

# VOICE OF THE RURAL WORLD

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**PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT  
IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS**



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the member movements belonging or not to the Federation

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Dear Readers of VMR

*Greetings from International Secretariat!*

In October 2014, The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) adopted the Principles on Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems. This edition of VMR will explain the background and rationale of the Principles. The necessity to reach a broad consensus on what constitutes responsible investment in agriculture lies in the urge to mitigate the multiple side effects generated by the sudden peak in foreign direct investments in land and agriculture that took place between 2007 and 2009 that caused land grabbing. The causes of land grabbing are multiple. Scarce recognition of land rights, the widespread trend of public underinvestment in the agricultural sector by the less developed and developing countries and Food, financial and energy crises made primary sector into a profitable investment opportunity and massive transnational purchase of fertile land by both public and private actors.

Concerns about land-grabbing had already led to the development of the 2010 Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment that respect rights, livelihoods and resources (PRAI), released by the FAO, the International Fund for Food and Agriculture (IFAD), the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Bank. The status of these principles remained controversial and, although they received support from the G20, they did not obtain intergovernmental endorsement at the 36th CFS session in 2010 and support of civil society organizations. They were perceived as a 'move to legitimize the long-term corporate (foreign and domestic) takeover of rural people's farmlands', by positing large-scale investments as the solution to rural poverty and hunger, and for their lack of any consultative process. Consequently, The CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and



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Food Systems – known as RAI – was prepared by consultative process, focus on all kinds of agricultural models and in particular on smallholder agriculture, recognize and respect human rights – particularly the right to adequate food – and avoid duplicating existing agreements. They are a set of ten principles that apply to all types and sizes of agricultural investment including fisheries, forests and livestock. They address all stakeholders and apply to all stages of the value chain. As a soft law instrument they are globally applicable and include actions to address a range of environmental, social and economic issues.

The 10 CFS Principles aim at expressing the core features that any investment in agriculture should display in order to avoid undermining the food security, livelihood and wellbeing of populations affected by investment projects, therefore contributing to the realization of the right to food and sustainable development. In order to do so, the Principles address three broad areas: human rights and social protection, natural resources, good governance. Although the Principles have not managed to clarify which kind of investment is more likely to lead to positive results, thanks to the participatory mechanism in the CFS certain areas commented on by civil society have been incorporated into the final text, such as labour rights and women’s rights. The first four principles deal with the respect of human rights, social protection and equality.

The second four set of principles deals with the relationship of local communities and indigenous peoples with natural resources. The last two Principles spell out the instruments necessary for good governance when investing in agriculture and food systems. They concern the incorporation of inclusive and transparent governance structures, processes, and grievance mechanisms (Principle 9), and the necessity to assess and address impacts and promote accountability (Principle 10). The ten Principles adopted, however, give equal weight to all investments, with only a few references to smallholder agriculture in vague references to “taking into account the interests of smallholders”. Overall, the Principles constitute a synthetic consolidation of a variety of existing international instruments that could be pertinent to the governance of agricultural investments.

Enjoy your reading

George Dixon Fernandez  
Secretary General



# PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

*In 2012, the Conference of Rio+20 launched an appeal to better the food security and the nutrition, for a sustainable agriculture and formulated Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to be integrated to the development Program of the FAO for 2015 and beyond as well as it launched the Zero Hunger Target. After 2 years of work, on October 16th*



*2014 in Rome, the members of the CFS (Committee on World Food Security) approved a set of principles meant to guide, at a global level, the investments in agriculture and food systems and to make sure that the flow of investments and the cross-border investments lead to the improvement of the food security and the sustainability of agricultural production respecting the rights of the producers and of the agricultural workers.*

*The position of the FIMARC and of farmer's organizations is clear: we want more public investments to support the small farmers and we refuse massive investments that alien the people, throw them from their land and from their productive resources. And thus there is questions regarding these principles: as these are not binding, who will apply them and for the benefit of whom?*

The most important group of investors in agriculture are the small farmers: 70% of the world population is nourished by them. They work to live or to survive, to get food or to provide food to the local populations. But they are not recognized, not supported, not taken into account in the calculation of the GDP. They have none or few financial resources; the bank loans choke them and, in the impossibility to reimburse their debt they are forced to sell their land, to migrate to cities and in this kind of situation, suicides are not rare.

In front of them, the speculators, the big transnational companies, the private companies, the States, the financial sectors who manage enormous speculative funds... all those benefit from local complicities to grow their capital. Their objective



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is clear; to make money; to speculate on food products to develop industrial food production (sugar cane, bananas, cotton, soya...) and to help them an exaggerated mechanization, chemical products, GMO... They grab the land for their own use, for the development of agrofuels...etc

### **The position of the FAO**

The principles for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems are essential to improve food security and nutrition and to favor the progressive implementation of the right to an adequate food in the context of the national food security. The responsible investment contribute to reinforce the sustainability of the living means especially for the small producers and for the members of marginalized and vulnerable groups, to create decent employment for all



workers in the food and agricultural systems, to fight against poverty, to improve the equality between social groups and sex, to eradicate the worst forms of child labor, to favor the social participation and inclusion, to reinforce the economic growth and finally to gain a sustainable development. Agriculture and food systems include the complete range of activities bound the production, the transformation, the marketing, the retail selling, the consumption and the elimination of the products, food or nonfood products issued from the agriculture, the pastoralism, the fisheries, the aqua culture and the forestry, including the necessary inputs and the products generated at all stages.

### **The principles**

The principles are based on documents that constitute the foundation for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems especially the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Labor Organization Declaration (ILO) on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007 , the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests of the CFS, the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition of the CFS, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, proclaimed by the UN Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992; and the Outcome document on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development “The Future We Want” adopted UNCSD in June 2012.

### **10 Principles**

*The first one is « Contribute to food security and nutrition ».* It is directly directed to the States so that they assume their obligations regarding the progressive realization





of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, and all intended users' responsibility to respect human rights. It is a question of contributing to the eradication of poverty while increasing production and productivity of safe, nutritious, diverse, and culturally acceptable food, and reducing food loss and waste; improving income and reducing poverty enhancing the fairness, transparency, efficiency, and functioning of markets, enhancing food utilization through access to clean water, sanitation, energy, technology, childcare, healthcare, and access to education.



***The second principle aims to « Contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development and the eradication of poverty ».*** Here it is question of respecting the fundamental principles and rights at work, especially those of agricultural and food workers, and the elimination of the worst forms of child labor. This will be possible by creating new jobs and fostering decent work through improved working conditions, occupational safety and health, adequate living wages; by improving income, generating shared value through enforceable and fair contracts, fostering entrepreneurship and equal access to market opportunities; by contributing to rural development, improving social protection coverage and the provision of public goods and services such as research, health, education, capacity development, finance, infrastructure, market functioning, and fostering rural institutions, particularly for smallholders, including those that are family farmers - women and men - and their organizations, and promoting their access to resources and input.

***The 3rd principle is «To foster gender equality and women's empowerment».*** It is question of ensuring that all people are treated fairly, recognizing their respective situations, needs, constraints, and the vital role played by women by eliminating all measures and practices that discriminate or violate rights on the basis of gender; by advancing women's equal tenure rights, and their equal access to and control over productive land, natural resources, inputs, productive tools; and promoting access to extension, advisory, and financial services, education, training, markets, and information, adopting innovative and/or proactive approaches, measures, and





processes to enhance women's meaningful participation in partnerships, decision-making, leadership roles, and the equitable sharing of benefits.

**The 4th principle is « to engage and empower youth »** by advancing their access to productive land, natural resources, inputs, productive tools, extension, advisory, and financial services, education, training, markets, information, and inclusion in decision-making and providing appropriate training, education, and mentorship programs for youth to increase their capacity and/or access to decent work and entrepreneurship opportunities, and foster their contribution to local development as well as promoting development and access to innovation and new technologies, combined with traditional knowledge, to attract and enable youth to be drivers of improvement in agriculture and food systems.

**The 5th principle: « respect the tenure of land, fisheries and forests, and access to water ».** Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems respects legitimate tenure rights to land, fisheries, and forests, as well as existing and potential water uses, in line with the existing instruments.

**Principle 6: « Conserve and sustainably manage natural resources, increase resilience, and reduce disaster risks ».** This principle is meant to conserving biodiversity and genetic resources, including local genetic resources; preventing, minimizing, and remedying, as appropriate, negative impacts on air, land, soil, water, forests, and biodiversity; reducing waste and losses in production and post-harvest



operations, and enhancing the efficiency of production, the sustainability of consumption, and the productive use of waste and/or by-products and taking measures, as appropriate, to reduce and/or remove greenhouse gas emissions integrating traditional and scientific knowledge with best

practices and technologies through different approaches, including agro-ecological approaches and sustainable intensification.

**Principle 7: « Respect cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, and support diversity and innovation »** by respecting cultural heritage sites and systems, including traditional knowledge, skills, and practices; and recognizing the role of indigenous peoples and local communities in agriculture and food systems; recognizing the contributions of farmers, especially smallholders in all regions of the





world, particularly those in centers of origin and diversity, in conserving, improving, and making available genetic resources, including seeds and, respecting their rights, to save, use, exchange, and sell these resources, and recognizing the interests of breeders;

***Principle 8 « Promote safe and healthy agriculture and food systems »***, promoting

the safety, quality, and nutritional value of food and agricultural products; supporting animal health and welfare, and plant health, to sustainably increase productivity, product quality, and safety; improving the management of agricultural inputs and outputs, to enhance the efficiency of production and minimize potential threats to the environment and to plant, animal, and human health, including occupational hazards; managing and reducing risks to public health across agriculture and food



systems, including strengthening science based strategies and programs for the control of food safety, with supporting infrastructure and resources; Enhancing awareness, knowledge, and communication leading to strengthened capacity along the entire agriculture and food system, particularly for smallholders enabling consumer choice by promoting the availability of and access to food that is safe, nutritious, diverse and culturally acceptable.

***Principle 9: «Incorporate inclusive and transparent governance structures, processes and grievance mechanisms»***

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems should abide by national legislation and public policies, and incorporate inclusive and transparent governance structures, processes, decision-making, and grievance mechanisms, accessible to all, through: respecting the rule and application of law, free of corruption; sharing of information relevant to the investment, in accordance with applicable law, in an inclusive, equitable, accessible, and transparent manner at all stages of the investment





cycle; engaging with and seeking the support of those who could be directly affected by investment decisions prior to decisions being taken and responding to their contributions, with an effective and meaningful consultation with indigenous peoples, through their representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent under the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples and with due regard for particular positions and understanding of individual States; promoting access to transparent and effective mediation, grievance, and dispute resolution mechanisms, particularly for the most



vulnerable and marginalized; taking steps to respect human rights and legitimate tenure rights, during and after conflict, to achieve free, effective, meaningful, and informed participation in decision-making processes associated with investments in agriculture and food systems with all parties affected by the investments, including farmers, consistent with applicable international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law.

***Principle 10 «Assess and address impacts and promote accountability»***

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems includes mechanisms to assess and address economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts, considering smallholders, gender, and age, among other factors, and respects human rights and promotes accountability of each actor to all relevant stakeholders, especially the most vulnerable, by applying mechanisms that provide for independent and transparent assessments of potential impacts involving all relevant stakeholder groups, in particular the most vulnerable; defining baseline data and indicators for monitoring and to measure impacts; identifying measures to prevent and address potential negative impacts, including the option of not proceeding with the investment; regularly assessing changes and communicating results to stakeholders; implementing appropriate and effective remedial and/or compensatory actions in the case of negative impacts or non-compliance with national law or contractual obligation.

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**References: PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS** [www.fao.org/cfs/rai](http://www.fao.org/cfs/rai) **CFS SECRETARIAT:** [cfs@fao.org](mailto:cfs@fao.org)

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## FIMARC NEWS

### FIMARC INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON FAMILY FARMING, BELGIUM



As family farms demand less land to produce food and employ more people per hectare, small-scale farms are more efficient than the large agricultural operations, controlled by international agribusinesses. Family farmers exhaust fewer natural resources and destroy less of the forest reserves and marginal land that often is not appropriate to food production. Working in small plots, family farmers are less dependent on oil-based agrochemicals. Their efficient use of resources leaves a smaller environmental foot print on the land. Agribusinesses – controlled by a few international corporations – are aggressively extracting resources from the communities to feed other industrial operations and markets overseas. Despite unfavorable conditions for small-scale farmers, food security depends on the work of rural families on their land.

FIMARC organizes formation sessions for the global and continental leaders on the key burning topics related to rural people and agriculture each year.

During the Executive Committee of the FIMARC, which was held in Assesse, Belgium from 15 to 20 April 2015, an important international training session was organized on Family farming – Strategy and Follow up of IYF and concrete actions at national levels for the promotion of Family farming. This was also the theme adopted by the General Assembly of FIMARC in Germany for its campaign 2015-2018. This training session was articulated in four moments:

The presentations of the speakers followed by exchanges with the participants

- Working groups
- Sharing of the results of those groups
- Immersion in family farms



Olivier de Schutter, Former Special Rapporteur on Right to Food at FIMARC Global session, and Bernard Roux, Resource person in Rural Economy from France

### **I. Main ideas derived from the presentations**

- Family agriculture feeds more than 70% of the world's population and give work to 2.5 billion people to whom it provides substantial income and decent jobs;

- It contributes to the good health of populations by the diversity, the variety and the quality of the products it offers.
- It develops and uses environmental friendly agricultural practices which is thus better protected and preserved environment for future generations.

## II. Recommendations to the FIMARC:

1. The FIMARC should grab many international forums of the next few months to advocate in synergy with the other stakeholders of the civil society with a view to the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations of the declaration of the rights of farmers and other people in rural areas.
2. It should be kept to a backward-looking corporatist battle, but rather that worn by both rural and urban populations benefiting all both with the same title of the services rendered by family agriculture;
3. The FIMARC is urged to join the activities carried by international civil society under the name IYFF+10, at the national, regional and international levels to sustain and strengthen the achievements of the international year of the family farming celebrated in 2014.



## III. 2015-2018 Campaign plan

After each working group, participants met in plenary for the consolidation of the work by continent, and it is from this synthesis that the plan of campaign was developed. Below is the brief overview of the global campaign on Family Farming

### A. General objective:

Promote, protect and strengthen family farming;

### B. Specific objectives:

1. Establish a dialogue with members of the FIMARC, partners and other stakeholders to sensitize them for the promotion, the protection and the strengthening of family farming,
2. Educate young people and policy makers on the importance of family farming,
3. Mobilize support at the national, regional and international.

### C. Expected results:

1. The dignity and civil rights of family farmers are recognized and respected;
2. The members of the FIMARC have undertaken actions for the defense, the promotion and the strengthening of the family farming at the national, regional and international level;
3. Success stories in family farming are listed and available to make good example.

### D. Actions

1. Create functional networks at the

national, regional and international level;

2. Produce working documents for the campaigns;
3. Organize campaigns of awareness;
4. Organize campaigns of advocacy towards decision-makers;
5. Strengthen the capacities of the members;
6. Identify and disseminate success stories in family farming;
7. Establishing links between producers and consumers;
8. Organize a leafleting campaign.

Recommendations to take into account in the finalization of the plan of action by continent or country

1. Taking into account the international character of the FIMARC, consider activities that may be carried out at national, regional and international level;
2. Develop collaboration with other stakeholders, in never losing sight that there are initiatives trying to do the same thing that we do all over the world;
3. Replicate the training received wherever possible;
4. Always make the link in each formation between human rights and the topic of the countries
5. The assessment of the various action plans will be realized next year.

#### **IV. Follow up of the campaign on family farming:**

For the follow-up of the campaign of FIMARC on family farming, a team was set up by the Executive Committee, specifically responsible for the mobilization of members. This team includes the following persons:

Modesta Arevalos from Paraguay

Rony Joseph from India

Jean Claude Germon from France

Meyanga Ayong Médard from Cameroon

George Dixon Fernandez-Secretary General, FIMARC

#### **V. Visit of two family farms in the region of Assesse**

Two field visits were organised in connection with the theme of the session to get concrete experience and information from the local family farms. Participants had the opportunity to visit two family farms in the region of Assesse on April 15, 2015, which allowed the participants to become familiar with the realities of the Belgian family farmers of Wallonia

##### *Visit of the 1st site:*

Type of activity: biological poultry farming of hens with a capacity of 30.000 hens who have the freedom to leave at certain



hours of the day in a grassy course specially designed for this purpose.

The farm is run by a couple, the husband is permanent while his wife is a nurse who comes to the farm the afternoons after returning from work; there is also a seasonal worker who comes when extra support is needed and is also tipped to take over the farm if the couple withdraw.

Funding: initial funding was gathered by the own efforts of the couple who contracted a significant credit for the construction of buildings and the purchase of equipment (batteries for breeding, treadmill for the egg collection, automatic supply of food and water, calibration and codification for tracing of eggs, etc...).



Organization of marketing: constitution of the college of Walloon producers carrying out collective actions of direct sales to consumers.

Premium for organic farming: an incentive is paid to this operation to reward the efforts and sacrifices made to meet the requirements of this type of farming.

2nd site:

Activity: manufacture of homemade ice cream;



Site name: farm Leboutte

Farm was recovered from their parents and held by two sisters aged respectively 24 and 26;

Other coupled activity: rearing cows

Funding: the two girls followed a training program of insertion of young people by the European Union, which allowed them to have access to the financing they needed for their installation.

They have developed a direct marketing service to consumers and gives them full satisfaction.

In the fast changing world with a lot of emerging challenges, the formation of our leaders to carry out their actions related to various themes, lobby actions and advocacy towards the decision making authorities at different levels and to the international and intergovernmental organizations such as FAO, UNHCR, ECOSOC, UNESCO, CFS is quite important. These types of formation really help them to increase their knowledge, reflection and analysis and more over make them capable to provide awareness to general public in their own areas of work.





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## **INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON AGRO ECOLOGY, NYELENI CENTER MALI**

The International Forum on Agro ecology was organized by the peasant movements at the Nyeleni Center in Mali, from 24 to 27 February 2015 .FIMARC has been part of this forum that gave momentum for a global debate on Agro ecology as solution to climate crisis. Medard Meyanga, the FIMARC African Coordinator represented our movement in this global conference. Small scale food producers developed their first ever common vision on agro ecology for Food Sovereignty in this global forum. The common vision was developed at the historic Forum through dialogue among food producers such as peasants, artisanal fisherfolk, the landless, rural workers, indigenous peoples, hunters and gatherers, pastoralists and nomadic peoples, urban communities and consumers. They warn against the corporate co-optation of agro ecology through initiatives such as Climate Smart Agriculture. These attempt to redefine agro ecology as a narrow set of technologies without challenging the industrial food system, or its existing structures of power.

Representing the producers of 70% of the world's food, they call for an immediate transformation of food system towards agroecology. The forum affirmed that "Agro ecology practised by small scale producers generates local knowledge, promotes social justice, nurtures identity and culture and strengthens the economic viability of rural areas," and . "Agro ecology is political; it requires us to challenge and transform structures of power in society. We need to put the control of seeds, biodiversity, land and territories, waters, knowledge, culture

and the commons in the hands of the peoples who feed the world."

Small scale food producers of the forum demand that policy makers respect and reinforce their agro ecological processes rather than support forces that destroy them. Mali Forum on Agro ecology call on all civil society organisations to strengthen the movement for agro ecology and endorse the Declaration of the International Forum for Agro ecology and the organisations present in the forum decided to promote the common vision on Agro ecology, at the CFS and FAO regional seminars on agro ecology in November 2015

The Forum was indeed a unique opportunity for NGOs and social movements to exchange on agro ecological approaches, strength synergies, evaluate policies for sustaining agro ecology, family farming and food sovereignty around the globe. The CSO were able to come up with common understanding about agro ecology, the strategies and policies needed to support and strengthen it and also a common final declaration was another major outcome of this conference

## **MORE AND BETTER GENERAL MEETING-MALI**

Medard Meyanga from Cameroun, Africa participated in the More and Better General Meeting in February 2015, Nyéléni Center, Mali prior to the "The International Forum for Agro ecology! .FIMARC is a member of the More and better Network and we strive to have better policies and support for the small holder agriculture throughout the world through the campaign and activities of this network



*FIMARC International Seminar on Family Farming, Belgium*

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