

Agriculture – Civil20

Civil Society Recommendations to the G20

Sustainable food and nutrition security for all - Focus on small scale farmers and reorientation of agriculture

The G20 in Hangzhou, 2016, committed to “*promote sustainable agriculture and rural development, improve global food security and nutrition for all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable groups, tackle the issue of food price volatility, and reduce food loss and waste throughout food value chains*”. They also published the Food Security and Nutrition Framework which outlines objectives of the G20 on the same. As a group of civil society organisations working towards improving agriculture, realizing the right to food and nutrition security, and achieving the SDGs we assert that achieving these ambitious commitments requires a farmer centred approach, attention to maintaining ecological integrity of food production systems, and robust regulation of agri-business.

Agriculture must focus on farmers, not on industrialized farming systems. Agriculture must strengthen local economy and local ownership. Although small-scale farmers feed the vast majority of the world’s population, in many places they are highly vulnerable to extreme poverty, chronic hunger and malnutrition. Lacking land tenure security their primary asset and security, their land, is increasingly vulnerable to land grabbing. Globalized markets and price competition by global agribusiness, food speculation and a vicious circle of debt are important threats to rural livelihoods which results in people leaving their rural homes in search of better opportunities in the cities. Global fish stocks are under pressure from expanding fisheries, the loss and pollution of marine habitats.

- **Agriculture, family farming and fishing must become an attractive economic prospect again.** This requires for instance a re-examination of trade and investment agreements aiming at de-globalizing agricultural markets for most products. Fair trade must be promoted as best practice for providing greater equity in international trade and empowering small scale farmers and marginalised workers.
- **The role of agriculture must go beyond food production towards improving the availability, affordability and consumption of diverse, safe, and nutritious foods for healthy diets for all.** Resource allocation, research and development by and with farmers need to be increased for nutrition sensitive agriculture. Additionally, vulnerable groups such as women and small-scale farmers should be provided greater access to resources, subsidies, and technical assistance to boost nutrition through adequate and diverse food production alongside strengthening their resilience.
- **We call on the G20 to respect, support and build on existing bodies and decisions,** especially the Committee on World Food Security and its decisions (e.g. the Voluntary Guidelines on the right to food, land tenure, forest and fishery, principles for responsible agricultural investment etc.).
- **The G20 should establish monitoring and assessing systems to track the social and environmental impacts of large-scale agricultural investment** (especially in low income countries) supported by G20, and enact binding international criteria which are consistent with VGGT, RAI, PRAI.

Agriculture must work towards conserving the planet’s ecosystems. Unsustainable farming systems of any size contribute significantly to biodiversity loss, the destruction of ecosystems, pollution and the

overuse of water. Large scale food crop monocultures use up to ten times more water than biodiverse agricultural systems must be avoided.

- **We ask the G20 to take responsibility for the sustainable use of water in agriculture including preserving healthy water ecosystems and guaranteeing the human right to water.** The overuse of water by large-scale agriculture can negatively affect the water requirements of small-scale food producers in subsistence agriculture or for local markets. We call on the G20 to work towards recognizing customary forms of water management.
- **Farmers groups around the world are fighting for food sovereignty, to keep control over land and seeds and to use low-cost, environmentally friendly techniques to feed local communities.** This is crucial to make the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 succeed.
- **There is a growing demand amongst consumers for local, organic, and fair food produced without exploiting animals, environment, and workers.** Huge agricultural subsidies benefit large agribusiness corporations, mass animal factories, and exporters to open up overseas markets and destroy agricultural livelihoods. We call on the G20 to phase-out harmful agricultural subsidies and create a level playing field for sustainable agricultural practices.
- **Harmful subsidies to the fishing sector and the widespread practice of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing are drivers of overfishing.** We call on the G20 to remove these subsidies and combat IUU fishing by increasing supply chain traceability, accountability, and enforcement.
- We request the G20 to support and invest in participatory land use planning at landscape scale as a necessary pre-condition for sustainable agricultural production.

We ask the G20 to take measurable steps to prevent the concentration of power in a handful of global agribusiness corporations which has become a threat to farmers and breeders, consumers and the environment alike. There is the risk that certain new technologies will further consolidate industrial agriculture dominance and delay the inevitable shift to a fundamentally different model of agriculture whether the starting point is industrial agriculture or small-scale farming.

- **We call upon the G20 to reinstate a functioning market in seeds** by taking adequate antitrust measures against the seed oligopoly and abolishing any law or trade agreement criminalizing the free exchange of seeds by farmers.
- **We call on the G20 to reframe their focus on digitalisation and agriculture** and shift focus on small-scale farmers and a transition to diversified agro-ecological systems.

Civil20 is the G20 engagement group of the international civil society. It represents organisations and individuals from all continents, giving civil society a loud voice in the G20. Find out more at www.civil-20.org.