

**High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
Intervention as Speaker
Session 5 Panel Discussion : Review of Implementation : SDG2
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presented by :

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Thank you for the invitation to speak before you. My organization , the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), with 13 M women and men , young and senior farmers, organized through 20 national farmers organizations in 16 countries in Asia, share with you the commitment to achieve the SDG 2 because:

- first agriculture is what we do. And in the Asia region, we produce as much as 70% of the region's food. And sustainable agriculture is our priority agenda.
- and second, the poorest and hungriest in the world come from Asia (511 out of 794M), particularly in South Asia.
- and third, about half of all stunted children live in Asia and over third in Africa.

Why are we hungry and our children malnourished when the world can produce enough food to feed everyone ? We are hungry because we are Poor. Why are we poor ? Family Farmers from various consultations cite the following:

- First, Many of us do not have secured rights over the lands, the waters, and the forests we live on. This is aggravated by growing large-scale land acquisitions by private companies, sometimes offering quick, hard-to-resist money in exchange of lands, or worse, grabbing our lands. Good seeds are not readily available and affordable, and are beginning to be out of our control.
- Second, we do not have the capital for our production inputs and tools, and find it hard to get credits and loans. Furthermore, we have high input costs.
- Third, we find it difficult to sell in the market because of bad roads, or to know where the market is because of poor market information or to command good prices for our produce because our products are of lower quality or the market has too much of it already. And now with globalized trade – there are trade rules which we consider unfair for small scale farmers in the developing world.
- Fourth, In this knowledge and digital age, we are still information poor. Our past two generation of farmers have been practicing chemical intensive agriculture, almost forgetting the kind of sustainable agriculture which their parents/grandparents have practiced before.
- Fifth, we are more and more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change . Droughts, floods, supertyphoons claiming loss not only of property but our own lives. There is still inadequate information and advisory and extension and sharing of technologies on climate resilient farming , there is still inadequate preparedness of communities for disaster management and risk reduction.

- Fifth, women farmers are particularly disadvantaged as they are affected by socially constructed roles that inhibit participation in decision-making processes.
- Sixth, there is still massive neglect in the rural areas – no electricity, bad roads, bad communication facilities, bad health care, bad education.

Who would like to live in the rural areas? and Farm ? Because of the massive poverty, many rural people migrate to cities within and outside their countries; many of the youth are not attracted to farming and only farm as a last resort. There is conflict in poverty and hunger stricken areas in Asia and around the world as people battle it out for access and control over land, waters and forest resources, and battle it out for a place in decision making, or in being able to feel that they are part of society and are taken cared of by their governments.

But then, no farmer, no food , no nutrition, no future .

The problems of hunger and malnutrition and unsustainable agriculture is complex and multidimensional. Thus, eradicating hunger, poverty and malnutrition go hand in hand. These problems need a transformation where sustainable development means a holistic approach to development that is **socially just, environmentally sound and economically viable** for the millions of the poor and hungry family farmers, looking at the entire food system. We need policies, programs that promote secured rights to land, waters, forests and seeds; that promote biodiversity including genetic diversity, agro ecology, agro forestry, integrated, diversified organic, climate resilient systems in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry; that provides easy access in financing for sustainable agroecological production and enterprises, that integrates social protection programs with support for sustainable agricultural production such as crop insurances, public procurement of farmers' organic produce, and farmers' local markets; that strengthens the capacities of farmers to have power over their markets through stronger involvement in value chains with their cooperatives and social enterprises; that promotes awareness on the right to food, on health and nutrition among the consumers; that helps prepare and manage disasters. We need investments and support in "public goods" such as in farm to market roads, electricity and renewable energy, appropriate equipments and machineries for production, harvest, post production and marketing infrastructures, education, agriculture research and extension, and health care. We need policies and affirmative action that will promote gender equality in agriculture. In the area of macro trade, we will need better policies and rules in agriculture domestic support, access to markets of farm goods, on export restriction, preventing price spikes that harm consumers in poor food importing countries. Various ministries of the government need to coordinate and synergize their efforts as the work for SDG2 is the work of combined ministries of finance, agriculture/fisheries/livestock/forestry, environment and natural resources, trade and industry, education, rural development, transportation, communication, agrarian reform, health, foreign affairs, social welfare and development, climate change commissions, women's commission, youth commission. This synergy is not impossible, as can be shown

from successful experiences of Brazil's zero hunger program and some projects funded by GAFSP, or the global agriculture and food security program, for example in Nepal and Rwanda. We will not start from scratch in enacting and implementing these policies, as we already have some international instruments which we can contextualize in each country, such as the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right of the food in the Context of National Security, Responsible Governance of Tenure of Lands, Fisheries and Forestry in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition, on Small Scale Fisheries, the Principles of Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Food Systems, as well as the various recommendations of the CFS' High Level Panel of Experts.

Lastly, transformation in agriculture will require that the men and women family farmers are recognized and regarded not only as victims, not only as beneficiaries, but also as agents and partners for sustainable development. In a world that aims to achieve SDG2, a key investment is in building and empowering the organizations of women, men, and young family farmers at local, national, regional and international levels. These organizations, when strengthened and made accountable to their members, will be effective and efficient agents of social, political, cultural and economic change for development in their communities and societies. Farmers' organizations and especially agri-fishery-forestry cooperatives (1) consolidate the voices, the produce and the material and non- material wealth (such as knowledge) of their members, (2) promote democratic, just, inclusive and participatory processes and systems and (3) promote self reliance and a collective shaping of their members/communities' destinies. As a result, investments in empowering farmers' organizations are investments in getting committed, dynamic, active partners, unleashing the potentials of millions of family farmers in the work of ending poverty and hunger in the world.