

Document: EB 2018/125/R.56
Agenda: 9
Date: 15 November 2018
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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IFAD and the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028)

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Executive Board — 125th Session
Rome, 12-14 December 2018

For: Review

Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms	ii
I. Introduction	1
II. Background	1
III. Family farming in the context of the 2030 Agenda and IFAD	2
IV. Objective of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming	2
V. Development of a governance structure and action plan	3
VI. Launch of the Decade of Family Farming	4
VII. Funding	4
VIII. Reporting	5
Annex	
United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/239	6

Abbreviations and acronyms

FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
ISC	International Steering Committee
IYFF	International Year of Family Farming
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

IFAD and the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028)

I. Introduction

1. The purpose of this document is to brief the IFAD Executive Board on the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028) and seek its feedback on related priorities.

II. Background

2. The International Year of Family Farming. IFAD actively supported the process leading up to the declaration of 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) and the implementation of IYFF, which succeeded in raising global awareness of the important role played by family farming in food security, nutrition and rural development. The document "Legacy of IYFF 2014 and the Way Forward"¹ reports the main results of the IYFF and calls for action to implement the recommendations resulting from the broad policy consultations held during that year. By dedicating 2014 to family farming, the United Nations positioned this issue at the centre of agricultural, environmental and social policies, and helped to identify both needs and opportunities for strengthening political commitments to family farming at the national, regional and global levels.
3. The adoption of a United Nations resolution. On 20 December 2017, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 72/239, which declared 2019-2028 to be the Decade of Family Farming (see the annex for the full text of the resolution).
4. The resolution was adopted unanimously following a successful campaign led by the Government of Costa Rica and the World Rural Forum, which was actively supported by IFAD, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and a range of other partners. The fact that the resolution was endorsed by more than 100 Member States attests to the importance of family farming in the promotion of sustainable and inclusive rural transformation and the achievement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
5. The United Nations resolution explicitly calls upon IFAD and FAO to lead the implementation of the Decade of Family Farming in collaboration with other United Nations organizations. This includes identifying and developing activities and programmes within their mandates through existing resources and voluntary contributions as necessary.
6. The role of family farming. In 2014, the United Nations acknowledged that family farming is the predominant form of food and agricultural production in both developed and developing countries. Family farmers, including fishers and pastoralists from every region and biome of the world produce over 80 per cent of the world's food in terms of value.² More than 90 per cent of all farms in the world (over 500 million) are managed by families and rely upon family labour, and 84 per cent of all farms are small farms (less than 2 hectares).³
7. Family farming and smallholder agriculture. Although there are several country-specific definitions of family farming, it primarily refers to the type of farm management or ownership, and the type of labour employed. The definition of family farming agreed upon by the International Steering Committee (ISC) of the IYFF states that: "The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine

¹ See FAO, *IYFF Legacy and Way Forward*.

² See FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture: Innovation in Family Farming* (2014),

³ *Ibid.*

economic, environmental, reproductive, social and cultural functions”.⁴ Along the same lines, the High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition⁵ describes smallholder agriculture as agriculture that “is practised by families using only or mostly family labour and deriving from that work a large but variable share of their income, in kind or in cash”. This type of agriculture includes crop farming, animal husbandry, forestry and artisanal fisheries and the holdings are run by family groups, a large proportion of which are headed by women, and women play an important role in these farms’ production, processing and marketing activities. Country-specific classifications based solely on farm size can be misleading. 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 largely overlap.

III. Family farming in the context of the 2030 Agenda and IFAD

8. Smallholder agriculture and the 2030 Agenda. The importance of smallholder agriculture for sustainable development is acknowledged in the 2030 Agenda, most notably in SDG 2.3: “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 nonfarm employment . Along the same lines, the Ministerial Declaration of the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development states that: “Ending hunger and achieving food security is fundamental for sustainable development .⁶ It is worth noting that the latest report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (2018)⁷ revealed a rise in world hunger for the third year in a row. The absolute number of undernourished people – those facing chronic food deprivation – increased to nearly 821 million in 2017 – almost the same number as a decade ago. Hence, renewed attention to smallholder agriculture is crucially important.
9. Smallholder agriculture is at the core of IFAD’s mandate. The Agreement Establishing IFAD recognizes that the Fund should focus on food production in developing countries and improve nutrition among the poorest populations. The IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025 emphasizes that IFAD will invest in rural people and enable inclusive and sustainable rural transformation, notably through growth led by smallholder agriculture. In the context of the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD’s Resources, Member States have recognized IFAD’s important role in promoting smallholder agriculture, achieving food security and raising income and nutrition levels. Thanks to its 40 years of experience and its track record in this area, IFAD is well positioned, along with FAO and other partners, to implement the Decade of Family Farming.

IV. Objective of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming

10. The Decade is intended to focus the 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 strengthening the prominence of family farming in economic,

⁴ See the IYFF+10 website.

⁵ See High-level Panel of Experts, *Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security* (2013).

⁶ See the *Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Political Forum* (2018).

⁷ See the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (2018).

environmental and social policies at all levels, contributing to achievement of the SDGs.

11. The following specific objectives for the Decade were formulated following discussions among key partners and submitted in November 2018 for feedback and endorsement by the ISC before the end of 2018:
 - (a) Improve socio-economic inclusion, equality and well-being in rural communities through and with family farmers. Eliminate food insecurity, poverty, hunger and malnutrition in rural communities through guaranteeing and improving family farmers' access to resilient livelihoods, social protection systems and inclusive food markets to ensure availability of food and increase incomes.
 - (b) Promote sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries through and with family farmers, based on the sustainable use of natural resources. Increase sustainable production and productivity of family farmers, while at the same time foster the creation of inclusive markets and other opportunities for decent rural employment.
 - (c) Strengthen family farmers' capacity to safeguard, maintain, adapt and improve biodiversity, to preserve environment and culture. Address environment-related risks and vulnerabilities faced by family farmers worldwide, and at the same time fulfil their whole potential toward environmental protection, fight against climate change, protection of biodiversity and culture, and towards the strengthening of healthy diets that are nutritionally diversified, balanced and culturally appropriate, also thanks to the strengthening of inclusive local markets.
 - (d) Strengthen family farmers' capacities to generate knowledge and to provide inclusive services in rural areas. Strengthen and empower family farmers and producer organizations, farmers' associations, agricultural cooperatives and relevant civil society organizations to foster social and economic improvements in rural areas through supporting knowledge generation and innovation, enhancing the entrepreneurial capacity of family farming and their inclusion in value chains, as well by improving their negotiating capacities and participation in decision-making processes at all levels.
 - (e) Support young family farmers. Through enabling policies for inclusive and sustainable rural transformation, stimulate the future of family farming through the promotion of youth access to natural and financial resources, infrastructures, public goods, services, and innovation, in order to make them become agents of sustainable rural development interconnecting traditional knowledge with innovative solutions.
 - (f) Promote gender equality in family farming. Support instruments and conducive actions for the achievement of women's rights and gender equality in food and agricultural production and for the empowerment of rural women. Increase access to and control over productive and financial resources, especially to land, as well as access to information, social protection policies, markets, job opportunities, education, extension services, and technology.

V. Development of a governance structure and action plan

12. Collaboration among Rome-based agencies. As mentioned above, the United Nations resolution on the Decade of Family Farming calls for FAO and IFAD to lead implementation of the Decade. In order to further strengthen collaboration among the Rome-based agencies, IFAD and FAO are working closely and consulting extensively with the Member States and non-state actors that took part in the

campaign for the Decade of Family Farming in order to determine the best way forward.

13. Establishing an International Steering Committee. In order to ensure an inclusive and structured approach to the Decade of Family Farming, an ISC is currently being established.
14. The role of the ISC will be to oversee the development and implementation of the Decade of Family Farming, monitor corresponding activities and provide guidance on any adjustments needed along the way. FAO and IFAD will jointly serve as the secretariat of the ISC.
15. ISC members will include representatives from FAO and IFAD, a regionally representative group of Member States and global and regional farmers' organizations. In order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the ISC's work, it will have a maximum of approximately 25 members.
16. In order to ensure the inclusiveness of this work, action networks will be established on specific topics and bi-annual global conferences on family farming will be organized to bring together a broad range of partners, including Member States, farmers' organizations and other actors not directly involved through the ISC.
17. Development of an action plan. There is broad agreement among the core partners that a coherent action plan is needed to guide the implementation of the Decade. The action plan may also serve as a basis for identifying activities (including at the country level), mobilizing voluntary contributions, assigning roles and responsibilities, defining indicators of success, monitoring progress and reporting. Discussions are under way on the contents and structure of the action plan, which will be drafted this year based on the guiding document prepared by FAO and IFAD. The draft action plan will be submitted to Member States and farmers' organizations for consultation and inputs on country-specific commitments. Following discussion at the Sixth Global Conference on Family Farming in Bilbao in March 2019, the action plan will be finalized and endorsed by the ISC prior to the official launch of the Decade of Family Farming.

VI. Launch of the Decade of Family Farming

18. In order to formally launch the Decade of Family Farming, FAO and IFAD, along with other partners, are jointly planning a high-level conference in Rome on the Decade in spring of 2019.
19. This conference will build on the outcomes of the International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation for Family Farming, which will be held in Rome on 21-23 November 2018, and the Sixth Global Conference on Family Farming in Bilbao on 25-30 March 2019.
20. In anticipation of the formal launch, high-level side events were held at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018 and the annual plenary week of the Committee on World Food Security in October 2018. Both events raised awareness of the Decade of Family Farming and links with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

VII. Funding

21. The funding requirements for implementation of the Decade will be determined once the specific activities and timelines in the action plan have been fully developed. Funding will also be required to enable the ISC to serve as the overarching governance mechanism for the Decade.
22. As noted in the United Nations resolution, voluntary contributions to support implementation of the Decade are welcome. IFAD looks forward to receiving

voluntary contributions in the form of supplementary funds that may be earmarked for specific activities included in the action plan.

23. Some activities could be funded with IFAD grant resources in the event that the activities are in line with IFAD's Policy for Grant Financing and strategic priorities. IFAD will also allocate in-kind resources in the form of staff time and a limited amount of funds from administrative budgets (e.g. for essential staff travel, the organization of the Global Conference on Family Farming and the formal launch event in spring 2019).

VIII. Reporting

24. As required by the United Nations resolution, IFAD and FAO will submit a joint report on a biennial basis to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in order to inform the General Assembly about progress made during the Decade of Family Farming. The first report will be submitted in 2020 and will focus on the priorities for the first biennium and actions carried out in 2019-2020.
25. FAO and IFAD will keep their governing bodies informed of progress on a regular basis and seek their guidance on the way forward. It is proposed that a progress report be presented to the IFAD Executive Board and the FAO Council on an annual basis beginning in 2019.
26. In line with the objectives of the Decade of Family Farming, Member States will be invited to report to the ISC on the progress of activities undertaken within the framework of the Decade in order to foster joint analysis and knowledge sharing. The reports on countries' actions and achievements will be reflected in the regular reports issued by the joint secretariat.
27. In relation with the Decade of Family Farming, the Committee on World Food Security decided at its October 2018 plenary to monitor the use of its smallholder-related policy guidance at the country level and report back at its next plenary in October 2019.

Seventy-second session Agenda item 25

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2017

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/72/426)]
72/239.

United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019–2028)

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the success of the International Year of Family Farming, declared by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/222 of 22 December 2011 and implemented in 2014, which raised the profile of the role of family farming, pastoralism and smallholder farming in contributing to the achievement of food security and improved nutrition,

Welcoming the fact that many countries have made significant progress in developing public policies in favour of family farming, including the formation of national committees for family farming, and making financial inclusion policies for smallholder farmers, such as small-scale credit loans, and recognizing the role that family farms play in improving nutrition and ensuring global food security, eradicating poverty, ending hunger, conserving biodiversity, achieving environmental sustainability and helping to address migration,

Recalling the creation of the Family Farming Knowledge Platform, and recognizing that sharing knowledge and data contributes to policy dialogue and policymaking to address the specific needs of family farms,

Recognizing the important role of science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship in supporting smallholders, including pastoralists and family farmers, in particular women and youth in rural areas, and in that regard highlighting the importance of innovation-driven development and support to mass entrepreneurship and innovation, and welcoming new sustainable agricultural technologies that can contribute to the transition of smallholders from subsistence farming to innovative, commercial production, helping them to increase their own food security and nutrition, generate marketable surpluses and add value to their production,

Recognizing also the close links between family farming, the promotion and conservation of historical, cultural and natural heritage, traditional customs and culture, halting the loss of biodiversity and the improvement of the living conditions of people living in rural areas,

Stressing the role of different forest types, including boreal, temperate and tropical, in supporting family farming,

Reaffirming the importance of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture farms for food security and nutrition,

Noting the convening of the thirty-first session of the Regional Conference for Europe of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Voronezh, Russian Federation, in May 2018, with a focus on agricultural, food security and nutrition issues, including their links with climate change,

Mindful of the guidelines for international decades in economic and social fields set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/84 of 24 May 1989,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Welcoming the Paris Agreement⁸ and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁹ that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Recalling the proclamation of 2016–2025 as the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition,¹⁰ based on the Rome Declaration on Nutrition¹¹ and the Framework for Action,¹²

Recalling also that nearly 80 per cent of the extreme poor live in rural areas and work in agriculture, and that

⁸ Adopted under the UNFCCC in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.

⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

¹⁰ Resolution 70/259.

¹¹ World Health Organization, document EB/136/8, annex I.

¹² *Ibid.*, annex II.

devoting resources to the development of rural areas and sustainable agriculture and supporting smallholder farmers, especially women farmers, is key to ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions, by, inter alia, improving the welfare of farmers,

Recognizing that 815 million people throughout the world still suffer from hunger and that the prevalence of other forms of malnutrition is still considerable in some regions of the world, and stressing the important role of family farms in the production of more than 80 per cent of the world's food in terms of value,

Stressing that a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system will promote agriculture, family farming and rural development in developing countries and contribute to world food security and nutrition, and urging the adoption of national, regional and international strategies to promote the inclusive participation of farmers, especially small-scale and family farmers, including women, in community, national, regional and international markets,

Reaffirming that the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, reaffirming also the critical role and contribution of rural women, including smallholders and women farmers, indigenous women and women in local communities, and their traditional knowledge in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty, and in this regard stressing the importance of reviewing agricultural policies and strategies to ensure that the critical role of women in food security and nutrition is recognized and addressed as an integral part of both short- and long-term responses to food insecurity, malnutrition, potential excessive price volatility and food crises in developing countries,

Stressing the need to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and acknowledging that policies and programmes that promote innovation on family farms must go hand in hand with policies promoting overall rural development, so as to offer additional or alternative employment and income-generating opportunities in rural areas,

Recognizing the positive impacts of collaboration among family farmers through farmer-to-farmer cooperation as essential to the creation of environments conducive to supporting the exchange of experience and knowledge to scale up relevant, cost-effective, traditional and innovative solutions towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Conscious that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet, that it is seriously affecting agriculture throughout the world and that supporting family farming could

contribute to combating climate change as well as to increasing the ability to adapt to its adverse impacts and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production,

Recalling the need to strengthen our efforts to enhance food security and nutrition and to focus on smallholders and women farmers, as well as on agricultural cooperatives and farmers' networks, and the need to encourage countries to revitalize global partnerships,

Recognizing the importance of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in promoting family farming and addressing the problem of food insecurity through the exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices, innovative policies, know-how and resources,

1. Decides to proclaim 2019–2028 the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, within existing structures and available resources;

2. Encourages all States to develop, improve and implement public policies on family farming and share their experiences and best practices of family farming with other States;

3. Calls upon the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development to lead the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including by identifying and developing possible activities and programmes, within their mandates and existing resources and through voluntary contributions, as appropriate;

4. Invites Governments and other relevant stakeholders, including international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia, to actively support the implementation of the Decade, including through voluntary contributions, as appropriate;

5. Invites the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly about the implementation of the Decade on the basis of the biennial reports compiled jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

74th plenary meeting
20 December 2017