

“Feeding the World, Caring for the Earth.” Family Farming – our alternative for the future

FINAL DECLARATION

Family Farming World Conference: Feeding the World, Caring for the Earth

October 5-7, 2011 / Bilbao, Spain

We, 200 women and men, leaders of national, regional and international farmers’ organizations, civil society groups and social movements, and key academic and research institutions, from four continents of the world –Africa, Americas, Asia and Europe-, as well as representatives from national governments and inter-governmental organizations, have gathered in Bilbao, Spain, for the Family Farming World Conference with the theme “Feeding the World, Caring for the Earth.”

Family Farming – our alternative for the future

In our world today, 3 billion people live in the rural areas. Most of them belong to families who are engaged in family farming or family agriculture, where both the husband and/or the wife together with the other household members are involved directly in the production processes and in the other many different activities in the farm, and where agriculture/livestock/aquaculture/forestry is the family’s main source of livelihood. Oftentimes, they have limited access to land and other capital and technological resources required to make farming a viable endeavour. Currently there are 1.5 B women and men farmers working on 404 million small scale farms of less than 2 hectares, 410M gathering the hidden harvests of forests and savannahs, between 100 and 200M are pastoralists, 100M are small-scale fishers and 370 million belonging to indigenous communities with a great majority of them engaged in agriculture. In addition, 800 million people are growing urban gardens.

Family farming represents a sector of strategic value because of its economic, social, cultural, environmental, and territorial functions. The women and men engaged in family farming produce 70% of the world’s food. Family farming is the basis of sustainable food production aimed towards food security and food sovereignty, of environmental management of land and its biodiversity, of the preservation of the important socio-cultural heritage of rural communities and nations.

Our Issues and Challenges

Family farmers all over the world are severely affected by the interconnected crises of food, financial, fuel and climate change. Many policies to respond to these crises are unfavourable and unresponsive to

the conditions of family farmers. It is deplorable that the current dominant economic model and many policies of governments and inter-governmental organizations and international financial institutions generally neglect or even disadvantage Family Farming. Land grabbing represents today a major threat to family farming and to sustainable food production. Many farming families, including smallholders, indigenous communities and shepherds, are deprived of their assets through the forced “acquisition” of their land to establish vast domains of export oriented industrial and food crops. Farming families often have poor access and control over markets and market information, and very weak bargaining power for the prices of their produce. In the last few years, dizzying volatility of food prices has compounded the situation.

Women farmers play a vital role in producing as well as providing food for their families and their communities. They are custodians of the environment as well as of the more traditional, less intensive farming and input-efficient techniques. They are leaders in natural and genetic conservation efforts from seed selection to planting, harvesting, storage, and processing. Yet, their contributions are undercounted and most agricultural policies and programs are not sensitive to women farmers’ needs. Women lack access to and control over land, access to markets, education and a political voice in farmers’ organizations and in government bodies. They face gender-based discrimination in the household and society at a daily level. These factors reduce their ability to contribute and benefit from agricultural development and also increase their vulnerabilities.

Our young people do not have the economic and educational support to motivate them to stay in the field and thus opt to migrate from their territory without being able to realize their desire to continue living, creating and producing life in their own space.

Our Demands

A. General Calls. To uplift the conditions of the women and men engaged in Family Farming, and unleash their potentials as primary stakeholders in the fight to end poverty and hunger in the world we need to strengthen their voice, transform institutions, and advocate for policies that are responsive to their needs.

1. Strengthen family farmer organizations and movements to increase their influence over policies, institutions and markets, to secure access to the resources they need, and to ensure they are inclusive and act positively in favour of the most marginalized (women, youth, indigenous peoples, etc.).
2. Ensure that public and private institutions, including international financial institutions (IFIs) are accountable to family farmers and provide targeted, quality services (i.e. financing, infrastructure, extension, technology research and innovation, information, public distribution, education, emergency response, etc.) that build on family farmers' knowledge, capabilities, and interests.
3. Define investments and develop policies, in consultation with family farming organizations, which are specifically dedicated to addressing family farmer needs (I.e. Access to small scale inputs, local food availability/procurement, storage, bolsa familia, territorial approach and adaptation to local systems, etc.), and to redistributing wealth and opportunities to reduce inequalities in gender, and in

access to critical resources (land, water), and services (finance, technologies, social protection) .

B. We call on our governments to:

1. *Ensure family farmers' access and control over natural resources, mainly land, water, forests and seeds.* Ensure rights to land of both women and men family farmers, pastoralists and indigenous peoples, rights to fishery resources by fishing communities, and decent jobs and fair wages for agricultural workers. The forests, lands and waters are not commodities; they are living spaces and key components for life. Pursue agrarian reforms and protect family farmers from land grabbing. Ensure legal recognition of community property rights. Strengthen processes of land and property registration, with the meaningful participation of family farmers' organizations.

2. *Promote sustainable, agro –ecological approaches by and with family farmers.* Invest with family farmers in sustainable, agro-ecological, environment-friendly agriculture models, systems, technologies and practices that ensure proper management of natural resources (land, soil, forests, waters), sustainability of the environment and biodiversity, climate resilience, wide use of local resources and local wisdom, and control over their own seeds.

3. *Ensure access and increased market power of family farmers.* Provide an appropriate environment to enable family farmers to collectively produce and market products along commodity lines and support on farm value addition. Invest in building capacities of family farmers and their organizations to improve their interaction with local, national and regional markets. Support the creation of added value of products coming from family farming in order to create employment and improve incomes. At the macro-level, conduct a critical analysis of WTO in the context of the Doha Development Rounds and Free Trade Agreements while pushing for the reform and integration of regional markets that will protect family farmers against the effects of price volatility. Ensure that agricultural products and food are not subjected to perverse speculation.

4. *Promote women empowerment and gender equality.* Recognize women as both drivers and change agents in agriculture. Incorporate gender in key aspects of agricultural participatory researches, policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Eliminate gender discrimination in national legislations (especially regarding land and livestock tenure, access to resources and contractual rights) and ensure that specific laws are then put into practice. Facilitate women's participation in all relevant decision-making processes through mandatory quotas of at least 40%, leadership training, information sharing and visibility. Provide funds for gender-sensitive credit, savings systems, transportation and health services that support women farmers. Increase the number of women extension agents and train male extension agents to become more gender-sensitive. Target investments to enhance women's knowledge, training, innovation with regard to sustainable production and conservation.

5. *Strengthen organizations of family farmers.* Recognize farmers' organizations as primary partners in decision making and agriculture service delivery by creating institutionalized spaces for participation, providing incentives for women and men farmers to independently and credibly manage their associations and cooperatives, whether along geographic and commodity lines, by providing subsidies, grants, loans , project cooperation, through their organizations.

6. *Promote agriculture among the youth.* Develop policies and provide programs that will make

agriculture challenging, meaningful, more attractive, profitable and a credible career/vocation to the youth through the application of modern and appropriate technologies in value addition and ICT, inspiring them to further innovations in farming. All these should take into account the urban youth who also need to find meaning and can support the necessary link between rural and peri-urban agriculture.

C. To our partner inter-governmental institutions and processes:

We call on Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to sustain the partnership with family farming organizations in leading the International Year of Family Farming, and to declare Family Farming to be the theme for the 2014 World Food Day.

We call on the Committee on World Food Security on its 37th Session on October 17-22, 2011 in Rome to respond to the basic calls of IYFF campaign and assist in promoting the ideals and priority agenda of Family Farming in its process of regionalizing and decentralizing the CFS reform process in the immediate future.

We call on the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to support the FOs and rural development institutions in carrying out priority action plans related to the promotion of Family Farming. In particular to highlight the agenda, together with the Steering Committee of the Global Farmers Forum, in the 2012 FAFO.

We call on the Commission of Sustainable Development-United Nations Environmental Program (CSD-UNEP) to recognize the importance of the IYFF call and ensure that this agenda is highlighted, among many other important development agenda, in the preparatory activities leading up to the Rio+20 process in 2012.

We also call on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-UN Women) in its session in 2012 to recognize the IYFF call and highlight women in family farming in its “Rural Women” theme for the upcoming session.

We call on regional governmental associations such the ASEAN, SAARC, African Union, Regional Economic Communities (REC), Andean Communities MERCOSUR, EU, etc. to recognize Family Farming through our respective national governments and promote coherent policy framework and programs in support to small holder agriculture.

Our Commitments

As farmers’ organizations at national, regional and international levels, we will ensure that we have governance instruments that ensure legitimacy, representativeness, democracy and inclusivity for women, youth and marginalized. We will build our capacities to operate professionally and to empower our members economically, socially and politically. We will commit to support our women members’ efforts to empower themselves by providing spaces for their collective action and their involvement in leadership as well as by helping strengthen their capacities to claim their rights to land, financial, technical and other resources.

As social movements, academic and research institutions and other civil society organizations, we will support farmers' organizations in their capacity building, policy research, advocacy and empowerment, always recognizing and respecting their autonomy and capacities and working in genuine partnership with them.

Together we vow, in solidarity, to push strongly these calls with much urgency and dedication, in the coming year and the immediate future.

Signed by: Family Farming Organizations

Endorsed by: Civil Society Organizations

In the strong and supportive presence of:

National Government Agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)

Committee on World Food Security

Coordination team of the High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis

Family Farming World Conference