

**ActionAid Senegal position paper on the legislative elections of July 31st, 2022**

**Making citizens' voices heard to change their lives**

The parliamentary elections in Senegal will take place on Sunday July 31st, 2022. On this occasion, Senegalese citizens will go to the polls to elect 165 parliamentarians: 150 living in Senegal and 15 parliamentarians from the Diaspora. These elections are of a paramount importance as they involve electing the representatives of every citizen of the country who will yet have the heavy responsibility of controlling the actions of the government and voting laws during the 14th legislature. It is therefore crucial to elect members of parliament who can validly represent and defend the interests of every Senegalese citizen. The eight coalitions of political parties competing for these 165 seats in our National Assembly must therefore cultivate peace, tolerance, and transparency in the voting process.


ActionAid Senegal recalls that these parliamentary elections should be moments to celebrate democracy and freedom of expression in respect of the law and adversity.


ActionAid Senegal recognises the power of citizens to elect the leaders of their choice and therefore invites all Senegalese voters, particularly those living in rural areas, to come out in large numbers on Sunday July 31st, 2022, to vote peacefully and choose the right candidates who will work in the Parliament to improve their well-being.


**The parliamentary elections in Senegal are taking place in a context of multidimensional crises**


The legislative elections in Senegal are taking place in a context of food and climate crises reinforced by the war between Ukraine and Russia with implications on the prices of basic commodities. Indeed, the Ukrainian crisis came on top of pre-existing crises that were aggravated by COVID 19. These different crises have therefore negatively affected the cost of living, mainly due to the increase in the price of fuel and basic foodstuffs. This situation particularly affects the most vulnerable households in our country. In the agricultural sector, the climate and Ukrainian crises have shown the vulnerability of our economy. A paradigm shift is therefore needed to promote food sovereignty and improve the living conditions of the Senegalese. ActionAid recognises the efforts of the Senegalese government in this difficult context to reduce inequalities, protect women and girls rights and improve public services.


**ActionAid would like to remind citizens of the main challenges faced in Senegal:**

 A recurrent risk of food insecurity in some rural communities due to exogenous and endogenous factors


 Despite the 40 - 50% increase in salaries and the recruitment of 5000 teachers, financing education remains a challenge


 Women's and girls' access to quality public services, land and means of production is still limited


 The rate of prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women remains low


 The 10% fertiliser subsidy for organic fertiliser is to be welcome but is considered low compared to the needs of farmers practising agroecology. Additional efforts are therefore needed to finance agriculture and fight against climate change.


**ActionAid Senegal therefore calls on the newly elected on Sunday 31st July 2022 to give greater priority to the following policies and programmes**


 Women's access to and control over the means of production including land, access to credit, seeds and other agricultural inputs, processing, creation of storage spaces and access to markets.


 Promotion of food sovereignty to avoid exposing our country to exogenous shocks and ensuring community, especially women farmers' control over resources.


 The need to build multidimensional programmes that support community adaptation and resilience to climate change.

 The promotion of free and universally accessible quality public education that respects the rights of all children in Senegal, especially girls, with a safe learning environment, quality teachers and appropriate curricula that contribute to the resilience of Senegalese.

 The establishment of women's empowerment programmes that build their economic capacity and their ability to resist gender-based violence and that also address the unpaid care work they do within families and communities.

 Provision of quality, gender-sensitive public services with a particular attention to the availability of childcare centres, schools, health facilities in rural communities, safe public transports, and safe well-lit and accessible streets in urban areas.

 An enabling business environment that creates employment opportunities for young people, including access to credit and other initiatives to support youth self-employment.

 Elected representatives should make it a priority to promote safe migration that respects human rights.

ActionAid wishes all candidates good luck and calls for a peaceful behaviour from them and their supporters for a Senegalese society where the rights of each citizen, especially women and girls, are realised.