



Good practices on Family Farming and Smallholder Agriculture

Proposal by Brazil

With Contributions by Argentina, Australia, Canada, France,
India, Japan, the United States and FAO

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects our global vision for an inclusive, dynamic and resilient pathway to prosperity. It commits the international community to act together to meet the complex challenges of ending poverty and hunger while restoring and sustainably managing natural resources. Agriculture, through its links to food security and nutrition, health and rural development, has a major role in achieving the entire set of Sustainable Development Goals.

G20 Members recognize the importance of sustainable agricultural development and the crucial role of rural economies in eradicating poverty and ensuring food security and better nutrition, strengthening local and regional economies, ensuring prosperity and inclusive growth, and thus helping consolidate an environment of peace.

The development and implementation of agriculture, food security and nutrition policies committed to sustainable development and the promotion of states' commitments to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security are key steps towards those goals.

Food security, as an important element of the 2030 Agenda, is closely linked to, and shaped by other inter-related issues such as nutrition, climate change, land and water use and rights, and poverty alleviation. Hence, there is also a clear need to have an integrated and multi-faceted approach to food security.

Family farmers and smallholder agriculture play a vital role in development and, as increasingly acknowledged, contribute to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda, especially SDG 2, by producing nutritious foods, supporting livelihoods, generating decent jobs and incomes, diversifying production, and managing land and water resources. Family farmers and smallholder agriculture have demonstrated strong resilience to adverse conditions, and can promote sustainability through diverse approaches to agriculture, including agroecological production

approaches. Within the context of the 2030 Agenda, the G20 can create momentum for a new wave of commitment and actions by the international community that target family and smallholder farming, especially women and youth, through revitalizing rural communities and expanding farming opportunities, including their integration into value chains. Aligning policy options with relevant global norms and good practices and sharing knowledge and information on successful approaches can have a direct impact on family and smallholder farming in low-income countries.

The G20 Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Framework, approved by leaders in the Brisbane Summit, is broadly aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and its priorities for food systems (increasing responsible investment; increasing incomes and quality employment; and, increasing productivity sustainably to expand the food supply) recognize that family farmers and smallholders are crucial cross-cutting agents both in the G20 and other countries' growth, jobs and finance agendas.

In order to further support family farmers and smallholders, this document identifies a set of successful and effective policies, programs and tools that can prove useful to G20 members and beyond. Family farmers and smallholder can greatly benefit from targeted policies that ensure access to production factors, support services, rural credit lines, agricultural insurance, transportation, irrigation, storage and public investment programs.

Access to Agricultural Inputs Markets

Adequate access to agricultural inputs, including appropriate water resources, seeds and other plant are pre-conditions for any successful approach in favor of family farmers and smallholders. Countries should seek to support sustainable access to appropriate water for agricultural production, encouraging the use of water-efficient technologies and practices, and taking advantage of social technologies and participatory approaches for supply systems' management.

The importance of protection of farmers' rights subject to national laws and as appropriate, is recognized in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Dedicated Registries and Database

Regularly updated registries of family farmers and smallholders can be used to ensure appropriate access to targeted public policies, such as those related to land tenure, production support, special

lines of credit, 'smart' input subsidies and vouchers, social safety nets, as well as access to other public services (housing, energy, safe drinking water, basic sanitation).

Comprehensive and systematic data sets on the profile of smallholder farmers in developing countries are important to support evidence-based policies and evaluation to contribute towards meeting the challenge of sustainable agricultural development (for example, FAO's Smallholder Data Portrait). All data collection should include intra-household assessments, gender-based analysis and sex-disaggregated data.

Encouraging the development of food-value chain and agro-related activities

Economic returns for family farmers and smallholders can be improved by policies that support diversification of, and value-adding to production, as well as the development of associated markets for goods and services.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

ICT has proved to be an effective and powerful medium to disseminate information on markets, agronomic practices, fertilizer and pesticide use, weather and pest-related issues. ICT can also serve as a tool to promote access to financial services and social protection in rural areas. Many new initiatives have been undertaken in order to develop an integrated approach for communication process in the agricultural sector.

Family farmers' and smallholder's access to technology, including ICT, should be facilitated to help them access information and join markets and meet the demand for sufficient, safe and nutritious foods. Farmers can benefit from improved access to appropriate technologies, along with knowledge and information at all stages, from production to marketing.

International Cooperation on Family Farming

International horizontal cooperation, as well as triangular cooperation through peer-to-peer initiatives leveraging existing platforms and knowledge hubs, is useful to strengthen the exchange of experiences and successful and relevant practices adding to the knowledge of family farmers and smallholders, and to the adoption of technologies.

Given the continued relevance of development aid in public sector agricultural investment, international donor support to family and smallholder agriculture – alongside other forms of development financing – remains critical.

Legislation and Policy

The evidence underlines the importance of having policies and legislation specifically targeted to family farmers and smallholders that ensure social participation in the design, implementation and assessment of such policies so they are effective, inclusive and reflect local realities.

Market Participation of Family Farming and Smallholders

Family and smallholder farmers' access to markets, including traditional local and community markets, and targeted public procurement programs can be enhanced through specific initiatives. Such initiatives can include measures that aim at strengthening participation in associations that can leverage economies of scale, and interventions that promote inclusive business models targeting global value chains in which family farmers can participate competitively and obtain fair prices.

Policies that enhance family farmers' access to markets can not only increase farmers' incomes, but also reduce food loss and waste, raise food quality and promote better nutrition.

WTO-consistent specific tools such as agricultural insurance, incentives for establishing or joining associations and public procurement of food can also play an important role in enhancing the participation of family farmers and smallholders in the market.

In many countries, national strategies for public procurement of family and smallholder farmer production have been very successful in promoting market access and aggregating value to production. Market access is an important incentive to increase on-farm investment, production, productivity, and incomes, especially when combined with other policies that support this kind of farming. Furthermore, purchasing food from local smallholders for use by social protection mechanisms can significantly add to the social welfare.

Partnerships with Multilateral Development Banks

Adequate and timely investment in the agricultural sector plays a crucial role in sustaining growth. Weak global demand for agricultural products and delayed economic recovery in the developed world has slowed the pace of investment, particularly from the private sector.

Against this backdrop, MDBs can play an active role in meeting the long term credit needs of the agricultural sector. Expanding technological support to agricultural cooperatives and farmer producer organizations, which are more relevant for smallholder farmers, can also play an important role in supporting family farming and smallholder agriculture

Research, technical Assistance and Rural Extension

Agricultural research and technical assistance should be articulated and treated coherently in order to amplify their impact on sustainable production among family farmers and smallholders. Interactive, inclusive and dynamic Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) that encompass agricultural research and development and extension services, and strengthen synergies between public and private actors, including farmers, lie at the heart of sustainable productivity growth.

It is key to increase efforts to develop human resource programs, in particular vocational training, to allow family and smallholder farmers to acquire the skills needed to participate in emerging food production systems and markets, thus contributing to their taking advantage of job and income generation opportunities.

The adoption of technologies, practices and production models to meet new and emerging challenges can be stimulated through policies and initiatives that promote innovation and knowledge sharing, such as cooperation between universities and educational exchange between farmers.

Given the challenges posed by climate change and natural resource constraints, there is need for continued investment in agricultural innovation, science and technology, production patterns and business models. In this regard, joint agricultural research and development programs focused on issues of strategic importance and common interest on sustainable productivity growth are key tools to be explored.

Rural Territorial Development

A territorial approach, encompassing all parties in a particular geographical environment, has the potential to generate mutual benefits by linking the poor to the non-poor, and leveraging linkages between poverty reduction and inequality reduction efforts.

Measures that facilitate co-ordination among different sectorial policies and levels of government and strengthen local stakeholders' organizations and institutions to better prepare, plan and participate in integrated and strategic rural-urban development should also be promoted.

Social Protection and a Rights-based Approach to Poverty and Hunger

Meeting the goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2030, and ensuring food security and better nutrition for rural populations depend on policymakers' continuous pursuance of coherent and integrated actions.

It is important to promote the design and implementation of social protection programs, as part of a broader development and poverty reduction strategy, with a view to promoting economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, including rights related to food.

Social protection systems are an important tool in the fight against hunger. The expansion of social protection across the developing world has been critical for progress towards the MDG hunger target. Regular and predictable cash transfers to poor households can be critical to meet immediate food gaps. It can also help improve the livelihoods of the poor by alleviating constraints to their productive capacity.

Strengthening farmers' organizations

Collective action is fundamental to foster technical, social and economic empowerment of family farmers and smallholders. Farmers' organizations are thus effective channels to improve family farmers' access to inputs, services (technical and financial) and markets. Farmers' organizations have also an important role to play in strengthening family farmers' negotiating power across the value-chain and strengthen their voice in the public policy process.

Policies that recognize the role of farmers' organizations and programs that strengthen their capacities can have a positive impact on family and smallholders farmers' incomes and rural

economic development.

Targeted Credit and Investment Programs

It is important to support responsible agricultural investment that contributes to the reduction of poverty and inequalities, economic, social and environmental sustainability, and to enhanced resilience of farmers to climate change. Investments are also necessary to facilitate access by family farmers and smallholders to markets and technologies, including to post-harvest infrastructure; improve efficiency; and raise the chances of success.

Women and Youth in Family Farming

Women play an important role in family farming and can greatly benefit from policies which support equal rights for men and women, enhance female economic empowerment, strengthen rural women's associations and ensure female participation in the design and implementation of public policies for sustainable development. Providing rural women with equal access to capacity building and the documentation necessary to participate in markets, in particular civil and labor documentation is essential to facilitate their access to public services and programs and can contribute to their ability to exercise their rights.

Youth can significantly contribute to sustainable rural development and should be the focus of policies and training programs that result in facilitating access for young people to productive assets, and upgrading their technical and entrepreneurial skills. Interventions could also promote agriculture to be an attractive sector to work in, facilitating youth's choice for succession and return to the countryside. These policies should cover aspects such as access to land, support for production projects, education, technical and professional training, digital inclusion and access to cultural facilities and services.