

# Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security and Nutrition

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS), 40th Session, 2013 endorsed the following recommendations on Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security and Nutrition.<sup>1</sup>



## 1. The Committee:

- Welcomed the work of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on “Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security” and the relevant report, and acknowledged its findings as an important contribution to the CFS recommendations.
- Recalled the report on the Committee’s deliberations on ‘How to increase food security and smallholder-sensitive investment in agriculture’ during its 37th 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 agriculture contributes to 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 in general, with special attention to those faced by women and youth, and thereby improve food security and nutrition, the CFS encouraged governments, together with smallholder organizations and other national and international stakeholders (civil society, local organizations, private sector, research institutions and international development partners), to:

### Enable national policies, governance and their evidence base

2. Build or further develop 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 connecting smallholders to markets, that is articulated together with all national stakeholders, especially smallholder farmers, of whom women represent a majority in many countries, their organizations and their representatives, in the context of sustainable development and transparent rights-based processes and guidelines.

3. Guided by this vision and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, consider revisiting agricultural, urban and rural sector policies, strategies and budgets, with particular attention to enabling smallholder access - especially for women - to productive assets, local, national and regional markets, appropriate training, research, technology and farm support services.
4. Support the review, financing and implementation of smallholder inclusive, gender-sensitive, multi-sectoral, policies and strategies linked to sustainable agricultural development, 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.
5. Mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment within the country-led vision and



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**Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition**

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from the CFS 40 Final Report

strategy for agricultural development. In addition, encourage gender specific support services in view of the critical role of women and to address the specific needs and constraints faced by both women and men smallholder farmers.

6. Address constraints to engaging young women and men in smallholder agriculture, as well as in related non-farm rural sectors, through targeted policy interventions. These include strengthening and ensuring equal access to education and training systems.

7. 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.

8. Improve governance for agriculture and rural development through a coordinated multi-sectoral approach, with particular focus on smallholder agriculture, ensuring adequate participation of all relevant organizations, 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.

9. Build inclusive participatory processes that engage smallholders, women, youth, private sector, and other relevant organizations. 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.

10. Improve information management (the collection, transparency, communication 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 evolution and its contributions to various outcomes in particular to food security and nutrition.

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

11. Note farmers' and breeders' contribution to conserving and developing plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Promote smallholders'- particularly women farmers'- ability to access, breed, produce, conserve, purchase, exchange, sell and use the seeds they need, including local, indigenous and modern varieties. Strengthen information and knowledge sharing related to practical on-farm implementation and foster local innovation. Support in situ and ex situ conservation and development of agricultural biodiversity by smallholders together with research and extension systems, in line with sustainable agricultural development and good practices, including through agro-ecological approaches and sustainable intensification. All the above-mentioned measures of this paragraph have to be in accordance with applicable national and international law.

12. Strongly promote 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 in the Context of National Food Security 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**

13. Prioritize public investment and encourage private investment, specifically in support of smallholders' own investments, in, among others; water management, sustainable management of genetic resources for food and agriculture, soil conservation, forests, transport and infrastructure such as feeder roads, energy, post-harvest handling infrastructure, rural electrification and telecommunication grids.

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

15. 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, including with respect to climate change, according to the tenets of sustainable development. The approach is ideally that of combining farmers' and indigenous people's traditional knowledge with the findings of scientific research, as appropriate.

16. Promote access to available technologies that help improve the quality of smallholders' production. Take into consideration the specific constraints of smallholders in relation to sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations and enable their access to the programs and supplies needed for compliance.

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

17. Promote investment of and for smallholders. Improve policies, markets and institutions to foster economic opportunities for smallholders. Mitigate excessive price volatility and non-transferable smallholder risks using public policy instruments in accordance with international commitments. Develop and/or improve value chains and enable smallholders to be full participants in the value chains of their choice. Ensure legal and fair business practices amongst all parties and increase the negotiating capacity of smallholders. This calls for continued development of policy measures and technical guidelines and tools, including for contract farming and public-private partnerships, in consultation with smallholder organizations, the expertise of relevant UN organizations and other centres of expertise.

18. Access to markets. Support, in accordance with international commitments, the development of, and access to, markets, distribution and marketing systems and mechanisms that are remunerative for smallholders and rural economies. Recognize the importance of non-monetary exchanges of products and services, the importance of local food systems for smallholders including their potential for supplying school and institutional feeding programmes. Create appropriate linkages and engage smallholder farmers, men and women, along value-chains, especially in local, national and regional markets. Enable and stimulate cooperation between smallholders, for instance, via cooperatives or other approach-

es for market organization that benefit smallholders in accordance with international commitments.

19. Financial services. Improve regulatory conditions and financial infrastructure to strengthen smallholder access to a full range of financial services adapted to their needs, with attention to the particular challenges faced by women and youth in this regard. Relevant financial services include safe deposits, monetary transactions and remittances, mobile financial services, sustainable micro, 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 for field operations equipment, food processing and other value-adding activities on smallholder farms. As appropriate, relax liquidity constraints on working capital expenditures (e.g. fertilizers, seeds) as well as on medium- and long-term investments while avoid worsening smallholder farmers' debt burden. Support such measures by appropriately designed, well-targeted fiscal measures. All the above mentioned measures of this paragraph should be implemented in accordance with international commitments.

20. Investing beyond the farm. Promote public investment and encourage private investment to develop 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, where appropriate and particularly targeting young women and men, for employment in a modernized agriculture as well as in other related activities and labour markets. It also requires promoting investment for new business development.

#### **Furthermore the Committee:**

21. Encouraged stakeholders to share their experiences in using these recommendations in their national context at the High-Level Forum on "Connecting Smallholders to Market", planned in the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for 2015. In general, encouraged promoting international cooperation and sharing of experience in smallholder development across the world, with strong engagement and leadership of smallholder organizations.

22. Invited its members and stakeholders to disseminate the findings of the HLPE Report and the present recommendations to relevant fora and processes such as: the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and the principles for responsible agricultural investments (rai); the 2014 International Year of Family Farming, the Right-to-Food plus 10, the post-2015 development agenda.



#### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

CFS is the foremost inclusive international and inter-governmental platform for all stakeholders to work together in a coordinated way to ensure food security and nutrition for all. CFS endorses policy recommendations on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics.

#### **CFS WEBSITE AND CONTACT**

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