



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FAMILY FARMING (IYFF)

IFSN and ACTIONAID ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Background

The UN Resolution 66/222 released in March 2012 declared 2014 the International year of Family farming. It builds on the Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security, adopted on 18 November 2009, expressing, inter alia, support for the special needs of smallholder farmers, many of whom are women, and the important contribution that family farming and smallholder farming can play in providing food security and eradicating poverty in the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was invited to facilitate its implementation, in collaboration with Governments, International Development Agencies, farmers' organizations and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system as well as relevant non-governmental organizations.

What is family farming?

In the definition provided by the FAO, family farming includes all family-based agricultural activities, and it is linked to several areas of the rural development. Family farming is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, including both women's and men's.

At national level, there are a number of factors that are key for a successful development of family farming, such as: agro-ecological conditions and territorial characteristics; policy environment; access to markets; access to land and natural resources; access to technology and extension services; access to finance; demographic, economic and socio-cultural conditions; availability of specialized education among others.

Based on IFSN experience, at the regional level the key factors for a successful family farming can be: a common and shared biodiversity and agroecological conditions including pastoralist, fisheries and forestry between countries in the same region: i.e. SAHEL, SAARC (with Ganges, Sindhu delta) and ASEAN (Mekong delta), common waters for cost effective irrigation and fisheries, regional position on the food production and food banks, regional trade and protection bio diversity within common forestry and rivers.

Family farming has an important socio-economic, environmental and cultural role.

Why is family farming important?

FAO clearly states that:

- Family and small-scale farming are inextricably linked to world food security.
- Family farming preserves traditional food products, while contributing to a balanced diet and safeguarding the world's agro-biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Family farming represents an opportunity to boost local economies, especially when combined with specific policies aimed at social protection and well-being of communities.

In addition to that:

- Family farming constitutes 80% of the world food production and 75% of the food producers: thus their wellbeing will ensure overall wellbeing and growth in the sector.
- Family farming is effectively linked to the overall development of the rural development and people dependent on farming. A well maintained family farming system benefits all population living in the rural areas and thus contributing to the quality labour migration into urban areas

Overall objectives of the IYFF

1. Support the development of agricultural, environmental and social policies conducive to sustainable family farming
2. Increase knowledge, communication and public awareness
3. Attain better understanding of family farming needs, potential and constraints and ensure technical support
4. Create synergies for sustainability

Three Global Lines Of Action Of The International Year

The IYFF will focus on three global lines of action that will be implemented in the context of the national processes and agreements, in collaboration with relevant partners.

1. Promotion of dialogue in policy decision-making processes
2. Identification, documentation and sharing lessons learned and successful experiences of existing pro-family farming policies at national and/or other levels to capitalize relevant knowledge on family farming
3. Communication, advocacy and outreach

What's the structure in place to organize activity during the Year of Family farming

The international Steering Committee (ISC)

An International Steering Committee (ISC) was established for this purpose. It provides guidance and support for the implementation of IYFF activities. It fosters dialogue and promotes partnerships among relevant stakeholders including family farmers' organizations, civil society organizations, research centers and private sector representatives. It also promotes the integration of issues related to Family Farming in policy-making processes at national, regional and global levels.

The ISC is composed of 12 member states (Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, France, Kuwait, Philippines, Slovakia and South Africa; North America nomination pending) as well as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), Bioversity International, FAO, the World Rural Forum (WRF), the European Union and the World Farmers' Organization (WFO).

International and national partners will define their objectives, plans and will fund their own events within the IYFF objectives.

FAO

According to the UN Resolution declaring the IYFF 2014, FAO is in charge of preparing the official programme of the Year.

FAO is coordinating activities around the IYFF together with the International Cooperative Alliance, World Farmers Organization and the World Rural Forum. One of the activities planned is the organization of regional dialogues to generate discussion around the value of the family farming model.

The joint regional dialogues aim at highlighting the crucial role of family farmers, smallholders, producer organizations and cooperatives, as the cornerstone of world food security and the key to a sustainable future, eradicating hunger and poverty, achieving social cohesion, employment and sustainable use of natural resources. The outcomes of these regional dialogues will set the ground to provide regional overview of Family Farming issues that will be addressed in the IYFF Global Dialogue to be held in Rome in 2014, the FAO Regional Conferences and other relevant regional and global processes and fora.



WRF – coordinating civil society

The World Rural Forum-WRF -a worldwide network, present in four continents, of farmers' organizations, rural NGO, research institutes, in February 2008 started a Campaign in favor of the declaration by the UN General Assembly of the International Year of Family Farming. Up to now, more than 350 organizations -110 farmers associations, 82 rural NGOs, etc-, from 60 countries have been actively participating in the Campaign, supported also by the FAO' Conference, the president of IFAD and by several governments, namely the Philippines, Brazil, Argentina, India, Uganda, Spain, etc.

During 2012-2013, WRF was coordinating the Civil Society preparation programme of the IYFF 2014. For us, Civil Society organizations, the prime objective of the IYFF 2014 is to promote, in all countries, real active policies in favor of the sustainable development of farming systems based on the family unit, with universal access to secure land tenure, gender and youth approach, to boost the role of farmers organizations and to raise the awareness of the whole Civil Society on the importance of supporting Family Farming. And all this is to fight against poverty, to seek food security and food sovereignty, and to achieve an active rural world based on respect for the environment and the biodiversity.

WRF, as coordinator of the IYFF's world preparation programme 2012-2013, is guided by a World Consultative Committee-WCC which is open to new members. Through this WCC, the ERF is coordinating civil society preparation as well as representing them into the International Steering Committee.

For further information: <http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/home/en/>

European Union

On November 29 the EC is holding a conference that will allow participants to look at the role of family farming, key challenges and priorities for the future, as well the best means of supporting family farms. The outcome of the conference will contribute to the FAO European Regional conference scheduled in 2014 in Bucharest (Romania) as well as other events related to family farming that will be organized in many EU Member States in the course of 2014.

For further information: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/family-farming-conference-2013_en.htm

ActionAid and IFSN involvement in the IYFF – core objectives

ActionAid Objective 1, KP2, sets the following *“by 2017 we will have supported marginal and smallholder farmers to secure direct support and policies from their government, and effective accountability of corporates, enabling them to gain a good living from climate resilient sustainable agriculture, (CRSA) improving the food security of 25 million people”*. This implies training, awareness-raising and organization-building support at local and national level, as well as influencing global institutions and donors who will be the targets for increased international investment in agriculture through campaigns and advocacy with other like-minded civil society groups.

IFSN is a grassroots partnership towards democratizing global food security dialogues. The network promotes south-south dialogues and knowledge dissemination and aims at influencing policies and programmes for increased food security at national, regional and international level.

The IYFF is a space we can use to advance on our core objectives. In our vision, family farming is not a new and different concept from what we constantly pursue within our Federation. Although ActionAid and IFSN don't use the term “family farming”, the vision behind our common terms such as “household”, climate resilient sustainable agriculture, agroecology, smallholders, are central plank of the objectives and focus of IYFF. Family farming goes hand in hand with CRSA principles, and with the promotion of a sustainable agricultural model which puts smallholders at the centre, and promote the role of women in the family/household level from food production to other chores including unpaid care work. .

ActionAid and IFSN can use the space created by the IYFF to achieve the following:

1. support the concept of climate resilient sustainable agriculture as the most viable solution for the sustainable livelihoods of smallholders, women farmers, their households and communities.
2. promote the role of women in the family/household level from food production to other chores including unpaid care work.
3. Influence Governments, Agencies, private sector on policies and increased investment in support of smallholders and climate resilient sustainable agriculture, as well as in support of their secure access and control over natural resources, particularly for women.
4. Build solidarity with networks having similar politics in order to strengthen the civil society movement around CRSA

Activities proposed for ActionAid and IFSN

First and foremost ActionAid and IFSN should develop an internal brief to elaborate on the concept of family farming as responding to our objectives and vision, starting from this document as a basis. The brief can build on existing material and documented best practices and can benefit from the presence of our networks in all continents, so as to give a comprehensive picture of how family farming model articulates across different regions. The brief will also attain better understanding of family farming needs, potential and constraints in order to articulate them in policy demands for decision makers.

ActionAid and IFSN will strive to participate at the national, regional and global meetings organized by several actors and will bring forward their policy demands. ActionAid has also been offered the opportunity to co-sponsor a big conference on rural women to be organized by FAO – Gender Division, whose details are still unclear and to be finalized. This may entails co-funding that AA and IFSN should further discuss. Other opportunities may arise over the year and will be considered at a proper time.

Ultimately, in order to stay connected with the overall process and increase solidarity with other organizations and social movements involved, I recommend to join the WCC facilitated by the WRF.

In summary, ActionAid and IFSN will engage in the following activities:

1. Join the WCC responsible for coordination of civil society for the IYFF
2. Promote AA CP colleagues and IFSN partners to get engage at national level with CSOs to understand and contribute to the Plans of IYFF.
3. Promote regional IFSN partners to get engage to explore and contribute to the regional CSOs plans on IYFF.
4. Undertake policy positions on several components that positively affect family farming (financing smallholders agriculture- linking it with rai work, position on land grabs – affecting women farmers; recognition of women as farmers and highlighting their contribution – Actionaid project, etc)
5. Participate at national, regional and global meetings
6. Develop a policy briefing outlining ActionAid and IFSN concept of family farming and our vision
7. Explore feasibility of co-organizing the rural women conference together with FAO gender division
8. Use IFSN researches and cases to promote family farming.

Key researches and workshops that can contribute to the IYFF

- Position of land grabs by IFSN Asian Network
- Submission on rai and build on the grassroots participation on this work
- FED UP report
- Researches proposed by other IFSN regional networks
- FAIR Shares: is CAADP working?

Key events

FAO regional meetings

- Europe & Central Asia : 22nd-23rd October in Brussels
- Latin America & the Caribbean : 30th-31st October in Santiago
- South Africa : 6-7th November in Capetown
- Middle East & North Africa : 20-21st November in Tunis
- Asia-Pacific : 21st-22nd November in Bangkok

EC Conference

- "Family farming: A dialogue towards more sustainable and resilient farming in Europe and the world" (Brussels, 29 November 2013)
- FAO European Regional conference scheduled in 2014 in Bucharest (Romania)

2014 key dates for external communication

- 8 March 2014 – International Women's Day
- 15 October - International Day of Rural Women
- 16 October – World Food Day