



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The Director-General

DG/20/701

27.XI.2020

Dear Sir, Madam,

I would like to thank you and all the associated signatories for your recent letter regarding the Letter of Intent between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and CropLife International (CLI).

I would like to first assure you that the Organization takes very seriously our mandate to act as an independent, neutral and honest broker to provide a forum where the best technical and social solutions are shared, and all relevant stakeholders involved in our efforts to achieve Zero hunger.

FAO's Strategic Framework for achieving sustainable agriculture and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) clearly highlights the importance of engagement with different actors. This is in line with Agenda 2030, Finance for Development, as well as the dedicated SDG 17 on Partnerships. FAO has solid relationships and partnerships with many of these actors, including family farmers' organizations, cooperatives, consumers, civil society organizations, academia and research institutions, parliamentarian alliances, networks of municipalities and the private sector. These partnerships bring forward different perspectives and approaches in order to better inform decision-making from our Members.

We see strategic partnerships with the private sector as important to identifying and implementing innovative approaches to support sustainable agriculture and to ultimately promote better and more responsible engagement and behavior. This implies a need to engage with a greater diversity of private sector actors, from micro and small enterprises to larger, global corporations and industry networks. FAO can only influence the way the private sector supports sustainable development through engagement and partnering around common goals.

FAO's cooperation with CLI has been ongoing since 2010 focusing on the removal of highly hazardous obsolete pesticides. The intent of this type of formal cooperation is to ensure industries exercise more responsibility and contribute to pesticide risk reduction and sustainable pest management, as stipulated by the International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management. The envisioned cooperation allows FAO to steer the engagement to align with the overall transformation of food and agricultural systems for achieving SDGs.

CLI is an important stakeholder in plant protection and has a role in contributing to pesticide risk reduction and sustainable agriculture. The aim of this Letter of Intent is to collaborate on three important areas of work:

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To: Academics, Scientists and Researchers

- sound management of pesticides to minimize risk of pesticides for sustainable crop production intensification and better protection of human health and the environment;
- management of transboundary plant pests and diseases to minimize yield losses for food security; and
- data and information sharing regarding pest and pesticide management.

The Letter of Intent does not create any legal, financial or other obligations for FAO or CroPLife International, nor does it create any formal relationship between our two organizations. The scope of collaboration is currently reflected in the Letter of Intent, which we have attached for your information in a spirit of full transparency.

If FAO is to serve as an impartial adviser to our Members, we must also adhere to a spirit of inclusivity. I would like to point out that a failure to engage, even if sometimes to disagree, with key actors in our sectors of work, would be a failure of our mandate as a convening, normative and technical Organization. We need to recognize that the entire food and agricultural system is in need of investments, innovation, and knowledge sharing that will have to come from a wide range of partners, including the private sector. FAO remains fully committed to ensuring that the voices of all actors are heard and to supporting a broad diversity of approaches and solutions to common problems.

I can assure you that FAO will continue to play a lead role in supporting countries in transitioning towards sustainable agriculture and food systems, and agroecology is a key component of the global response to the challenges facing the sector. FAO is leading the implementation of the Scaling-up Agroecology Initiative that aims to accompany and support national agro-ecological transition processes through policies and technical capacities.

The Initiative, importantly, has undertaken a stocktaking exercise of agriculture projects across multiple UN Organizations, so that agriculture and food systems not only become more inclusive of small-holder farmers, but also protect the very natural resources and ecosystem services that all farmers rely on for their livelihood. FAO continues to share local knowledge and promote success stories in agroecology through, for example, the Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (AP-CMNF) programme where over 600 000 farmers have been able to recycle nutrients and employ biocontrol and other methods to achieve improved soils and sustained crop yields.

I wish to reiterate that FAO has the objectives of supporting sustainable agriculture production, preserving biodiversity and human health, delivering abundant and nutritious food and fueling prosperity – this is our focus on Better Production, a Better Environment, Better Nutrition and Better Life, for everyone.

I appreciate your communication and welcome a continued open exchange of ideas with all of you and other partners on how we achieve these goals together.

Yours sincerely,

QU Dongyu

