The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

Position by the Farming First Coalition

Gains in food security, eradicating poverty and reducing child mortality cannot be sustained without a thriving agricultural sector that protects the planet and offers growth to farmers and their communities.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Agriculture and food and nutrition security are central to realizing the Post-2015 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 to halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger and poverty between 1990 to 2015 was not met. Many felt this was due to a lack of specific focus on agriculture and rural development, as central to the goal, particularly in the early years of implementation.

Since the 2007/08 food crisis and hunger riots, the international policy agenda has shifted, clearly identifying that hunger and malnutrition are a poverty trap and potential source of political instability — which will undermine progress on sustainable development if not addressed. We also know now that children who pass through the first 1000 days of life food secure and well-nourished have a far greater ability to grow, learn and rise out of poverty. Rio+20 further underscored the strategic role of agriculture in delivering long-term solutions to sustainable development —both in developed and developing countries.

The World Bank estimates that GDP growth from agriculture generates over double the gains in poverty reduction compared to other sectors. Currently 65% of the population in developing countries engage in agriculture. Investment has the potential to change the lives of hundreds of millions whilst also addressing other inequalities. For instance, we know rural women lag behind urban women and all men in achieving the MDGs. The FAO estimates that investments in gender-sensitive rural development and farming could boost food and nutrition security globally by up to 4%[1].

In 2010, for the first time more of the world lived in urban and peri-urban areas. Yet, even as the world urbanizes, a dynamic agriculture sector will remain essential. Urbanites depend on national production for most of their consumption, as well as opportunities in food processing and urban agriculture.

Box 1
Investments in agriculture have no parallels in other sectors in terms of the potential to promote human development and sustainable economic growth.

2. Farmers in the developing world can become as productive as those in the developed world—while supporting continuous gains in sustainability for all

While globally agricultural productivity continues to rise, there is still a significant gap in reaching optimum potential yields in many developing countries and in parts of Africa yields have even declined. Rio+20, in framing the challenges for agriculture emphasized the need to reinvigorate a diversity of farming systems, through support to farmers and increased investments in research, technology and market infrastructure, extension and knowledge sharing. This will catalyse innovation and empower farmers.

We need to work with farmers of all sizes around the world to realize sustainable intensification: producing more food per unit of land, while safeguarding their soils, using less water and other natural

[1] "The Female Face of Farming" (Farming First, 2012). http://www.farmingfirst.org/women/

resources and adopting integrated pest management. Farmers also need good agricultural practices, quality inputs, weather insurance and other support to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Given the diversity of landscapes and agro-ecological zones, sustainable intensification will require a mosaic of farming practices and solutions.

Evidence from the US indicates that continuous gains in productivity can be coupled with significant improvements in resource use efficiency. The 2012 report from Field to Market found that in the past 20 years, yields per acre in key crops such as wheat, maize and rice continued to grow while use of irrigated water, soil, energy and carbon emissions all declined. Habitat loss also decreased.[2]

Box 2
Innovation in agriculture is often a process, with continuous improvements in productivity coupled with improved resource use.

3. Re-Commit to Empower Farmers via Support to Knowledge Sharing and Accessible, Quality Extension in Farm Management and Marketing

Agriculture is a knowledge-intensive sector. Farmers need access to training and extension, while sharing traditional knowledge to encourage abundant production, nutritious crops and mixed diets. Extension empowers farmers to maximize the use of technology including correct use of improved seeds, fertilizers, and water management, while disseminating information on conservation practices and building capacity in farm management and marketing. Efforts should seek to engage women farmers and to increase the numbers of female extensionists, given the resulting benefits in household welfare and nutrition.

Declining investments in extension and disseminating agriculture innovation are starting to reverse, particularly in developing countries. More support is needed by international efforts and national governments. The World Bank's investments in agriculture still totaled less than 10% of the overall investment of the Bank in the same year.

Some of the most promising innovations scale the reach and effectiveness of extension, focusing on farmer to farmer support at the national level, while engaging farmers in research and development. The Empowering Smallholder Farmers in Markets (ESFIM) program, operating in 11 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, promotes this collaborative approach. Farmer organizations are partnered with local research to focus research and extension requests, while gradually building their ability to collect, organize and exchange information for on-farm trails and farm management.

Box 3
Women comprise 43% of the rural workforce, but only 5% have access to extension services.

4. Supportive Frameworks for Investment in Infrastructure and Inclusive Markets

Making agriculture a dynamic sector requires investments in policies and infrastructure that support all actors along the value chain, while creating opportunities for collaboration and holistic solutions. Farmers also need to be able to access markets at the local, regional and global level to sustain their livelihood. In some countries, this requires improving access to transport, storage and market facilities. In Tanzania, via the South Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) project, both public and private organizations are seeking to work together to channel US$2.4 billion of investment into the country. This outlay will triple the agricultural output in the region, while building up the port of Dar es Salaam to maximize the trade potential for Tanzania and its landlocked neighbouring countries. In the first stage of the project 20,000 smallholders are being supported to become commercial farmers, generating an estimated $1.4 billion annually in revenues for the country.

[2] *Environmental and Socioeconomic Indicators for Measuring Outcomes of On-Farm Agricultural Production in the United States.* Field to Market: The Keystone Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture. July 2012. Available online at http://www.fieldtomarket.org/report/

5. Work with Farmers and Other Actors Across the Value Chain to Address not Just Food Waste, but also Food Loss

Increasing focus on food waste, particularly in developed countries where post-consumer losses can total up to 30% of 40%, offers great promise to reduce natural resource use. However, less attention has been paid to food loss across the supply chain.

In 2010, FAO estimated that poorly developed systems for handling, storage, packaging, transportation and marketing of agricultural products in developing countries results in post-harvest losses ranging from 15% to a staggering 50%. Similarly, lack of knowledge of integrated pest management and access to crop protection products results in losses from pests, diseases and weeds ranging from 10% to 90% of smallholder crops in Africa[3] to 23% of the wheat yield in Kazakhstan.[4]

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should carry forward the commitments made under the Millennium Development Goals, while integrating into the global post-2015 development agenda for sustainable development.

Farming First endorses the Zero Hunger Challenge as a good starting point for proposed SDGs on Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture. It emphasizes addressing the needs of hungry people around the world—offering scope for more sustainable food systems that address both obesity and malnutrition, while promoting sustainable agriculture.

SDG: Eradicating hunger and malnutrition

Why?	"We can end hunger, extreme poverty and the worst impacts of malnutrition and food security within a generation" (Madrid Consultation FAO-WFP, 4 April 2013)
Possible targets	**1-INVESTMENT AND TRADE** • Scope investments to promote sustainable resource use via internal investment policies and public-private collaboration • Promote diversity in economic opportunity by expanding market access and supporting smallholder farmers, particularly women • Invest in agricultural research and development partnerships to promote innovation and to build local capacity, particularly among developing country researchers **2-INTEGRATION OF FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY OBJECTIVES** • Foster nutrition security to tackle malnutrition • Promote the role of agriculture in delivering nutrition security solutions • Shift diets and produce healthier food **3-SUPPORT FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS** • Increase access for smallholder farmers, especially rural women, to agricultural finance, training, capacity building, knowledge transfer and innovative practices • Foster approaches, such as extension programs, to address social issues and promote education and knowledge transfer • Build resilience to climate change, political and economic shocks **4-REDUCTION OF POST-HARVEST LOSSES AND FOOD WASTE** • Optimize production through better farm management, food storage and processing through appropriate technology and knowledge-sharing • Reduce the amount of edible food waste

[3] Muller, C., *et al*. 2011. Climate change risks for African agriculture. *PNAS*. 108(11):4313-4315.

[4] Sigarev, M.I.. 1997. Grain marketing in Kazakstan. *Spring Wheat in Kazakstan: Current Status and Future Directions*. Proceedings of the Kazakstan-CIMMYT Conference. Shortandy, Akmola, Kazakstan. September 22-24, 1997.

Measuring progress	Draw upon existing commitments and international texts, such as: The 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security (including the commitment to the allocation of at least 10 percent of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development policy implementation within five years) The CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program) objective of 6 percent average annual growth in agricultural production by 2015 The G8 L'Aquila commitment to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP): US$22 billion. The five objectives of the Zero Hunger Challenge: • 100% access to adequate food year-round • Zero stunted children less than two years old • Promoting sustainable food systems • 100% increase in smallholder productivity and income • Zero loss or waste of food Other indicators include: • Increased global food production • Improved provision of daily nutritional requirements for all (linkages to maternal and child health) • Changes in incomes, employment and investments in agriculture • Existence of legislation and policies that support free global, regional and local trade and change in current legislation to promote women's rights and access to resources, including credit, land tenure and inputs • Promoting food safety and reducing food waste through access to better storage, processing and handling practices and technologies

SDG: Adoption of sustainable agricultural practices

Why?	This goal should recognize and support a wide diversity of agricultural systems, farming practices, technologies and farmers, as well as balanced diets. It should also recognize that sustainable agriculture differs by landscapes. Thus, countries and farmers need flexibility and a variety of solutions.
Possible targets	**1-FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE INTENSIFICATION** • Promote the adoption of good agricultural practices, such as the 4R nutrient stewardship system for crop nutrients and Integrated Pest Management • Prevent zero net land degradation in wild areas & intensify production on existing arable land • Ensure that food production can meet growing demand in line with the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity, so biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, and ecosystem services are maintained **2-RESTORING SOILS AND DEGRADED LAND** • Restore land and soil quality and manage land and soil resources sustainably. **3-EXPANDING RESOURCE EFFICIENCY TECHNIQUES** • Invest in nutrient use efficiency research • Promote connections between water, energy land and ecosystems 4**-REDUCING THE YIELD GAP FOR SMALLHOLDERS** • Invest in extension and knowledge sharing that scales farmer adoption of good farming practices, while planning for climate change • Develop a network of agri-input dealers as farmers' main point of contact for inputs and advice, in order to promote extension services and knowledge transfer • Governments need to invest in agricultural education programs to train agronomists, extension workers and agro-input dealers
Measuring progress	The 2006 Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for the African Green Revolution: • An increase in the level of use of fertilizer from the current average of 8 kg per hectare to an average of at least 50 kg per hectare by 2015 Other indicators include: • Closing the yield gap in food-insecure countries, particularly for smallholder farmers (yield/arable land data) • Access to inputs and improvements in input use efficiency, particularly efficient use of nutrients • Adoption of farming practices and technologies that promote environmentally

	sustainable intensification and regeneration, including integrated pest management (IPM), measured as continuous improvements in the use of water, energy, land on farms of all sizes, with reference in particular to the 4R nutrient stewardship framework • Changes in land use, including reductions in the rate of deforestation • Scaling access to public and private extension, knowledge, and climate-smart farming practices and technologies that will enable farmers to be resilient to climate change and related potential yield losses • Arriving at a zero net rate of land and soil degradation within an internationally agreed timeframe

About Farming First

Farming First is a coalition of the world's farmers, scientists, agriculture NGOs and business working together on global policy issues in sustainable agriculture, including climate change, gender and food security. Farming First advocated for a broad-based, knowledge-centred approach to increase agricultural output in a sustainable and socially responsible manner.

For more information on Farming First please visit our website at www.farmingfirst.org