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el centro de los sistemas  
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CONFÉRENCE GLOBALE  
L'agriculture familiale  
au cœur des systèmes  
alimentaires durables

GLOBAL CONFERENCE  
Family farming at  
the core of Sustainable  
Food Systems

REFERENCE DOCUMENT

# PANEL 3

PUBLIC POLICIES TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION  
OF FAMILY FARMING IN THE FOOD SYSTEMS



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**FAMILY  
FARMING**  
2019-2028



# PANEL 3 PRESENTATION



The Global Conference “Family farming at the core of sustainable food systems”, from 23 to 26 November 2021, aims to analyse the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF) 2019–2028 to obtain more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and viable food systems, contributing directly to the fulfilment of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

The Global Conference combines thematic panels, special events and cross-cutting topics that feed into all of its content. Panel 3 “Public policies to increase the participation of family farming in food systems” aims to present and discuss the generation of favourable policy environments (legal and institutional frameworks, political

commitments, etc.) that ensure the leadership of family farming in the shift towards sustainable, resilient, inclusive and viable food systems. A key element to ensure that the challenges and opportunities are well identified is to increase the participation of family farmers in decision-making processes. National Action Plans for the Decade, and family farming laws and regulations will be outlined.

This reference paper has been prepared by the Advisory Thematic Committee for Panel 3, made up of:

### **Facilitation:**

- Lautaro Viscay – Special meeting on Family Farming (REAF) Mercosur Technical Secretariat and
- Caio Galvao De França – Postgraduate Program in Rural Development of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil).

### **Members:**

- Dr Cheikh Oumar, Executive director – Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale, IPAR.
- Giovanna Vasquez, Manager, Confederation of Peruvian Agriculture, CONVEAGRO.
- Haley Atienza, Director, PAKISAMA, The Philippines.
- Teresa López, President, Federation of Rural Women’s Associations/Union of Small Farmers and Livestock Farmers (FADEMUR/UPA).
- Célestin Nga, Executive secretary, Plateforme Régionales des Organisations Paysannes d’Afrique Centrale, PROPAC.

### **WRF support:**

- Belén Citoler – Deputy director

# INTRODUCTION



**The United Nations International Year of Family Farming (IYFF 2014)** contributed to increasing social visibility and recognition of the rural communities' and family farmers' contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular to ensuring food security.

Our organizations have built National Committees for Family Farming (NCFF), and in several countries, specific regulatory frameworks and differentiated public policies have been accomplished. We are progressing in regional networks and global coordination with the World Rural Forum, and together with other organizations, we are assuming new regional and multilateral commitments. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda acknowledge the importance of our contributions in achieving several of these objectives and open up new possibilities to accelerate their fulfilment.

Now, with the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNFFF) 2019-2028, our challenge is to release the unique potential of family farming to transform food systems and make them sustainable, resilient and inclusive. To do this, it is necessary to strengthen our organizations, their capacities to influence and build new social alliances that favour and expand the scope and improvement of differentiated policies, as well as new policies that integrate environmental, nutrition and food dimensions – all of this in an effort to synthesize public policies and their contents to include in the next biennium of implementation of the UNFFF.

# ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

**In an increasingly more complex planet**, food systems and sustainability are inter-related, occupying a key place in a transition to guarantee rights and a better life for all of society.

The current situation poses great challenges, considering that the Covid 19 pandemic has accentuated inequalities within countries, between countries and regions, and has starkly revealed that prior to Covid 19 more than 820 million people in the world were experiencing hunger or food insecurity.<sup>1</sup> Around 80% of the world's extreme poor reside in rural areas, and the vast majority of them depend on natural resources to ensure their livelihood. At the same time, and on a global scale, there is a situation of food loss and waste.

Family farming is diverse and implicated in food systems, such as small farmers, fishermen, shepherds or forest-dependent communities, wage workers, and others linked to small and medium-sized family businesses in different food value chains, co-operatives, associations and other forms of organization.

Current food systems are questioned/confronted by their economic, social, environmental and cultural effects, and by the asymmetrical relationships among the different sectors: food production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption.

The impact of climate change is already perceptible in many parts of the planet: episodes of flooding, drought, permanent changes in climatic regimes affect future life and expectations in food production. This will certainly affect us, but it will dispro-

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162es/ca5162es.pdf> (State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019).

proportionately affect poor people and vulnerable groups, even multiplying the impact of other threats (e.g. hunger, pests and diseases, water scarcity).

The effects of climate change, the pressure of a growing world population, the depletion of natural resources and loss of biodiversity, and the demands of ensuring healthy diets reveal the limitations of current food systems and require urgent action.

Another challenge relates to economic sustainability, which calls for favourable mechanisms for the insertion of family farming into food value chains and for guaranteeing the profitability of their farms, marketing infrastructure and support for their associative or cooperative organization.

On the other hand, we know how to build favourable environments for family farming policies, based on legal and institutional frameworks and national, regional and multi-lateral political commitments that can feed back into each other. There are situations in which we have made progress, such as the exchange experiences, dialogue and the construction of regional agricultural and pastoral policies and the national plans for the Decade. However, there is still a long way to go to ensure the influence of farmers' and rural organizations on the laws that steer the agricultural agenda, such as in areas of regional integration and the common agricultural policy.

Another point is the need to overcome the inequalities imposed on women, many of which are linked to the traditional imbalances faced by them (care, for example) and to the specific problems of women farmers (recognition of their work, economic and political empowerment). Despite their important contribution to food production and as guardians of knowledge and know-how and productive practices, it is they who are most affected by poverty and lack of access to land and other economic and financial resources. It is necessary to have data to measure the reality, inequalities and gaps, generating specific policies and affirmative actions in general policies to overcome the enormous "gender gap" that persists and limits the capacity of rural women to intervene and take advantage of new opportunities and capture their autonomy.

Another challenge is generational succession, and it is therefore necessary to create favourable conditions for access to land, education, work and recreation for young people in rural areas, with incentives and specific policies that take into ac-



count the possibilities of the digital era, paying special attention to the situation of young women who are the ones who migrate and leave the farms.

In order to achieve substantive changes, it is essential that States/Nations prioritize and undertake the necessary investments, ensuring an adequate budget for agriculture, particularly for family farming.

The concurrence of economic-, environmental- and health crises, and the growing recognition of the need to transform food systems, open up new opportunities to set family farming at the centre of the agenda and strengthen its role in contributing to resolving problems.

The multifunctionality of family farming is related to the role of farmers in the community, as caretakers of the environment, which enables the sustainable use and management of natural resources, their conservation and sustainable relationship with biodiversity, and their contribution to rural and territorial development. Family Farming organizations have experience in promoting sustainable agriculture, such as silvopastoral and agroforestry management to strengthen more resilient and sustainable systems.

Responses must be urgent, sustained and geared towards the welfare of family farming and rural communities, towards the profitability of farms and the resilience of production systems with sustainable production practices, with healthy food supply.

We already have the regional and international organizations and alliances that we have been building, but we can go further by partnering with environmental and consumer movements. We have proven successful experience and we know what to do and how to do it, in this grave scenario. But we can do more and better with more participation of organizations in public policies, with new, intelligent and inclusive governance, together with broad, lasting and strong alliances.

A scenario of challenges, but also of opportunities in the international agenda with the progress made in overcoming COVID 19 and the possibilities opened up by international commitments in the face of climate change and for the transition to sustainable food systems.

# PUBLIC POLICY PROPOSALS

An illustration of a rural farm scene. In the foreground, there are several cows of different colors (brown, white, and black) gathered around a blue water trough. To the right, there is a simple house with a dark roof and the letters 'ABC' on its side. The background features rolling green hills under a bright yellow sky. The overall style is a flat, colorful illustration.

**A focus on family farming is essential to promote food systems** and rural transformation that empower rural populations. Policies and programs that improve the livelihoods and resilience of small farm holders, foresters, fishing people, shepherders and labourers, with special attention to rural women, indigenous peoples and youth.

But beyond keeping the focus on food availability, it is necessary to ensure access to healthy food, to rethink consumption-, production- and supply systems in an integrated manner, amalgamating policies for family farming with food, health and environmental policies. Public policies play a vital role in releasing the potential of family farming in the transformation of food systems. The following public policy measures, adapted to each specific context, are proposed to help strengthen family farming and release its transformative potential in the construction of sustainable, resilient, inclusive and viable food systems:

## **1. Recognition and implementation of differentiated public policies with a comprehensive approach**

- a.** All the actors should accept that family farming, rural communities and indigenous peoples are the caretakers of the environment and vital for sustainable and resilient food systems, with policies and programs that value and reward the care and sustainable management of natural resources and more sustainable forms of production.



- b. Governments should establish an inclusive, transparent and coordinated approach to policy development and implementation, with active and informed participation of farmers and their organizations during the process of policy development as well as the implementation and monitoring of national and regional policies, as a condition of legitimisation, qualification and effectiveness.
- c. Effective interventions in favour of family farming require recognizing its multi-dimensional nature, strengthening the interconnection with other agendas and their policies, particularly with regard to food, health, nutrition and environmental policies, and having a set of multisectoral policies and a regulatory framework that define the category of family farmer and facilitate differentiated interventions.
- d. Create, expand and strengthen differentiated policies for social protection and access to education, health, the economy and financial services, and, fundamentally, to cultural goods.

## **2. Commitments, cooperation and coalitions to advance differentiated public policies at the national, regional and multilateral levels.**

- a. To advance in the coordination and coalition of countries and common agendas in support of family farming as a positioning strategy and to promote exchanges and cooperation (government and civil society and also within civil society) at national, sub-regional and global levels.
- b. To spur the construction and implementation of public policies, international instruments and commitments that recognize and protect, from different angles, family farmers and their vital role, as set out in the “*GUIDE International and regional instruments to defend and promote the interests and rights of family farmers*”.
- c. To enhance the work of the National Committees of Family Farming (NCFE) in promoting policy dialogue and incorporate new stakeholders by creating

discussion, communication channels and alliances with healthy consumption and environmental organizations and movements to strengthen the participation of family farming in the transformation of food systems.

### **3. To protect the territories and the rights of indigenous communities.**

- a. Promote international instruments and implement national public policies for the defence and protection of territories and the protection of indigenous peoples' ways of life.

### **4. Promote the equality and autonomy of rural women and their social, economic and political empowerment.**

- a. Implement policies to promote equality, autonomy and social, economic and political empowerment of rural women, acknowledging their contribution to sustainable production. Similarly, measure the impact of policies on women and incorporate the rural perspective when addressing women's rights in the political agenda.
- b. Influence the construction process, coordinated by the CFS (Committee on World Food Security), of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment (VG-GEWE) in the context of food security and nutrition to ensure the incorporation of the experiences and knowledge of rural women's organizations.

### **5. Rights and opportunities for rural youth.**

- a. Generate opportunities for youth, prioritizing access to land, education, work and leisure and in new agendas of circularity and wellbeing, in transformation and commercialization.
- b. Promote innovative ways to engage youth in agriculture, paying special attention to gender considerations, digital literacy and connectivity.

## **6. Promote the use of science and technology so that rural populations have access to accessible and quality inputs.**

- a.** This presupposes promoting research to produce scientific evidence capable of leading an inclusive debate and dialogue and, therefore, leaving no one behind.

## **7. Promote partnerships and ensure access to public policies.**

- a.** For policies to be sustainable, it is necessary to ensure effective access for family farmers, which requires their empowerment and that of their organizations, the production of disaggregated data, adaptation of access requirements, inclusive dialogue, the constant review of instruments, and training and capacity building in public policies for family farming.
- b.** Promote the association of family farmers as a mechanism for learning and economic organization so as to expand the scale and access to markets and public policies, contributing to greater autonomy.
- c.** Strengthen marketing infrastructure (electrification, internet access, etc.), short marketing circuits and the proximity of markets, valuing local and healthy products, integrated with food supply, health and nutrition policies for the construction of sustainable chains.

**The proposals gathered in this document on public policies** seek to make visible and broaden the participation of our organisations in the transformation towards sustainable, resilient, inclusive and viable food systems. It is through the experience of our family farming organisations that we will be able to advance in the implementation of the UNDF 2019–2028; a strategy that demands creativity, innovation and co-construction of public policies to achieve the SDGs and position family farming as part of the solution to global problems.