

Senegal: Final declaration of the Family farms International Forum

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"FAMILY FARMS CONSTITUTE THE PRIMARY FOOD AND WEALTH SUPPLIERS IN WEST AFRICA"

INTERNATIONAL FORUM 20-22 November, 2012

Final Statement

We, representatives of the CNCR member farmers' and producers' organizations, as well as other national platforms member of the ROPPA (Network of West-African Farmers' and Producers' Organizations), met from 20 to 22 November, 2012 in Dakar with technical services officers and technical and financial partners in the framework of the international forum "Family farms constitute the primary food and wealth suppliers in West Africa":

After having assessed the capacity and potential of family farms through a series of case studies on the dynamics governing family farms, including the adoption of organizational, institutional and technological innovations, productive investments and resources' sustainable management, and production marketing ;

Confirm the significance of the potential and current function of family farms, which:

- Ensure to a large extent food security/sovereignty, the sustainable management of natural resources, and the creation and continuous availability of decent occupations in West Africa;
- Have positioned various agricultural growth sectors as the most performing at global level thanks to the adoption of technological innovations in collaboration with research institutions;
- Are practically the only stakeholders contributing to increase the capital of various agricultural sub-sectors;
- Ensure to a great extent the coverage of agro-food business related needs in several farming industries;
- Play a critical role in maintaining social, territorial, cultural and political equilibriums;
- Have largely participated in the mobilization of West-African farmers and producers organizations and various stakeholders groups for the reform of sectoral policies affecting agricultural and rural development;

Recognize further that:

- Family farms are facing many constraints associated with an unfavorable socioeconomic environment;

- Family farms have not yet deployed their full potential and still enjoy opportunities to grow and considerably contribute to the different functions pertaining to agriculture, namely feeding the population, creating wealth and employments, and managing natural resources in a sustainable manner.

However, there are some threats likely to hamper the development and strengthening of family farms' potential.

That is why we refuse and condemn:

- Any practices consisting in grabbing our natural resources (land, water, forests...) and granting them to agro-industrial stakeholders who are threatening the development of family farms' potential and ruining the prospects of future generations;
- Any public investment related policies that prioritize agro-business to the detriment of family farming;
- Any development and growth programs elaborated without consultation and negotiation with family farms through farmers' organizations and without reference to PNIA (National Programs on Agricultural Investment) and PRIA (Regional Programs on Agricultural Investment) and other sectoral policies jointly formulated by all the relevant stakeholders.

Call for the ECOWAS member States and any agricultural and rural development stakeholders to give high priority to the following recommendations:

- Prioritize the development of family farms' potential in public investments;
- Suspend any projects and measures supporting land commodification and allocation to national and international private developers to the detriment of family farms. This phenomenon of land grabbing gives rise to the exclusion of several millions of farmers from production processes and/or reduces them to the status of mere farm workers or unemployed workers.
- Secure family farms' access to resources through structuring investments;
- Promote the development of family farms' potential by establishing conditions favoring food sovereignty, employment and wealth creation, and the building and protection of the West African common market;
- Take into account the place and primary role of family farms in the implementation of agricultural policies in accordance with sub-regional agricultural policy documents;
- Empower and involve farmers' organizations in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agricultural and rural development policies and programs.

Today it is urgently necessary that all stakeholders joint their efforts to respond to this issue: What investments, for which production systems, for which product, for which market, and for the benefit of whom?

The response to such issue requires taking into account the aforesaid.

That is why we call on government, administrative, local, political and religious authorities, as well as civil society stakeholders to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of our

recommendations.

Issued in Dakar on November 2012

The participants
