

Statement of the 2014 Farmers' Forum

We, delegates in the 5th Farmers' Forum, representatives of small-scale producer organizations, speak on behalf of millions of small-scale farmers, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, livestock breeders, and indigenous communities. Through this statement communicate our views and proposals to IFAD and its governing bodies.

IFAD was founded in 1977 to work for the rural poor. With the creation of the Farmers' Forum in 2005 it began to work with the rural poor. At that time it was way ahead of the rest of the UN system in opening up to systematic dialogue with organizations representing the intended beneficiaries of its action. Since then, the partnership between IFAD and small-scale producers' organizations (POs) has brought significant mutual benefits. IFAD's image, its working methods and the effectiveness of its programs have profited from its association with our organizations. On our side, we have had some opportunities to bring our concerns to the governing bodies and the staff of IFAD and to gain access to funding for our capacity building programs.

But the world has not stood still over the past decade. Since the food crisis of 2007 agriculture has climbed to the top of the international agenda and small-scale producers are now the object of everyone's attention. Climate change, environmental degradation, conflicts, agrarian crisis and numerous suicides in many regions, desertification and water scarcity, food-related health issues, toxic chemicals, the scandal of land grabbing, food waste and commodity speculation have exposed the unsustainability of a food system based on industrial agricultural production and globalized value chains which reward all the actors except food producers and consumers. At the same time, we continue to strengthen our organizations' capacity to advance alternative proposals for sustainable agro-ecological production models and equitable local, national, and regional food systems. We have multiplied and capitalized the countless resilient practices that our members are conducting in all regions of the world. On the governance side, the reform of the Committee on World Food Security has set a new standard for participation in the process of decision-making by those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.

New challenges and new opportunities have opened up for the Farmers' Forum partnership that IFAD established with us almost a decade ago. If we do not seize them our collaboration risks stagnating. If we do, together we can make significant contributions to addressing some of the most serious issues that the world faces

today. This year, the International Year for Family Farming, is the time to act. It is with this intention that we advance the following proposals.

Smallholder family farming should be recognized as a pillar of local, sustainable development and a substantial guarantee for food sovereignty and peace and stability in the world. This vision has to be conceived at every level and implemented in national actions with positive effects for each community. The International Year of Family Farming 2014 has to constitute a significant step forward in improving the quality of life of hundreds of millions of smallholder family farmers, fisherfolk, livestock breeders and indigenous communities. We expect concrete initiatives and policies among others to mobilize resources and to improve access to land, water, oceans and other inputs and natural resources. Agroecology and organic agriculture should be promoted, and farmers' control over their production, especially their seeds and indigenous species of livestock and fish, should be strengthened, avoiding the violation of their rights of use.

We call upon IFAD to work with us to:

Improve the image of small-scale family farming, pastoralism and artisanal fisheries as the source of 90% of the food consumed in the world; obtain formal recognition in each country of their status and profession; and engage, through specific proposals, technical assistance and exchanges between countries and continents, in the formulation of more effective policies and support for smallholder.

Strengthen the involvement of smallholder producers' organizations at country level and in operational activities

- Facilitating smallholder producer organization's policy dialogue with governments is the top priority at country level. IFAD should provide increased support for the implementation at national level of the Committee on World Food Security's recommendation calling on governments, small-scale producers and other actors to develop a national vision for the future of smallholder production. This would be a concrete occasion to establish national multi-actor dialogue platform in which all genuine small-scale producer organization are included.
- Although there has been progress in involving our organizations in the national programmes (COSOPs) and in providing grants for our own organizations, we are still excluded from the design, implementation and evaluation of too many of the projects/loans which constitute the bulk of IFAD operations. The precedents in which

such projects are implemented in a tripartite arrangement involving IFAD, the government and the farmer organisations need to be multiplied.

- IFAD should more systematically inform and involve farmer organisations regarding all the initiatives it undertakes in a country. IFAD country offices and missions should systematically make contact with them. Farmers' organizations should be endowed with more capacity for independent analysis, critical assessment and monitoring. Each project should earmark specific resources to allow farmers' organizations to provide inputs in the design and supervision process rather than calling on external consultants. We are willing in all countries to engage in IFAD Country Programme Management Teams.

- More attention should be given to issues of concern to FOs, such as risk management in agriculture, guarantee funds to facilitate access to credit, and resolution of conflicts over natural resources.

- IFAD should extend its fisheries programmes to other countries and ensure inclusive space for small scale fishers' organizations. IFAD should ensure the integration of small-scale fishery organizations in its on-going grants programmes. It should support the implementation of the International Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries and facilitate small-scale fisher organisations' dialogue with national governments.

- More attention to livestock breeders and pastoralists is needed, and we recommend to have a special session on livestock issues and pastoralism at next Farmers Forum.

- Establish a global grant programme for direct support to organizations of farmers and fishers to increase their capacity in policy and economic areas and to strengthen their initiatives. It should include specific programs for women and youth, including the establishment of women and youth wings and their leadership and capacity development, as well as farmer schools and training centers for smallholder sustainable agriculture, and the inclusion of training modules on agroecology in the agricultural school system.

Strengthen the interaction between the Farmers' Forum and IFAD governance

- A more continuous and autonomous functioning of the Farmers Forum and its Steering Committee is necessary. It would allow a qualitative leap in the functioning of the Forum, improving its analysis and interactions with IFAD at different levels, and would lead to a more effective contribution of farmer organisations to IFAD programs and initiatives. Taking into account evolutions since the founding of the Farmers' Forum, a reform of the Steering Committee is necessary to clarify its mandate,

composition and working methods. We expect that IFAD will accompany this next step in our deepening collaboration.

- Allow the Steering Committee to provide the Board with information and views that can enrich its discussions, through such means as inviting a SC representative to sit as observer in the IFAD Executive Board or establishing an advisory group to the Executive Board.

- Set up a dialogue with IFAD governing bodies on key issues related to IFAD's mission and concepts such as value chains, adequate technologies and investment, and market access.

Strengthen collaboration in other global policy forums

- IFAD and our organizations should strengthen our coordination in support of the interests of small-scale producers in international forums/institutions such as the Committee on World Food Security and in programmes such as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme.

- IFAD governing bodies should adopt CFS policy instruments such as the Guidelines on land tenure and the recommendations of the roundtable on investing in smallholders adopted at CFS40, apply them to IFAD projects and programs, and support their implementation at national level, promoting the participation of small-scale producers' organizations.

- IFAD should also align its goals to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

We call upon the governments to:

- Resolve the agrarian crisis in their countries, among others through an effective use of the resources made available by IFAD, by implementing the CFS guidelines on land tenure, the FAO guidelines on small scale fisheries, as well as by undertaking agrarian and aquatic reforms and by investing in smallholder production including appropriate infrastructure and credit facilities.
- keep supporting IFAD as a key institution that channels resources to the smallholder, food producing sector, making the necessary resources available in the coming years for an ambitious agenda to be launched in this International Year of Family farming,
- implement the decisions taken in the CFS and in the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), as well as the findings of the International Assessment of Agriculture, Science, and Technology for Development (IAASTD), calling on IFAD support as appropriate, and use them as

central guidance for IFAD programs and projects,

- Involve producers' organizations in the design and implementation of all IFAD programs and projects and in the IFAD Country Program Management Teams.
- Give special priority to women, youth as both are key for smallholder food production.

We call upon our organizations to:

- commit ourselves to work together in solidarity and mutual trust, and to promote our common agenda on smallholder food production,
- continue to build our organisations, enhance our capacity to participate effectively in dialogue and collaboration with national governments and regional and international institutions including IFAD, and strengthen our capacities to provide services to our members.
- create space for women and youth to ensure that they gain an effective space in our organisations and that their concerns are given a high priority in our work,
- strive to achieve a participation of 50% women and 30% youth of 30% in the next global meeting of the Farmers Forum.