

Letter of the Regional Committee on Family Farming to the representatives of the Member States and other invited guests of the XXXIV FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean

Dear Representatives of the Member States,

Dear invited guests and observers,

The Regional Committee on Family Farming for Latin America and the Caribbean was created on February 18, 2014; the year in which the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) was celebrated, having been declared in the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Responding to this mandate, the various institutions and organizations involved in family farming gathered at the regional level to form a Regional Coordinating Committee for the IYFF 2014.¹

Following the activities of the IYFF, the participants of the aforementioned Committee reached an agreement regarding the need to maintain space for dialogue and regional exchange of ideas and experiences in the area of Family Farming. There are currently 14 organizations and institutions participating in the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean², and one of their functions is to create a space for consultation and dialogue between the National Committees of Family Farming, as well as other spaces for dialogue regarding public policies for the sector.

The Committee recognizes that the region is undergoing a major shift towards a more inclusive development and can help overcome the historical challenges we face. We also understand that the IYFF 2014 managed to position family farming as a key actor in this process of transformation, based on the discussion and construction of differentiated national policies for the sector.

On the other hand, we recognize the significant support which FAO provides, through the Regional Initiative of Family Farming and Rural Territorial Development, for the processes which seek to position and strengthen this sector. This commitment is reflected in how the FAO supports the spaces for dialogue for the construction of family farming policies. At the regional level, we would like to highlight the CELAC Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication 2025, and specifically the support provided to the Working Group of Family Farming and Rural Territorial Development. At the subregional level, we would like to highlight the spaces for dialogue for family farming policies, such as the Specialized Meeting of MERCOSUR (REAF/MERCOSUR), along with the efforts to establish a space for permanent dialogue within the framework of the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC).

¹ Annex I: Terms of Reference of the Regional Committee on Family Farming

² A list of all participants is annexed.

We applaud the implementation of the XXXIV FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean and we hope that for the next biennium, FAO will continue to support the formulation and implementation of public policies which contribute to hunger eradication and fighting malnutrition, along with its work in institutional strengthening to improve the conditions and livelihoods of family farmers and the sustainable development of rural areas. Additionally, we hope that FAO can continue to support the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources, adaptation to climate change, and the prevention and control of health threats and disasters. These topics are also present in the CELAC Plan for Food Security, Nutrition and Hunger Eradication 2025, in the Post-2030 Agenda and in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); mechanisms which we should constantly discuss and include in our actions.

Finally, we would like to emphasize the importance of the dialogue on public policies which strengthen family farming between the governments, civil society, academia and other stakeholders. Therefore, we are willing to not only support the implementation of the work plan of FAO for the next biennium, but also strengthen the spaces for national, subregional and regional dialogues, such as the National Committees on Family Farming or similar entities. We also propose to carry out an analysis and actions to include Family Farming in the important discussions of the following period, with special emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Best regards,

Regional Committee on Family Farming for Latin America and the Caribbean

Annex I- Terms of Reference

Regional Committee on Family Farming for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Regional Committee on Family Farming for Latin America and the Caribbean was created on February 18, 2014; the year in which the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) was celebrated, having been declared at the 66th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. In response to this mandate, various institutions and organizations involved in family farming gathered at the regional level to form a Regional Coordinating Committee for the IYFF 2014.

Following the activities associated with the IYFF, and within the framework of the Decade for Family Farming (IYFF + 10), there is consensus on the importance of giving continuity to this Committee as an important mechanism for regional dialogue on family farming. However, it is essential to establish new objectives and goals for this committee; in order to shape a new work plan to meet current and future challenges in the region.

Accordingly, it was agreed upon by all participants at the last meeting of the Regional Committee, held on March 25, 2015, to establish new terms of reference for action by the Committee.

In this regard, we propose the following functions for the Committee:

1. Facilitate dialogue and the exchange of ideas and experiences regarding family farming among the different organizations and institutions that comprise it, along with others which may join.
2. Allow for and promote exchange and coordination between the national committees on family farming or similar national entities, from the various countries in the region, with the aim of developing a South-South Cooperation between the committees.
3. Promote and encourage the creation of platforms for dialogue by the National Committees or equivalent entities- in the medium term and recognized by the regional authorities- wherever there are platforms and active civil society.
4. Support the establishment, coordination and monitoring of proposals of the public policies which strengthen family farming and are defined as priorities for the National Committees or equivalent entities.
5. Based on the priorities identified by the National Committees or equivalent entities, create an agenda of priorities for Latin America and the Caribbean; to be highlighted and promoted with the governments, international organizations, and continental integration entities and processes.
6. Maintain the information systematized and updated regarding the agenda, composition, strategies and achievements of the National Committees or equivalent entities.

7. Highlight the work, progress and achievements of the Regional Committee and the National Committees, as well as initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean on family farming, through the Knowledge Platform on Family Farming (FFKP) tool created by FAO as a development of the IYFF website.³
8. Disseminate the work (best practices and lessons learned) and achievements of the National Committees or equivalent entities in international and intergovernmental forums, both in Latin America and the Caribbean and in other regions of the world. Ensure, as much as possible, a diverse representation of the subregions of the continent and the various continental and national networks of rural workers and family farmer organizations who participate in committees or other forums. Facilitate, whenever possible, the participation of representatives of those national committees or equivalent entities in supranational and international event, in order to act as "speakers" of the advances in their countries and regions.
9. Promote a multisectoral dialogue which is wide-reaching, transparent and inclusive, regarding the challenges and achievements of family farming in the region. In particular, facilitate the opportunities for exchange between the continental and national networks of rural workers and family farming organizations, along with the governments, international organizations and processes for continental integration.
10. Propose the contents and alliances for possible communication and information campaigns on Family Farming in Latin America and the Caribbean.
11. Promote the coordination of coalitions with the aim of supporting advocacy actions in public policies concerning family farming at the regional or subregional level.
12. Support the continental and national networks of rural workers and family farming organizations in the management of resources in order to promote the advocacy actions regarding the continental and national priorities identified, along with dialogue and the exchange of ideas and experiences, and the dissemination of the achievements of the national committees or equivalent entities in international and intergovernmental forums.

³ The objectives of the Platform are: (a) facilitate free and immediate access to relevant information on family farming, improving the channels of information exchange between the policy-makers, farmers organizations, researchers, etc.; (b) facilitate the exchange and dissemination of documents regarding legal frameworks, policies, programs, international cooperation and investment in support of family farms; and (c) hold key analysis on family farming.

Annex II- List of participants in the Regional Committee on Family Farming for Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Alianza por la Soberanía Alimentaria de los Pueblos
2. Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo
3. Coalición de los Pueblos por la Soberanía Alimentaria
4. Consumers International
5. Cooperativas de las Américas Región de la Alianza Cooperativa Internacional
6. Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños Productores de Comercio Justo
7. Diálogo Regional Andino
8. Foro Rural Mundial
9. Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura
10. Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y Agricultura
11. OXFAM
12. Programa Diálogo Rural Regional
13. Programa Mundial de Alimentos
14. Reunión Especializada de Agricultura Familiar del MERCOSUR
15. CEPAL