

SALOUM DELTA MANIFESTO

For a Just, Rooted, and Biodiversity-Centered Transition

Adopted in Palmarin, October 31, 2025, at the conclusion of the 5th Edition of the Climate School Carried by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation West Africa, in collaboration with its partners, Écologie Universelle and the National Platform of Actors for Climate Justice (PNAJC).

Preamble: Living Ecology, Living the Territory

During a week of immersion, from October 27 to November 2, 2025, young people, women, community leaders, researchers, activists, elected officials, artists, and engaged actors from all regions of Senegal, from Europe (France, Germany), and from Africa (Madagascar, South Africa, Nigeria, and Mali) gathered in the Saloum Delta for the 5th edition of the Climate School.

This edition, organized by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation West Africa in partnership with the PNAJC and supported by Écologie Universelle, transformed the territory of Palmarin and its islands into a space of learning, awareness, and transformation.

Participants lived a unique experience: listening, observing, feeling, and understanding the link between nature, culture, and humanity.

We traveled through the islands of Niodior, Dionewar, and Sangomar—lands of memory and spirituality—where humans and nature coexist in a fragile harmony.

We shared local meals, discovered the commitments of women, and observed daily gestures of adaptation. We also saw, with the naked eye, the vulnerabilities: salinization, erosion, loss of land, climate migration.

But we also witnessed strength: solidarity, knowledge, creativity, dignity.

This encounter gives birth to the Saloum Delta Manifesto—a declaration of heart and reason, the fruit of collective work and lived experience—affirming that another ecology is possible: human, rooted, and grounded in justice.

1. Climate Justice: Repairing Inequalities, Building Solidarity

The climate crisis is first and foremost a crisis of justice.

African peoples suffer the consequences without being responsible for them.

Climate justice means acknowledging these inequalities while building a shared, dignified, and equitable future.

We call for:

- Ensuring access of vulnerable communities to climate finance and resilience mechanisms.
- Embedding human rights and accountability at the heart of environmental policies.
- Decentralizing climate governance so territories can design their own solutions.
- Promoting a just energy transition that sacrifices neither lands nor peoples.

- Guaranteeing the active representation of women and youth in all decision-making spaces.
- “Climate justice is not a slogan; it is a moral and political imperative.”

2. Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Memory, Land, and Dignity

Indigenous peoples and local communities embody the living memory of the Earth. Their relationship with nature is rooted in knowledge, spirituality, and respect. Protecting them is protecting the planet.

We recommend:

- Preserving, documenting, and transmitting Indigenous and community knowledge so it can guide public policy and future generations.
- Protecting ecosystems and Indigenous territories—spaces of culture, spirituality, and life.
- Recognizing Indigenous knowledge as territorial science, to be valued in education, research, and climate planning.
- Promoting local cultures—through gastronomy, arts, languages, and rituals—as expressions of a rooted ecology.
- Strengthening intergenerational transmission so that elders are guides and youth are builders of change.
- “Indigenous peoples and local communities are guardians of the living, not relics of the past.”

3. Biodiversity and Climate: Protecting Life, Honoring the Earth

The Saloum Delta, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is a mosaic of life, a lung for West Africa. But it is now threatened by pollution, erosion, overfishing, salinization, and plans for oil exploration.

We demand:

- A ban on all new oil drilling in the Saloum Delta.
- Equitable access of women to land and resource management.
- Integration of environmental education into school curricula at all levels.
- Support for community initiatives in reforestation and ecological monitoring.
- Recognition of the Saloum Delta as a pilot territory for local ecological governance.
- “Protecting the Delta means protecting memory, culture, and life.”

4. Climate and Health: One Breath, One World

The health of populations depends on the health of ecosystems. Waterborne diseases, extreme heat, and biodiversity loss affect collective well-being. An ecology without health is survival without a future.

We propose:

- Adopting a “One Health” approach linking human, animal, and environmental health.
- Strengthening community health infrastructure.
- Protecting water resources from salinization and pollution.

- Raising awareness about links between health and the environment.
- Integrating women and community health workers into adaptation planning.
- “A healthy environment is the first medicine.”

5. Sustainable Food and Resilient Agriculture: Nourishing the Earth, Nourishing Life

In the Delta, fishing, farming, and gathering are ancient knowledge systems. But faced with the ecological crisis, communities are reinventing their practices. Agroecology has become their response, their resistance, and their promise.

We call for:

- Supporting peasant agroecology as a pillar of sustainable food sovereignty.
- Facilitating access of youth and women to land and financing.
- Preserving mangroves and promoting sustainable fishing.
- Creating local seed banks and encouraging solidarity-based exchange.
- Promoting short value chains and local products.
- Educating children in sustainable food practices from an early age.
- “To cultivate the Earth without destroying it is to nourish the future.”

6. Adaptation and Mitigation: Territories That Invent

Adaptation is lived on the ground, through daily acts.

People of the Delta already experiment with models of adaptation, clean energy, and cooperation.

We recommend:

- Strengthening community capacity to plan and manage climate change.
- Developing local and accessible renewable energy.
- Encouraging South-South cooperation for sharing green innovations.
- Implementing local adaptation plans co-created with communities.
- Promoting a circular and low-carbon economy based on repair, recycling, and reuse.
- “Adaptation does not come from above; it grows where people take root.”

Conclusion: The Call of the Saloum Delta

We, participants of the 2025 Climate School, gathered in Palmarin, having walked the lands of Niodior, Dionewar, and Sangomar, having listened to the voices of women, fishers, elders, and children, issue this Call of the Saloum Delta:

- For an Africa that rises from its territories,
- for an ecology of solidarity, culture, and justice,
- for a humanity that no longer separates humans from nature.

This manifesto is a collective commitment: a commitment to life, courage, and hope.

It is our shared promise: to protect, to transmit, and to act.

