

ADDIS ABABA DECLARATION ON ENSET

The “**International Workshop on Enset (*Ensete ventricosum*) for Sustainable Development: Current research trends, gaps and future direction for a coordinated multidisciplinary approach in Ethiopia**” has taken place between October 17 and 18, 2016.

INTRODUCTION

Over 20 scientific papers in thematic areas in both Natural and Social Sciences including: Agronomy, Agroforestry, Ethnobotany, Genetics, Modelling, Industrial application, Food security, Nutrition and Dietary aspects, and Socio-economics, were presented in the International Workshop on Enset (*Ensete ventricosum*) for Sustainable Development on October 17 and 18, 2016. The current research trends, knowledge gaps and future directions were assessed in each of these papers. The discussions following the presentations revealed the uniqueness of the crop, the status of its biodiversity in Ethiopia and its potential to become an important food crop and industrial crop in Ethiopia and beyond. Furthermore, the importance of enset for food security, especially for the rural poor, and the importance for the livelihood and culture of many peoples of Ethiopia was highly stressed.

PREAMBLE

- Recognizing that Enset (*Ensete ventricosum*) is a widely occurring species in tropical Africa but has only been domesticated in Ethiopia where it has been in use for at least 10,000 years,
- Underlining that enset is an indigenous multipurpose crop species used for food, feed, medicine, fiber, and for industrial purposes,
- Appreciating that enset is a main staple for about 20 million people (20% of the Ethiopian population), mainly in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, but also in Oromia and Gambela Regions,
- Highlighting that the domestication of a wide genetic diversity has been created and maintained, enhanced by the diverse use and the diverse agronomy in the different agro-ecosystems and agro-ecologies,
- Highlighting that conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity as well as the environmental services provided by the ecosystems have a strategic value for sustainable development,

- Appreciating that enset is highly flexible in its use, as it can be harvested over a prolonged period of growth and its products can be conserved for a very long time as well, it can therefore serve as a food bank for times of scarcity,
- Considering that enset is a climate-robust and sustainable crop that is very suitable for fragile, low-input environments given its many, diverse ecosystem services,
- Recognizing fundamental roles of women in farming systems and the perpetuation of associated traditional knowledge, integrated management of food production and conservation of biodiversity,
- Stressing that research on enset has not been given enough attention compared to cereal crops both at the national and regional levels,
- Recognizing that local communities play an important role in the economic, social and environmental development, and the importance of sustainable traditional farming practices related to biodiversity and the use of their resources,
- Appreciating that the Southern Peoples, Nations and Nationalities Regional State recognizes enset as the most important crop in the region in its agricultural policy and is prepared to take appropriate constitutional steps.

The participants HAVE AGREED ON THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

- To identify National Universities, Institutions and international partners that would participate in research, extension, community service, etc. relating to all aspects of the enset crop.
- To organize a consultative meeting of relevant (national and international) stakeholders to establish a Centre of Excellence for Research and Extension for enset in partnership with the Federal Government with clear mandates and responsibilities, and adequate funding.
- To actively seek the interest of international donors to support the development of such a Centre of Excellence.
- To develop a Conceptual Model for Enset research and extension.
- To identify all relevant stakeholders with rural communities.
- To guide the shift from the current practice of isolated research on a

particular field to a coordinated and concerted multidisciplinary approach both at national and international levels.

- To align with international centres on root and tuber crops and banana such as the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and the International Potato Centre.
- To guide enset research in order to create focus on providing solutions to the problem of the rural communities (such as enset bacterial wilt) and the use of enset and enset ecosystems on a sustainable basis.

The participants expressed their full commitment and support in all means and ways for the success of the conservation and utilization of enset for the benefit of the communities and the establishment of the Centre of Excellence which will work towards its sustainability.

Addis Ababa University, 18 Oct. 2016