

September 2013



# COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

## Fortieth Session

**Rome, Italy, 7-11 October 2013**

### **POLICY ROUNDTABLE: INVESTING IN SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

The Committee:

Welcomes the work of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on “Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security” and the relevant report, and acknowledges its findings as an important contribution to the CFS recommendations<sup>1</sup>.

Recalls the report on the Committee’s deliberations on ‘How to increase food security and smallholder-sensitive investment in agriculture’ during its 37 session in October 2011, particularly the acknowledgement that smallholder farmers, many of whom are women, play a central role for food security locally and worldwide. They are the main investors in their own agriculture. Smallholder

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in the HLPE report do not necessarily reflect the official views of the CFS, its members, participants, the CFS Secretariat.

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;  
a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.  
Other documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)*



mi342e

agriculture provides a range of other benefits such as helping to maintain employment, reduce poverty, and enhance the sustainable management of natural resources.

In order to address constraints on investment in smallholder agriculture<sup>2</sup> in general, with, special attention to those faced by women and youth, and thereby improve food security and nutrition, the CFS encourages governments, together with smallholder organizations and other national and international stakeholders (civil society, local organisations, private sector and international development partners), to:

**Enable national policies, agricultural governance and their evidence base:**

1. Build a country-owned vision for smallholder agriculture, in the context of broad based national and agricultural development, that positions smallholder agriculture firmly within integrated policies and strategies, that includes and integrates smallholders into efficient markets, that is articulated together with all stakeholders, especially smallholder farmers, their organisations and their representatives, in the context of sustainable development, transparent national and global political and rights-based processes and guidelines.
2. Guided by this vision, revisit agricultural, urban and rural sector policies, strategies and budgets, with particular attention to promoting smallholder access - especially for women - to productive assets, local, national and regional markets, appropriate training, research, technology and farm support services.
3. Support the review, financing and implementation of smallholder inclusive, gender-sensitive, multi-sectoral, policies and strategies, with a particular supporting role by international development partners and especially IFAD, FAO and WFP, the World Bank, bilateral funding agencies and regional development banks.
4. Mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment within the country-led vision and strategy for development and agriculture, to support the critical role of women and address the specific needs and constraints faced by both women and men smallholder farmers.
5. Address constraints to engaging young women and men in smallholder agriculture, as well as in related non-farm rural sectors, through policy interventions. These include upgrading rural education and training systems.
6. Explore geographically inclusive territorial development as an approach to effectively coordinate cross-sectoral public and private investments, in particular in smallholder agriculture as well as in the non-farm economy.
7. Improve agricultural governance through a multi-sectoral approach, with particular focus on smallholder agriculture, ensuring adequate participation of all relevant organisations, especially those representing smallholder farmers. This involves developing context specific solutions for smallholder-sensitive public and private investments. Consider experiences such as the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) and others.
8. Promote legal recognition and respect of the rights of smallholder farmers - including the right to organize democratically and to have voice in policy debates, with gender- and age-balanced representation - and the need for farmers' organizations to be strengthened to achieve this. Build political support through inclusive participatory processes that engage smallholders; women, youth, private sector, and other representative organizations.
9. Improve the collection, transparency and access to data, including sex-disaggregated data. Step-up evidence-based analyses to document the state of smallholder agriculture; its diverse

typologies, its incentives and constraints, its transformation trajectories and its contributions to food security and nutrition

**Promote access to assets, public goods, social services, research and extension and technology**

***Access to assets***

10. Promote access to and control (i.e. breeding, production, conservation, purchase, exchange, sale and use) by smallholders - in particular women farmers - over the seeds they need, both for indigenous crops and modern varieties. Strengthen information and technology transfer related to practical on-farm implementation, including on provision of support in-situ and ex-situ conservation and development of agricultural biodiversity by smallholders themselves and by research and extension systems, in line with sustainable agricultural objectives and good practices. Create opportunities for integration of smallholder farmers into international mechanisms and processes to access genetic resources for food and agriculture.

11. Strive to ensure responsible governance of land and natural resources with emphasis on securing access and tenure for smallholders, particularly women, in accordance with the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests as well as other country-led measures with similar objectives. Solutions need to be country and context specific and consistent with existing obligations under national and international law. A related need is to strengthen local institutions dealing with regulation of such access and use of natural resources, particularly by smallholders and women.

***Access to public goods, social services, research, extension and technology***

12. Provide sufficient public investment and encourage private investment in, among others; water management and soil conservation, specifically in support of smallholders' own investments; transport and infrastructure such as feeder roads, energy, post-harvest handling infrastructure; and rural electrification and telecommunication grids.

13. Provide gender-sensitive public investment and promote private investments in health and reproductive services, child care, nutrition, education and capacity development, social protection, water and sanitation, to enhance food security and nutrition, health and productivity, and reduce smallholder poverty.

14. Strengthen participatory research, extension and farming service systems, particularly those that respond to the specific needs of smallholders, and women farmers, to increase their productivity, diversify their production, and enhance its nutritional value and build their resilience according to the tenets of sustainable development. The approach is ideally that of building on farmers' traditional knowledge and combining this with findings of scientific research.

15. Promote access to available technologies that help improve the quality of small farmers' production chain. Ensure access for small farmers to the programs and supplies needed to comply with national sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations.

**Enable investment, access to markets, productive services and resources**

16. ***Promote a good investment climate.*** Improve policies, markets and institutions to create a conducive policy environment for smallholders. Mitigate excessive price volatility and non-transferable smallholder risks using public policy instruments in accordance with international commitments. Ensure legal and fair business practices amongst all parties with special attention to value chain contracts. Enable smallholders to be full participants in value chains by encouraging, inter alia, business and numeracy training.. This calls for a continued development of policy measures and technical guidelines and tools for contract farming and public-private partnerships in consultation with

---

smallholder organisations, the relevant technical services of FAO and in collaboration with other centres of expertise.

17. **Access to markets.** Support the development of markets and mechanisms that are remunerative for smallholders and rural economies. . Create appropriate linkages and engage smallholder farmers, men and women, along the value-chain especially in local, national and regional markets,. focussing for instance on helping them reduce transaction costs and meet food safety and quality standard certification requirements. Enable and stimulate cooperation between smallholders, for instance, via cooperatives or other approaches for market organisation that benefit smallholders in accordance with international commitments. Promote innovations in value-chain for small- and medium-size food processors as well and small-scale traders at retail and wholesale levels.

18. **Financial services.** Improve the enabling regulatory and infrastructure environment to strengthen smallholder access to a full range of financial services adapted to their needs and requirements, with attention to the particular challenges faced by women and youth in this regard. Needed financial services include safe deposits, monetary transactions and remittances, mobile financial services, sustainable short and long-term credit, public insurance schemes (including indexed insurance), commodity exchange and warehouse receipt systems. Reduce financial risks, lower transaction costs and facilitate long-term investments - such as sustainable technological innovations in farming, in soil fertility improvement, agro-ecological approaches - as well as for field operations equipment, food processing and other value-adding activities on smallholder farms. As appropriate, relax liquidity constraints on working capital expenditures (fertilizers, seeds) as well as on medium- and long-term investments while guarding against debt burden. Support such measures by appropriately designed, well-targeted fiscal measures with full respect of international commitments.

19. **Investing beyond the farm.** Invest in developing a decentralised, rural, non-farm economy to support smallholders' access to alternative sources of income, thereby further consolidating the farming economy and contributing to improved food security and nutrition. This encompasses investment in capacity building and entrepreneurship development for young women and men, for employment in a modernized agriculture as well as in other related activities and labour markets. It also requires promoting enabling conditions and facilitating investment for new business development.

**Furthermore the Committee:**

20. Strongly encourages the monitoring of the implementation of these recommendations, and the sharing of findings in the CFS so that it can function as an effective platform for sharing lessons learned and best practices in smallholder agriculture development for food security and nutrition. If feasible, the results of the first experiences in building a country-owned vision for smallholder agriculture could be presented to the CFS in 2015. In general encourages promoting international collaboration and sharing of experience in smallholder development across the world, with strong engagement and leadership of smallholder organizations.

21. Agrees to consider the possible inclusion in a future MYPoW an examination of forms of market organization that are beneficial to smallholders, that are appropriate to their production systems and enhance their fair remuneration and resilience while promoting food security and nutrition..

22. Invites its members and stakeholders to promote the transmission for appropriate information of the findings of the HLPE Report and the present recommendations to relevant fora and processes such as: the implementation of the Voluntary guidelines and the principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments (rai); the International Year of Family Farming, the Right-to-Food plus 10, the post-2015 agenda.