

Scaling up the implementation of CFS policy instruments in a time of climate crisis: The role of the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 (UNDF)

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13:30- 14:45

Family Farming is at the core of the CFS program, profoundly linked with their products and policy recommendations. The UNDF has been successfully promoting policy change through the development and use of comprehensive policy plans and tools in more than 76 countries. It mobilized 2,625 actors in various dialogue processes and committees, including 1,853 family farmers' organizations and federations. Since the launch of the Decade, 260 policies, laws and regulations were developed and approved supporting family farming and the transformation towards sustainable agrifood systems.

The side event provided an opportunity to showcase the UNDF as a key instrument to contextualize and implement global policy instruments including CFS product to achieve policy convergence in a coordinated, participatory, multi-stakeholder manner, to display the UNDF as an effective mechanism resulting in innovative and integrated public policies for family farming and inclusive governance mechanisms at national level that responds to the actual, interrelated and urgent challenges caused among others by the climate crisis; and to amplify the voice of family farmers around the world, in particular of women and young farmers to mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure more diverse, sustainable and resilient food systems.

This side event was moderated by Ms Marcela Villarreal, Director of the Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division in FAO and the opening of the even was given by Ambassador Mario Arvelo, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the Rome-based agencies of the United Nations, and Member of UNDF International Steering Committee. Highlighting the significance of the UNDF as a key instrument to coordinate policies that support family farmers, Ambassador Arvelo emphasized the alignment of UNDF activities with key CFS recommendations. While celebrating the progress made through the UNDF, he stressed the need for continued collective efforts and the need to recognize family farmers as central to transforming food systems to achieve zero hunger by 2030.

The event consisted of two round table discussions, the first of which focused on successful experiences of scaling-up the UNDF to contextualize and implement global policy instruments, including CFS products, to achieve policy convergence in a coordinated, participatory, multi-stakeholder manner.

Javier Sanchez Anso, member of the coordination committee of La Via Campesina (LVC) as Vice-Chair of the UNDF's International Steering Committee, stressed the importance of the Global Action Plan to implement CFS products and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants. He emphasized the need for inclusive participation from all sectors of family farming and called for effective national-level methodologies and monitoring of legislative measures and programmes.

Deputy Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN Agencies in Rome, Juan Prieto Gomez, shared that Spain's experience with family farming has become central to national policies and the new Common Agricultural Policy, contributing to food sustainability, social cohesion, and rural development. Including the establishment of a Spanish Committee for family farming, CEDAF, and the development of a national Family Farming Action Plan, supported by recent regional laws in Aragón and Castilla-La Mancha. Following this intervention, Musa Sowe, Vice President of Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA), discussed the crucial role of family farmers in policy decision-making and the implementation of the Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security

(VGGT). He emphasized the positive impact of the Multicultural Committee in Senegal, Mali, and Gambia, which fosters dialogue, helps to resolve conflicts, and shapes national land policies. He stressed the importance of empowering farmers to lead and adapt policies to their local knowledge, calling for a synergy between local knowledge and science for sustainable food production.

Dr Nandini Azad, Chairperson of the Asia and Pacific Women's Committee and President of the Indian Cooperative Network for Women, emphasized the importance of involving women in family farming and global agricultural discussions. She highlighted the need to empower women in agriculture by recognizing their multiple roles, and emphasized land ownership and access to finance as key challenges that must be addressed. Dr Azad also stressed the significance of promoting national policies that support family farming and called for greater investment in women's inclusion in family farming processes. Concluding the roundtable discussion, Alberto Broch, president of COPROFAM and Vice President, World Rural Forum (WRF) emphasized the central role of family farming in addressing global challenges, particularly in achieving the 2030 Agenda and eradicating hunger. He highlighted the need to implement resolutions focusing on dialogue – with the strong involvement of youth and women and a focus on sustainability – and called for worldwide replication of the importance of on-the-ground discussions at high level policy dialogue, emphasizing "nothing about us without us."

The second round table focused on strengthening family farmers' resilience to climate change via public policies and climate related investments. Claudio Garon, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to UN Agencies in Rome, opened the discussion by highlighting family farming contributions to food security, employment and economic sustainability. He emphasized the multi-dimensionality of family farming, including economic, social, and environmental aspects, underscoring government policies that support women's empowerment, rural development and sustainable agriculture, particularly in the Amazon region.

Zoe Williamson, Program Officer at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), highlighted the critical role of family farmers in climate-resilient agriculture, emphasizing their contribution to food security and biodiversity. She stressed that small-scale farmers receive only a small portion of global climate finance, which is insufficient to meet their adaptation needs, and called for increased support and more equitable access to funding due to their vulnerability to climate change. She also highlighted an upcoming research report to be launched ahead of COP28.

Irish Baguilat, Coordinator of the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), addressed the importance of family farmers actively participating in climate negotiations, highlighting their multi-dimensional contributions and vulnerabilities. She stressed the need to support farmer organizations in collaborating with governments to enhance resilience and sustainability beyond negotiations, enabling access to different services and markets. Séraphin Médard, Vice President of Plateforme Sous Régionale des Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale (PROPAC) and President of the Concertation nationale des organisations paysannes et producteurs agricoles du Congo (CNOP-CONGO), highlighted the importance of states acknowledging family farmers and civil society organizations in effective policies on ecology and climate change. He shared a call to reform national-level institutions and evaluations of commitments made by states to improve the outcomes, emphasizing the importance of collaboration with civil society organizations.

The event was concluded by Renate Hahlen, Principal Administrator of the European Commission, who reflected on key points raised during the discussion, including the importance of national action plans for family farming, women's empowerment, and support for the UNDF. She emphasized the European Union's support for family farming, agroecology, and the need for balanced panel compositions in discussions on these topics.