makers, private sector, NGOs, etc., thanks to the media, mainly rural radios, conference/debates, workshops, exchange trips, and production of educational documents, etc.
- Incite Farmer Organisations and grassroots communities to take stand on the question of patenting the living and GMO, and trigger concerted actions aimed to bring about the formulation of policies and regulations that favour sustainable exploitation and valorisation of genetic resources in Africa

5. Axes of action

The main areas of action where the Coalition intends to work are focused around the axes below:

- Creation and strengthening of the Movement's animation mechanism at regional, national, and local levels;
- Enhancement of the knowledge of the problems linked to GMO and the rights of local communities;
- Communication and information of women and men farmers, grassroots communities and public opinion in general of the

necessity to protect the African genetic property and the opportunity that the standard laws of the AU offer;

- Lobbying with local, national, sub-regional, and regional decision-makers, in favour of the rights of local communities and against GMO;
- Partnership aimed to extend the action to other African countries.

These different actions will be realised according to the opportunities and constraints inherent to each country, and implies that all the Coalition members combine their actions.

6. Animation mechanism of the Coalition

The animation mechanism of the Coalition is formed of the following ruling bodies:

❖ At regional level

- **A Regional Forum**, highest ruling body that yearly gathers the Representatives of all the Coalition members at regional level in order to assess the activities carried out, and to reorient the campaign actions, if needs be.
- **A Regional Focal Point**, which role is to facilitate the connection between, the information of, the sharing of experiences among the actors involved in the different national campaigns, and even build their capacities. INADES – FORMATION has been entrusted with playing this role at the present initial stage.
- **A Regional Co-ordination Group** the ruling body of the Coalition, which the Regional Forum has instructed to support the Regional Focal Point in the implementation of the general orientations decided by the Coalition members; to inform regularly the other members of any progress; and to make the required changes, if needs be. This Group comprises five (5) members.
- **A Scientific Committee** made up of high level personalities with different profiles (Geneticists, Biologists, Sociologists, Jurists, Economists, Agronomists, etc.), which wisely advises the Regional Co-ordination Group and the Regional Focal Point, and at people's request carries out certain studies and research actions indispensable to the mission of the Coalition.