

SIDE-EVENT ON AGROECOLOGY FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Permanent Representations Friends of Agroecology

1ST June, 2016, 12h45-12h15

Iran room

Brazil's experiences on Agroecology: enhancing family farming and promoting sustainable rural development

Madam Deputy Director-General of FAO

Dear Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I come here today to talk about the Brazilian experiences on Agroecology.

It is also with pleasure that I see a growing number of countries interested in learning more about the role of agroecology in ensuring food security and nutrition, adaptation to climate change and the transition to more sustainable, inclusive and productive food systems.

Brazil is also pleased to see FAO's engagement in promoting the exchange of experiences and best practices on agroecology. We would like to take this opportunity to thank FAO for its support in organizing the regional seminars, as well as this side-event in partnership with the "Friends of Agroecology".

As we have said in previous opportunities, Brazil fully recognizes the crucial role of family farming in its national rural development project, as well as its importance for poverty eradication, food security and nutrition. In this regard, Brazil has been putting in place public policies that establish the basis for a transition to a more sustainable agricultural production model based *inter alia* on agroecological approaches.

The Brazilian legal and institutional framework for this area is composed by measures such as: a law for family farming, a National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production, policies related to

credit and insurance, technical assistance and rural extension to farmers, agrarian reforms, and public procurement programs to ensure smallholders' access to markets.

Recognizing that agroecology encompasses different dimensions, the Brazilian regulation system adopted an instrumental approach that considers "agroecological production" as "a system that aims at integrating production capacity, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and other natural resources, ecological balance, economic efficiency and social justice".

The first National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production was developed for the period of 2012-2015 and benefited more than 60 thousand families and 23 thousand young farmers. The PLANAPO had 4 strategic areas focused on production, trade and consumption of agroecological local products; knowledge generation; and conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

During the four years of its implementation the National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production promoted among other activities: 1 - the offer of credit and insurance for the development of agroecological food production systems ("PRONAF Agroecologia"); 2 - technological assistance and capacity development of farmers ("ATER"); 3 - the establishment of research networks and farmers associations; and 4 - the creation of local markets for agroecological products, mainly through public procurement programs.

In order to implement the National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production, an interministerial Committee and a National Commission on Agroecology were established. They are responsible for making the liaison between the Federal Government and the representatives of civil society organizations, cooperatives and agriculture associations.

On 3rd May 2016, the Brazilian Government launched the Second National Plan for Agroecology and Organic Production for the period of 2016-2019, together with other important measures to continue strengthening family farming production in the country ("Plano SAFRA 2016-17"). The second PLANAPO establishes two strategic areas in addition to those of the previous plan: one related to land and territory and other to sociobiodiversity. The new Plan aims at increasing to 1 million the number of family farmers that produce food using agroecological techniques by 2019. Among its goals are the consolidation of the agrarian reform and the establishment of a federative pact to promote agroecology across the different regions and municipalities of the country.

The implementation of the Second Plan for Agroecology will be reinforced by the recent creation of the National Agency for Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ANATER), the continuation of policies to support family farming production (PRONAF) and programs to ensure access of family farmers to markets, in particular the Food Acquisition Program (PAA) and the National School Feeding Program (PNAE).

Other related measures that will certainly contribute to the successful implementation of the Second PLANAPO are the recently launched National Plan for Rural Youth, as well as a number of foreseen activities focused on women's empowerment in rural areas.

It is also worth mentioning the promotion of access to water for agricultural production as well as the creation of community seed banks in semiarid rural areas of Brazil. The "One Million Cisterns Program" has already benefited more than 130 thousand family farmers and is considered crucial for the sustainability of agroecological food production in rural communities. The "Community Seed Bank Program" foresees the establishment of around 600 seed banks in semiarid areas and aims at supporting family farmers to preserve and access the seeds of the most adapted varieties for the region. This is also fundamental for the agroecological and organic food production of family farmers, including indigenous peoples and local communities.

Brazil's commitment to the family farming and the sustainable rural development based, *inter alia*, on agroecological approaches, is reflected not only in the national experiences abovementioned, but also in the South-South and Triangular cooperation projects in Africa and in Latina America and the Caribbean.

The regional initiatives on Agroecology in Latin America and the Caribbean are included in the agendas of REAF/Mercosur and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The importance of agroecology for the region is also reflected in the report of the 34th FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean that took place in Mexico last February. The Regional Conference requested FAO to continue its work on agroecology and to include this subject matter in the implementation of the FAO initiatives for the region. It also requested FAO to support CELAC in organizing a second regional seminar on agroecology.

With regard to the cooperation with African countries, Brazil is promoting discussions on agroecology, technical assistance and rural extension for family farming with the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries. It has just taken place in Brazil on 30 May 2016 the Second International Meeting of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension to which all CPLP countries were invited.

We can also highlight the Program Purchase from Africans for Africa which is inspired by lessons learned from Brazil's Zero Hunger Initiative. PAA Africa aims at promoting food security and nutrition security and income generation for smallholder farmers through local food purchase initiatives in five Sub-Saharan African countries: Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal.

According to FAO data, the Program has already helped around 5,500 small scale family farmers to boost their productivity by 115 percent. During the first two years of PAA Africa's implementation, some 1,000 tons of locally procured food was used to regularly provide school meals for around 128 000 students in 420 different schools.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

These experiences demonstrate Brazil's commitment to mainstream agroecology into agricultural public policies and to invest and promote local innovation in this field. We are convinced that agroecological practices are important tools to improve nutrition, food security, local innovation and income generation in rural areas with less environmental costs.

The main outcomes of the regional seminars organized by FAO have given us many avenues to explore in the promotion of agroecological practices at local, regional and international levels. Let's keep up this momentum in FAO and discuss, in a very constructive and inclusive manner, the contributions of agroecology to the sustainability of agriculture.

Thank you very much for your attention.