



CONFERENCIA GLOBAL
Agricultura familiar en
el centro de los sistemas
alimentarios sostenibles

CONFÉRENCE GLOBALE
L'agriculture familiale
au cœur des systèmes
alimentaires durables

GLOBAL CONFERENCE
Family farming at
the core of Sustainable
Food Systems

CONCEPT DOCUMENT

PANEL 1

ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION
OF DIVERSIFIED, SAFE, AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD BY
FAMILY FARMERS AND ITS CONTRIBUTION
TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD



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FARMING**
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PRESENTATION OF THE PANEL



The Global Conference on Family Farming and Food Systems aims to intensify the implementation of the Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028 towards the creation of more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and viable food systems that directly contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

The Conference will feature several exchange sessions, including three thematic panels. Panel 1 focuses on increasing the capacity of family farmers to produce diverse, safe and nutritious food in a sustainable manner, while enhancing their contribution to sustainable livelihoods. This panel will aim to present and discuss the ways and means of production of family farming, providing both a viable and sustainable livelihood for producers and a source of healthy and diversified food for communities. Different axes can be linked in order to work from family farming towards virtuous family production systems, within more sustainable, inclusive, viable and resilient food systems:

- the development of practices such as agro-ecology via a decarbonisation of production techniques, allowing for better economic, ecological and social performance;
- the creation of widespread decent work for rural youth;

- production systems which allow the integration of FFs into more inclusive and remunerative markets;
- the differentiation of public policies, oriented towards diverse family farming;
- access of family farmers to resources and means of production;
- and surely many other issues...


This document is in line with - and builds on - the other themes developed in the framework of the Conference:

- Panel 2: Promoting inclusive value chains and access to markets for family farmers;
- Panel 3: Public policies increasing the participation of family farming in food systems;
- cross-cutting themes: (i) gender equity and the leadership of rural women; ii) resilience and adaptation to climate change; iii) securing and improving family farmers' livelihoods; iv) inclusiveness, participation and strengthening of family farming organizations; and v) support for youth and to ensure generational sustainability.

This document has been prepared by the Advisory Thematic Committee 1 composed of:

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- José Ángel Coto Hernández, President, Programa de Dialogo Regional Rural (PDRR),
- Cristina Grandi, Chief Food Security Campaigner, IFOAM - Organics International,
- Lavinia Kaumaitotoya, Program Manager, Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON),
- Joe Mzinga, Regional Coordinator, Eastern and Southern Africa small scale Farmers' Forum (ESAFF),
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It was coordinated by Jean-Michel Sourisseau, Socio-Economist, Deputy Director of JRU ART-Dev, CIRAD, and the process was supported by Agnès Morilhat, cooperation officer at the WRF.



BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

Family farming is a way of organising agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production that is managed and run by a family and relies mainly on family labour, both women and men, young and older people. Farms and families evolve with and through each other. They combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions. In addition to the composition of labour, they differ from corporate agriculture in that the farm capital is owned by a family.

Family farming is the main form of food and agricultural production in the world. It accounts for more than 80 per cent of the world's food in terms of value. Given the multi-dimensional nature of family farming, the farm and the family, food production and home life, farm property and labour, traditional knowledge and innovative farming solutions, the past, the present and the future, are all deeply intertwined.

Family farming is diverse, as family farms can be larger or smaller, more or less mechanised, have different legal forms, and produce in a more or less agro-ecological way (including in a conventional way with high labour productivity).

In general, agriculture today represents a major global challenge. It is under increasing pressure to provide an ever-growing population with access to healthy, nutritious food at affordable prices, to adapt to climate change and natural resource degradation, including water scarcity, soil depletion and declining biodiversity, as

well as very unevenly distributed land resources. Widespread and persistent social and economic inequalities between rural and urban areas, and the shift in some parts of the world to the high-intensity production patterns of the Green Revolution, have led to an unprecedented level of urbanisation. Cities face problems of social marginalisation and sometimes conflict and are particularly sensitive to global warming. Urban lifestyles have also led to concentrated food systems, long value chains and high levels of waste (more than a third globally).

This productivist logic creates great imbalance and inequality, to the benefit of large companies and multinationals, emphasising the quantities produced, favouring the concentration of the means of production, and based on a short-term vision. It does not integrate environmental and social costs into pricing systems. It constrains family farmers, puts them in debt, and makes them dependent on globalised markets, which drive prices down and position them in a competition that is often unfavourable to them.

The current global food system produces enough food for everyone, but is vulnerable to crises; it is unable to reduce famine and malnutrition in its various aspects, and increases social inequalities.

In order to feed the world today and in the long term, it is essential and urgent to make in-depth changes to our food production systems. For the actors of the UNDRF, family farming offers the best perspectives for achieving this transformation, both in production systems and in the governance of food. Family farming must move towards and rely on more agro-ecological practices, respecting the commitments related to the preservation of biodiversity, the challenges of climate change and the management of natural resources, and taking into account the contexts, cultures, approaches and constraints of each farmer. It must also guarantee dignified living conditions for farmers, who are the main actors in its implementation, as well as their overall well-being. Family production structures can indeed rely on virtuous principles and practices for healthy and sustainable food and inclusive and resilient food systems. But this will not happen by itself; family farmers need support to achieve it. Through adequately resourced public policies and programmes that enable family structures to move towards inclusive, sustainable, context-specific practices such as agroecology, it seems possible to address the failure of the global food system.



PROPOSALS

The Panel will address the following questions: why and under what conditions can FFs meet the challenges of reshaping local and global food systems. The Panel will be tasked with developing these proposals with a view to the priorities to be implemented in the next UNDIFF biennium (2022–2024). These elements will be integrated into the final declaration of the Conference.

Production issues are very much related to Pillar 5 of the Decade: improving the socio-economic inclusion, resilience and well-being of family farmers, households and communities in rural areas. However, they are spread throughout the Global Action Plan of the Decade and its seven pillars: they cannot be reduced to a strictly economic dimension, as family farming is multidimensional. These issues are linked to the dynamics of territories and the preservation of natural resources, they question social relationships – in particular the role of women and young people in decision-making – and call for specific public policies and collective actions.

The first step is to develop the capacities of family farmers to intensify or adopt technical and innovative solutions, such as agroecology, always based on the knowledge of the farmers themselves. The objective is to move from a situation of vulnerability – experienced by many FF organisations around the world – to secure and more regular production over time, less dependent on external inputs, and with improved efficiency and economic viability of farms. Particular attention should be paid to the principles of the circular economy: use of waste, compost, etc. The issue of farmer autonomy is central and concerns the whole technological package: pesticides and fertilisers from the petrochemical industry, equipment and seeds. On this last point, there is a great deal of asymmetry between the interest shown in native, peasant seeds and agro-industrial seeds.

In this sense, collective forms of organisation, in particular cooperatives, contribute to pooling resources and strengthen farmers' production and organisation ca-

capacities. They play a key role in the promotion and defence of family farming, helping farmers to overcome their vulnerabilities.

Although priorities and practices vary across contexts, there is a need for holistic and dynamic approaches which address inequalities in the access to natural resources, services such as credit and insurance, and technology. Ensuring secure access to, and control over, land for family farmers, especially for young people and women, indigenous communities and the landless, is a prerequisite for family farming and must be a public policy priority. Public policies must reduce exposure and vulnerability to extreme events related to climate change or other social and environmental risks. And we must emphasise the need to strengthen the capacities of agrarian organisations to develop and implement collective and inclusive solutions.

To this end, the development of multi-faceted and inclusive agricultural extension and advisory services should be promoted to improve farmers' knowledge and use of crop-appropriate, sustainable, non-hazardous and diversified production practices. In particular, agroecology should be promoted to increase crop diversity and productivity, while improving income generation and reducing the risk of hazardous farm work, especially among vulnerable groups.

The diversification of production and its orientation towards more nutritious and culturally appropriate crops, which also reduce the risks associated with market hazards and the impacts of climate change, the strengthening of more sustainable practices and techniques that reduce dependence on external inputs, the differentiation through quality and safety of production and the generation of added value are strategies which can be interesting, as stand-alone policies or in combination, to develop the individual and collective potential of family farming. The panel should also focus more strongly on the issue of production quality and the prospect of market recognition of this quality. In line with Panel 2, the connection between production and public markets, and the recognition of environmental and social services rendered, in particular through certification, are all proposals to be examined.

Depending on the initial situation of family farms and the contexts in which they evolve, the solutions will take different forms, based on a territorialisation and adaptation of the approaches to the realities of the farmers. For example, while intensification

of production seems essential for the most vulnerable, forms of de-intensification can be envisaged for others. It is not a question of seeking convergence. The environmental impacts of the family farms which are most committed to conventional approaches must be reduced while maintaining adequate income levels and improving social performance; the economic and production performance of the least conventional organisations must surely be improved first. It is necessary to increase the levels of funding for agriculture and direct it more clearly towards family farms which adopt practices useful to all and contribute to healthy, inclusive food systems.

Production must also be geared towards consumption: family farm production adapted to its territory also means that it corresponds to the food needs of the population, particularly in terms of nutrition and health.

Another proposal for action relates to the issue of employment, which again calls for targeted public actions and policies. Family farming must be able to make a significant contribution to reducing inequalities, given the pool of jobs it represents. These working conditions need to be regulated so that family farming can create a large number of decent jobs which are attractive to young people as they generate dignified and sustainable livelihoods for both families and rural communities.

Experience shows that public policies favourable to family farming are possible and necessary in order to reduce inequalities and promote viable agricultural and food systems, both within families and within rural communities. However, experience also shows that these policies, in order to be sustainable, must be anchored in the law and in institutions. Particular attention should be paid to the soundness and sustainability of public policies dedicated to family farming.

