

**IFAD 13<sup>th</sup> Replenishment Session**  
**Opening Statement**  
**Farmers Forum Steering Committee**

*Esther Penunia, Secretary General, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA)*

Good afternoon to everyone.

We appreciate the invitation for a representative of the Steering Committee of the Farmers Forum (FAFO) to deliver an opening statement to the first IFAD 13 Replenishment Consultation. The FAFO SC include five global organizations- Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organizations, La Via Campesina, World Farmers Organization, World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers, World Forum of Fishers Peoples, as well as four regional organizations – COPROFAM in Latin America, ROPPA for West Africa, PAFO for Africa continent, and the organization I belong to – Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development.

Family Farmers comprise 90% of farms all over the world, and 80% of them are small scale, with an average of 2 hectares of lands being worked on. Together, we produce 80% of the world's food, with small scale farmers producing 35%, but 80% of their region's food, particularly in Asia Pacific. Yet, poverty and hunger in the world has a rural face, the majority of the world's poor and hungry are women, men, young family farmers depending on agriculture for a living, particularly those in developing countries. The current food crisis has exposed the ills of the current global food systems, dominated by industrial, exploitative agriculture with a profit orientation regardless of human rights and environmental considerations.

However, family farmers are solution providers. Farmers organizations, at local, national a regional and global levels have made efforts to respond holistically to the current global, interrelated crises on covid, climate, conflict, food. Our partnerships with IFAD such as the FO4ACP, FOA, APFP and ARISE prove that farmers organizations are effective service providers. In fisheries, our fisher members use appropriate fishing gears, practice sustainable ecosystem-based fishing and collectively raise their voices against coastal land grabbing and unsustainable fishing. Herders and pastoralists practice sustainable pasture management and agroforestry. We practice sustainable, integrated, biodiverse, climate-resilient, organic systems in farms, fisheries, and forests. We promote traditional but healthy, nutritious and climate -resilient crops. We preserve rural landscapes, perform environmental and social services, and reduce food waste. We engage in sustainable processing and marketing of our products, especially through our cooperatives. We organize ourselves, build solidarity, strengthen our collective voice to become effective partners in

development and deliver effective services to our members. All our efforts build resilience and adaptation to climate change, providing sustainable livelihoods and decent living to women and men family farmers, promoting agro biodiversity, making youth attracted to agriculture, while making the planet healthy again.

We view IFAD, with a strong mandate from the UN for financing agricultural development, as our strong ally and strategic partner towards increasing our Agency to effectively engage governments in policy work and in providing effective social and economic services to our members.

For the IFAD 13 replenishment, we call on IFAD to put more resources on climate resiliency , climate adaptation with mitigation benefits. We ask IFAD to:

1. Recognize FOs as a strategic partner in IFAD processes, thereby effectively facilitating the inclusion of FOs at national level processes of IFAD, including processes cited in the 2018 Joint FO-IFAD Statement (e.g., IFAD COSOP processes in the design, implementation, and monitoring of its country portfolio projects, IFAD's knowledge management work); as well as facilitating FO-government interactions, and supporting capacities of FOs in policy engagement as needed.
2. Strengthen national farmers' forum processes and support farmer-led design and implementation of national and regional action plans for the UN Decade of Family Farming.
3. Refrain from supporting any project that pollutes and destroys our planet; promotes genetically modified crops, land and ocean grabbing, unsustainable use of natural resources; and treats farmers as mere recipients of top-down technologies.
4. Set up regular or permanent grant facility for direct Financing to FOs, for climate change adaptation and mitigation by FOs with their members and partners; possibly through ASAP+, or using the grant portion of IFADs Green Climate Finance to directly support the work of family farmers' organizations, building on the success of the IPAF. In terms of process, we ask IFAD to organize a Farmers Forum dedicated to discuss climate action and climate financing this year.

FOs can use such facility to support their various works:

- a. Economic services delivery to members including:
  - i. Ensuring access, control and ownership of basic natural assets and resources – lands, waters, forests, seeds.
  - ii. Access to institutional credit and skills training from various government institutions.
  - iii. Development and implementation of sustainable business models.

- iv. Provision of revolving funds for enterprises of members
  - v. Effective utilization of digital technologies, such as e-platforms for products promotion, marketing, and small farmer friendly certification
  - vi. Access to local and regional markets
  - vii. Strengthening of partnerships with governments and other development organizations for procurement of sustainably grown and processed products of members
- b. Establishment and maintenance of biodiverse, agroecological, nature-positive systems in farms, fisheries, forests, doing participatory research and innovation, and exchanges among farmers such as farmer field schools.
  - c. Policy making engagement with governments in VGSSF and VGGT implementation at national levels and in formulation and implementation of UNDRIP National and Regional Action Plans with the right to food, UNDRIP and UNDROP under the concept of food sovereignty.
  - d. Responsible, accountable, and transparent governance of our organizations and cooperatives.
  - e. And in doing the above, provide equitable opportunities for women and young farmers so they can be significantly involved and benefit from the actions of FOs.

Even as we highly recommend the setting up of such grant facility through ASAP+, we call on IFAD to:

1. expand ASAP+ allocation for FOs from 15% to 50% or more of the total funds.
2. involve representatives of the FAFO Steering Committee at global, regional, and national levels in a co-construction process.
3. make the inclusion of FOs in the design, implementation, and monitoring of funds as part of the eligibility requirements for government applications for ASAP+.

On Policy Agenda, IFAD to work together with FOs for joint policy agenda, including on: Government recognition of FOs and Access of farmers to public finance and climate financing.

We, as frontliners in the work for sustainable, healthy and just food systems, commit to join IFAD in resource mobilization and in the wise use of mobilized funds through good project/program management, lending of our collective voice as family farmers and effective engagement with decision makers for pro-family farmer policies and programs. We commit to strengthen our solidarity, knowledge exchange, and movement building through FAFO processes at the national, regional and global levels.