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United Nations
Decade of
**FAMILY
FARMING**
2019-2028



The future of family farming in
the context of the 2030 Agenda



UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF FAMILY FARMING 2019-2028

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Introduction to United Nations Decade of Family Farming

The process of the International Year of Family Farming 2014 raised global awareness of the important role played by family farmers in promoting food security and nutrition and in broadly contributing to building more inclusive and equitable societies. The Year improved collective understanding of the challenges family farmers face and created political will and partnerships to address these.¹

Recognizing the success of the Year and having established family farming at the centre of agriculture, environmental and social policies, the United Nations subsequently adopted Resolution 72/239² declaring 2019-2028 to be the United Nations Decade of Family Farming. The Resolution was adopted unanimously – being endorsed by over 100 Member States – following a campaign by the Government of Costa Rica and the World Rural Forum, supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and a range of other partners. The Resolution calls upon FAO and IFAD to lead the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with other United Nations organizations.

Overview: Family farming definitions and data

There is no single definition of family farming. Multiple definitions exist in the literature and at the country level. Common key elements of definitions include ownership and management of the farm is carried out at the family level; the family lives on the farm; and the farm relies predominantly on family labour. The concept agreed upon in 2014 by the International Steering Committee of the International Year of Family Farming states that family farming: “is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labor, including both women’s and men’s. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, reproductive, social and cultural functions”.³ It is important to bear in mind the vast diversity that exists within the concept of family farming, for example, in terms of land size, productive sectors,⁴ asset base, access to infrastructure and services, proximity and access to markets, degrees of commercialization, types of markets engaged in, and degree of specialization within farming activities at the household level. These factors all influence the types of strategies and approaches adopted by family farmers and their economic, social and environmental outcomes.

1 The “Legacy of IYFF 2014 and the Way Forward” synthesizes the main outcomes from the Year and calls for action to implement the recommendations arising from the consultations therein (available at www.fao.org/3/b-mm296e.pdf).

2 Available at www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/72/239.

3 See www.familyfarmingcampaign.org/en/family-farming/concept.

4 May include agriculture, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture and pastoralism.

Several countries have defined criteria and parameters to identify family farmers in order to design and implement policies that specifically address their issues, constraints and development potential. Noting that farm sizes vary depending on agricultural ecosystems and production systems, some of these criteria and parameters include:

- management of farm production that is assumed by a member of the family;
- farm size that varies depending on the agricultural ecosystem and production systems;
- family's place of residence;
- proportion of family labour in total labour force;
- proportion of farm income in total income;
- family capitalization (capital value of what a farmer or family farm possesses – land, machinery, input and production stocks, etc.).

It is generally recognized that family farmers are the main contributors to food security and nutrition, management of natural resources, rural community cohesion and cultural heritage. Notably, they produce the majority of the world's food,⁵ and they are a major investor in the agricultural sector and the foundation of the local business and economic structure of rural areas.

There are an estimated 500 million family farms, representing over 90 per cent of all farms globally.⁶ Though specific circumstances relate to diverse local political, economic and environmental contexts, in general family farmers throughout the world are constrained to some extent with respect to challenges, such as securing access to land and natural resources, accessing services to support production and marketing, availability of rural infrastructure, participation in political processes, and threats to the environmental and climatic conditions on which they rely. In general, the constraints facing women farmers are greater with gender-based power imbalance and lack of gender awareness in policy implementation, leading to persistent gender gaps related to outcomes such as productivity and rural wages (FAO, 2011). Specific issues related to promoting youth employment in agriculture and agrifood sectors are also deserving of more attention, given the tendency of rural youth to be largely ignored even in countries with youth strategies, these tending to be tailored towards urban youth who are less likely to be poor. The susceptibility of children to work on farms that undermines their physical and educational development is also worthy of attention, especially noting that the majority of child labour globally is centred on agriculture (FAO, 2019).

One typical feature of family farming, especially in developing countries, is that farms tend to be small. Indeed, an estimated 84 per cent of farms globally are below 2 hectares but only control about 12 per cent of the farmland (FAO, 2014a). Generally speaking, the term "family farming" is commonly used in the Americas and in West Africa, while references to smallholder agriculture (or farming) are more common in Asia. In practice, family farming and smallholder agriculture tend to largely, though not completely, overlap. As such, the issues discussed in this paper are understood to refer largely to "smallholder family farmers",

5 Estimated at more than 80 per cent of the world's food in value (FAO, 2014a). Other studies also find family farmers producing a majority share of the world's food – though the total share may be estimated more conservatively than the FAO's "more than 80 per cent" finding (for example, Graeub et al., 2016).

6 FAO (2014a); supported by subsequent research by Graeub et al. (2016), which finds that "family farms constitute 98 per cent of all farms".

in particular considering the specific role of these farms in promoting food security and nutrition, especially in areas where a large share of the population is vulnerable to hunger. At the same time, it is noted that some family farms – especially in land-abundant regions such as North America and countries such as Australia and New Zealand – operate on a large scale and that their needs and roles must also be considered in the national context.

Current and future challenges of food systems

Food systems face the challenges of providing sufficient, affordable and nutritious food to a growing global population, while dealing with the already stark impacts of climate change on production, and addressing concerns related to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental footprint. While much focus is on viewing family farming as a business and improving its productivity, a wholesome narrative on sustainable food systems and nutrition must additionally emphasize the critical roles of fairness and inclusion. This narrative emphasizes the need for locally based agroecological approaches to agriculture, based on holistic environmental and social – in addition to economic – prerogatives; due to their roots in local communities and knowledge of ecosystems, this narrative may be of particular relevance for family farmers. A bridge is needed between local, agroecologically based food systems and the emergence of new business opportunities that can advance the livelihoods of family farmers.

Some of these changes are bringing new commercial opportunities: higher incomes and urbanization are increasing demand for food – especially for higher-value products. Potential commercial opportunities are also widening as a consequence of strengthening rural-urban linkages (in particular as a consequence of the growth of small and intermediate towns at the rural urban interface),⁷ in addition to increasingly interlinked upstream and downstream service provision supporting agricultural commercialization. This is offering opportunities for some family farmers to increase incomes, though not all are poised to benefit. It is also important to recognize that the majority of family farmers continue to operate in local – generally informal – markets, where their contributions are key for ensuring access to food among groups vulnerable to food insecurity (CFS, 2017a).

Significant changes are also taking place on the production side of food systems. New technologies and innovations – for example, biotechnology, digitalization and artificial intelligence – are already shaping the way food is produced and consumed in some contexts, though affordability and suitability for small-scale family operations are often low. These transformations have contributed to raising agricultural productivity and expanding availability of low-cost food, as well as to increasing commercialization and profitability of agricultural production. However, these have not brought about the desired rapid improvements in global food security – in fact, global hunger is on the rise,⁸ as are different forms of malnutrition,⁹ while environmental issues remain a major problem. In fact, when

7 Small towns and cities of less than 500,000 inhabitants already represent the majority of the world's urban population and are projected to account for the majority of the projected urban growth in the decades ahead; as a consequence, economic and social interactions across the rural-urban continuum are growing and potential opportunities to access remunerative markets for family farmers are increasing (IFAD, 2017).

8 The estimated number of hungry people in the world has risen for the past three years, returning to levels of nearly a decade ago. The absolute number of undernourished people (i.e. those facing chronic food deprivation) has increased to nearly 821 million in 2017 (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2018: p. 2).

9 Obesity, linked to inadequate access to nutritious diets, continues to rise: latest estimates indicate adult obesity standing at 13.2 per cent in 2016, or 672.3 million people (Ibid., p.16).

the true cost of food is accounted for – taking into account not only economic but also social and environmental externalities – the cost of much so-called “low-cost food” is actually relatively high (Holden, 2016). This indicates that local sustainable, including agroecological, approaches that are more predominant in family farming vis-à-vis large-scale industrial farming offer compelling comparative advantages. More needs to be done to improve access of family farmers to innovations that have transformed agriculture productivity and profitability in many contexts. At the same time, there is growing discussion of the potential for greater use and support of family farmers’ own traditional knowledge, including in the realm of agroecological approaches to agriculture to achieve more sustainable social, environmental and nutritional outcomes (Inter alia: De Schutter, 2010; HLPE, 2016; HLPE, 2017; CFS, 2017b; UNGA, 2012).

Trends such as market concentration among large multinationals in agrifood value chains, the domination of large private firms in agricultural research, and the development and protection of products by patents as well as strained fiscal spending to support local family farmers have contributed to a situation where the types of food systems transformation being promoted – and the benefits associated with these – are too often biased towards large-scale actors at the expense of family farmers. For example, public policies and practice frequently favour the acquisition of land by large investors at the expense of local family farmers (Vorley et al., 2012), a trend that sees especially smallholder family farmers controlling an ever-diminishing share of the world’s agricultural land in many parts of the world. Though typologies of land transactions are diverse and generalizations difficult to state, there are concerns in many contexts over the recognition of legitimate land tenure rights of family farmers. Overall, it should be of concern that the unique knowledge, innovations and practices of family farmers tend to be inadequately considered and supported in policies, investments and institutions dealing with food systems. The unique role and knowledge of women farmers is especially invisible in relevant discussions and planning processes, for example, related to advancing innovation, meaning local sustainable grass-roots knowledge is rarely adequately captured and shared. One of the major consequences of these patterns of exclusion has been that the environmental and social dimensions of development in the context of food systems have lagged behind economic dimensions – the latter having brought about unprecedented bounty in terms of productivity and profit, but tending to disproportionately benefit a relatively small number of large private actors.

Modern food systems offer differing opportunities to different types of family farmers, reflecting the diversity of this group. At least three groups are commonly distinguished in the literature (Vorley et al., 2012; Graeub et al., 2016): first, those with access to capital, infrastructure, capacity, knowledge and organization to enable them to be competitive in the different markets (niche, local, national and the international agrifood value chains); second, those with some assets and capacity who lack some critical elements (e.g. sufficient land, credit, infrastructure), who tend to operate in local and informal markets; and third, relatively land-poor farmers with few assets operating on a largely subsistence basis. For the purposes of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, all the categories of family farmers will be taken into account; the need to tailor strategies and approaches to different opportunities, traditions, socio-economic contexts and ways of working and living are key to achieving improved outcomes for all.



So, the key questions emerging are: What diverse roles can family farmers play at the international, national and local levels to make food systems more sustainable, inclusive and equitable? What needs to be done – and by whom – to enable family farmers to play these roles, and to share in the resultant benefits?

The role of the family farmer in promoting better outcomes in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and food systems

It has been acknowledged that family farmers already make a predominant and indispensable contribution to feeding the world. And this is despite the increasingly challenging climatic and environmental conditions they face, the gaps in investment that affect the availability of rural infrastructure needed to support their enterprises, and the prevailing political economic structures that tend to bias food production and marketing towards large private companies in food systems. The latter aspect underpins a situation where family farmers in some contexts have their tenure rights to land and other natural resources impinged upon, with large industrial farms expanding the share of farmland and other natural resources under their control in many parts of the world.¹⁰ And even where the legitimate tenure rights of family farmers are acknowledged, women farmers are often facing inequalities which impede their agricultural activities.

In order to promote food systems that are sustainable, there are particular advantages associated with enabling and supporting the role of family farmers. This means working with and for diverse groups of family farmers to design and implement context-specific solutions pertaining to the different activities they are involved in; this may relate to engagement in international and national agrifood markets, to local and informal markets, or to community and family-level subsistence models.

Benefits relate to both equity and efficiency considerations. The equity argument is based on the view that it is ethical to ensure that family farmers are not disadvantaged vis-à-vis larger, more powerful interests. The efficiency argument derives from evidence that family farmers can produce better outcomes in terms of food security and nutrition, community and economic development, and environmental sustainability. In particular, it is important to emphasize the public goods that the family farming model provides, including but not limited to biodiversity conservation, environmental stewardship, employment generation, contribution to public health and nutrition, and cultural enrichment. With this in mind, the reasons that food systems built upon family farmers are more sustainable may be summarized as follows:

- Food systems where family farms are the main actors are key contributors to food security and nutrition, producing most of the food in many regions of the world¹¹ and producing more food and nutrition in the world's most populous, and food-insecure, regions. Equally important, family farms are key for maintaining nutritional diversity, with shifts to larger-scale industrial farming being associated with declines in the diversity of nutrient production (Herrero et al., 2017).

10 In the European Union, it has been estimated that farms of at least 100 hectares now control more than half of all farmland (ECVC and HOTL, 2013). Analysis of available data indicate similar trends in other parts of the world (Grain, 2014).

11 Estimates indicate that smallholder family farming-dominated systems produce more than 70 per cent of the food calories produced in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South and East Asia (Samberg et al., 2016), and produce most of the food in a variety of countries where data are available (Grain, 2014).

- Land productivity is often relatively higher on family farms, including relatively small-scale units – as is the diversity of production – as posited by a vast literature (FAO, 2014a, pp. 16-17; FAO and OECD, 2012; Larson et al., 2012; Wiggins, 2009; Lipton, 2006; Sen, 1966). This is largely as a result of the relative efficiency and lower transaction costs associated with using family, as opposed to hired, labour. Other reasons that productivity may actually be higher on farms include flexibility, availability and motivation – built on dedication to the farm as the basis for the family’s livelihood and food security – of household labour used on family farms compared with hired labour on which large farms rely; ability to withstand price slumps as a result of household labourers’ preparedness to accept lower returns at times where larger farms relying on hired labour would likely go out of business; and family farmers likely have more detailed knowledge of the specific characteristics of landscapes on their farms.
- Family farms are better at promoting social equity and community well-being. One of the key rationales for promoting family farms is the acknowledgement that these farms contribute to addressing key challenges related to equity, poverty and employment. In this respect, it is not surprising that communities dominated by family farms have been found to offer better opportunities for civic and social engagement, more attachment to local culture and landscapes, and higher levels of trust within communities (Inter alia: Pretty and Bharucha, 2014; Donham et al., 2007; Lyson et al., 2001; Jackson-Smith and Gillespie, 2005). In contrast, models of large-scale industrial farming managed by corporate managers place the interests of local communities at risk (Inter alia: MacCannell, 1988; Lobao and Stofferahn, 2008; Lyson, 2004; Crowley and Roscigno, 2004). Further, the positive spillover effects of family farming-generated growth on local rural non-farm sectors have been found to be especially strong (Ngqangweni, 1999; Bautista and Thomas, 1998), even shaping wider poverty reduction progress at the national level over the longer term.¹²
- Family farms have advantages in terms of environmental sustainability and addressing climate change. This in part derives from their greater attachment to local communities and landscapes, which foster a higher level of interest and care for the natural environment and climate upon which they rely for agricultural production.¹³ In addition, family farms tend to be more receptive to adopting sustainable approaches that rely upon intricate knowledge of family labour on farmland and local ecosystems; agroecology, organic agriculture and permaculture, for example, are all sustainable approaches that favour relatively small-scale family farms. Key issues, therefore, related to intergenerational transfer of natural resources, traditional knowledge and culture are bound up in family farming systems.

12 “[T]here are no examples of agricultural development leading to poverty reduction without sharp increases in productivity in smallholder agriculture.” (HLPE, 2013: p. 62).

13 A factor that is frequently cited by farming communities, civil society groups and environmentalists, in particular when local smallholder family farming models are threatened by the industrial interests, articulated many years ago, thus: “[S]mall farms offer[] the opportunity for ‘attachment’ to local culture and care for the surrounding land”. In: Perelman, M. and R. Merrill. 1976. *Efficiency in Agriculture: The Economics of Energy*. Radical Agriculture. New York: Harper and Row.



Family farming and the Sustainable Development Goals

It follows that enabling family farmers to fulfil the roles described above can act as an accelerator of progress across key elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Most obviously, family farmers, especially small-scale producers, are central to ending hunger, as recognized by their being the explicit focus of SDG target 2.3, which begins: “[b]y 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers”. In addition, as demonstrated in the previous section, family farmers offer particular advantages across the other SDG 2 targets, most notably in contributing to feeding all, especially those most vulnerable to hunger (target 2.1): consider that family farmers predominate in local and domestic markets,¹⁴ where their produce feeds poor rural and urban people, while larger industrial farms predominate in export markets, which is more important for trade and gross domestic product figures but less important in terms of providing food for those vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition. It is equally important to recognize family farmers’ role in:

- promoting healthy nutrition (target 2.2), noting the role they are already playing in enhancing nutritional diversity;
- prioritizing sustainable food production systems (target 2.4), noting the role they are already playing as custodians of land and natural resources;
- maintaining agricultural biodiversity (target 2.5), noting the role they are already playing in promoting diversity of food and nutrition production systems.

It is clear that family farmers, therefore, must be seen as key protagonists in advancing progress against SDG 2. Adding to this the reality that family farmers, despite their contribution, are themselves among the groups most vulnerable to malnourishment – with more than three quarters of the world’s poor living in rural areas,¹⁵ most of whom rely on family farming to some extent for their livelihoods – and the imperative to invest in and enable this group becomes even stronger.

But the role of family farmers as key transformational actors is not limited to SDG 2. In addition to being central to SDG 1 – noting that, first, they make up a large share of the poor themselves and, second, that the benefits of improved livelihoods among family farmers flow to wider communities and beyond the agriculture sector where they create opportunities to reduce poverty¹⁶ – multiple other interlinked goals are linked to the family farming agenda. For example:

- Key environmental sustainability goals are affected by and affect the livelihoods of family farmers. Goals related to water (SDG 6) and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) have linkages with the ways that family farmers are enabled to access, manage and

14 The vast majority of the world’s smallholder family farmers (more than 80 per cent) operate in domestic markets (IFAD, 2016. *Agrifood Markets and Value Chains*. Chapter 6), where they contribute to feeding local people, especially in countries with large populations vulnerable to malnourishment.

15 “Globally, extreme poverty continues to be disproportionately and overwhelmingly rural. The poverty rate in rural areas is more than three times as high as that in urban areas ... rural areas account for 79 per cent of the total poor.” (World Bank, 2018: p. 38).

16 Here, the literature pertaining to the “growth linkage” effects of higher incomes among farmers on non-farm sectors (see Haggblade, 2005) is relevant, and particularly pertinent given that it is reasonable to assume family farmers would tend to spend a larger share of incomes in local economies compared to the situation arising with capital-intensive industrial farms.

use these resources – agriculture as a sector is a major user of water (accounting for 69 per cent of global water withdrawals [FAO, 2014b]) and ecosystems. However, with regard to water, family farmers are more likely to rely upon rainfed¹⁷ and small-scale irrigation systems, as opposed to the large-scale irrigation projects which serve industrial agriculture, meaning their systems generally exert much less pressure on scarce water resources. And, with regard to ecosystems, it has already been acknowledged that they are more likely to adopt a custodial role in their interaction with the land upon which they and their communities rely upon. The need to enable family farmers' roles as custodians of the environment is also justifiable from equity and ethical perspectives, given that they are frequently at risk of having their rights to access water and natural resources infringed upon by favouring large-scale urban and industrial projects, which frequently divert water from rural communities, as well as by lack of investment in rural infrastructure.

- Family farmers are important actors in taking action on climate change (SDG 13). This group operates in some of the most climatically vulnerable areas of the world – in tropical regions, on low-lying coastal plains, and in areas vulnerable to extreme and slow onset weather events. Their work, by its very nature, is highly dependent on the vagaries of climatic and weather conditions. It will be important, therefore, in the context of SDG 13 implementation (in particular under target 13.1 to “strengthen[] resilience and adaptive capacity...”), that sufficient investment is committed to enable family farmers to adapt to the increasingly damaging impacts on their production systems. In addition, much potential exists for family farming systems to be part of the solution to reducing emissions from agriculture, and to enabling food production systems to adapt to the already stark impacts of climate change. For example, initiatives to promote agroforestry among family farmers (Lasco et al., 2014) have been acknowledged as holding much potential, bringing together enhanced adaptive capacity and climate mitigation benefits.¹⁸ Climate change adaptation and mitigation are being enhanced through agroecology and agricultural-resilient practices aimed at improving soil fertility, enhancing moisture retention, agroforestry, and adopting resilient varieties via farmer field school initiatives.
- Related to equitable growth, employment and equality goals (SDG 8 and SDG 10), when family farmers' rights are realized and their activities enabled, they can be drivers of equitable and sustainable growth, reducing inequalities and creating employment. Indeed, family farms, being more labour intensive than larger-scale alternatives, have a key role to play in harnessing the potential of broader food systems as a locus of employment generation,¹⁹ especially in countries facing youthful population bulges. Indeed, the need to engage youth in family farming emerges as a priority from both the perspective of the dynamism, energy and innovation young people can bring to farming at a time of rapid change in global food systems, as well as from the

17 Indeed, rainfed systems are the primary sources of global food production (HLPE, 2015: p. 14). These systems are overwhelmingly operated by smallholder family farmers, in contrast to the large-scale water withdrawals that are generally associated with large-scale industrial farms.

18 Research on the outcomes of efforts to engage Chinese smallholders in simultaneously addressing production and pollution problems reports increased yields and reduced greenhouse gas emissions for over 20 million smallholders covered in the study (Cui, Z. et al., 2018).

19 In many developing countries, the food system is the largest employer and will remain so during the SDG period; food systems continue to be major employers in some high-income countries, too (Townsend et al., 2017).

perspective of the potential contribution to job creation in countries facing youth employment challenges. Of course, addressing the gender-based inequalities faced by women farmers will be key to realizing potential benefits related to inclusive growth and must be prioritized in the context of SDG 5. Furthermore, the significant nutritional and local economic benefits of creating stronger links between growing cities with family farmers operating in surrounding rural areas deserve greater attention in the context of SDG 11 implementation.

Realizing the potential contribution of thriving, sustainable family farming as an accelerator of SDG progress emerges as a major objective of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming. FAO and IFAD are already engaged closely with family farmers and their organizations; the Decade offers an opportunity to galvanize wider support from governments, civil society, private actors, philanthropic organizations and other development actors to enable family farmers to realize their contribution to achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Using the Decade to enable family farmers to contribute to a brighter future for all

Though family farmers are already making significant contributions and are increasingly recognized as key protagonists to end global hunger and poverty, they can only fulfil their potential contribution if the obstacles they face are addressed. Better acknowledgement of their roles and potential, the inclusion of family farmers into SDG targets, and the development of international policy frameworks geared towards advancing the interests of family farmers – notably several developed and endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security²⁰ – all indicate that political will exists. However, more still needs to be done in terms of national policy design and implementation to ensure that, first, biases are not created which favour large-scale farming models at the expense of family farmers and, second, that specific measures sensitive to local contexts are put in place to create the conditions in which family farmers can thrive.

Specifically, integrated policies need to be geared towards family farmers in areas such as investment promotion,²¹ tenure rights over land and natural resources, provision of services in rural areas, climate change adaptation, social protection and decent work, participation in political processes, and addressing gender inequalities in agriculture and rural areas. This implies the need for multidimensional, multistakeholder and territorial approaches to development: issues related to promoting family farming cannot be confined only to rural and agricultural policy. Equally, even where such policies are in place – as is the case in many countries – investment in policy implementation, including capacity development of public authorities as well as family farmers and their organizations, is needed to ensure expected outcomes are achieved. Rural advisory services and local and regional farmer field

20 Including the “Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security”, the “Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security”, and the policy recommendations on “Connecting Smallholders to Markets”. See CFS main products page for a full list: www.fao.org/cfs/home/products/en/.

21 Investment policies in many countries tend to favour large-scale land acquisitions over small farm development, especially related to minimum size requirements for application of investment codes, structures of tax incentives, and fees for rights to access land and natural resources (Vorley et al., 2012).

school networks can play an important role to ensure family farmers' involvement and their needs are considered. Implementation challenges are often especially stark with regard to policies related to women's empowerment and gender equality in agriculture and rural areas, requiring greater gender awareness among all stakeholders, wider efforts to integrate gender equality into institutional and governance systems, and specific initiatives to address conflicts between, on the one hand, statutory laws and, on the other hand, local customary laws and norms pertaining to gender (CFS, 2017a; Vorley et al., 2012).

The Decade offers an opportunity to build on the policy consultations held during the Year to focus efforts of the international community – including national and local governments, parliamentarians, United Nations and other international organizations, international financial institutions, regional bodies, academia, research institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector – on working with family farmers to ensure the required mechanisms are in place to strengthen their roles in contributing to sustainable development and the achievement of the SDGs.

As lead implementers of the Decade, FAO and IFAD are working closely and consulting extensively with the Member States and non-state actors that took part in the campaign for the Decade in order to ensure a structure and inclusive approach is taken to realizing objectives. An International Steering Committee will oversee the development and implementation of the Decade of Family Farming, monitor corresponding activities, and provide guidance on any adjustments needed along the way. International Steering Committee members include representatives from FAO and IFAD, a regionally representative group of Member States, as well as global and regional farmers' organizations.

The Decade will be formally launched in Rome on 29 May 2019.

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