

CSO STATEMENT to the 31st FAO APRC
Our Urgent Calls for the future of World Food Security
March 15, 2012

We, **130 representatives** of smallholders food producers, that is farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, rural women, pastoralists, youth, cooperatives, labor movements, consumers and NGOs from **20 countries** worldwide met from March 10 to 11, 2012 for the CSO parallel consultation to the 31st FAO-Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam.

We are confronted with unprecedented financial, food and climate crises and the challenges of food price volatility, land grabbing, corporatization of agriculture, trade agreements and food governance. This profit-driven and unsustainable development model has gravely afflicted the region's marginalized and vulnerable communities mainly small food producer, causing increased hunger and malnutrition, displacement and loss of livelihoods and agrarian conflicts.

We now forward to the FAO 31st APRC Conference these recommendations from a grassroots, people-centered perspective.

First, to our governments:

1. Stop domestic and foreign land grabbing and instead implement genuine, people-led land, agrarian, pasture and fisheries reforms and rural development; protect agricultural, fisheries, pastoral and forest lands and common property resources; and develop policies to regulate investments on agricultural lands for food. We urge governments to initiate processes towards implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure.
2. Protect the rights of indigenous communities against takeovers by fortifying the full free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) processes. Customary rights of indigenous and ethnic minority communities should remain inalienable.
3. End food commodity market speculation, and develop and implement policies aimed at stabilizing food supply and prices at the country level such as strategic food reserves primarily sourced domestically, and price control mechanisms to address food price volatility. In addition, ensure decent living wages of farm workers and social protection and safety nets as a human right for the poor and marginalised communities.
4. Develop and implement policies in support of small-scale enterprise and people-led value chain, including smallholder food producers organizations and cooperatives, institutional development, infrastructure support, research and development, and capacity building. Ensure the regulation, monitoring and accountability of national and multinational corporations and stop free trade agreements (FTAs) that harm rural livelihoods, undermine food sovereignty and destroy ecosystems. Along this, we urge governments to recognize the important role of youth in agriculture and increase the investments to support their participation in agriculture and rural development.
5. Institute environmentally and economically sustainable food production models that lead to dynamic local economies. Governments should commit to increase annual national budgets to enable, support and uphold sustainable agro-ecology.. Promote community-centered seed conservation and improvement, and prohibit patents on plant, and other living organisms and the production of genetically engineered organisms.
6. Furthermore ensure the promotion of gender responsive policies at all levels, including participation, gender budgeting and women's control of and access to land, and productive resources.

7. Enforce climate change policies that ensure climate, social, environmental, and gender justice, common and differentiated responsibility, and food sovereignty. Funds that will go to address the impacts of climate change on small food producers should not be tied to donor conditionalities.

Secondly, to FAO:

1. Initiate a process of inclusive consultation on agricultural investment, as soon as the Voluntary Guidelines are approved during the special session of the CFS in May 2012.

2. Ensure that the Global Strategic Framework (GSF) includes strong monitoring mechanisms to hold transnational corporations accountable for their role with respect to large-scale food and agro-fuel production, toxic chemicals, land grabbing and the displacement of food crops. In addition, the document should provide guidelines for governments on how to strengthen coherence between national and global food policies.

3. Encourage its member states to set up position limits, ban commodity index funds, and strengthen food reserves to stabilize supply and prices of food staples.

4. Institute mechanisms for its national offices to strengthen engagement with wider civil society in their programs, workplan, implementation and monitoring. It is vital to ensure the participation of farmers' organizations and CSOs, with special attention on women's equal representation in the relevant committees and official consultations especially in the context of 2012 International Year of Cooperatives and the 2014 International Year of Family Farming. Implement the FAO Guidelines on the Right to Food and Farmers Rights to seeds.

5. Strengthen its work in the region and national offices in Asia-Pacific with smallholder food producer organizations in the adoption of sustainable ecosystem approaches particularly against climate change stresses such as drought, floods and extreme weathers.

6. And finally, initiate processes to reconcile, monitor and report on various international treaties and conventions that pertain to natural resource management and agriculture. It should also facilitate and ensure greater participation of civil society groups in the CFS, and FAO processes, and allocate greater resources for these processes as we welcome FAO's support for improved CSO participation at all levels.

Our Commitments

We, the civil society participants in this gathering, are committed to working together to make our governments, FAO and other international policy making bodies accountable to the needs of the region's peoples through principled engagement in various processes of implementing, monitoring and evaluation. We will contribute to the deliberations on the substance and methodologies of the various agricultural policies and investments for agriculture at national, regional and international levels. We will not waiver in resisting programs and policies that impair the rural poor and marginalized. Both as individuals and organizations, we will intensify our efforts in empowering local communities to contribute towards food sovereignty and benefit from sustainable development efforts in the Asia- Pacific region. ###

Presented to the High Level Meeting of the FAO-APRC on 15 March, 2012, Hanoi, Vietnam.