

THE SALOUM DELTA MANIFESTO



**ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG**

WEST AFRICA OFFICE

**FOR A JUST, LOCALLY ROOTED TRANSITION FOCUSED
ON PRESERVING BIODIVERSITY**

THE SALOUM DELTA MANIFESTO

For a Just, Locally Rooted Transition Focused on Preserving Biodiversity

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





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PREAMBLE: EXPERIENCING ECOLOGY AND THE REGION

From October 27 to November 2, 2025, the 5th Climate School edition brought together young people, women, community leaders, researchers, activists, elected officials, artists, and other committed individuals from Senegal, France, Germany, Madagascar, South Africa, Nigeria, and Mali in the Saloum Delta.

Organized by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) West Africa office in partnership with the PNAJC and supported by Écologie Universelle, this edition transformed the Palmarin region and its islands into a space for learning, enlightenment, and transformational change.

Participants experienced a unique journey of listening, observing, sensing, and grasping the connection between nature, culture, and humanity.

We journeyed through the islands of Niodior, Dionewar, and Sangomar, places deeply rooted in history and spirituality, where nature and people exist in a delicate balance and fragile harmony.

We shared traditional meals, learned about women's activism, and observed daily adaptations. We also observed firsthand the vulnerabilities of salinization, erosion, land loss, and climate-induced migration.

Nevertheless, our experience provided insight into other aspects of strength, such as solidarity, community knowledge, creativity, and the preservation of human dignity.

Inspired by this encounter, we created the Saloum Delta Manifesto. This declaration is born of the heart and reason. It is the fruit of collective endeavor and real-life experience. It asserts that alternative approaches to ecology based on human values, rooted in local communities, and promoting justice are possible.

1. CLIMATE JUSTICE: REPAIRING INEQUALITIES, BUILDING SOLIDARITY

The climate crisis is fundamentally an issue of justice.

African peoples are experiencing its effects despite not being responsible for it.

Climate justice requires recognizing these inequalities and building a shared, equitable, and dignified future.

We call for:

- Ensuring vulnerable communities have access to climate finance and resilience mechanisms;
- Integrating human rights and accountability into environmental policies;
- Decentralizing climate governance enables local communities to develop their own solutions;
- Promoting a just energy transition that does not sacrifice land or people;
- Ensuring the active representation of women and youth in all decision-making bodies.

“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 are the living memory of the Earth.

Their connection to nature is rooted in knowledge, spirituality, and respect. Protecting them means protecting the planet.

We recommend:

1. Preserving, documenting, and passing on the knowledge of Indigenous peoples and local communities to guide public policy and the thinking of future generations;
2. Protecting Indigenous ecosystems and territories where culture, spirituality, and life thrive;
3. Recognizing Indigenous knowledge as a form of territory-based science that should be valued in education, research, and climate planning;
4. Honoring local cultural traditions, such as cuisine, artwork, languages, and rituals, as forms of deeply rooted ecology;
5. Strengthening intergenerational knowledge transfer with elders serving as guides and young people as changemakers.

“Indigenous peoples and local communities are the guardians of life, not its relics.”

3. DIVERSITY AND CLIMATE: PROTECTING LIFE, HONORING THE EARTH

The Saloum Delta, a World Heritage Site, is a living mosaic and a “green lung” for West Africa.

However, it is currently facing threats from pollution, erosion, overfishing, salinization, and oil exploration projects.

We demand:

- A ban on all new oil drilling operations in the Saloum Delta;
- Equitable access for women to land and resource management;
- The integration of environmental education into school curricula at all levels;
- Support for community-led reforestation and ecological monitoring initiatives;
- Recognition of the Saloum Delta as a pilot region for local ecological governance.

“Protecting the Delta means preserving memory, culture, and life.”

4. CLIMATE AND HEALTH: ONE BREATH, ONE WORLD

The health of populations is inextricably linked to the health of ecosystems. Waterborne diseases, extreme heat, and loss of biodiversity affect collective well-being.

An unhealthy environment means survival in a world without a future.

We propose:

- Adopting a “One Health” approach that links human, animal, and environmental health;
- Strengthening community health infrastructure;
- Protecting water resources against salinization and pollution;
- Raising awareness of the links between human health and environmental health;
- Involving women and community health workers in planning adaptation policies.

“A healthy environment is the best medicine.”

5. SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS AND RESILIENT AGRICULTURE: NOURISHING THE EARTH, NURTURING LIFE

Fish farming, agriculture, and foraging are ancient traditions in the Delta. However, in the face of the ecological crisis, communities are reinventing their practices. Agroecology has become their response, their resilience, and their promise.

We call for:

- Supporting peasant agroecology as a pillar of sustainable food sovereignty;
- Facilitating access to land and financing for young people and women;

- Preserving mangroves and promoting sustainable fishing;
- Establishing local seed banks and encouraging solidarity-based exchanges.
- Promoting short supply chains and local products;
- Educating children early on in sustainable food systems.

“Cultivating the land without destroying it means nurturing the future.”

6. ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION: COMMUNITIES LEADING THE WAY

Communities adapt on a daily basis through their everyday actions. The people of the Delta are experimenting with adaptation models, clean energy solutions, and cooperative initiatives.

We recommend:

- Strengthening community capacity to plan for and manage climate change;
- Developing local, accessible renewable energy sources;
- Fostering South-South cooperation to share green innovation initiatives;
- Implementing local adaptation plans developed in collaboration with communities;
- Promoting a circular and resource-efficient economy based on repair, recycling, and reuse.

“Adaptation cannot be imposed from above; rather, it takes root where communities are firmly established.”

■ CONCLUSION : THE SALOUM DELTA APPEAL

We, the participants in the 2025 Climate School edition gathered in Palmarin, having walked the lands of Niodior, Dionewar, and Sangomar and having heard the voices of women, fishermen, elders, and children, hereby issue the Saloum Delta Appeal for:

An Africa that rebuilds itself and rises from its territories;

An ecology of solidarity, culture, and justice;

A humanity that no longer divorces humans from nature.

This manifesto is a collective commitment to life, courage, and hope. It is our shared promise to protect, pass on knowledge, and act.