

**HLPF Side Event on Small food producers and family farmers as agents for change for sustainable agriculture and food systems in the post-2015 agenda**  
**1st July 2014 - 1:15 - 2:30 pm, Conference Room 6, North Lawn Building**  
**United Nations Headquarters**

Side event by BioVision, Millennium Institute, Philippines, Brazil, FAO, WFP, IFAD, World Animal Protection, IASS and Global Soil Forum

FAO intervention on behalf of the RBAs  
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The Rome-based agencies believe that multi-stakeholder participation and engagement is essential in the post-2015 process. It is only by recognizing and honouring the voice (and the right to voice) of **all the relevant actors** and stakeholders that we can have a post-2015 development agenda that is universal, inclusive, representative and also transformative. It is through all of us together that the new development agenda will be implemented.

This is why a side event like this, showcasing **how small food producers and family farmers can support the achievement of sustainable development** through sustainable agriculture and food systems, is so timely, as it is part of a broader process of dialogue with Member States and all concerned stakeholders around the significance that the future agenda will have for this group of actors, and what role they will have in bringing the new development agenda down to the local level, by implementing and monitoring it.

More than 500 million family farms produce most of the world's food. They represent 90% of all farms. Their contribution to economic, environmental and social sustainability is key to face the challenges of eradicating rural poverty and food insecurity. To keep playing this key role, family farmers need political commitment and an enabling policy environment capable of addressing their specific needs.

In 2012-2013, FAO, IFAD and WFP collaborated to organize a **Global Thematic Consultation** on Hunger, Food Security and Nutrition in the post-2015 agenda, which involved non-governmental and civil society organizations and private sector representatives. This included an **informal consultation of all stakeholders of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** in February 2013. The Global Thematic Consultation culminated in a High Level Consultation gathering representatives of all stakeholders, held in Madrid on April 4<sup>th</sup> that same year. Farmers' organizations were among the key participants at the Madrid event.

**The Madrid Statement** – the outcome document of this High Level Consultation – urged for measures and investments to **empower the critical agents of change for a future of food and nutrition security for all**. These are small producers – women and men alike - and their

organizations, family farmers, fisher folk, livestock keepers, forest users, as well as rural workers, entrepreneurs and indigenous peoples. The Statement emphasized that empowering small food producers is a critical part of the future development agenda. Increasing their access to resources, employment and income opportunities, and decision-making processes is about promoting rights, human welfare (including good nutrition) and equality – all of them central elements of the future agenda. Moreover, it is also a precondition for improving the productivity and capacity to manage natural resources sustainably that small scale producers have, thus contributing to inclusive and sustainable growth and development.

It is, therefore, time to invest in rural producers, rural people, and rural communities. **Although they invest four times more in agriculture than governments, donors and private enterprises combined,** family farmers and small-scale food producers **remain disproportionately affected by** poverty, hunger and malnutrition, inequality, lack of social protection coverage, climate change, vulnerability to environmental hazards and natural resource degradation. Yes, what they do and what they can offer to their societies – including in increasingly populated and affluent urban areas – is of critical importance and in growing demand. It includes food, environmental services, clean water, and much more. Indeed, agriculture is the backbone of the economy of the majority of low-income countries, and it holds the key to inclusive, poverty-reducing growth across a much broader set of countries.

**Investments directed towards family farmers and small producers** should complement and enhance their capacity to invest in their own productivity and in addressing new market demands and new environmental pressures. Public investment in particular should provide public goods of importance to small agricultural producers – from research and development to infrastructure, to education, to modern technologies and essential services in rural areas. Enhanced access to finance and related services, as well as to remunerative markets, are also paramount to empower small producers and family farmers to play their roles as development actors in an optimal way.

The specific challenges and concerns of women in agriculture should be addressed with urgency: It is estimated that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30%; raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4 percent; reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17 percent.

Building on the momentum created by the International Year on Family Farming, we must ensure that family farmers, small food producers and especially women and disadvantaged communities can **play their transformative role in rural development**, providing for

inclusive growth and decent job creation, food security and good nutrition through sustainable agriculture and the sound management of natural resources.

Given their leading role in agriculture, food security and nutrition related areas, the RBAs have also collaborated in providing technical support for the **Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. They co-led the preparation of technical issues briefs on sustainable agriculture and food security and nutrition, and also collaborated in developing some potential **targets and indicators** in these areas. The five targets identified by the RBAs, offer a comprehensive approach to achieving food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture and are inspired by the holistic vision of the Zero Hunger Challenge Initiative. One of these targets specifically aims at **ensuring secure access to inputs, knowledge, resources and services for small-scale food producers**, as this is – as already noted – essential both on grounds of inclusion and rights, and as a means to **increasing the productivity, incomes and resilience of small-scale food producers**, especially women. People are at the centre of the RBA's approach, and we stand ready to support Member States for this approach to be fully reflected in the Post-2015 Agenda.

**Recognizing the utmost importance of the new development agenda in support of the efforts to eradicate hunger, achieve food security and adequate nutrition for all, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**, which is the most inclusive international platform on food security and nutrition, has shown a strong interest in engaging in the post-2015 development agenda process, especially in playing an active role in the **monitoring and implementation** of the agenda. The RBAs have actively supported this engagement. The CFS's multi-stakeholder approach, facilitating ownership, accountability and policy convergence at the global, regional and country levels, can be an exemplary model for the **High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)** to adapt and adopt in order to offer to its stakeholders a multilateral governance architecture capable of responding to great challenges of sustainable development.

Mandated by the Rio+20 Conference outcome document, the HLPF with its convening power holds strong potential for fostering the participation of different stakeholders and new ways for all actors to play their role, especially in the monitoring of progress towards the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda including the Sustainable Development Goals. Once again, the HLPF would benefit in this regard from **capitalizing on the experience of already existing multi-stakeholder policy coordination mechanisms such as the CFS**.