2nd International Symposium on Agroecology: Scaling-up Agroecology to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals
3 - 5 April 2018, Rome

Chair’s Summary

The 2nd International Symposium on Agroecology held at FAO’s headquarters bringing together more than 700 participants with representatives from 72 governments, about 350 non-state actors’ organisations, and representatives of 6 UN organisations analyzed the experiences, evidence and public policies to respond to the challenges facing food and agriculture systems. Building on the first International Symposium on Agroecology for Food Security and Nutrition in Rome in September 2014, and the seven regional multi-stakeholder seminars on agroecology organized by FAO between June 2015 and November 2017, participants explored solutions, experiences and practices coming from the grassroots, articulated in a transformative vision of agriculture to be resilient, equitable and socially just, based on agroecology. With the 2nd International Symposium we have reached a turning point: it is time to scale up agroecology now.

The focus on increasing yield at any cost promoted by the Green Revolution is not sustainable and is not sufficient to eradicate hunger and poverty, and to face the challenges of natural resources exhaustion, environment degradation and biodiversity loss, and the need to adapt to climate change. In order to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there is an urgent need to promote transformative change in how food is grown, produced, processed, transported, distributed and consumed. Agroecology offers multiple benefits, including for increasing food security and resilience, boosting livelihoods and local economies, diversifying food production and diets, promoting health and nutrition, safeguarding natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem functions, improving soil fertility and soil health, adapting to and mitigating climate change, and preserving local cultures and traditional knowledge systems.

It is critical that legal and regulatory frameworks are implemented in a way that ensures transformative change towards sustainable agriculture and food systems based on agroecology, and respects, protects and fulfills farmers’ rights and access to productive resources such as land, water and seeds. It is especially critical to ensure the active participation of family farmers, in particular small-scale food producers, women and youth, as historical subjects of agroecology in dialogue spaces of public policies. This will not only facilitate the spread of agroecology but will provide the imperatives for policy and institutional changes and investments that are supportive of using agroecology to transform food and agricultural systems to sustainability. Sustainability can only be achieved with the inclusion of all actors in food and farming systems in all continents, from small-scale farmers and their families to the networks of conscientious consumers. Reintroducing diversity on farms, strengthening local food systems, valuing traditional knowledge, ensuring equity and access to land and economic resources, and respecting the multiple food cultures around the world are core components of agroecology.

1 Catalysing dialogue and cooperation to scale up agroecology: outcomes of the FAO regional seminars on agroecology. Available at http://www.fao.org/3/I8992EN/i8992en.pdf
2 Family farmers are considered in a range from smallholder to medium-scale farmers, and include peasants, indigenous peoples, traditional communities, fisher folks, mountain farmers, pastoralists and many other groups representing every region and biome of the world. They run diversified agricultural systems and preserve traditional food products, contributing both to a balanced diet and the safeguarding of the world’s agro-biodiversity (FAO Family Farming Knowledge Platform, 2018).
Agroecology scaling up is proposed as a way forward in the coming decade as a strategic approach and means to promote and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal 2 on hunger eradication, food security and sustainable agriculture. Agroecology also contributes to numerous other Sustainable Development Goals, providing an integrated, comprehensive and holistic approach that will directly benefit those whom the 2030 Agenda aims to uplift. In order to achieve this, the diverse agriculture systems of the world need to follow a new path towards sustainable agriculture and food systems, with different starting points and diverse pathways based on agroecology principles.

Over the last four years, FAO has convened very fruitful multi-stakeholder dialogues, and is committed to continue to support this dynamic at global and regional levels. Building on the outcomes of these processes and on the draft proposal for a Scaling Up Agroecology Initiative, stakeholders are invited to contribute, in multiple ways, to strengthening existing agroecological systems already developed by farmers as well as to affect the transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems through agroecology. The key actions contained in Annex 1 of this document are options for consideration.

**Way forward**

Agroecology is seen as a great opportunity to support the transformation that is needed in our food systems and commitments from different stakeholders are urgently needed. Based on the outcomes of the regional processes, the 2nd International Symposium on Agroecology and work areas of the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative, participants welcome FAO’s continued commitment to agroecology, including the Initiative, fostering its growth and supporting countries and different stakeholder in this process. All stakeholders are invited to engage in this process in the next years in the following ways:

- **Governments**: develop policy and legal frameworks to promote and support agroecology and sustainable food systems, ensuring policy coherence by removing perverse incentives for unsustainable agriculture, and putting in place policies that support agroecology and family farmers, in particular smallholder producers, women and youth.
- **FAO**: submit to FAO Committee on Agriculture in 2018 a document on mainstreaming Agroecology based on this Chair’s Summary and the Final Report of the Symposium.
- **FAO**: should develop a detailed 10 years action plan and start implementing the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative immediately and continuing provide policy and technical support to countries and implement the three work areas of the Initiative.
- **FAO**: should pursue its mandate to reinforce the work on Agroecology through its different programmes and strategic framework and work with small scale producers’ organizations and Governments to support implementation of agroecology at local, national, and international level.
- **UN partners of the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative, including FAO, IFAD, WFP, CBD and UN Environment**: work in a coordinated way to scale up agroecology through

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policies, science, investment, technical support and awareness, according to their expertise, and extending the knowledge to all actors in societies

- **FAO and IFAD**: Use the Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 as an opportunity to raise awareness in the international community about the importance of family farming and to link family farming and agroecology for achieving sustainable development.

- **FAO and WHO**: Use the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 as an opportunity to raise awareness in the international community about the importance of family farming and agroecology for achieving health and nutrition for all.

- **Small and medium enterprises and investors**: explore the potential of agroecology, and different and innovative ways to invest in it, to increase their investment in agroecology in accordance with agroecological principles and relevant international frameworks. frameworks and therefore be inherently compliant with SDgs provisions⁴

- **Foundations and funders**: view agroecology as an opportunity to transform the food system and address challenges by increasing long-term funding to agroecology including environmental, economic and social components, and to multiple stakeholders, in particular small-scale producers’ organizations, NGOs, and governments. Engage with networks of funders and foundations to increase funding for agroecology.

- **Family farmers and small-scale producer**: continue feeding their communities and the cities of the world, sharing their knowledge and experiences and using their networks and farmer-to-farmer processes to scale up agroecology, including agroecology schools, and providing multiple benefits to society.

- **Civil society organizations**: maintain support for agroecology movements by producing knowledge and awareness and advocating for the enhancement of agroecological systems worldwide. The CSO declaration for this Symposium will be an integral part of the final report of the Symposium.

- **Academia and research organizations**: increase research on agroecology, including pushing the boundaries of science, to increase and consolidate the evidence base on the impacts of agroecology, involving farmers in this process, respecting and promoting traditional knowledge and their knowledge systems. Develop new methodologies and indicators for sustainable food systems that are not solely based on yield. and extend the research agenda to the cost effective and massive transfer of knowledge to million of farmers on agroecology

- **Consumers and citizens**: act as agents of change in the food system to promote responsible consumption, and increase innovative alliances between producers and consumers. Request the private sector and governments to support and invest more in agroecology.

- **Committee of World Food Security and its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition**: Consider the actions identified in this Chair’s summary in the report of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition on agroecological approaches and other innovations for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition, and the policy roundtable that it will inform in 2019.

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⁴ Including the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, and Free Prior and Informed Consent (recognized under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
Annex: Key actions for scaling up agroecology

1. Strengthen the central role of family farmers and their organizations in safeguarding, utilizing and accessing natural resources
   a. Upholding the human rights of family farmers, agricultural workers, indigenous peoples, and consumers, in particular women and youth
   b. Scaling up agroecology by supporting the sharing of experiences, knowledge and collective action among the family farmers currently engaged with agroecology
   c. Respecting, protecting and fulfilling family farmers’ rights and access to common goods and natural resources such as land, water, forests, fisheries and genetic resources, including through the operationalization of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, and the development of regulatory frameworks that protect Farmers’ Rights (International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture)
   d. Recognising, preserving and utilising traditional and indigenous knowledge, culture and heritage
   e. Promoting the dynamic management of biodiversity and use of local and traditional crops and livestock breeds
   f. Supporting product diversification and integration of cropping, livestock, aquaculture, and forestry

2. Foster experience and knowledge sharing, collaborative research and innovations
   a. Developing family farmer-led and participatory research and co-innovation that is people-centred, builds collective capacities to solve systemic problems, is climate resilient, low-cost, enhances family farmers’ autonomy and livelihoods, is locally adapted, uses natural resources sustainably and evolves according to feedback
   b. Developing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and filling research gaps and promoting technical, social and institutional innovations for agroecology
   c. Creating networks for family farmers’ to share their innovations and multi-stakeholder cooperation platforms for collaboration between farmers and researchers at local, national, regional and global levels
   d. Investing in smallholder family farmer-led training and knowledge sharing, such as the peasant agroecology schools and including agroecology in training and educational curricula from primary schools to universities
   e. Documenting the social, economic, health, nutrition, resilience and social justice benefits of agroecology; including qualitative and quantitative data
   f. Developing analytical frameworks for developing policies and the instruments to implement them
3. Promote markets for agroecological based products for health, nutrition and sustainability
   a. Supporting value addition to agroecological products, shorter food supply chains and innovative markets, such as public procurement schemes and direct linkages between consumers and family farmers
   b. Harnessing consumers’ existing demand for healthy and fair products to strengthen agroecology and further raising awareness of the benefits of agroecological products, including nutritional quality, health and the importance of diversified production systems for diversified diets, and the need to change consumption patterns that are fed by resource intensive production systems
   c. Promoting small-scale social enterprises for agroecology and developing regulatory frameworks that facilitate the sales of products (particularly for processed and animal based products) from agroecological smallholder agriculture
   d. Promoting markets and economies based on solidarity and ensuring that food from agroecology is affordable for the urban and rural poor
   e. Promoting territorial approaches and the transition to circular food systems
   f. Reforming trade policies and incentive measures to enhance local food systems and strengthen local markets for agroecological family farmers
   g. Conducting baseline studies on production and market potential that help make the case for agroecology and monitor its growth

4. Review institutional, policy, legal and financial frameworks to promote agroecological transitions for sustainable food systems
   a. Transforming legal and regulatory frameworks at all levels to ensure transitions to agroecology based on integrated and coherent multi-sectoral food policies, based on long term objectives and planning, that respect human rights, particularly the right to food
   b. Developing public policies and initiatives that adhere to universal human rights based values while responding and adapting to local contexts, that support the central role of family farmers, particularly women, in driving forward agroecology, and that are monitored for continuous improvement and accountability
   c. Ensuring that policies recognize the importance of existing and neglected agroecological systems, such as pastoralism and artisanal fisheries, for food security and economic livelihoods
   d. Opening up spaces and support for people’s participation, in particular those most marginalized, in public policies and considering the specific needs of family farmers, including women and youth, by including them in policy development
   e. Changing the measures of success: developing multi-criteria indicators on the environmental, economic and social aspects of agroecology that measure the long-term performance of agroecological systems and internalising the externalised costs of agriculture including through true cost accounting
   f. Backing up these policies with the required funding and investments, including through public and private investments, that support the investments of family farmers (the major investors in agroecological production systems), based on the principles of responsible agricultural investments
g. Increasing the support to agroecology from donors, including accessing climate funds for agroecology

h. Adopting laws and budgets that support agroecology by raising awareness of agroecology among parliamentarians

i. Promoting long-term thinking and investments by the ethical finance sector as well as a critical engagement by savers, and alliances between savers and those receiving loans in support of agroecology

j. Implementing policy and legislative mechanisms that prevent market monopolies by private sector actors whose actions block the scaling up of agroecology

k. Sharing knowledge and experience from countries who have legal and policy frameworks on agroecology to those who are interested in developing them

l. Analysing the impacts of subsidies and redirecting subsidies from resource intensive production systems to support for agroecology

m. Developing strong regulations to preserve natural resources from pollution and degradation, penalising polluters and sectors that have negative impacts on human health and rewarding family farmers who create multiple benefits for society

n. Strengthening international cooperation for agroecology and integrating agroecology into the work of the Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP) as a priority

o. Strengthening the critical role of FAO on public policies and regulatory activities (including measurements of the performance of agriculture), creating spaces for democratic debate and platforms for discussion and negotiation to harmonise public and private strategies

5. **Take agroecology to scale through integrated and participatory territorial processes**

a. Supporting territorial approaches and planning for agroecology that protect the rights of local communities to land, and that integrate across sectors and reconnect the urban and rural by involving all local actors in an integrative, participatory and inclusive way

b. Include indigenous people in territorial development processes based on the principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent (recognized under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

c. Managing conflicts in territories through open multi-sector dialogue that include the concerned parties, including indigenous peoples

d. Support the restoration of territories to respond to the needs of family farmers in marginal areas based on success stories of agroecology that contribute to food sovereignty

e. Ensuring that laws and policies for agroecology have continuity and real impact by continuing to strengthen the participation of civil society organisations, through participatory democracy, to claim their human rights

f. Supporting networks of cities, municipalities, territories and villages that promote agroecology

h. Including territorial approaches to agroecology in climate related plans, including the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture at the UNFCCC