



DECLARATION BY CIVIL-SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ¹ to the 28th FAO Regional Conference for Africa

We African civil-society organizations - made up of peasant, livestock and pastoral farmer, fishing and consumer organizations, non-governmental organizations, human rights movements, women's organizations, trade unions, youth/student organizations, craftworkers, native peoples and the urban poor – gathered in Tunis on 21 and 22 March 2014 in the framework of the 28th FAO Regional Conference for Africa, having discussed the situation of agricultural development in Africa, food and nutritional security, family farms and natural resources (land, water, pasture, forests and so on), would like to make the following remarks:

Participants appreciate:

- 1- The introduction by FAO of the strategic framework for partnership with civil society. They appreciate the efforts of PAFO and its member UMNAGRI in organizing this consultation that has brought together participants from 35 African countries, with 47% female representation;
- 2- The efforts of CFS through the adoption of Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests;
- 3- The efforts of the African Union, NEPAD and regional integration institutions to maintain and strengthen the participatory and inclusive processes as part of the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes;
- 4- The effective implementation of the trust fund adopted by the 27th FAO Regional Conference to fund States' activities. Participants encourage them to continue their efforts to consolidate the fund and consider funding the projects of young people in farming as part of the project portfolio eligible under this fund;

However, the participants note:

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- 1- A weakness in legal and regulatory frameworks in Africa in terms of supporting farming projects for young people;
- 2- Insufficient consideration by tenure policies of tenure access and security for vulnerable groups such as young people, women, native peoples and so on.
- 3- Lack of coherence among policies, programmes and projects at the various levels (local, national, regional and continental), which often creates major shortcomings in their implementation, thereby compromising the achievement of food and nutritional security and actions to reduce poverty in countries;
- 4- Insufficient communication among food security actors in relation to the FAO decentralization process;

Furthermore, in 2014 which was declared International Year of Family Farming by the United Nations General Assembly on 22 December 2011 in New York, the participants deplore:

- 1- Weak public investment in family farms, which is reflected, inter alia, by the mixed results in achieving the Maputo commitments 11 years later and the weak implementation of the CAADP;
- 2- Insufficient financing tools and mechanisms suited to the needs and realities of family farms;
- 3- Funding geared towards industrial farming with the public/private approach that is not suitable for supporting family farms;

In order to take account of these remarks, which we have discussed for two days, we request:

- 1- In relation to African youth in farming and rural entrepreneurship
 - a. The formulation and adoption of coherent policies conducive to the involvement of young people in farming, rather than support for industrial farming enterprises that are the source of land-grabbing in various countries;
 - b. The establishment in all countries of funding and investment mechanisms suited to youth entrepreneurship in farming; in each country, this basically involves setting up special funds to finance young people's farming projects;
 - c. The establishment in all countries of enough quality training arrangements and mechanisms suitable for farming and rural entrepreneurship of young people where they do not exist, and the consolidation of existing arrangements.
 - d. The establishment of an inclusive dialogue mechanism involving the authorities, youth organizations and other stakeholders.
- 2- In relation to the farming and food situation, and implementation of CAADP
 - a. The establishment of inclusive arrangements and mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and capitalizing on all commitments made in terms of public projects, programmes and policies;

- b. Improved targeting of support requirements for family farms in the framework of CAADP to ensure that they are modernized in an ongoing and sustainable way;
 - c. Strengthening of the protection of farming and agrifood markets to support regional and continental integration processes through the application of agreements on the free movement of people and goods;
 - d. Promotion of farming risk management and insurance systems;
- 3- In terms of the CFS, participants value the various thematic reports it has drafted and appreciate the last special report of the United Nations on the right to food and:
- a. Encourage States to engage in decisions to implement the recommendations;
 - b. Ask that the working methods of the CFS be implemented in all levels of regions and countries;
 - c. Call on governments to implement the Voluntary Guidelines in their national context by introducing inclusive approaches, particularly in the form of formal dialogue forums involving all actors (with special attention given to small-scale producers and young farming entrepreneurs) by strengthening the implementation of the Guidelines and the monitoring and evaluation of all actions undertaken;
 - d. Ask for State accountability in terms of useful and relevant farming investments that consider the vision of farming policies that have already been devised or are in the process of being formulated;
 - e. Strongly condemn land-grabbing and demand a moratorium on the industrial production of biofuel in the continent.
- 4- In terms of the FAO decentralization process, the participants support it and also:
- a. Recommend that the process be inclusive, transparent and coherent;
 - b. Ask that the guidelines and programmes of Regional Offices be defined in agreement with all groups of actors;
 - c. Approve of the proposal to group Regional Offices into two, although this should be accompanied by appropriate measures (particularly in terms of strengthening National Offices);
 - d. Consider that this strengthening requires increased human and financial resources, the appointment of a civil-society focal point within National Offices, and greater decision-making power for such Offices in terms of certain activities;
 - e. Ask States to communicate regularly about the FAO decentralization process in order to resolve weaknesses over time.
- 5- Furthermore, participants strongly recommend:
- a. That farming research be funded by the public sector as a priority, and that it should be inspired by knowledge in the form of local know-how;

- b. To governments and FAO to make a positive contribution to the initiatives of civil-society organizations (and peasant organizations in particular) in the context of the International Year of Family Farming in 2014;
 - c. To support the process of the Forum of African Rural Women.
- 6- Lastly, more specifically in terms of fishing, we consider that a common vision and approach to African fishing would help us to face many cross-border challenges in general and in terms of shared resources. In this regard, participants:
- a. Note that the African Union and NEPAD are currently carrying out an important study into African fishing to develop a strategic plan, in preparation for the forthcoming Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries & Aquaculture;
 - b. Encourage the active involvement of fishing organizations throughout Africa in the above-mentioned process, so that their concerns can be integrated into the outcome, and in order to make the study more significant and productive.

The Civil Society Organization Consultation in Africa:

- Fully supports FAO and its management emphasizing the eradication of hunger in close collaboration with civil society and other non-State actors;
- Supports the transformations of FAO implemented in the past two years under the leadership of Director-General, Mr. José Graziano da Silva ;
- Welcomes the possibility offered by FAO to contribute effectively to the Regional Conference and participate fully in FAO activities at the national, regional and international levels.

The Civil Society Organization therefore applauds FAO and encourages it to continue along the same lines in the years to come.

We civil-society organizations are encouraged to continue structuring work to respond to the challenges of professionalization. Furthermore, we are prepared to carry out advocacy and monitoring actions vis-à-vis decision-makers at various levels in order to achieve our aims.

Done in Tunis, on 22 March 2014

The African Civil Society Organization Consultation in the framework of the 28th FAO Regional Conference for Africa.