

How to Increase Food Security and Smallholder Sensitive Investments in Agriculture

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS), 37th Session, 2011, endorsed the following recommendations on How to Increase Food Security and Smallholder Sensitive Investments in Agriculture.¹



The Committee:

Underlined the paramount importance of increased and improved investment in agriculture for achieving food security and nutrition for all.

Recognized that the bulk of investment in agriculture is undertaken by farmers and smallholders themselves, their cooperatives and other rural enterprises with the rest being provided by a multiplicity of private actors as well as governments.

Acknowledged that smallholder farmers, many of whom are women, play a central role in producing most of the food consumed locally in many developing regions and are the primary investors in agriculture in many developing countries.

Welcomed the report of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on “Land Tenure and International Investments in Agriculture”, and duly takes note of its recommendations.

Took note of the report and recommendations resulting from the Regional Multi-stakeholder Workshop on Food Security and Nutrition for the Near East and North Africa Region that took place on 3-4 October 2011 in Cairo under the CFS umbrella.

Therefore, the Committee urged member governments, international partners and other stakeholders to follow-up on the following recommendations:

- Ensure that public investment, services, and policies for agriculture give due priority to enabling, supporting and complementing smallholders' own investment with particular attention to women food producers who face specific

difficulties and need specific policies and support;

- Ensure that agricultural policies and public investment give priority to food production and nutrition and increase the resilience of local and traditional food systems and biodiversity, with a focus on strengthening sustainable smallholder food production, reducing post harvest losses, increasing post harvest value addition, and on fostering smallholder-inclusive local, national and regional food markets including transportation, storage and processing;
- Ensure that public policies and investment play a catalytic role in the formation of partnerships among agricultural investors, including private-public, farmer co-operative-private and private-private partnerships, to ensure that the interests of smallholders are being served and preserved by those partnerships, and recognize that, in many cases, the State has a crucial role to play in facilitating access of smallholders to credit, technical and extension services, insurance, and markets;
- Give due attention to new market and environmental risks facing smallholder agriculture, and design investment, services and policies so as to mitigate these risks and strengthen the ability of both women and men smallholders to manage them. Align investment in agriculture with environmental sustainability considerations; and
- Actively involve organizations representing smallholders and agricultural workers in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies for investment in agriculture, and in the design of investment programmes in agriculture and food value chains;

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¹ Excerpt from the CFS 37 Final Report

Furthermore the Committee:

- Encouraged governments and other stakeholders to report to the Committee as determined in the framework of 'Mapping food security actions at country level', on actions being taken to align international and domestic private and public investment in agriculture with food security concerns, including progress made in the implementation of the recommendations above, and to share lessons learned from national experiences. This reporting should be prepared in the context of a multi-actor forum that replicates at country level the inclusive vision of the new CFS;
 - Requested the HLPE to include in its plans for future work, taking into account available resources, a comparative study of constraints to smallholder investment in agriculture in different contexts with policy options for addressing these constraints, taking into consideration the work done on this topic by IFAD, and by FAO in the context of COAG, and the work of other key partners. This should include a comparative assessment of strategies for linking smallholders to food value chains in national and regional markets and what can be learned from different experiences, as well as an assessment of the impacts on smallholders of public-private as well as farmer cooperative-private and private-private partnerships;
 - Recognized the urgent need to finalize the negotiations on the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, which will underpin smallholder investment in agriculture;
 - Supported an inclusive consultation process within CFS for the development and the broader ownership of principles for responsible agricultural investment that enhance food security and nutrition; acknowledged that the first step of this consultation process will be to develop terms of reference that include the scope, purpose, intended recipients and structure of these principles as well as the format of the consultation process, taking into account existing frameworks, such as the RAI principles developed by FAO, IFAD, UNCTAD and the World Bank. This consultation process will be initiated promptly after approval of the
- Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, and will be overseen by the CFS Bureau with the assistance of the joint Secretariat and in close collaboration with the Advisory Group and the involvement of all interested stakeholders, with a view to submitting these principles for the consideration of CFS. The consultation process will seek to ensure consistency and complementarity with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security;
- Urged the explicit recognition of smallholder-sensitive investment among the criteria for characterizing responsible corporate investment in agriculture. The definition of this term should be specifically addressed in the consultation on responsible investment in agriculture; and
 - Requested the CFS Secretariat, in collaboration with the Advisory Group and based on the information made available by the relevant stakeholders, to prepare a general report on the state of implementation of the above recommendations to be presented to CFS.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CFS is the foremost inclusive international and inter-governmental platform for all stakeholders to work together in a coordinated way to ensure food security and nutrition for all. CFS endorses policy recommendations on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics.

CFS WEBSITE AND CONTACT

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