



WORLD RURAL FORUM

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Summary record of the meeting of African, European and South American National Committees on Family Farming (NCFFs)

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Introduction

At the 5th International Conference organised by the World Rural Forum (Derio, 21 to 23 September 2015), representatives of the National Committees on Family Farming (NCFs) met to share their experiences on the following topics: defining the objectives of the NCF, policy dialogue and the rules of procedure of the Committees.

Committee representatives were divided into groups on the basis of their working language (English, French and Spanish).

A number of recurring difficulties were discussed in the various groups: lack of engagement by international bodies in support of the NCF, governments' failure to recognise the NCF, lack of economic resources.

This document is an attempt to summarize the responses on each of the items discussed.

1) Reasons why the NCFs consider it necessary to set practical, achievable objectives:

- In order to be realistic and credible
- In order to avoid wasting finance and time
- In order to facilitate subsequent mobilisation.

To achieve that result, it is important to build a common understanding, a basis for agreement between the organisations represented on the NCF, which will also help them establish new relationships and synergies between them.

2) The main steps considered necessary by the NCF to foster good policy dialogue are as follows:

Internal steps

- Ensure a good understanding and good dialogue between the various organisations represented, creating alliances and synergies and preventing any rivalry between them
- Agree on a common discourse, a common position and practical prioritised NCF proposals, based both on good technical capacity and on the identification of common denominators between the NCF's member organisations
- Achieve representativity within the NCF (both quantitative and qualitative)



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- Include on the NCFE both neutral players (international organisations) and, wherever possible, political players in order to raise awareness (regarding the usefulness of the NCFE, national family farming, the worldwide network of NCFEs, etc.)
- Have reliable data to present to decision-makers in order to convince them of the potential of family farms to ensure food security and act as a source of employment, etc., and in order to overcome their prejudices
- Remain politically neutral at all times
- Take advantage /make use of every member organisation's forums for dialogue.

External steps

- Identify the key players in Ministries who have decision-making powers, establish a dialogue with them and build strategic alliances. If that is not possible, make sure that information reaches those people, for instance by informing them personally of the outcome of meetings held with their representatives
- Try to find an institutional space for the NCFE, placing it at interministerial level so that it can be directly involved in decision-making, can be kept informed of laws in preparation and will be able to influence them in good time
- Set up a favourable atmosphere of political resolve and build a relationship with local political players
- Be legally recognised and enjoy the support of political leaders
- Take full advantage of election campaigns to approach political decision-makers involved in the electoral process and to engage in exchanges on Family Farming
- Use communication tools to make civil society at large aware of the NCFE
- Persuade ministries which refuse to change existing policies to carry out an evaluation of the place of Family Farming in those policies
- Engage in advocacy at levels higher than the national level (UA, PAFO, etc.) since presidents and ministers are heavily influenced by the G20 agribusiness vision.



3) The main lessons learnt by the NCFs with regard to their own operating procedures are as follows:

- It is important that the NCFF be pluralist (have a variety of sectors represented on it) and ensure that young people and women take part.
- There must be a well-defined organisational structure, i.e. a horizontal structure in which everyone takes part in decision-making but in which there is enough leadership to prevent stalemate.
- The NCFF needs to have a bureau to carry out various functions (chair, secretary, treasurer, etc.). The secretariat needs to have the basic logistical resources (printer, communication tools, etc.) and needs to be recognised in the country.
- Bureau functions must be held on a rotating basis by the various types of organisations (for example a representative of rural organisations, NGOs, research centres, etc.).
- The NCFF must also develop an organisational structure: communications, finance, research, etc.
- There must be balanced participation between the members of the NCFF: that means involving more organisations in the various processes, giving them tasks and responsibilities.
- It is important to establish rules of procedure.
- There must be clear objectives, a work schedule and a common budget.
- Measures must not be too general: precise topics must be targeted and may well be allocated according to the specific capacities of the members in order to get around problems caused by the time and finances each one has available.
- The IYFF+10 vision must be incorporated into the NCFF objectives.
- As far as possible, NCFF activities must be included in members' strategic plans so that resources can be allocated to them.
- It is important to have a constant dialogue between NCFF members; that requires communication channels and forums to make interaction fluid and transparent within the NCFF and prevent misunderstandings.
- Regional committees should be set up to allow decentralised discussions at local level.
- A system of monitoring and constant evaluation of the NCFF must be set up.



4) Various measures to promote financing of the NCFF

Measures to be improved	New measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Making use of support in kind (human resources, installations, etc.)▪ Obtaining a specific budget from the government, depending on the context▪ Strategic collaboration with the FAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Exploring new forms / sources of finance (microcredit)▪ Having organisations on the NCFF contribute their own resources▪ Financing by international bodies / cooperation agencies▪ Having NCFFs recognised as recipients of public funds
Measures to be discontinued	Measures to be continued
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Allowing donors to the NCFF to set conditions for how their contribution should be spent (tied aid, conditional aid)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Taking advantage of member organisations' forums / events (sharing resources already defined)▪ Financing by international bodies / cooperation agencies.