

A NEW CONSENSUS WITH SMALL-SCALE FOOD PRODUCERS



GOOD FOOD BEGINS WITH FARMERS #GOODFOOD4ALL





CONTEXT

Small-scale food producers[1] will be decisive in overcoming some of the world's most pressing challenges. At the heart of local and regional food systems, they are instrumental in ensuring food and nutrition security, particularly in low and middle-income countries. In Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, they produce much of the food that is consumed locally[2].

As a result of conflict, climate change, poverty and inequality, food insecurity and hunger have been steadily rising since 2014, reversing decades of progress. The economic impact of the COVID19 pandemic led to a dramatic increase in food insecurity in 2020 and revealed several vulnerabilities in our food systems.

Now the world is on the brink of another hunger crisis due to rising food, fuel and fertilizer prices, intensified by the Ukraine conflict. This comes a decade[3] after the last commodity price spike, which led to social unrest in many parts of the world, and the third in this century.

The world is also on the brink of a climate catastrophe, with the latest United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report predicting devastating impacts on farming systems, particularly in Africa, Asia, and South America.

With only eight harvests and eight years left to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is no time to waste.



[1] SDG2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment. <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/2-zero-hunger/>. Around 500 million food producers operate farms on less than 2 hectares.

[2] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. "Small Family Farmers Produce a Third of the World's Food." April 23, 2021. <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/Small-family-farmers-produce-a-third-of-the-world-s-food/en>.

[3] World Bank. "Global Food Crisis Response Program." April 11, 2013. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2013/04/11/global-food-crisis-response-program-results-profile>.

THE ROLE OF SMALL SCALE FOOD PRODUCERS

Small-scale food producers help diversify food production and diets, protect agrobiodiversity, maintain and improve soil health, and sustain local markets. Their relative size and proximity put them in a unique position to exponentially increase the impact of agricultural development, building resilience and improving income and health outcomes for people and planet.

Yet their contributions to the global system are repeatedly underestimated and overlooked in decisions and investments being made to transform food systems and address climate change. They are also on the front lines of these interconnected challenges, leaving them most likely to experience hunger and poverty and their children to face the life-threatening, long-term consequences of chronic malnutrition.

Indigenous peoples, youth and women farmers, in particular, face further marginalization due to limited access to land, markets, finance, and extension services. In many countries, women food producers are often underpaid and undervalued, face inherent biases in the economic and social systems and shoulder much of the domestic responsibilities in addition to their income-generating work.

Insufficient investment in agriculture has kept most small-scale producers in poverty for generations. They face high transactions costs and are locked out of regional and global markets due to lack of market information, poor economies of scale and weak infrastructure. While there is evidence from sub-Saharan Africa that growth in agriculture reduces poverty up to 11 times faster than growth in other sectors[4].

Despite small-scale food producers' role in addressing the climate emergency and their struggle with climate impacts which have reduced crop yields, fish catch and livestock productivity, less than 2% of climate funds go to support them.

As we respond to these compounding crises, we have an opportunity to correct historic injustices and systemic neglect and to build a more equitable food system that puts small-scale producers at the center, unleashing their potential for the prosperity of their communities and countries.



[4] IFAD. "Change Starts Here." <https://www.ifad.org/thefieldreport/>

NEED FOR CONSENSUS AND ACTION

Now is the time for a new consensus with small-scale food producers that recognizes them as entrepreneurs and respects the critical role they play in local, regional and global food systems. This new consensus represents an effort to step up support for small-scale farmers and food producers, to align, innovate, and partner to help them navigate the multiple, interconnected pressures and shocks they face. It represents a departure from the fragmented approaches of the past.

Doing so would also accelerate efforts to achieve several SDGs by 2030, including poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, climate action, water, land, and environmental sustainability.

Now is the time to deliver on the many policy commitments already made by governments and donors. Evidence-based interventions and an extensive body of research and policy agreements already exist[5]. What is urgently needed is coordinated, collaborative action that prioritizes the needs and aspirations of small-scale food producers. These interventions are grouped into two broad categories - direct support to small-scale food producers and creating an enabling environment for their long-term future.



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[5] "3rd CAADP Biennial Review Report." AUDA-NEPAD, February 2022. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/41573-doc-ENGLISH_3rd_CAADP_Biennial_Review_Report_final.pdf; "CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition." Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2021. <http://www.fao.org/cfs/vgfsn>; "Connecting Smallholders to Markets." Committee on World Food Security, 2019. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-bq853e.pdf>; Murphy, Carin Smaller, David Laborde, Jaron Porciello and Sophia. "Donors Must Double Aid to End Hunger - and Spend It Wisely." Ceres2030, n.d. http://ceres2030.org/shorthand_story/donors-must-double-aid-to-end-hunger-and-spend-it-wisely/; PARI. "About Us," 2016. <https://research4agrinnovation.org/about-us/>; "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World." Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2021. <https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2021/en/>.

DIRECT SUPPORT ^[6]

Invest on the Farm

- Invest in information technologies, data collection/analysis tools, agricultural extension and training, particularly for women, to increase the uptake of new approaches, varieties, and digital technologies.
- Ensure new environmentally friendly farming methods are also economically viable.
- Support the adoption of climate-resilient, nutritious and indigenous seeds/crops and other innovative approaches.
- Increase research on how to help small-scale producers in water-scarce regions.
- Target improvements in the quantity and quality of livestock feed to small and medium-sized commercial farms.

Help Move Food to Markets & Consumers

- Reduce post-harvest loss and ensure small-scale farmers' produce reaches markets through improved handling and packaging, and by going beyond storage of cereals to improved cold storage for perishables, including dairy, fruit and vegetables.
- Invest in the rural infrastructure (roads, electricity, and broadband), regulations, services and technical assistance needed to support small-scale farmers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that supply or buy from small-scale farmers, particularly through targeted public procurement policies.

Empower the Excluded

- Enable participation in farmers organizations and cooperatives, which often bring multiple benefits to farmers - higher income, better crop yields, improved quality of crop, water, and soil conditions - and strengthen their ability to represent themselves and participate in policy development, implementation, and monitoring of results.
- Support and strengthen farmers organizations so that they can more effectively represent and build capacity of small-scale farmers/producers, and measure impacts of policy changes.
- Provide multi-skill training, especially for rural youth, to increase employment levels and wages via more formal structures and systems.
- Encourage and enable women's inclusion and leadership in decision-making roles in the food system, starting with access to education and skills-building.
- Establish or expand social protection programmes to ensure farmers have a minimum level of income and food security, including via strengthened data collection and analysis tools.

[6] Murphy, Carin Smaller, David Laborde, Jaron Porciello and Sophia. "Donors Must Double Aid to End Hunger - and Spend It Wisely." Ceres2030. n.d. http://ceres2030.org/shorthand_story/donors-must-double-aid-to-end-hunger-and-spend-it-wisely/.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Strengthen policies, financing, regulations, research, data and strategic partnerships to support small-scale producers and small and medium-sized enterprises in the food value chain, and promote responsible agricultural investments:

- Scale up public investment in small-scale producers, including through increased national and sub-national budget allocation, repurposing agricultural support, public procurement and overseas development assistance.
- Improve access to banking, insurance, and markets, and support commercialization and risk management.
- Improve access to land and secure land tenure, especially for women and marginalized farmers, including with innovative approaches using abandoned lands.
- Create incentives for existing financing mechanisms to provide more direct and diverse support to small-scale farmers and their organizations.
- Assist small-scale farmers organizations and cooperatives to enact governance and accountability structures that serve their members and facilitate direct investment by donors and partners.
- Enact a regulatory environment to encourage public and private sector support to small-scale farmers, particularly to expand trade capacities and opportunities.
- Invest in better data, locally adapted research and innovation, and monitoring and evaluation practices to capture successes and lessons learnt for knowledge sharing.
- Prioritize political stability, good governance and prevention of, and timely response to conflict, shocks and humanitarian crises.

Build Resilience Across the Food System

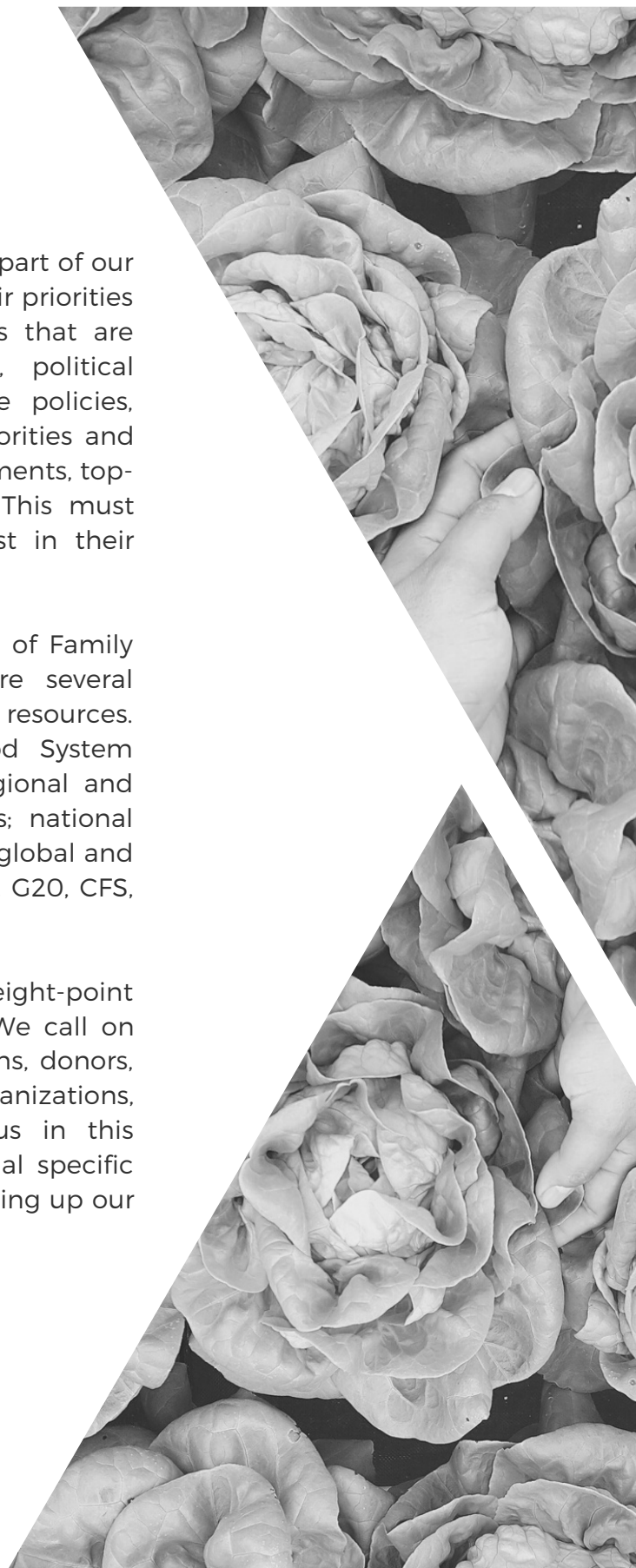
- Invest in the health and nutrition of small-scale food producers, their families and communities—recognizing that their physical and cognitive health and wellbeing is a key input into their productivity and resilience.
- Strengthen the capacity of small-scale producers to withstand climate and hunger shocks and integrate them into local adaptation and resilience planning.
- Strengthen legislation and governance systems to encourage farmers to adopt local, contextualized nature-positive, sustainable intensification agricultural practices that improve their bottom line.

CALL TO ACTION

Small-scale farmers and producers are an integral part of our food system, yet their voices are not heard and their priorities unheeded. Too often, they are subject to forces that are beyond their control, from natural disasters, political instability and conflict to weak and ineffective policies, insufficient and short-term funding, changing priorities and lack of coordination between partners and governments, top-down program design, and power imbalances. This must change. We must recognize, leverage and invest in their capacities.

As we approach the midpoint of the UN Decade of Family Farming and eight years until 2030, there are several opportunities to accelerate action and mobilize resources. These include implementation of the UN Food System Summit's commitments and pathways; local, regional and global climate adaptation and mitigation efforts; national nutrition, agriculture and development plans; and global and regional summits and meetings, including the G7, G20, CFS, World Bank/IMF Meetings and the Climate COPs.

We, the undersigned, support and commit to the eight-point policy consensus and agenda for action below. We call on national and global leaders, multilateral institutions, donors, research institutions, civil society, farmers' organizations, philanthropy, and the private sector to join us in this commitment and to develop country and regional specific calls to action. All of us have a role to play in stepping up our support for small-scale food producers.



CALL TO ACTION

Power and Priorities:

- 1 Center small-scale producers in policymaking, advocate for their right to food and their role and voice in policy decisions and scale up the science and evidence-based solutions outlined above through transparent, inclusive policy mechanisms.
- 2 Rebalance the risks and benefits throughout the value chain to ensure small-scale producers receive decent wages and fair prices for their crops.
- 3 Align data, research, and policy decisions to the needs of small-scale producers and address the specific challenges faced by women, youth, indigenous peoples, and marginalized groups who are engaged in agriculture.

Financing:

- 4 Increase longer-term public and private investment and financing to enable small-scale producers to increase incomes and productivity in a sustainable way, including by providing direct and rapid support to small-scale producers and their organizations through multilateral or national mechanisms and ensuring that the repurposing of agricultural support benefits them.

Inclusive, Meaningful and Accountable Partnerships:

- 5 Strengthen mechanisms for coordination and accountability across partners (donors, NGOs, multilateral agencies, research institutions) to leverage strengths, align financing, expand coverage, and scale up impact.
- 6 Build and strengthen partnerships with small-scale farmer organizations, subnational governments, and rural institutions to improve alignment, capacity, knowledge sharing, and accountability across stakeholders.

Resilience:

- 7 Strengthen the adaptive capacity of small-scale food producers to respond to the impact of climate change by, for example, channelling a greater share of climate adaptation financing directly to them.
- 8 Invest in small-scale food producers' resilience and human capital by expanding the reach of social protection programs, improving access to health and nutrition services, and taking anticipatory action to protect and restore livelihoods and agricultural production when responding to emergencies and climatic shocks.







Other Organisations:

Cambodian Farmers Association Federation of Agricultural Producers - CFAP

National Alliance of Agricultural Cooperatives in Uganda

F.A.L.C.O.N. Association

Specific Union for Women Farmers in Jordan

Plateforme Société Civile pour la Nutrition et la Sécurité Alimentaire

Food Solidarity International

Sierra Leone Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition

Jamaica Network of Rural Women Producers

Mansofinia Agric Farmers' Organization (MAFO)

Farmers' Corner

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Reach Unreached Millions Worldwide

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