

# Policy In Focus



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

*A publication of  
The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth  
United Nations Development Programme*

Volume 12, Issue No. 4 ■ 2015

## Public policies for the strengthening of family farming in the Global South



The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) is a partnership between the United Nations and the Government of Brazil to promote South-South learning on social policies. The Centre specialises in research-based policy recommendations to foster the reduction of poverty and inequality as well as promote inclusive growth. The IPC-IG is linked to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Brazil, the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management of Brazil (MPOG) and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) of the Government of Brazil.

**Director:** Niky Fabiancic

**IPC-IG/UNDP Research Coordinators:**

Diana Sawyer, Fábio Veras Soares and Rafael Guerreiro Osório (Ipea)

## Policy in Focus

*Policy in Focus* is a regular publication of the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG). This issue was developed in partnership with the Ministry of Agrarian Development of Brazil (MDA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) exploring unique perspectives of and experiences with family farming.

**Editor-in-Chief:** Michael MacLennan,  
UNDP/International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth

**Specialist Guest Editors:** Thomas Cooper Patriota, Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex, Scholarship from CAPES – Brazil and Francesco Maria Pierri, FAO

**Copy Editor:** Jon Stacey, The Write Effect Ltd.

**Publications Manager:** Roberto Astorino

**Art and Desktop Publishing:** Rosa Maria Banuth and Flávia Amaral

**Editorial Assistant:** Manoel Salles

Cover art: Mosaic produced by the IPC-IG Publications Team, composed of photographs by Eduardo Aigner, Ministry of Agrarian Development of Brazil (MDA); Ana Nascimento, Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS) and Sergio Amaral, MDS.

Some of the photographs used in this publication are licensed under The Creative Commons license; full attribution and links to the individual licenses are provided for each.

**Editor's note:** On behalf of the UNDP IPC-IG, I am grateful to the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) of the Government of Brazil and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for their collaboration in the development of this special edition. In particular, we would like to extend a special thanks to the specialist guest editors Thomas Cooper Patriota and Francesco Maria Pierri for their dedication to the publication of this issue. Finally, we also would like to express our sincere appreciation to all of the authors for their generous and insightful contributions, without which this issue simply would not have been possible.

This special edition is dedicated to the memory of Professor Sam Moyo who passed away in November of 2015. Sam was a leading scholar on agrarian issues in Africa and the Global South. Generations learnt from his work and will continue to do so as the themes he researched continue to occupy central space in the nations of the Global South. He will be remembered for combining academic rigour with a commitment to social justice and tenacious activism.

Our thoughts go out to his partner, Beatrice Mtetwa, and all of his family.

### Editorial Office

#### International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth

United Nations Development Programme  
SBS, Quadra 1, Bloco J, Ed. BNDES, 13º andar  
70076-900 Brasília, DF - Brazil  
Telephone: +55 61 2105 5000

[publications@ipc-undp.org](mailto:publications@ipc-undp.org) ■ [www.ipc-undp.org](http://www.ipc-undp.org)

© 2015 International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth  
United Nations Development Programme

ISSN: 2318-8995

The views expressed in IPC-IG publications are the authors' and not necessarily those of the United Nations Development Programme or the Government of Brazil.

**Rights and Permissions** – All rights reserved. The text and data in this publication may be reproduced as long as written permission is obtained from the IPC-IG and the source is cited. Reproductions for commercial purposes are forbidden.

# Summary

- 04 **The growing recognition of family farming as part of the solution for sustainable development:**  
evidence from recent policy shifts
- 08 **Food sovereignty as a key public policy framework for strengthening family farming in the Global South**
- 11 **Family farming in the new Latin American regional integration and development agenda**
- 13 **The democratisation of access to land for Brazilian family farmers in recent years**
- 16 **Rural development committees, institutional innovation for political dialogue and the inclusion of family farming in Uruguay**
- 18 **Challenges in sustaining family fishing in South Asia**
- 21 **Smallholders and family farming in the Himalayan region of India:**  
policy considerations
- 24 **How can short food supply chains be a lever for the development of a local economy based on peasant family farms?**

T

his special edition of *Policy in Focus* aims to follow up on discussions and debates instigated by the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF 2014) by drawing attention to specific cases as well as more general policy recommendations related to family farming in countries of the Global South. It is the product of a collaboration between the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP IPC-IG), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) of Brazil.

The IYFF was the first United Nations (UN) international year resulting from a civil society-led campaign, launched in 2008 by the World Rural Forum (WRF) at the height of the international food price crisis, when popular mobilisation in dozens of developing countries had just brought food security back to the forefront of the international policy agenda. With the support of national governments and international organisations, the IYFF campaign gained traction, mobilising more than 360 civil society organisations from 60 countries across five continents and eventually obtaining unanimous approval from Member States at the UN General Assembly in December 2011 in favour of the celebration of a commemorative year in 2014.

The campaign's simultaneous organisation at national, regional and international levels was reflected by the creation of more than 50 IYFF national committees—essentially platforms congregating civil society organisations as well as in many cases, governmental institutions and international organisations—to deliberate on policy priorities for family farming within a given country. In many cases, in particular where such platforms did not formerly exist, national committees have given way to new bills, policies, budgetary allocations and, more generally, greater visibility for family farming in their national contexts.

The many demands voiced by civil society organisations throughout the IYFF campaign can be synthesised in the three 'lines of action' as identified by FAO at its 38th Conference in June 2013. These relate to: i) the promotion of dialogue between stakeholders on public policies; ii) the creation and sharing of lessons learned on such policies; and iii) the better communication and dissemination of the many contributions of family farming to society at large.

Despite a growing global consensus on the vital role of family farming, as evidenced by the IYFF, there is still relatively little knowledge among policymakers and scholars regarding specific policies that are currently being implemented in developing countries. In the same way that the IPC-IG has greatly contributed to expand global knowledge on social policies throughout the developing world in the past decade, its present partnership with FAO and the Brazilian Government attest to the Centre's mission and growing body of work aiming to contribute towards bridging the knowledge gap on policies directed at supporting family farming across different contexts in developing countries.

Family farming has begun to occupy a larger space within policymaking circles, from the launch of the IYFF campaign in 2008 to the post-IYFF 2014 celebrations within the framework of FAO's 'Legacy of IYFF 2014 and the Way Forward', as well as with the new Sustainable development Goals (SDGs), which have established support to small-scale food producers as a crucial target for achieving sustainable increases in productivity and food security.

We hope that this special issue, which shares unique experiences and perspectives of family farming via articles from researchers, civil servants and civil society representatives of the Global South, will contribute to this growing global conversation on family farming.

*by Cristina Timponi Cambiaghi,  
Thomas Cooper Patriota,  
Francesco Maria Pierri and  
Michael MacLennan*

# The growing recognition of family farming as part of the solution of sustainable development: evidence from recent policy shifts

by Thomas Cooper Patriota,<sup>1</sup> Francesco Maria Pierri,<sup>2</sup> Michael MacLennan<sup>3</sup> and Manoel Salles<sup>3</sup>

## From the global food price crisis to the Post-2015 Development Agenda

This special edition of *Policy in Focus* follows the worldwide celebrations of the United Nations (UN) International Year of Family Farming (IYFF 2014), and, more recently, the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. The relative proximity of these two events calls for a reflection on their greater significance for policymaking related to agriculture and rural development in developing countries today.

The IYFF represented a historical recognition of the actual and potential contribution of close to 40 per cent of the world's—and a majority of the developing world's—population, to poverty eradication, food and nutrition security, as well as to the sustainable management of natural resources. These relate directly to the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—enshrined in the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development (UNCSD)—Rio+20 outcome document, 'The Future We Want', which form the conceptual pillars of the recently adopted SDGs.

While these dimensions are quite representative of the areas in which family farming can make a fundamental contribution to sustainable development worldwide, they also remind us of some of its most pressing challenges. Although agriculture is the largest source of employment in the world, close to three quarters of the 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty reside in rural areas, and most of them depend on agriculture for their livelihoods (HLPE 2013). Likewise, whereas most of the world's food is produced by family farmers, most of the world's food-insecure population also live in rural areas. Furthermore, even though family farmers have been the main contributors to the sustainable

management of natural resources for countless generations, they are also among the most vulnerable to extreme weather events, biodiversity loss and land degradation.

This apparent paradox can be partly explained by decades of insufficient investment in family farming due to a number of reasons, ranging from the difficulty of creating tailor-made policies for sectors with frequently little or no voice in policymaking circles, to conceptual and ideological policy biases and general underestimation of the capacities of small-scale agriculture to deliver economic growth in addition to a range of social and environmental positive externalities. Moreover, austerity measures promoted in the name of 'structural adjustment'—particularly throughout the 1980s and 1990s—considerably weakened or even dismantled the hitherto still nascent public support systems directed at small family farms in several developing countries. Nevertheless, experiences in many countries have demonstrated that family farming can be a driving force, instead of a burden, towards the realisation of the aforementioned goals, given the proper means. To better understand these means is perhaps the main question that the IYFF has helped to raise. In other words, how may public policies strengthen family farmers so as to enable them to increasingly become a part of the solution for the achievement of sustainable development?

If we consider the sets of development goals agreed to in multilateral forums as representative indicators of general shifts in international policy discourse and practice, the current transition from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to SDGs provides encouraging signs. Although the focus provided by MDG 1 on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger has significantly contributed to

better coordination and prioritisation of governments' and international development agencies' efforts, the goal's specific targets and indicators did not go so far as to incorporate the predominantly rural dimension of extreme poverty and hunger across the developing world,<sup>4</sup> perhaps influenced by a still pervasive conception of development according to which the bulk of rural populations are seen as a 'reserve army' of cheap labour destined to be absorbed by urban industry and service sectors.

The SDGs, on the other hand, were born out of a much more inclusive and democratic elaboration process. They were also formulated during a period marked by growing recognition of the importance of family farming for food security in the wake of the 2007–2008 food price crisis, up until the commemoration of the IYFF in 2014. As such, the SDGs have afforded a much stronger role to family farming than the MDGs, as reflected by a substantial portion of the approved goals and targets, notably the second goal—to "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"—and, more specifically, target 2.3, which explicitly calls for the doubling of "agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment" by 2030. (UN 2015).

Meanwhile, as SDG indicators are still being elaborated, a question arises regarding the degree of future comparability between different countries' progress and outcomes in reaching their goals, which in turn relates to the necessity of adopting a minimum set of common criteria to define family farming while still encompassing its diversity.<sup>5</sup>

## Conceptualising and measuring family farming on a global scale

Family farming is a contested socio-economic category of analysis. It is at times defined as a list of its diverse components, including pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, rural women and youth, among other subcategories. It has been claimed by peasant movements, not only as part of an overarching strategy to strengthen the protection of their autonomy and livelihoods from globalised food systems, but also for its crucial role in building consensus towards a normative framework to promote public policies. Moreover, scholars have used it for technical or academic purposes, and, in some countries, it is even an official legally defined term included in national statistics, with concrete implications for policymaking.

In the context of the IYFF 2014, FAO proposed its own official definition of family farming.<sup>6</sup> While this definition is sufficiently broad to encompass the aforementioned elements, it is also based on at least two crucial criteria: management and operation by the family unit, and predominant reliance on family labour. Of the more than 570 million farms in the world, close to 500 million are run by individuals or families who primarily depend on family labour, 475 million of which are 2 hectares or less in size and collectively represent only 12 per cent of total agricultural land (Lowder et al. 2014).

From another statistical perspective, farms with an area of less than 5 hectares account for 94 per cent of all farms but control only 19 per cent of all agricultural land (FAO 2014b). Conversely, only 1 per cent of farms in the world are larger than 50 hectares, yet these represent 65 per cent of all agricultural land. Many of these larger farms rely mostly on wage labour, even when they are family-owned and operated. Therefore, family management and operation is a necessary but not sufficient condition to define family farming, as it masks huge differences in other variables such as farm size and capital intensity. Predominant reliance on family labour in contrast functions as a fundamental additional criterion, as it tends to be more representative of the reality of small and medium family farms worldwide.

Notwithstanding the diversity of family farming definitions, including through

an additional lens such as its degree of relative autonomy or dependency vis-à-vis global agricultural markets and food chains, there is a broad consensus that family farming remains by far the most prevalent form of agriculture in the world, as well as the main sector responsible for providing food and nutrition security as well as rural environmental sustainability.

As the IYFF drew to a close and the race to achieve the SDGs began, the main question has thus shifted from 'should we support family farming?' to 'how do we support family farming?'; as evidenced by current mainstream international policy discourse and practice. Countries of the Global South may be able to draw valuable lessons from their collective experiences to better equip themselves to answer this question, which brings us to the individual articles comprising this special edition of *Policy in Focus*.

### Policy options to support family farming: an overview of this special edition

The opening article is a piece by the General Coordinator of the 200 million-strong, transnational peasant social movement, La Via Campesina (LVC). The organisation's headquarters moved two years ago from Jakarta, Indonesia, to Harare, Zimbabwe, with ZIMSOFF leader Elizabeth Mpfu assuming the role of General Coordinator—the first African and first woman to do so. Mpfu takes as a starting point for the discussion on public policies for family farming the concept of 'food sovereignty', a term coined by LVC in 1996.

While highlighting the drawbacks of decades of neoliberal policies in developing countries, Mpfu also points out 'alternatives from below', driven by social movements in struggles that range from the local to the global. On the multilateral front, these are marked by concrete action in shaping the rules of global governance with a proactive stance in favour of the adoption and implementation of specific international treaties on such issues as land tenure or the management of plant genetic resources, as well as opposing the approval of liberalising international trade agreements.

At the national level, particular emphasis is placed on the need to empower rural

populations to bring about policies that reflect local priorities, while respecting fundamental human rights. This implies increases in public investments that support the livelihoods of family farmers, which have historically been essential, sustainable providers of healthy foods. Perhaps in one of the author's most interesting arguments, protectionism is mentioned—here devoid of its otherwise frequently negative connotations—as a fundamental measure of support whereby Southern countries can even learn from Northern ones by emulating some of their effective income support mechanisms, but also by firmly rejecting the latter's bias in favour of large-scale agribusiness.

Positive experiences can also be witnessed in countries of the contemporary Global South, as noted by Mpfu with regards to most nations of South America, which have taken part in the innovative and participatory Specialised Meeting on Family Farming of the Southern Common Market (REAF/Mercosur), one of the mechanisms mentioned by Caio França and Adoniram Sanches, the authors of the following article. In this subsequent piece, the concept of family farming escapes a merely technical perspective and is revealed as a political synthesis category, which has enabled peasants, indigenous peoples, rural women and youth, among others to collectively join forces and put pressure on governments towards the common goal of creating institutions and policies adapted to their needs.

The multiple potential positive impacts of family farming on the economies in which they operate include not only the provision of healthy and nutritious food but also effects on wider macroeconomic goals such as control of inflation through the increased supply of essential and widely consumed goods, as well as being an important source of demand for national industrial and service sectors.

Despite the diversity of settings in the Latin American region, countries have demonstrated a great deal of convergence, especially in South America, where more than a decade of participatory policy dialogue at various governance levels has yielded gains in terms of mutual learning and political

traction towards creating and expanding the institutional repertoire of state actions aimed at strengthening family farming.

Still, the authors point out that these facts occur within the current prevailing productive model, parallel to a continuing expansion of large-scale agribusiness, and should be seen as long-term endeavours, which through gradual accumulation of economic and political force can bring about deeper structural change, including the democratisation of historically unequal and concentrated patterns of land distribution throughout the region.

The following article by Mauro del Grossi and Vicente Marques deals precisely with the efforts of the Brazilian government to bring about more equitable land distribution since the democratisation process in the 1980s, and in particular the acceleration, intensification and more widely inclusive nature of this process since 2003. The article is an important contribution to the domestic and international land reform debate, given the fact that most of the literature on the topic usually tends to highlight only the shortcomings of Brazil's land reform process (e.g. its limited contribution towards the reduction in the land distribution Gini coefficient), and even to misrepresent or oversimplify it as a mere example of 'market-led land reform'.

The impressive numbers of families and land allocations, but also the wide variety of social and productive policies integrated into the process, as well as specific provisions for access to land for rural women, youth, indigenous peoples and rural Afro-descendant communities all contribute to reveal a much broader and complex picture of the land reform process in Brazil.

As in the case of the regional integration institutions mentioned in the article by França and Sanches, institutionalised participation of civil society has been a key factor in enabling policies to be better formulated and gain traction in their implementation processes in various contexts. Rural Development Committees are among the multiple innovations brought about in recent years in Latin America, and partially as a result of interactions between policymakers

and civil society representatives at the South American subregional level. José Ignacio Olascuaga and Clara Villalba Clavijo show that these committees in Uruguay are indicative of similar types of mutually reinforcing interactions between government and civil society, differing from the previous case in that they occur at the local territorial level.

Although a recent institutional innovation, the Rural Development Committees have made a crucial difference in enabling the Uruguayan central and local governmental authorities to systematically engage in constructive policy dialogue with a wide array of rural organisations, and in this way better integrate their different rural development policies and offer a much more adequate and targeted response to the priorities of family farmers.

This edition's regional focus then shifts from Latin America to Asia, the continent with by far the largest number of family farmers, and in particular to the South Asian subregion, with a pair of articles that focus on two specific forms of family farming that are characterised by the broad variety of biomes and the corresponding livelihoods that have developed therein: small-scale fisheries and mountain family farming. In the case of the fisheries of South Asia, Yugraj Yadava and Rajdeep Mukherjee accurately describe how the advent of more capital-intensive forms of fishing has led to a complex and intertwined series of economic, social and environmental challenges following the increases in the mechanisation of production, in the scale of fishing operations and the concentration of distribution networks, all of which have put strains on traditional family fishing practices.

Despite relevant government efforts to support the artisanal fisheries sector through a variety of policies, ranging from legally protected coastal fishing reserves to income support, insurance and improved infrastructure, the authors remark that there has been insufficient government action to increase the production capacity of small-scale fishers, disproportionately favouring larger fishing units. Yadava and Mukherjee make a convincing case for intensifying government support to the small-scale fishing sector, noting how this

can lead to employment, rural women's social and economic empowerment and a more sustainable management of marine ecosystems.

Similar challenges are prevalent at the other extreme of the South Asian subregion, the mountainous Himalayan region of Northern India, where the livelihoods of traditional family farmers have played a fundamental role in managing the region's agrobiodiversity in close integration with livestock and forestry ecosystems, while contributing to the population's food and nutrition security and economic well-being. R.K. Maikhuri, R.C. Sundriyal, G.C.S. Negi and P.P. Dhyani show that policies have nonetheless unfortunately favoured technological packages and economic incentives that excessively focus on a limited number of crops and on the minority parcels of plain-lands of these regions, generating capital-intensive forms of agriculture unsuited to traditional mountain family farming, and challenging the social cohesion of the region's villages (as the surge in male migration to urban centres clearly demonstrates).

The authors show that these challenges can and should be addressed, by making a series of policy recommendations that include government interventions ranging from context-specific research and development in the production phase, to incentives for the sale of mountain organic products at the distribution end of the value chain.

The still relatively unexplored potential of Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) in the Global South is addressed in this edition's closing article, with Abdourahmane Ndiaye's compelling account of how the reduction of intermediaries between producers and consumers of food can have transformative effects, not only on the economic autonomy of family farmers and access to healthier and more nutritious food for consumers, but also in terms of the wider social and well-being implications of 'organised proximity' at the territorial level.

### **Main findings**

Policy considerations outlined in this issue range from the global (such as Mpofu's recommendations for action at the multilateral level) to local spheres

(as detailed in the account of participatory territorial Rural Development Committees in Uruguay, as well as Ndiaye's call for 'relocalising' producer–consumer relations through support to SFSCs), cutting across the regional (as in the cases of Latin America and South Asia) and national contexts (Brazil's land policies or India's policies for mountain family farming). They also encompass different types of policies, from the production (such as through access to land in the case of Brazil) to the distribution end (as in the reduction of intermediaries through the promotion of SFSCs), and different types of biomes, such as fisheries, mountains and forests.

Although this collection of articles in effect deals with very different aspects of policymaking and implementation towards family farming in wide-ranging contexts, a few main conclusions can still be drawn. A first important finding relates to the need to combine policies that provide social services with the creation and reinforcement of proper conditions for family farmers to enhance their productive capacities. In most cases, mechanisation and productivity gains have only occurred among a minority of farmers (such as the capitalised marine fishers of South Asia or the high-yielding farmers of the Himalayan plain-lands), thus concentrating income and wealth in rural areas at the expense of most family farmers.

The provision of economic assets to the most vulnerable family farmers (such as land, as described in the Brazilian case), but also of greater access to markets (as made possible via SFSCs), with protection against competition from large-scale, export-oriented agribusiness (for instance, through targeted forms of protectionism, as advocated by Mpofu) all form part of a policy repertoire that deals directly with the productive dimension.

Although considerable progress has been made during the last decade in the creation and expansion of social policies, from income support schemes to increases in access to health and education, much less attention has been devoted to providing the world's poorest and most marginalised populations with better conditions to become a driving force of economic growth in their own right. There are encouraging signs of a shift towards

greater recognition of this need at the multilateral level, however, as FAO's State of Food and Agriculture report reveals, by recognising that social protection alone cannot bring people out of poverty, whereas creating links between social and agricultural policies can be a "potentially powerful means of breaking the cycle of rural poverty" (FAO 2015). These shifts are also illustrated by the broader aforementioned SDG agenda.

A second important finding is that there are several positive experiences on the ground to learn from. Different authors in this edition seem to agree that Latin America has been the region which has most consistently oriented its public institutions towards providing better conditions for the strengthening of family farming. As Mpofu and Ndiaye in particular point out, past or present policies promoted by Northern countries, can also provide lessons for governments of the Global South, provided that they are guided first and foremost by the specificities of their own countries' national contexts and rural settings.

This brings us to a third fundamental finding, on which all authors in this edition seem to converge: the meaningful participation of family farmers in deliberations and consultations with government officials has proved a key element for the creation and improvement of public policies that aim to promote rural development.

This collection of articles represents a contribution to an ever-widening and growing debate on how best to provide support to family farming in developing countries across the globe, from which we hope readers will be able to glean useful insights. ■

FAO. 2014a. Committee on Agriculture, 24<sup>th</sup> Session, "Family Farmers: Feeding the World, Caring for the Earth", July, Rome, <<http://www.fao.org/3/a-m1163e.pdf>>. Accessed 9 December 2015.

FAO. 2014b. The State of Food and Agriculture: Innovation in family farming. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome. <<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4040e.pdf>>. Accessed 9 December 2015.

FAO. 2015. The State of Food and Agriculture: Social protection and agriculture: breaking the cycle of rural poverty. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome. <<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4040e.pdf>>.

Accessed 9 December 2015.

HLPE. 2013. Investing in smallholder Agriculture for Food Security. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security. Rome. <[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/hlpe/hlpe\\_documents/HLPE\\_S\\_and\\_R/HLPE\\_2013\\_SmallholderAgriculture\\_Summary\\_EN.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_S_and_R/HLPE_2013_SmallholderAgriculture_Summary_EN.pdf)>. Accessed 9 December 2015.

Lowder, Sarah K., Jakob Skoet and Saumya Singh. What do we really know about the number and distribution of farms and family farms worldwide? Background paper for The State of Food and Agriculture 2014. ESA Working Paper No. 14-02. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2014. <<http://www.fao.org/docrep/019/i3729e/i3729e.pdf>>. Accessed 9 December 2015.

UN. 2015. General Assembly resolution 70/1. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. A/RES/70/1. United Nations. <[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)>. Accessed 9 December 2015.

1. Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Scholarship from CAPES - Brazil.
2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
3. UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (UNDP/IPC-IG).
4. MDG 1 is measured by three targets: i) to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than USD1 per day; ii) to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and iii) to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
5. The IYFF International Steering Committee set up a specific working group with the aims of developing "criteria and guidelines to support countries in establishing and characterizing clear family farming definitions and typologies at national and regional level" (FAO 2014a). The World Agriculture Watch (WAW) initiative was set up by FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) "to inform policy dialogue at national and international levels. WAW [has developed] an international framework to support countries [in] build[ing] comparable classification[s] of holdings, capture specificities and transformations of different types of holdings to better target and adapt investments and policies" <[http://www.worldagricultureswatch.org/sites/default/files/documents/synthesis\\_typology\\_report.pdf](http://www.worldagricultureswatch.org/sites/default/files/documents/synthesis_typology_report.pdf)>.
6. "Family Farming (which includes all family-based agricultural activities) is a means of organising 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. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions" (FAO 2014b).

# Food sovereignty as a key public policy framework for strengthening family farming in the Global South

by Elizabeth Mpofu<sup>1</sup>

The last four decades have been characterised by the deepening of the integration of most economies of the Global South into the global capital and liberalised market systems, with dire consequences for family farming. This has happened, and continues to happen, through a relentless promotion of the neoliberal paradigm, under the tutelage of its main international drivers—i.e. the Bretton Woods Institutions and governments of the Global North. These have constrained Southern countries into opening up their national borders, leading to the retreat of the State from its developmentalist agenda, in which public policies historically played a central role. Consequently, national policies and legislations have been modified to serve the interests of global finance capital and transnational firms. According to Ha-Joon Chang (2009, 478):

“[The] withdrawal of the state has negatively affected investment in public goods such as agricultural research, education, extension, and infrastructure, thereby reducing agricultural productivity. In addition, market-oriented reforms of financial institutions have left agriculture with even less access to credit than before. Trade liberalisation has led to increased import penetration, which has threatened the livelihoods of many farmers. A simultaneous push for agricultural exports in a large number of countries that specialise in the same products has often resulted in falling prices and even export earnings.”

Nevertheless, family farming, instead of disappearing, has remained a key sector of agriculture and the economy of rural areas in countries of the Global South. According to La Via Campesina and GRAIN (2014), family farms produce most of the world’s food, feeding about 70 per cent of the world’s population, despite

their shrinking share of agricultural land. Family farms not only conserve biodiversity and mitigate climate-related risks, they are also the world’s most important source of employment and employ the bulk of the labour force in the Global South. The United Nations thus declared 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) in recognition of the fundamental role played by this sector. Yet, despite the development of pro-family farming policies in some countries, policy support for family farming has not improved dramatically across the Global South, while the majority of agricultural policies continue to be biased in favour of export-oriented large-scale agribusiness.

## **Conformity to the neoliberal agenda: the Achilles heel of the Global South**

The countries of the Global South, in the current context of globalisation—where finance capital reigns supreme—have primarily focused on ‘*being competitive*’ to attract foreign investment. Such policy preoccupation with foreign investment has also entailed a shift in public policies, whereby the provision of infrastructure and agricultural subsidies have been redirected to support the agribusiness sector, which mainly produces for export markets. These policy shifts in the Global South have left the family farming sector not only weakened but also exposed and vulnerable. For instance, the recent world food price crisis of 2007–2008 led to the dispossession and displacement of thousands of small farmers to make way for large-scale land investments geared towards export-oriented land use.

Consequently, malnutrition and hunger are more prevalent in the Global South, and occur predominantly in rural areas, where most family farmers reside. Food insecurity experienced in most countries of the Global South has exposed the flaws in these policy shifts. One would

have expected a change in the attitude of policymakers during the global food crisis, towards the revision of existing public policies in favour of the small-scale farming sector, so as to ensure national food security. But policy bias against the sector (e.g. poor agricultural pricing policy, poor land tenure policies which discriminate against women’s access and control over land, poor rural infrastructural development policies in most Sub-Saharan African countries) not only in terms of redistribution of land but also of budgetary support, whether for research and extension or for relevant financial institutions, has prevented this from happening.

## **Blindness to the historical agricultural development paths of countries of the Global North**

The rush to conform to the neoliberal agenda by some countries of the Global South has led not only to the ‘commodification’ of nature and a weakened collective, unified approach to problems and strategies for prosperity in the Global South but also to blindness regarding the historical agricultural development paths of countries of the Global North. Most of today’s rich countries have in the past experienced the same situation currently faced by the agricultural sector in countries of the Global South.

Such countries (Germany, Netherlands, Japan, USA, Belgium etc.) experimented with a wide range of policies and institutions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and learned from other countries’ experiences to eventually become agricultural success stories (Ha-Joon 2009). A comparable willingness to experiment is unfortunately still insufficient in terms of scope and depth in contemporary countries of the Global South. However, some countries in Latin America (mainly Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay and



Photo: Sergio Amaral/MDS. Family farmer in Planaltina, Distrito Federal, Brazil, 2014.

### Which way forward for public policies in the Global South?

Countries of the Global South should take deliberate measures to strengthen family farming, and these should include using food sovereignty as a baseline policy framework. The experience with markets in recent decades has shown that neoliberalism has failed to provide adequate economic and social support measures to strengthen family farming agriculture. 'One-size-fits-all' policy measures should certainly be discarded if this sector is to be empowered. Indeed, food sovereignty is about building and empowering people to self-determine their course of development within their local context and ensuring the full enjoyment and realisation of all human rights.

Venezuela, all full or associate members of Mercosur) have started efforts to create and improve the design of public policies targeted at family farming (Marquez and Ramos 2010) and have had some measure of localised success.

In Africa, the continent in general still suffers from a continued regression in terms of public policies for family farming. Some countries (Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia etc.) have opened up their agricultural lands to foreign investors. Furthermore, family farming in sub-Saharan Africa has more broadly suffered from reduced budgetary support for agriculture: indeed, much less than the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) goal of a minimum of 10 per cent of national budgets is allocated by most governments (United Nations 2014). Although to a lesser extent, in many parts of Asia family farming also suffers from similar challenges. Policy neglect has increasingly led to 'alternatives from below', driven mainly by social movements such as La Via Campesina<sup>2</sup> and allied non-governmental organisations, in support of small farmers.

#### Alternatives from below: food sovereignty as a framework for strengthening family farming

La Via Campesina and its allies have called for the adoption of food sovereignty<sup>3</sup>—a concept constructed by peasants—as a basis to support and protect family farming. The movement

has also offered a wide range of political and policy proposals within the framework of food sovereignty to strengthen family farming. These include calling on governments to (La Via Campesina 2014a): implement the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT); apply key decisions from the Committee on World Food Security (CFS); adopt and implement the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA); support ongoing negotiations towards approval of the Declaration of the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC); and campaign against new negotiations for free trade agreements (La Via Campesina 2014b), such as the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), among others.

Such proposals, if adopted and implemented, could lead to millions of family farmers being strengthened, not only in Southern countries but globally. La Via Campesina and its allies continue to engage with many actors in international policy spaces, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), with the aim of supporting family, peasant and indigenous farming, as well as public policies for food sovereignty.

Due to the public goods nature of most of the services required by family farming (research, extension, education and information), public policies (whether provided directly by the State or indirectly through subsidisation) should address the challenge of underinvestment by market mechanisms, thereby eliminating biases and widening geographic reach. If one considers the contribution made by family farming towards national development in the South, through its maintenance of a constant supply of diverse, appropriate and healthy traditional foods, and concomitant protection of biodiversity and cultural diversity, then the need for targeted and measured public interventions in all the areas that affect the incomes and capabilities of family farming is imperative. These measures should be context-specific and adapted to the level of economic development of each country.

Countries of the Global South should maintain some support policies—particularly income stabilisation schemes. Some level of protectionism should also always remain, as witnessed in countries of the Global North such as the USA and members of the European Union (EU)—which have consistently maintained farm subsidies and targeted trade protectionism. Such measures are necessary to shield processes of strengthening family farming from the volatility of international markets,

“

Family farming, instead of disappearing, has remained a key sector of agriculture and the economy of rural areas in countries of the Global South.



Photo: Eduardo Aigner/MDA. Family farmers supplement meals with their own production, Mato Grosso, Brazil, 2010.

to deliver more durable and concrete gains in the medium to long term, such as increases in land productivity and the stabilisation of incomes. However, when applied to the contexts of family farming in countries of the South, these measures should—unlike in the USA and the EU—remove biases in favour of large-scale farming.

For social movements such as La Via Campesina, public policies are not ends in and of themselves but, rather, means by which to gain strength in the peasant struggle and achieve real structural change through a systemic approach to addressing the inadequacies and inefficiencies faced by family farming. ■

Ha-Joon, Chang. 2009. "Rethinking public policy in agriculture: lessons from history, distant and recent." *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36(3): 477–515.

La Via Campesina. 2014a. "CFS in Rome: The majority of governments remain blind to the challenges of the global food security." <<http://www.viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/food-sovereignty-and-trade-mainmenu-38/1684-cfs-in-rome-the-majority-of-governments-remain-blind-to-the-challenges-of-global-food-security>>. Accessed 18 November 2015.

La Via Campesina. 2014b. "Rome: Stop TTIP, CETA and other free trade agreements." <<http://www.viacampesina.org/en/index.php/actions-and-events-mainmenu-26/stop-free-trade-agreements-mainmenu-61/1683-stop-ttip-ceta-and-other-destructive-trade-policies>>. Accessed 18 November 2015.

La Via Campesina and GRAIN. 2014. "Hungry for land. Small farmers feed the world with less than a quarter of all farmland." <<http://viacampesina.org/en/index.php/main-issues-mainmenu-27/agrarian-reform-mainmenu-36/1615-hungry-for-land-small-farmers-feed-the-world-with-less-than-a-quarter-of-all-farmland>>.

Accessed 18 November 2015.

Marquez, Susana, and Álvaro Ramos. 2010. *Differential policies for Family Farming in MERCOSUR: Contribution of Political Dialogue in the Design of Public Policies and Institutionalisation*. Rome: International Fund for Agricultural Development. <[http://www.ifad.org/events/gc/33/roundtables/pl/pl\\_bg\\_e.pdf](http://www.ifad.org/events/gc/33/roundtables/pl/pl_bg_e.pdf)>. Accessed 18 November 2015.

Nyéléni. 2007. "Declaration of the Forum for Food Sovereignty," Nyéléni Village, Sélingué, Mali, 27 February 2007.

United Nations. 2014. *Biennial report on the review of the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development. Report of the Secretary-General*. A/69/163. New York: United Nations.

1. ZIMSOFF and La Via Campesina.
2. La Via Campesina has 164 member organisations in 73 countries representing over 200 million peasants, small and medium-size farmers, women farmers, landless people, indigenous peoples, migrants, agricultural workers and youth.
3. Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies, rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users (Nyéléni 2007).

# Family farming in the new Latin American regional integration and development agenda

by Caio Galvão de França<sup>1</sup> and Adoniram Peraci Sanches<sup>2</sup>

The United Nations declaration of 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) represents a milestone in the long journey towards the increasing recognition of this sector's strategic importance. It is the result of converging social struggles, institutional progress in several countries, academic production and intellectual debates.

During the course of the IYFF, more than 300 events represented unique occasions for critical reflections on rural development and their main protagonists, which currently comprise close to 40 per cent of the world's population. Family farming has indeed gained relevance as a political force through many trajectories in different regions of the world, by promoting an agenda centred on the economic and political democratisation of rural areas.

Part of its strength derives from being a synthesis category representing a wide variety of identities, farming practices and forms of access to and management of natural resources. Strengthening family farming, therefore, has not hindered the affirmation of more specific identities encompassed by this wide-ranging concept (such as rural women and youth, indigenous peoples, rural Afro-descendant communities, other traditional peoples and communities, among others); rather, it expresses the capacity of this sector to build solidarity bonds and alliances towards common goals, such as differentiated and context-specific agricultural policies.

The dynamism and vitality of family farming in Latin America in recent years is inextricably linked, on the one hand, to the sustained commitment of both the region's countries and supranational institutions to eradicating hunger and poverty and to ensuring food and nutrition security for all, as well as, on the other, significant shifts in the region's economic policies from their guiding principles to their implementation.

Though there are examples of significant family farming achievements worldwide, Latin America has been the region showing the most promising results in recent years.

These achievements have contributed to increasing the recognition of family farming's contributions to inclusive economic growth. Not only does it play a crucial role in the creation of job opportunities and in supplying most of the expanding domestic markets' food—thereby helping to control inflationary pressures and to reduce dependency on food imports—this sector also contributes as a consumer of industrial goods (machinery, inputs, fertilisers etc.) and services (infrastructure, housing, rural extension etc.), in some cases even potentially generating countercyclical economic effects.<sup>3</sup>

However, family farming is currently at the centre of a much broader agenda that transcends merely sectorial or productive considerations by integrating a wealth of other dimensions, including regional and territorial development, public health and nutrition, the promotion of the autonomy and equality of rural women, and the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources.

At the global multilateral level, recent international commitments highlight the growing and persistent relevance of family farming in facing global challenges. For instance, during the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) held in 2014, the World Health Organization raised awareness in favour of an agriculture that can and should be more responsive to the public health agenda, drawing attention to the fact that family farming offers particularly healthy food and richer diets than more conventional forms of agriculture and thereby contributes to decreasing overweight and childhood obesity levels. Likewise, the Post-2015 Development Agenda's Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), recently endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, also recognise the fundamental contributions of family farming to the three dimensions of sustainability: economic, social and environmental.

At the regional integration level, the recent Latin American experience has demonstrated an unusual degree of alignment and synergy between domestic, sub-regional and continental family farming plans, programmes and policies. A case in point, which has become a reference in the region and beyond, is the experience acquired during more than 10 years of frequent sub-regional and national-level meetings and associated activities of MERCOSUR's *Reunión Especializada de Agricultura Familiar* (REAF—Specialised Meeting on Family Farming), a unique policy dialogue platform congregating delegations composed of governmental officers and civil society representatives.

The countries that take part in REAF have managed to agree on a set of common criteria to identify a region-wide definition of family farming that encompasses the diversity of each member country, subsequently incorporating these criteria into official MERCOSUR regulations. These criteria have also been incorporated into domestic legal frameworks, laying the foundations for context-specific national-level registry systems, which also represent the conditions required for individuals to qualify as family farmers and thereby gain access to specifically tailored agricultural policies. REAF has promoted an innovative form of political policy dialogue which has benefited from the intense and permanent participation of social movements and rural unions, and contributed to the creation of national-level policies based on common regional guidelines regarding the strengthening of family farmers, including indigenous peoples and other



Photo: Dênio Simões/Agência Brasília. Farmers' market (CEASA), Distrito Federal, Brazil, 2015 <<https://goo.gl/sZ7V7x>>.

traditional peoples and communities. Among the policies discussed in REAF's meetings, related workshops, training courses and cooperation programmes, a few worth mentioning are access to land, institutionalised public purchase of food produced by family farmers, and support to rural women's production.

Family farming issues have also become part of the wider regional integration agenda, as witnessed by the prioritisation of the theme by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), especially after the recognition of its central role in CELAC's Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and the Eradication of Hunger 2025, as well as the creation of a regional Working Group on Family Farming and Rural Development which reports to a yearly Ministerial Meeting on Family Farming. REAF countries have also reached outside the region, establishing mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation with other forums, such as the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries' (CPLP) Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSAN) and its Working Group on Family Farming.

This expansion of the family farming agenda has not been restricted only to the executive government and social movement arenas, having also reached the legislative branch, as the creation of a Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, its crucial role in the drafting and approval of national-level food security laws in most of the region's countries and its proposal

of a regional framework law on family farming to the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) all demonstrate.

Such recognition and visibility across and even outside the Latin America and Caribbean region revitalise the possibilities of democratising the rural environment agenda, with family farming as its driving force. In the continuing struggles for a greater recognition of its broader contribution to sustainable development, family farming in Latin America is at once resisting and gaining ground against deeply rooted mechanisms of domination and subordination, while at the same time embodying traditional forms and pursuing renewed ways of living and producing in rural areas. Family farming, therefore, expresses its counter-hegemonic potential through its capacity to combine coordinated resistance with credible alternatives. By relying on broader social alliances, it can build further traction in its efforts to overcome the current dominant agricultural mode of production and contribute to the creation of new projects of national development.

The family farming agenda in Latin America represents a combined, gradual and cumulative effort, due to its transition-oriented nature and its permanent action on multiple fronts. This effort consists of a set of policies and initiatives to strengthen family farming across social and economic dimensions which, although occurring in parallel to and under the current productive model,

can still result in substantial increases in production, productivity and income, and more longer-term qualitative changes such as agro-ecological transitions, the democratisation of the agrarian structure, and more cooperative and solidary forms of socio-economic organisation. Among the necessary actions for these longer-term shifts, we may highlight the necessary expansion of land reform and the recognition of the territories of traditional peoples and communities, as well as a deep structural change in the agri-food sector that may articulate industrial production processes and consumption standards, with potentially significant impacts on eating habits and population health.

Latin America has shown that the concept of family farming is a very relevant and useful contemporary political and social category. Further generalising its use may contribute to inserting family farming into other international contexts, in which terms such as 'smallholder' or 'small-scale producer' are currently prevalent, despite their narrower scope and even, at times, potentially negative connotations.

The lesson that Latin America has to offer is clear: strengthening family farming is a political process based on democratic participatory dialogue, social struggles, the creation and implementation of public policies, understanding and appreciating the sector's wide diversity, and making efforts to build alliances across sectors towards common goals.

Thus, family farming ultimately demonstrates that it can provide relevant contributions to the development of nations, based on democracy, social justice and a commitment towards reducing inequality. ■

Müller, Laudemir. 2014. "Public policies for family farming in Brazil: towards a sustainable development model." In *Deep Roots*, 222–226. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

1. Brazilian Ministry of Agrarian Development.
2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
3. Brazil's More Food programme is a case in point, as its concessional credit lines directed at family farmers had a significant impact on Brazil's national tractor sales, accounting for 61 per cent of these between January and May 2009, thus contributing to supporting national industry at the height of the global financial and economic crisis (Müller 2014).

# The democratisation of access to land for Brazilian family farmers in recent years

by Vicente P. M. de Azevedo Marques<sup>1</sup> and Mauro Eduardo Del Grossi<sup>2</sup>

Land access policies in Brazil have involved a significant set of actions aimed at democratising access to land and strengthening family farming, especially since 2000. These policies have been implemented in a context of high concentration of land ownership and access to natural resources, as well as frequent land disputes and related rural violence, among other prevailing characteristics of the Brazilian agrarian structure.

The origins of the concentration of land ownership hark back to the early 1500s, when Brazil was ruled by the Portuguese Crown and the colonial process of land occupation was based on the imprecise concession of large and remote areas of land, which left much of the Brazilian territory unmapped, without demarcation and lacking registration documents. It was not until 1850 that land was recognised by law as private property,<sup>3</sup> decades after the country's formal independence, when most of its land distribution had already been consolidated among a very small group of people, excluding indigenous peoples and other traditional communities from any right to property. Only a century and a half later did the Federal Constitution of 1988 and its amendments<sup>4</sup> fully reaffirm the right to property of land (conditional on the fulfilment of its *social function*) by enshrining this principle as part of its fundamental rights and guarantees, as well as by formally recognising the land rights of indigenous peoples and *quilombola*<sup>5</sup> communities.

## Land reform

Starting in 2003, the federal government embarked on a major effort to create and expand public policies for the strengthening of family farming and, simultaneously, for the settlement of thousands of landless families. Since then, more than 52 million hectares—comprising about 4,000 new projects, which have settled over 798,000 families—have been incorporated into the broader land reform process initiated during the democratisation period in the mid-1980s, effectively accounting for about

two thirds of it, both in numbers of settled families and area size. Indeed, according to the National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA), as of April 2015 there were 969,129 settled families in 9,263 land reform projects (MDA 2015), comprising a total area of 88 million hectares—about 10 per cent of the Brazilian territory. These families were mainly distributed in regions of the Legal Amazon (621,000 families settled in 3,400 projects) and in semi-arid areas (117,000 families settled in 2,200 projects).

There are various types of environmental modalities in land reform settlements, which can occur in forests, extractive reserves or sustainable development units (INCRA, 2015). The projects cater to the needs of specific groups, especially women, whose names have been systematically included in all titles of land reform settlements and land regularisation programmes, regardless of their marital status.

In addition to policies focused on access to land, a great effort has been made to articulate public policies (Del Grossi and Marques 2015), to ensure that land reform beneficiaries have access to other government initiatives, such as infrastructure (housing, water, electric power and roads), social assistance (especially with civil documentation), social security, income support to families living under extreme poverty through cash transfers (*Bolsa Família*—Family Grant) as well as to families whose livelihoods contribute to environmental conservation (*Bolsa Verde*—Green Grant), technical assistance and rural extension (ATER) and credit for production (Pronaf<sup>6</sup> rural credit at subsidised rates). When enrolled in Pronaf, land reform beneficiaries also have access to climate insurance and price guarantee schemes (Family Farming Insurance—SEAF—and Price Guarantee Programme for Family Farming—PGPAF), while those settled in semi-arid areas have access to specific regional climate insurance (*Garantia-Safra*—Harvest Guarantee).

In the marketing sphere, the government encourages the installation and modernisation of agro-industrial collective enterprises—through programmes such as *Terra Sol* (Sun Land)<sup>7</sup> and *Terra Forte* (Strong Land)<sup>8</sup>—which have benefited 209,000 settled families since 2004 (MDA 2015). Part of the families' production is also destined to institutional markets (through the Food Acquisition Programme—PAA—and the National School Feeding Programme—PNAE).

In addition to facilitated access to elementary and professional public school networks (Pronatec Campo), settled families also have access to the National Programme for Education in Land Reform (Pronera),<sup>9</sup> which started in 1988 with the aim of expanding the formal education levels of land reform beneficiaries. Pronera offers elementary courses—besides secondary and tertiary education—including literacy, technical and specialised professionalisation courses, all of which use a pedagogical approach adapted to local contexts.

Complementary to the land reform programme described above and its related policies, the National Land Credit Programme (PNCF)<sup>10</sup> provides subsidised credit to finance the acquisition of land by small farmers and has benefited around 97,000 families since 2003. PNCF additionally offers resources for the installation of social and productive infrastructure, and provides for the hiring of technical assistance and rural extension officers. It also includes specific clauses to assist poorer farmers and rural youth who may have an interest in acquiring land and settling as family farmers.

## Land regularisation in the Legal Amazon region

The *Terra Legal* (Legal Land) programme is aimed at granting the right of use of federal land previously occupied or informally settled by family farmers in the Legal Amazon region (states of

“

Starting in 2003, the federal government embarked on a major effort to create and expand public policies for the strengthening of family farming and, simultaneously, for the settlement of thousands of landless families.



Photo: Eduardo Aigner/MDA. Farmers next to motocultivator granted by the Mais Alimentos programme, Acre, Brazil 2010.

Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Rondônia, Roraima and Tocantins),<sup>11</sup> thereby speeding up land regularisation processes of legitimate occupations in rural and urban areas. The amounts charged for the newly titled land and payment deadlines vary according to their size, while gratuity is ensured for very small areas. The granting of titles is conditional on the sustainable use of natural resources and environmental conservation. By March 2015, the *Terra Legal* programme had georeferenced more than 10 million hectares and issued close to 18,000 titles in rural areas and 292 titles in urban ones, covering a total area of 1.4 million hectares (MDA 2015).

**The *Brasil Quilombola* programme and other land programmes for traditional peoples and communities**

The Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988 recognised the rights of remaining *quilombola* communities to their land, as a means of reparation towards Afro-descendants with a social history of resistance against slave oppression during the Brazilian colonial period. More than 2,000 communities have already been identified and certified (SEPIIR 2015). The *Brasil Quilombola* programme, launched in 2004, aims to consolidate a state policy for these communities, addressing the following points: access to land (delimitation, certification and granting of land title); infrastructure

“

Despite ... advances made over the past few years, Brazil still has vast swathes of non-regularised land as well as significant challenges to overcome in integrating often conflicting and overlapping land registries.



Photo: Eduardo Aigner/MDA. Food Acquisition Programme (PAA) in the General Sampaio municipality, Sertão Central, Ceará, Brazil, 2010.



Photo: Eduardo Aigner/MDA. Federal Agrotechnical School of Crato, in the Umirim municipality, Ceará, Brazil, 2010.

and quality of life (housing, sanitation, electrification, communication, access roads, as well as access to health care, education and social assistance); productive inclusion and local development (technical assistance and other public policies for family farming specifically tailored to quilombola communities); and rights and citizenship. According to SEPPIR (2015), 168 *quilombola* areas had had their identification and delimitation reports concluded by 2014, benefiting 23,000 families over an area of approximately 1.7 million hectares.

The original rights to land traditionally occupied by indigenous peoples are ensured through a specific programme, which has regularised more than 100 million hectares for 434 communities since its inception (FUNAI 2015). Other initiatives for land regularisation targeting traditional peoples and communities are under way, such as the *Nossa Várzea* (Our Lowlands) project: *Citizenship and Sustainability in the Brazilian Amazon*, which guarantees the riverside families and communities the recognition of their traditional ownership of the lands they and their ancestors have occupied and their role as agents who promote environment conservation and local development (MPOG/SPU 2015). Lastly, one should also note the existence of programmes for land regularisation that are run by individual states of the Brazilian federation, which are adapted to each state's particular context.

### Territorial management

Through the increased use of georeferencing systems, the Brazilian government has in recent years invested considerable efforts in improving the coverage, reliability and integration of land registries, which are considered fundamental in the governance of land and for the processes of land redistribution and regularisation in rural areas. Despite these mechanisms and the advances made over the past few years, Brazil still has vast swathes of non-regularised land as well as significant challenges to overcome in integrating often conflicting and overlapping land registries.

### Final considerations

Since 2003, the Brazilian federal government has made a great effort to guarantee the fulfilment of constitutional rights and a dignified life for rural inhabitants. In the pursuit of democratising and granting access to land, as well as in related efforts to reduce violence in rural areas, land policies have been considerably amplified and better articulated with other public policies in the last decade, with the overarching aim of creating the necessary conditions for the fulfilment of rights and sustainable production of family farmers and traditional peoples and communities. These actions have produced concrete results, to which the more than 798,000 families settled in 52 million hectares of land since 2003 attest. Indeed, not only did the land reform process initiated in the 1980s accelerate and intensify after 2003, it was also more transparent and participatory,

as social movements and unions were given greater voice and involvement than under previous administrations—undoubtedly one of the central reasons for the significant achievements of the most recent chapter of land reform in Brazil. ■

Del Grossi, Mauro Eduardo, and Vicente P.M. Azevedo Marques. 2015. "An in-depth review of the evolution of integrated public policies to strengthen family farms in Brazil." *ESA Working Paper*, No. 15-01. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <<http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/081e4416-dcdf-4981-a488-47f6a659c81b>>. Accessed 5 November 2015.

FUNAI. 2015. "Modalidades de Terras Indígenas." <<http://www.funai.gov.br/index.php/indios-no-brasil/terras-indigenas>>. Accessed 19 August 2015.

INCRA. 2015. "Criação de assentamentos." <<http://www.incra.gov.br/assentamentoscriacao>>. Accessed 19 August 2015.

MDA. 2015. "MDA and INCRA Information." <<http://www.mda.gov.br/sitemda/pagina/acompanhe-a-C3%A7%C3%B5es-do-mda-e-incra>>. Accessed 19 August 2015.

MPOG/SPU. 2015. "Projeto Nossa Varzea: sustentabilidade e cidadania na Amazonia." <<http://patrimonioidetodos.gov.br/programas-e-aco-es-da-spu/amazonia-legal/projeto-nossa-varzea-sustentabilidade-e-cidadania-amazonia-1>>. Accessed 19 August 2015.

SEPPIR. 2015. "Sistema de Monitoramento das Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial." <<http://monitoramento.seppir.gov.br>>. Accessed 19 August 2015.

1. National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA).
2. University of Brasília, Brazil (UnB).
3. Law No. 601, 1850: <[http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/LEIS/L0601-1850.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/LEIS/L0601-1850.htm)>.
4. Federal Constitution of Brazil, 1988: <[http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/Constituicao/ConstituicaoCompilado.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Constituicao/ConstituicaoCompilado.htm)>.
5. Descendants of Afro-Brazilians who resisted and/or escaped from their slave masters during slavery and formed quilombos, independent rural settlements, many of which remain to this day.
6. The National Programme for Strengthening Family Farming (Pronaf) is a rural credit scheme exclusively for family farmers. In 2013/2014, the programme funded the production of 1.9 million farmers.
7. See <[http://www.incra.gov.br/programa\\_terra\\_sol](http://www.incra.gov.br/programa_terra_sol)>.
8. See <<http://www.incra.gov.br/terraforteprograma>>.
9. See <[http://www.incra.gov.br/educacao\\_pronera](http://www.incra.gov.br/educacao_pronera)>.
10. See <<http://www.mda.gov.br/sitemda/secretaria/sra-crefun/sobre-o-programa>>.
11. See Law No. 11.952 of 2009: <[http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/\\_ato2007-2010/2009/lei/11952.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2007-2010/2009/lei/11952.htm)>.

# Rural development committees, institutional innovation for political dialogue and the inclusion of family farming in Uruguay

by José Ignacio Olascuaga<sup>1</sup> and Clara Villalba Clavijo<sup>2</sup>

In Uruguay, the State has gained prominence in the design and implementation of public policies since 2005. Concurrently, governments have also strongly promoted political and administrative decentralisation and citizen participation to drive political, social and economic inclusion. Within this general framework, the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (*Ministerio de Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca*—MGAP) has developed a series of institutional innovations that have contributed to the recognition and validation of family farming, bringing about appropriate intervention tools for this sector's effective inclusion. Among these innovations are the creation of the Directorate-General for Rural Development (*Dirección General de Desarrollo Rural*—DGDR)<sup>3</sup> and the institutionalisation of Rural Development Committees (*Mesas de Desarrollo Rural*—MDRs).

The DGDR was created with the aim of achieving rural development under a new type of production model, based on economic, social and environmental sustainability, and with the active participation of actors from rural areas. It is also responsible for the design of differentiated policies for family farming. Its strategic objectives are to:

- promote activities to support the integration, association and organisation of the rural productive population;
- strengthen producer and rural worker organisations;
- promote rural development in its multiple dimensions;
- organise family farming production and promote its integration throughout the agro-industrial chains and complexes;
- facilitate access to finance and financial resources through the creation of appropriate tools;

- facilitate access of the rural population to training, appropriate technologies and advances in research and innovation; and
- promote inter-institutional coordination between public and private actors to achieve rural development.

Furthermore, Law No. 18,126—for the Decentralisation and Coordination of Agricultural Policies on a Departmental Basis—promulgated on 12 May 2007,<sup>4</sup> established the creation of Departmental Agricultural Councils and MDRs, as well as the integration and functions of these instruments.<sup>5</sup>

MDRs were established as a space of social participation and public–private dialogue, gathering the representatives of producer organisations (especially those that mostly comprise family farmers), wage earners, women and youth, representatives of MGAP, public rural extension officers (Rural Development Territorial Teams—*Equipos Territoriales de Desarrollo Rural*—ETDRs)<sup>6</sup> and other rural actors (e.g. rural teachers).

Other public institutions (e.g. rural electrification, health, communications, infrastructure or education) are frequently also involved, according to the needs and interests raised by participating organisations.

In the MDRs, all actors participate on behalf of organisations and institutions, not as individuals. They meet on a monthly basis, with sessions assembled by ETDR officers, usually through email or mobile phone. According to MGAP,<sup>7</sup> there are currently 40 MDRs in operation throughout the country, with between 370 and 480 civil society organisations taking part. Participation is dynamic, meaning that some organisations are permanently involved while others only intermittently so, since the Committees are both an open as well as a relatively new institutional space still under construction. The MDRs are categorised as either 'fixed'—with meetings always held at the same location—or 'itinerant', whereby the venue is periodically changed to facilitate accessibility to some of the participants.



Photo: Eduardo Arraes. Canelones, Uruguay, 2013 <<https://goo.gl/cefU8>>.



Photo: Eduardo Arraes. Outflow of agricultural production in Canelones, Uruguay, 2013 <<https://goo.gl/cefU8>>.

The participating social organisations are diverse in nature: unions, producer groups, cooperatives, rural development societies, work leagues, community organisations and rural worker unions. The dynamics of each session include resuming discussions on pending issues to effectively deal with them, receiving proposals from social organisations, reporting on policy tools and public policies under implementation, and keeping records to draft minutes of the meetings. Participants present their claims and ideas, the ETDRs report on MGAP plans, and delegates from other public institutions listen to participants' demands, record them and articulate actions to find appropriate solutions.

Each ETDR is based in the territory where it conducts its activities. ETDRs have different degrees of systemic functioning, which in turn depend greatly on the team's leadership. Indeed, the ETDR Departmental Director usually has a decisive role in so far as he or she not only influences the team's working dynamics but also potentially leaves a more lasting imprint on it in at least two dimensions: i) by promoting (or not) the acquisition of skills and knowledge inside the territorial team through 'learning by doing'; and ii) by favouring (or not) the building of political and social capital between rural producer organisations and public institutions.

These territorial teams articulate the interests and claims expressed by representatives of participating organisations in MDRs with relevant

actors of the public institutions that are mandated to provide the corresponding services to the population. This process enables national agencies and institutions to better grasp the needs of the most vulnerable and scattered rural populations. Indeed, even when public institutions are driven by the ultimate intent and goal of social inclusion, they are still faced with difficulties of perception, visibility, design and implementation of strategies and programmes, when dealing with rural marginalisation and exclusion.

Territorial features (such as natural, cultural, social capital or combinations thereof) determine the number of MDRs operating in each Department, the presence or absence of different organisations within each Committee, and each Committee's own working dynamics. The construction of the agenda functions as a collaborative process, whereby the sending of documents by email reasonably ahead of time (usually two weeks before each meeting) allows for a maturing period during which participating organisations are able to collectively absorb information on the issues at stake and elaborate joint responses.

The MDRs can be interpreted, from a theoretical perspective, alternately as intangible territories; fringe organisations; network nodes; spaces for citizenship building; inclusive institutions; part of the environment and of institutional arrangements; and spaces for leveraging

different forms of capital and institutional mechanisms, which ultimately contribute to maintaining the MDRs' vanguard spirit.

The MDRs, as arenas for political dialogue, have expanded the strategic space of both social organisations and the State. There are nevertheless still additional inter-institutional connections to be made to further explore the potential uses of this policy instrument. ■

Uruguay. Law 17.930: <<http://www.parlamento.gub.uy/leyes/ AccesoTextoLey.asp?Ley=17930&Anchor=>>>. Accessed 24 November 2015.

Uruguay. Law 18.126: <<http://www.parlamento.gub.uy/leyes/ AccesoTextoLey.asp?Ley=18126&Anchor=>>>. Accessed 24 November 2015.

Villalba Clavijo, Clara. *Estudio de las Mesas de Desarrollo Rural en Uruguay como innovación institucional para la participación y la inclusión*. Montevideo: IICA – MGAP, 2015.

1. Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of Uruguay (MGAP).
2. Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA)/Universidad de la República - Uruguay (UdelaR).
3. Law No. 17.930 created the DGDR on 19 December 2005. This Directorate began operating in April 2008 and was fully institutionalised by 2010.
4. This Law provides for the creation of a Rural Development Committee in each Department, with, inside each Committee, one member of the Departmental Agricultural Council, one representative of each of the Department's agricultural cooperatives, one of each of its agricultural trade union organisations, and one representative of the Committee on Agriculture from the Department's legislative branch (*Junta Departamental*).
5. MDR functions include: i) promoting greater involvement and participation of agricultural civil society in the formulation and implementation of sectoral policies; ii) identifying the demands and concerns of rural producers in the Department; iii) channelling the various development projects; iv) promoting better articulation and coordination between the public and private sectors in the most relevant agricultural production chains; and v) directing their efforts towards the overarching goals of greater equity, local development and environmental preservation.
6. ETDRs are groups of technicians linked to the DGDR, as well as to the MGAP's Decentralisation Unit and Directorate-General of the Farm. These technicians are from agrarian, technological and social science backgrounds, jointly working in an integrated manner in each territory, thereby contributing to the processes of democratic participation in the Committees.
7. Information provided by MGAP's Decentralisation Unit, November 2014.

# Challenges in sustaining family fishing in South Asia

by Yugraj Singh Yadava<sup>1</sup> and Rajdeep Mukherjee<sup>1</sup>

## Family farming in the context of fisheries

Family farming can be broadly defined as the organisation of primary-sector activities, managed and operated by families predominantly reliant on family labour, including both genders. Within the marine capture fisheries sector (henceforth 'marine fisheries') in South Asia, artisanal fishery activities are usually carried out by a family unit using non-powered equipment and/or small boats.

However, technological advances in marine fisheries and expanding markets have resulted in the increased use of bigger mechanised boats, leading to conflict over access to fisheries resources between the two sectors—mechanised and artisanal.

The importance of sustaining artisanal fisheries, now recognised as a major challenge, is receiving increasing attention in global fisheries dialogues. It is not only important from a livelihoods perspective, but various studies have also shown that negative impacts of fishing (e.g. discards) are negligible in artisanal fisheries compared to their mechanised counterpart.

## Artisanal fisheries in South Asia

This article focuses on artisanal marine fisheries in South Asia, comprising Bangladesh, India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Marine fisheries form an

important source of livelihoods in the South Asia region. The region also has one of the largest concentrations of small-scale fishers in the world, with about 1.73 million people actively engaged in fishing.

The number of active fisherfolk<sup>2</sup> in the region grew by about 1 per cent per year between 2003 and 2014, although this average growth masks different trends in each country. Indeed, during this period, the number of active fisherfolk increased by 4.4 per cent per year in Sri Lanka and by 2.3 per cent per year in mainland India.<sup>3</sup> In Bangladesh, however, the increase in the number of active fisherfolk has been marginal, from 510,000 to 516,000 between 2007 and 2012 (see Table 1).

In the case of the Maldives, the number of active fisherfolk has gradually decreased (by 3.6 per cent each year), possibly due to structural changes in the economy (e.g. the expansion of the service sector) and changing demographics (better access to education, leading the younger generation to seek alternative livelihoods) (BOBP-IGO 2013).

With regards to the broader fisher population, in mainland India about 864,550 families are engaged in marine fisheries (CMFRI 2010). The 2010 Indian Census also recorded a total population of 3.999 million fishers, of which 91

per cent come from traditional fishing families (ibid.). In Sri Lanka about 190,780 families are engaged in marine fisheries, representing a fisher population of 825,120 in 2014 (Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development 2015). The total number of families engaged in marine fisheries in Bangladesh and the Maldives is not available.

Marine fisheries in the region comprise three basic activities: preparation, fishing and marketing. Families engaged in fishing activities act as a production unit, with men involved in fishing, and women playing an important role in mending nets, helping men in preparation for fishing and, subsequently, in marketing. However, with the advent of capital-intensive fishing practices, fisheries are being reformed more along the lines of business enterprises, with the creation and attribution of specific roles such as financiers, service providers (craft and gear), vessel operators and crew members, auctioneers, marketing agents and processing units. This development is increasingly marginalising fisherwomen.

Although women are still involved in large numbers in local retailing and primary processing and packaging, their diminishing role in the fisheries production system is a matter of concern, with implications for household decision-making, food security and

Table 1

Growth in the number of active fisherfolk in South Asia

Country	Base year	Number	Latest year	Number	Average annual growth <sup>4</sup>
Bangladesh	2007	510,000	2012	516,000	0.2%
India (mainland)	2005	889,528	2010	990,083	2.3%
Maldives	2003	14,891	2013	9,554	-3.6%
Sri Lanka	2003	148,830	2014	221,350	4.4%
South Asia	2003	156,324	2014	173,698	1.0%

Source: Authors' elaboration based on *Matsya Sampad Unnyan Aviyan* 2008/2014; *National Marine Fisheries Censuses of India* 2005/2010; *Maldives Basic Fisheries Statistics* 2003/2013; and *Sri Lanka Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources*.

social perceptions of women. This aspect requires proper attention from policymakers and should be tackled through adequate policy measures.

### **The development of marine fisheries and associated issues in the region**

Until the 1960s, artisanal fisheries were prominent in the region. At that time, a number of factors contributed to this status. First, fishery-rich coastal waters ensured lucrative fishing operations close to shore. Second, fishing operations carried out along the coastline in multiple centres allowed fishers to operate from their villages. Third, lack of connectivity in the coastal regions made coastal villages self-reliant, with a small but stable consumer base to sell the catch. Fourth, lack of access to technology and finance ensured the homogenisation of catching efficiency.

However, at the same time, these factors also stalled the transformation of subsistence-level family units into family enterprises through capital formation.

The introduction of advanced fishing technology (e.g. powered boats and gear), which started in the 1950s on an experimental basis, grew stronger over the next two decades, with governments identifying the fisheries sector as a vehicle for ensuring food security, creating employment and earning foreign exchange. International and multilateral agencies also played a major role during this phase through funding and technology transfer (Devraj and Vivekanandan 1999).

The sector experienced rapid changes in both harvest and post-harvest operations. New infrastructure, improved communication facilities and the opening of larger national and international markets all led to the consolidation of production centres. As a result, fishing harbours are now responsible for about two thirds of the region's total fish production and, in this process, control much of the market and distribution systems of the fisheries sector.<sup>5</sup>

Traditionally, in artisanal fisheries, families were a complete production unit with full ownership of both craft and gear. However, with increasing capitalisation, ownership of craft is slowly going out of their hands. For example, data on

the ownership pattern of fishing crafts in India (CMFRI 2010) show that in the artisanal sector fishing families own about 80 per cent of the vessels; in the case of the mechanised sector, ownership of crafts by fishing families varies between 30 and 80 per cent, depending on the type of craft.

The increasing trade potential of fish and fish products in the region has also led to the emergence of fishing companies, especially in the Maldives and Sri Lanka, where such companies are providing end-to-end solutions from harvesting to marketing.

### **Governmental policies**

Government policies of different countries in the region regarding artisanal fisheries can be viewed from two angles: first, the policy support provided to the sector; and second, the policy goals.

The fisheries sector receives assistance from the governments of the South Asia region through various schemes and support programmes. However, of particular importance is the legal protection provided to artisanal fishers. In India, fisheries up to 12 nautical miles from the shore come under the jurisdiction of provinces. The coastal provinces, under their Marine Fishing Regulation Act<sup>6</sup> have demarcated 3 to 5 nautical miles from the coastline as reserved for artisanal fishing. In this zone, fishing by mechanised vessels is prohibited. In Bangladesh, industrial trawlers are prohibited from fishing in waters less than 40 metres deep (Chowdhury 2009). In the Maldives, protection is provided to reef fisheries (ReefBase 2015).

In addition to legal support, governments also provide monetary benefits. However, such benefits are not particularly targeted at promoting or sustaining family fishing activities but, rather, are oriented towards improving the income and welfare of fisherfolk. In India, the government provides support for the improvement of fishing vessels (including purchase of outboard motors), improvement of housing conditions, incentives for children's education, monetary support during fishing bans, and insurance coverage (DAHDF 2015).

In Bangladesh, support is provided when fishing is prohibited, such as during the Bengali calendar month of *Ashwin* (September–October) when fishing of hilsa (*Tenualosa ilisha*, Hamilton 1822), the largest fishery in Bangladesh, is prohibited under the Protection and Conservation of Fish Act of 1950.<sup>7</sup>

However, charting a role for the artisanal sector in the development process of fisheries has yet to be achieved. Governments seem content with the transfer of technology and development of support infrastructure. There has not been enough space devoted to ensuring access to technology, balancing technology with the sustainability of fisheries, and managing the distributional impacts of technological advancements in the policy approaches of the region's different countries. The marine fisheries sector and its different strata are now mostly left to their own devices. Consequently, an increasing share of capital is being invested to promote larger fishing units, thereby jeopardising the sustainability of resources.

### **Conclusion**

Given its declining contributions to the revenues of national fisheries, the artisanal sector seems to be losing its strategic significance in the overall development of the fisheries sector in South Asia. As family fishing units have failed to scale up and become family enterprises, the concept of the family as a single production unit is waning, in light of more concentrated production and distribution networks. In terms of policy, the measures taken to assist artisanal fisheries seem to be insufficient and mostly ineffective.

Therefore, the question now is whether artisanal fisheries can remain important in national and regional contexts. Two factors, one economic and the other environmental, justify a fresh look at artisanal fisheries and attributing them the relevance they are due. While its importance has declined in terms of contribution to overall gross domestic product (GDP), the artisanal sector is still a major source of subsistence livelihoods.

Given the fact that South Asia is one of the most populous regions of the world, with



Photo: Matt Paish. Fishermen in Kovalam, Kerala, South India, 2011 <<https://goo.gl/sZ7V7x>>.

considerable poverty and unemployment rates, the downfall of artisanal fisheries could lead to many families becoming destitute. It is unlikely that the mechanised sector would gainfully absorb the labour-intensive artisanal fisheries.

Moreover, with coastal fisheries resources in the region being largely over-exploited, artisanal fisheries could be further encouraged to continue their fishing production from near-shore waters with minimum negative impacts, a policy move which would both support the livelihoods of vulnerable fisherfolk populations as well as contribute to the regulation and control of fish stocks, helping to prevent overfishing. ■

Basic Fisheries Statistics 2003 and 2013, Fisheries Management Agency, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, various years. Available from <<http://www.fishagri.gov.mv/index.php/en/statistics/fisheries-statistics>>.

BOBP-IGO. 2013. *Annual Report of the BOBP-IGO, 2012-13*. Chennai, India: Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation.

Chowdhury, A. 2009. "Present Status of Legal Support to Implement Monitoring, Control and Surveillance in Marine Fisheries Sector in Bangladesh." In *Report of the National Workshop on Monitoring, Control and Surveillance in Marine Fisheries – Bangladesh*, 91–99. Chennai, India: Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation. <[http://bobpigo.org/html\\_site/pdf/MCS-Bangladesh-REP110.pdf](http://bobpigo.org/html_site/pdf/MCS-Bangladesh-REP110.pdf)>. Accessed 18 November.

CMFRI. 2010. *National Marine Fisheries Census*. Kochi, India: Central Institute of Marine Fisheries Research.

CMFRI. 2015. *Annual Report 2014-15*. Kochi, India: Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.

DAHDF. 2015. *Annual Report 2014-15*. New Delhi, India: Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

Devraj, M., and E. Vivekanandan. 1999. "Marine capture fisheries of India: Challenges and opportunities." *Current Science* 76(3): 314–322.

International Collective in Support of Fish Workers. 2015. "Indian Legal Instruments." <<http://indianfisheries.icsf.net/en/page/827-Indian%20Legal%20Instruments.html>>. Accessed 4 November 2015.

Matsya Sampad Unnyan Aviyan 2008 and 2014 (in Bangla); Department of Fisheries, Government of Bangladesh. Available at <[https://www.fisheries.gov.bd/sites/default/files/Sankala%202008.Part\\_02.PDF](https://www.fisheries.gov.bd/sites/default/files/Sankala%202008.Part_02.PDF)> and <[https://www.fisheries.gov.bd/sites/default/files/Binder1\\_1.pdf](https://www.fisheries.gov.bd/sites/default/files/Binder1_1.pdf)>.

MFARD. 2015. "Fisheries Statistics 2014." <<http://www.fisheries.gov.lk/content.php?cnid=ststc>>. Accessed 4 November 2015.

National Marine Fisheries Censuses, Centre Marine Fisheries Research Institute, 2005, 2010. Available from <[http://eprints.cmfri.org.in/5522/1/1\\_Marine\\_Fisheries\\_Census\\_India\\_Part-I.pdf](http://eprints.cmfri.org.in/5522/1/1_Marine_Fisheries_Census_India_Part-I.pdf)> and <[http://eprints.cmfri.org.in/8998/1/India\\_report\\_full.pdf](http://eprints.cmfri.org.in/8998/1/India_report_full.pdf)>.

ReefBase. 2015. "Maldives." <<http://boblme.reefbase.org/countries.aspx?country=MDV>>. Accessed 4 November 2015.

Summary Statistics at a Glance. Ministry and Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development, Government of Sri Lanka. Available from <<http://www.fisherie.gov.lk/elfinder-2.0-rc1/files/stat/Fisheries%20Statistics/Web%20pdf%20Document.pdf>>.

1. Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation.

2. The category of 'active fisherfolk' includes people who spend most of their time and/or derive a major share of their income from fishing. Fisher families are families with one or more active fishers and that spend most of their time in fishing-related activities or derive a major share of their income from fishing. However, in the case of India, apart from this functional definition of fisher families, they also include people and families who are either fishermen by caste (as in the case of Hindu fishers) or have been engaged in fishing activities over several generations and are therefore socially recognised as fishers (as in the case of Muslim and Christian fishers). This social identity is more important for their inclusion as fisher families in the census than their economic dependence on fisheries.

3. Excluding the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the Lakshadweep Islands.

4. Percentage growth divided by number of years between the base year and the current year for which data are available:  $((\text{Number of Active Fishers (Current Year minus Base Year)} / \text{Base Year}) \times 100 / (\text{Current Year} - \text{Base Year}))$ .

5. For example, in India the mechanised fishing vessels (comprising mostly trawlers, gillnetters and purse seiners) operating from fishing harbours contribute about 75 per cent of the annual landings (CMFRI 2015). In Sri Lanka, landings from offshore/deep sea fishery are carried out by multi-day mechanised fishing vessels, and their contribution has increased from 4 per cent of total marine fish production in 1960 to 40 per cent in 2013 (MFARD 2015). In the Maldives, owing to its topology, all pole-and-line and yellow fin long-line fishing vessels operate from designated fishing harbours (Personal communication 2015). In the case of Bangladesh, as fishing harbours are limited, most of the landings take place at unorganised landing sites.

6. In the Indian context, the coastal provinces manage fisheries within the 12-nautical mile territorial limits under their Marine Fishing Regulation Act (MFRA). The Act is based on a Model Bill prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of India in 1979. The Bill was prepared in response to the growing conflict between different groups of gear users. Based on the Bill, all coastal provinces have enacted the MFRA and its rules and regulations. The coastal provinces of Goa, Karnataka and Kerala were the first to enact the MFRA in 1980. Some of the important management measures adopted under the MFRA include prohibitions on certain fishing gear, regulations on mesh size, establishment of closed seasons and areas, and demarcation of no-trawling zones, alongside other measures such as the use of turtle excluder devices and designation of no-fishing areas (International Collective in Support of Fish Workers 2015).

7. Under the Protection and Conservation of Fish Rules (1985), the Government of Bangladesh prohibits catching all kinds of fish in Hilsa spawning grounds for three days before and 11 days after the full moon, including the day of the full moon during September–October every year.

# Smallholders and family farming in the Himalayan region of India: policy considerations

by R. K. Maikhuri,<sup>1</sup> R. C. Sundriyal,<sup>1</sup> G.C.S. Negi<sup>1</sup> and P. P. Dhyani<sup>1</sup>

Agriculture is the major livelihood activity for over 70 per cent of the inhabitants of the Himalayan region. In this region, traditional farming systems are illustrative of the more general concept of family farming, whereby families are both the main managers and workers of their own plots, and consequently make the decisions related to farms, crops and their management (Sundriyal et al. 2014). In the Western Himalayan region of India, the most prevalent types of farming systems can be broadly categorised as livestock farming, mixed livestock-crop farming, and mixed crop-livestock farming, reflecting nomadic, semi-nomadic, and settled agricultural practices, respectively. Diverse environmental, biological, socio-cultural and economic conditions in the region have led to the development of varied farming systems, comprising diverse crops and cropping patterns.

Uttarakhand is one of the major Indian states of the Central Himalayan region, with a population of nearly 10.1 million people as per the 2011 census (Census Organization of India 2012). Only around 10 per cent of the total geographical area is comprised of plains where modern agriculture is possible. The traditional farming systems have close linkages and interdependencies with animal husbandry and forest ecosystems (Maikhuri et al. 2015). The majority of land holdings are small and fragmented, with an average size of 0.68 hectares, and tiny parcels of land distributed over rugged terrain. Terraced slopes (covering 85 per cent of Uttarakhand's total agricultural land) are largely rain-fed, whereas the valleys (covering 15 per cent of the state's agricultural area) are irrigated (Watershed Management Directorate 2010).

Rain-fed agriculture features high crop diversity, with over 40 types of crops and landraces of cereals, millets, pseudo-cereals, pulses, oil seeds, tubers, bulbs and spices

that are grown on farms across an elevation gradient. Some of the main traditionally grown crops are rice, wheat, maize, barley, barnyard millet, finger millet, buckwheat, necked barley, hog millet, foxtail millet, pearl millet, onion, potato, peas, pumpkin, gourd, cucumber, mustard, soybean, horse gram, lentil, kidney bean, mat bean, black gram, green gram, cow pea, rice bean, amaranth and okra. This diversity in the farm is maintained with the help of various crop combinations and crop rotations. Additionally, a number of multi-purpose tree species that yield fodder, fuelwood, fibre, fruits etc. are maintained within the non-arable farmlands.

The traditional farming system thus contributes significantly to the food and nutrition security, livelihoods, social security and well-being of the farming communities (Sundriyal et al. 2014). However, the role of smallholdings in mitigating hunger and poverty unfortunately does not receive the recognition it deserves. Recently, mountain farming has been undergoing certain transformations under the influence of

market forces, climatic variability, as well as changes in lifestyles and food habits. Village institutions are also deteriorating, which is in turn adversely affecting smallholders' economic and ecological security as well as the region's agrobiodiversity.

Some of the changing conditions that smallholders are facing include: the challenges of declining crop yields; the expansion of agriculture on marginal land; overexploitation of forests and rangelands; weed infestation; loss of crop diversity; soil erosion; hydrological imbalances; and social disintegration (Maikhuri et al. 2015). These drivers of change have raised questions about the sustainability of smallholders living in the mountains, limiting the options available to the farming communities and driving farmers—particularly male household members—to migrate to urban centres to seek off-farm jobs. Breaking this vicious cycle requires robust institutions, fair policies and adequate incentives to upgrade the quality of livelihoods, and appropriate research-based technology and innovations to revive traditional farming systems.



Photo: R.C. Sundriyal. A panoramic view of the landscape showing settlements, land holdings and forest linkages, Himalaya region, 2007.

### **Major policy issues and gaps in the Himalayan farming system**

Despite numerous plans and policies, the performance of the mountain/hill agricultural sector is still dwindling. Excessive focus on plain-lands of more 'viable' farmland sizes, and a lack of research, technological development and policy planning on mountain agriculture has further marginalised smallholders. For example, the promotion of high-yielding crop varieties requires irrigation and fertiliser inputs, which has an extremely limited scope in marginal hill farming. On the other hand, technological and market links have remained poor and insufficient for agriculture to modernise. The major focus has been on a limited number of crops that are responsive to a high level of external inputs.

The policies that predominate support large-scale farming; they are neither ecologically suited nor economically viable for the subsistence farming systems practised in the mountains. This has resulted in slow growth in the production of food grains, leading to the weakening of marginal hill farmers' food security and economic base. Due to these policies, traditional agriculture, with its diverse crops and cropping patterns, is under great threat in this region (Wymann von Dach et al. 2013). Therefore, to place hill agriculture on a sustainable path in the future, agricultural policies and planning institutions need to be more responsive to the specific needs of the Himalayan environment and its natural resources. There is a need to adopt a holistic approach to improve the livelihoods of smallholders. It should comprise the simultaneous development of the agricultural and horticultural sectors along with forest, pasture and rangeland management, as well as the cultivation and preservation of medicinal plants, as all these sectors form an integral part of smallholders' livelihoods in the Himalayan region. With regards to smallholders' farming systems, some areas of immediate concern in this sector are as follows:

**Research bias:** Despite the importance of mountain agrobiodiversity in the 'biodiversity-rich' Himalayan region, mountain food crops have been historically neglected in both agricultural policies and research and development. Agricultural development research and policy has

instead largely concentrated on only a handful of crops, such as wheat, rice, maize or sugarcane. The potential of traditional crop varieties to adapt to climate variability/change cannot be ignored and requires further research, so as to benefit the Himalayan smallholders who have been traditionally using them. Furthermore, traditional crop varieties are also well adapted to the mountain environment and can provide optimum yields with low inputs.

**Land use policies:** Large holdings, especially those devoted to the production of hybrid and fruit crops, have been promoted through incentives and subsidies. The much-required emphasis on the promotion of traditional crops in the marginal farmlands has largely been ignored, leading to a reduction in crop diversity and food security levels. Concerns regarding the Himalayan region's huge agrobiodiversity, historically maintained by family farmers, need to be addressed through land use policies which prioritise the ubiquitous hilly areas over the scarce plains.

**Subsidies on food import and credit policies:** The government has developed a mechanism to import food and subsidise it at low prices through a public distribution system, which has not only led to change in the dietary habits of hill people but also led them to abandon agriculture and traditional crop varieties which are nutritionally better and more diverse.

**Forest and wildlife conservation policies:** Recently, many parts of the Himalayan region have been facing a prevalence of wild animals (such as monkeys, wild boars, bears, elephants, porcupines etc.) which can damage crops to a great extent. The Wildlife (Protection) Act (1972), the Forest (Conservation) Act (1986) and local beliefs restrict farmers from killing such animals that are directly harming their crop yields. Although there are policies to provide compensation for damage to livestock and human life by leopards and elephants, there is only minimal provision for compensating damage to crops by monkeys, wild boars, nilgai and other animals (Watershed Management Directorate 2010). Moreover, the procedure for obtaining compensation is very cumbersome. This leads farmers to reduce cropping intensity or abandon crop fields

altogether. Therefore, crop insurance and proper compensation packages for crops damaged by wildlife should be ensured in agricultural policy for the region. Crop insurance should also cover damage due to adverse weather conditions such as hailstorms and pest attacks, among others.

**Subsidies on agricultural inputs:** The cost of inputs such as chemical fertilisers, water, pesticides and seeds has been reduced to a large extent to promote exotic and high-yielding varieties of crops—particularly in irrigated lands—at the expense of traditional hill agriculture, which boasts a huge variety of local crops that could have benefited instead from such subsidies.

### **Priority policy interventions for sustainable hill agriculture**

#### *Promote organic cultivation and value addition of traditional crops*

It is well recognised that hill agriculture is, by default, organic in nature (Maikhuri et al. 1996; Wymann von Dach et al. 2013). It is well suited to mitigate climate change, as it involves minimal or no greenhouse gas emissions and possesses a substantial capacity for carbon sequestration. Such characteristics of mountain farming can lead to enhanced incomes for smallholders, as the market demand for organically produced food has increased tremendously in recent years—both nationally and internationally. Local governments are also promoting organic foods through price support mechanisms, by either putting higher price tags on organic products sold in markets or enabling farmers to sell organic products at slightly higher prices than non-organic products to government authorities which procure food to be channelled into the public distribution system. To give further impetus to organic agriculture as well as to local food security, there is a need to widen the food basket of goods to include locally grown, traditionally and nutritionally rich organic food crops (Maikhuri et al. 2001).

#### *Proper implementation of support and extension systems*

In recent years, several agricultural and horticultural support services have been implemented in the region (e.g. Horticulture Mission, Livelihood Programme, Agriculture Technology Management Agency—ATMA—and Uttarakhand Decentralized Watershed Development Project—

**BOX 1****Priority action points for policy planning towards the sustainable development of mountain agriculture in the Himalayan region of India**

- Develop decentralised approaches for the mobilisation and strengthening of formal and informal decision-making institutional mechanisms
- Redefine research and development (R&D) priorities with a regional focus
- Develop strong linkages between R&D institutions, agricultural universities/NGOs and the private sector
- Improve integration of cross-sectoral linkages and interdependencies between different policies.
- Replicate success stories and identify lessons from failures
- Transfer appropriate hill-specific agro-technology to user groups
- Address human resource development issues in policies
- Properly implement extension and support services systems
- Ensure conservation of traditional agrobiodiversity and associated traditional knowledge
- Improve effectiveness of existing agricultural institutions, their arrangements and capabilities
- Promote organic cultivation, emphasising traditional hill crops and value addition

GRAMYA). However, few have managed to reach their intended target/user groups. Extension services and support remain weak and inadequate for the traditional farming system. A strong commitment is required to address the complex social, economic, environmental and policy issues affecting smallholders and their farming systems in the region. Box 1 outlines the main priority action points for policy planning for the sustainable development of mountain agriculture in the Central Himalayan region of India.

**Final considerations**

Increasing the social sustainability of farming systems can be accomplished by generating employment opportunities, through such initiatives as capacity and skills development programmes in simple, hill-specific agro-technologies; the provision of increased access to resources and opportunities for women; and attracting youth to farming by creating economically rewarding jobs. There is a huge range of potential initiatives to empower rural women to make decisions about farming along the production and distribution processes, and improve their control over resources through policies and institutions that may at once promote social and gender equity while also addressing environmental and economic sustainability (Palni et al. 1998).

If domestic plans and policies are not amended in light of the currently changing socio-economic environment, the Himalayan region will certainly suffer the effects in terms of loss of biodiversity and declining food and nutrition security, due to the lack of conditions to compete with global markets. Therefore, efforts to conserve the traditional crop-diverse Himalayan family farming systems will necessitate the creation of new incentives, the development of appropriate policies and the negotiation of institutional arrangements, in particular those that promote greater involvement of local people in policy planning: this may enable mountain family farming systems to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The economic and social empowerment of women and gender dimensions of biodiversity conservation and management must also be addressed, since women are the main conservationists and custodians of the Himalayan agrobiodiversity and farming systems (Maikhuri et al. 2015). Indeed, as described earlier, significant portions of the male population have been out-migrating in search of jobs, leaving women, children and elderly people behind in the villages and thereby leaving rural women with the responsibilities of natural resource management. Valuing the traditional

knowledge and wisdom of family farmers can likewise be of immense value for adaptation, particularly in the era of climate change (Swaminathan 1992).

There is, therefore, a need to follow adequate policies, implement strong institutional initiatives, develop specific research on mountain family farming and incorporate some of its findings for the people of the Indian state of Uttarakhand and the wider Himalayan region to ultimately achieve food and economic security in tandem with the conservation of traditional agrobiodiversity. ■

Census Organization of India. 2012. "Uttarakhand population census data 2011." <<http://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/uttarakhand.html>>. Accessed 18 November 2015.

Maikhuri, R.K., K.S. Rao, and K.G. Saxena. 1996. "Traditional crop diversity for sustainable development of Central Himalayan agroecosystems." *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology* 3: 8–31.

Maikhuri, R.K., K.S. Rao, and R.L. Semwal. 2001. "Changing scenario of Himalayan agroecosystems: loss of agrobiodiversity, an indicator of environ-mental change in Central Himalaya, India." *The Environmentalist* 20: 23–39.

Maikhuri, R.K., V.S. Negi, L.S. Rawat, A.K. Sahni, R.C. Sundriyal, and P.P. Dhyani. 2015. "Traditional agriculture systems." *Current Science* 108(9): 1581–1583.

Palni, L.M.S., R.K. Maikhuri, and K.S. Rao. 1998. "Conservation of the Himalayan agroecosystems: Issues and priorities. Technical Paper V." In *Eco-regional Co-operation for Biodiversity Conservation in the Himalaya*, 253–290. New York: United Nations Development Programme.

Sundriyal, R.C., G.C.S. Negi, R.K. Maikhuri, D.S. Rawat, R.S. Rawal, and P.P. Dhyani. 2014. "Family and smallholder farming in Himalayan communities." In *Deep Roots*, 105–108, 253. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Tudor Rose.

Swaminathan, M.S. 1992. "Cultivating food for a developing world." *Environmental Science and Technology* 26(110): 4–7.

Watershed Management Directorate. 2010. *Uttarakhand state: Perspective and strategic plan 2009–2027*. Dehradun, India: Watershed Management Directorate.

Wymann von Dach, S., R. Romeo, A. Vita, M. Wurzinger, and T. Kohler (eds). 2013. *Mountain farming is family farming: A contribution from mountain areas to the International Year of Family Farming 2014*. Rome: FAO, CDE, BOKU: 100.

1. G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development.

# How can short food supply chains be a lever for the development of a local economy based on peasant family farms?

by Abdourahmane Ndiaye<sup>1</sup>

Peasant family farming is an agricultural production organisation system, developed from a set of individual peasant family farms, where each farm is a family-based agricultural production unit aiming to meet the needs of its members. It is, therefore, not necessarily managed only according to market-driven considerations. Indeed, as it does not consider profit as an end in and of itself, it can be characterised as pertaining to the realm of social and solidarity economy, in the same way as non-profit organisations. More than just return on investment, this type of organisation aims for the reproduction of the family unit. According to authors such as Marcel Mauss or Karl Polanyi, market relations find themselves re-embedded in social relations (Polanyi 1944). The market, therefore, does not play the main socialisation role that liberal economic theory assumes it to play. Peasant family farms are understood here as systemic organisations which derive their legitimacy from the family unit and set their activities in an axiological, institutional, socio-political and economic environment that is at once a resource, an opportunity and a threat.

Can peasant family farming become the lever for an alternative peasant-centred development model driven by the overarching goal of responding to local necessities by means of 'non-outsourceable' jobs? Responding to this challenge is all the more pressing, considering that peasant family farming is 'held captive' by a globalised capitalist value chain, caught between upstream agribusiness seed producers (such as Monsanto, Dupont, Syngenta, Bayer, Sakata etc.) and industry, on the one hand, and downstream large-scale distribution oligopolies on the other. With the disappearance of self-consumption, farmers have now become entrepreneurs who commit most or all of their production to the market. In this context, globalisation

is identified as one of the main factors putting peasant family farming systems at risk and in peril (Amin 2012). How then may one 'deglobalise'?

One possible solution may be Short Food Supply Chains (SFSC) serving as a lever for the 'relocalisation' of economic activities and the fostering of a new development model. SFSCs can indeed be considered a 'path to liberation' or 'to independence'. With their present forms traceable to the Japanese *teikei*<sup>2</sup> which emerged in the early 1960s, SFSCs can be defined as a commercialisation system for agricultural products that operates either through direct sales from producers to consumers, or through indirect sales (provided there are few intermediaries). A slightly narrower definition understands them as initiatives which mobilise no more than one intermediary between producer and consumer (Chaffotte and Chiffolleau 2007) so as to reinforce the concept of 'direct sales' and thereby improve the producer's margins on the sale of goods. SFSCs are also defined by the reduction of the geographical distance between producers and consumers or, even more strictly, by the necessary occurrence of face-to-face interactions between them, heralding a social embeddedness of the local food system (Hinrichs 2000).

SFSCs are, in any case, based on *organised proximity*, which is indeed strongly correlated with the number of intermediaries between the producer and the final consumer. Limitations on the number of intermediaries, whichever way they may occur, aim to provide a fair income to producers, on the one hand, as well as transparency in the distribution process and traceability of the products for consumption on the other.

Proximity, transparency, traceability and fairness are necessary for SFSCs to effectively contribute to maintaining a local

'know-how economy' by adding economic value and providing learning and training processes. More localised consumption patterns can also contribute to a greater reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, by nature of the fact that food travels less between producers and consumers than in traditional supply chains. Furthermore, they also facilitate the traceability of food, face-to-face interactions between producers and consumers, and the building of solidarity links between production areas (rural or peri-urban) and consumption zones (urban).

Moreover, in light of frequent food contamination scandals plaguing large-scale agro-industrial chains (such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy—BSE, more commonly known as mad cow disease—or contaminated soybeans), the promotion of SFSCs can also enable improvements in food safety and potentially lead to a renewed appreciation for local, seasonal foods.

SFSCs have been acquiring an increasingly diverse array of forms and nomenclatures—proximity agriculture; peasant agriculture; local agriculture; organic farming; farmers' markets; peasant markets; community-supported agriculture (CSA); barter markets; local produce markets linked to *locavore* movements etc.—to meet the correspondingly diverse expressions of a growing demand for locally produced food. These multiple declinations around a single concept illustrate a considerable dispersion in the sustainable consumption movement, but the equally multiplying forms of engagement and action also reveal the movement's dynamism.

While the role of SFSCs in bridging the gap between producers and consumers has drawn considerable media attention in countries such as France (Maréchal 2008; Chiffolleau 2012), they remain virtually unknown in Africa, where they could nonetheless play a decisive role in reducing both the carbon footprint of the



Photo: FAO. Family farmers' market, Ghana, 2012.

“

Peasant family farming is ... caught between upstream agribusiness seed producers and industry, on the one hand, and downstream large-scale distribution oligopolies on the other.

food consumption chain as well as the high levels of food import dependency of most African countries.

SFSCs are not only alternative trading networks differing from conventional market exchange networks; they also represent a new mode of organisation of territories and sectors (Amemiya, Bénézech, and Renault 2008). In this respect, they are identified as a subset of a larger field often referred to as 'alternative food systems' or 'Alternative Agri-Food Networks' (AAFN) (Dubuisson-Quellier and Le Velly 2008), especially in the English-speaking world. While other roughly equivalent terms such as 'S3A' have also been used in the past (Deverre and Lamine 2010), in France and elsewhere the term *circuits courts* (literally meaning 'short circuits') is largely predominant<sup>3</sup> (Maréchal 2008).

The innovations introduced by these alternative systems or networks can be observed in terms of the conviviality of social relations, their personalisation and the authenticity of face-to-face relationships; they are meant as a clear break with the cold, anonymous and impersonal environments of large supply chains, largely embodied by the oligopolies of large-scale distribution and, in particular, their main point of sale—the supermarket (Hinrichs 2003). This analysis fits with the idea of reciprocity developed by Karl Polanyi (1944), which views material exchange as an extension of social relationships, and whereby markets are embedded in social institutions. SFSCs can thus be identified

as a pillar of a new development model, in stark contrast with highly specialised and intermediated intensive growth paradigms, and as part of more structural endeavours towards a 'relocalisation' of markets, a refocusing of the creation of value on the farm, and the choice of efficient, ecological and autonomous production models (Van Der Ploeg et al. 2000). Insofar as they may contribute to these efforts, SFSCs can indeed constitute a powerful development pathway (Mundler, Jauneau, Guermontprez, and Pluvinage 2009).

SFSCs also represent the reactivation of ancient modes of distribution that were greatly undermined by the modernisation of economies and the advent of mass distribution.<sup>4</sup> They make use of a series of innovative instruments, such as basket delivery systems directed at urban consumers willing to support local agriculture. Thus, in addition to the reduction or absence of intermediaries, it is also the collective or individual nature of the different initiatives taken to advance SFSCs that allows for a typology of their varying forms to be established (Chaffotte 2006).

SFSCs thus allow producers to free themselves from asymmetric market relations with intermediaries (wholesalers, processing industries etc.), to exercise greater control over their own prices and to 'relocalise' agriculture, since geographical proximity between production and consumption is one of its fundamental characteristics. Nevertheless, SFSCs seem to constitute themselves usually more as

“

They [SFSCs] remain virtually unknown in Africa, where they could nonetheless play a decisive role in reducing both the carbon footprint of the food consumption chain as well as the high levels of food import dependency of most African countries.

hybridisations with predominant marketing and distribution systems, rather than as completely autonomous alternatives (Ilbery and Maye 2006; Amemiya, Bénézech, and Renault, 2008). Indeed, SFSC prices do not merely reflect production costs; rather, they are determined by producers by taking into account the prices of other marketing and distribution channels.

This strategy aims to address a double challenge: first, the necessity of maintaining the customers of these local markets by neutralising potential competitors via prices that are sufficiently competitive; and second, the necessity for SFSCs to be coherent, in providing sufficiently uniform prices across different marketing and distribution channels (Dubuisson-Quellier and Le Velly 2008).<sup>5</sup>

The antithesis of Adam Smith’s ‘invisible hand’, such a market regulation system is, therefore, organised on a given territory by a group of actors with the aim of finding new social compromises that enhance the territorial resource, this resource being at the heart of such a distributional compromise.

This is what justifies a conception of the territory that goes beyond traditional economic considerations linked to geographical proximity (such as economies of scale, transaction costs and agglomeration economies) and introduces a relational dimension (Courlet 2008; Remy and Voyé 1992). The territory can thus be

conceived as a system of actors linked by social relationships that evolve in a space–time continuum, which in turn is constantly transformed by the changes and (re)positioning of these involved actors. The territory is, therefore, an active framework in which different actors’ individual participation and agency meet with each other, and through their interactions in this given space mould the territory’s institutions—with ‘institutions’ understood here in a broad sense as “a set of codes, formal rules and informal constraints”, as defined by Douglas North (1990).

Within the aforementioned framework of territorial and relational dynamics that shape and regulate SFSCs, one may thus distinguish at least four main categories of actors involved in the development of these chains in their respective territories (Lanciano and Saleilles 2010): i) individual or collective consumers; ii) individual or collectively associated producers; iii) logistics (storers, processors, transporters etc.) and commercial (responsible for sales outlets, sales systems etc.) intermediaries; and iv) institutional actors, such as central and local governments, farmer and producer organisations, consultative bodies etc.

A fifth category can be added to the above list: the social and solidarity economy actors that create spaces for collective action in favour of cooperative and solidary ‘eco-citizens’.



Photo: Mercy Corps/USAID. Niger beneficiary in community garden, Nigeria, 2014 <<https://goo.gl/uk4xos>>.



Photo: FAO. Beneficiary of the Programme for the Development of Urban and Peri-Urban Horticulture, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2008.

“

The creation and further development of SFSCs is of particular relevance to foster more autonomous and self-sufficient local economies based on peasant family farming in countries of the developing world.

In conclusion, the creation and further development of SFSCs is of particular relevance to foster more autonomous and self-sufficient local economies based on peasant family farming in countries of the developing world, in particular in the African continent. However, a crucial determinant of their transformative capacity rests on the degree of collective social organisation between the various categories of actors involved at the territorial level. ■

Amemiya, H., D. Bénézech, and M. Renault. 2008. "Les circuits courts: un 'monde de commercialisation' interpersonnel?" In *Les circuits courts alimentaires*, edited by G. Marechal, 113–123. Dijon: Educagri.

Amin, S. 2012. "Préface. Agriculture paysanne, agriculture familiale moderne. Agricultures capitalistes ou agricultures dans le capitalisme: les réformes foncières nécessaires en Asie et en Afrique." In *Réponses radicales à la crise agraire et rurale en Afrique. Agriculture paysanne, démocratisation des sociétés rurales et souveraineté alimentaire*, edited by B. Founou-Tchuigoua and A. Ndiaye, xiii–xxxiii. Dakar: CODESRIA.

Chaffotte, L. 2006. *Typologie des circuits courts et circuits de vente directe. Typologie issue des fiches de commercialisation CROC et cahiers de l'Observatoire*. Training tool. Montpellier: INRA.

Chaffote, L., and Y. Chiffolleau. 2007. "Vente directe et circuits courts: évaluations, définitions et typologie." *Cahier de l'Observatoire* No. 1. Montpellier: INRA.

Chiffolleau, Y. 2012. "Circuits courts alimentaires, dynamiques relationnelles et lutte contre l'exclusion en agriculture." *Économie rurale* 6/2012, No. 332, 88–101.

Courlet, C. 2008. *L'économie territoriale*. Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble.

Deverre, C., and C. Lamine. 2010. "Les systèmes agroalimentaires alternatifs: Une revue de travaux anglophones en sciences sociales." *Economie rurale* No. 317, 57–73.

Dubuisson-Quellier, S., and R. Le Velly. 2008. "Les circuits courts entre alternative et hybridation." In *Les circuits courts alimentaires. Bien manger dans les territoires*, edited by G. Maréchal, 105–112. Dijon: Educagri.

Hinrichs, C. 2000. "Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural market." *Journal of Rural Studies* Vol. 16, No. 1, 295–303.

Hinrichs, C. 2003. "The practice and politics of food system localization." *Journal of Rural Studies* Vol. 19, No. 1, 33–35.

Ilbery, B., and D. Maye. 2006. "Retailing local food in the Scottish-English border: a supply chain perspective." *Geoforum* Vol. 37, No. 3, 352–367.

Lanciano, E., and S. Saleilles. 2010. "Le développement des circuits courts alimentaires. Un nouveau souffle entrepreneurial dans l'agriculture?" *Congrès international francophone sur l'entrepreneuriat et la PME*, Bordeaux.

Maréchal, G., ed. 2008. *Les circuits courts alimentaires*. Dijon: Educagri.

Mundler, P., J.-C. Jauneau, B. Guernonprez, and J. Pluvinage. 2009. "The sustainability of small dairy farms in six regions of France. The roles of resources and local institutions." *EAAE-IAAE seminar 'Small farms: Decline or persistence'*, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK.

North, D. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Polanyi, K. 1944. *La Grande transformation. Aux origines politiques et économiques de notre temps*. Translated by Maurice Angeno and Catherine Malamoud. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, Collection Bibliothèque des Sciences humaines.

Remy, J., and L. Voyé. 1992. *La ville: vers une nouvelle définition?* Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan.

Van der Ploeg, J.-D., H. Renting, G. Brunori, K. Knickel, J. Mannion, T. Marsden, K. de Roest, E. Sevilla-Guzmán, and F. Ventura. 2000. "Rural development: From practices and policies towards theory." *Sociologia ruralis* Vol. 40, No. 4, 391–408.

1. Bordeaux Montaigne University.
2. A Japanese system of community-driven and supported agricultural production whereby consumers purchase food directly from farmers.
3. They are also referred to as 'alternative food initiatives' or 'local food systems'. The main difference between the Francophone and Anglophone literatures is related to the latter's main focus on labels linking production to a territory (IGP, AOC, 'slow food'), while from the French perspective, labels and seals of quality have been developed to value products for consumers who may be local but in most cases are distant (Deverre and Lamine 2010).
4. Some of the first food 'short circuits' can be traced to utopian experiences of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in England or the French Phalansteries (Fourierists) and *Familistères* (Fourierists and Godinists), among other types of intentional communities. The goal of SFSCs in that context was to prevent speculation and profiteering activities of capitalist entrepreneurs by gaining greater control over the prices of consumer goods and bypassing intermediaries.
5. In this respect SFSCs can at times be considered forms of disguised protectionism. They can indeed become invisible non-tariff barriers of sorts. These might work in favour of both *geographical proximity* (linked to reductions in physical distance or to more efficient logistical infrastructure connecting points of production and distribution etc.) and *organised proximity* (linked to the social relations and networks which can help bridge social, cultural and other gaps between producers and consumers).

**International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)**

United Nations Development Programme

SBS, Quadra 1, Bloco J, Ed. BNDES, 13º andar

70076-900 Brasília, DF - Brazil

Telephone: +55 61 2105 5000

[ipc@ipc-undp.org](mailto:ipc@ipc-undp.org) ■ [www.ipc-undp.org](http://www.ipc-undp.org)



Policy in Focus - December 2015.

“

Family farming, instead of disappearing, has remained a key sector of agriculture and the economy of rural areas in countries of the Global South.

**Elizabeth Mpofo**

“

Family farming is currently at the centre of a much broader agenda that transcends merely sectorial or productive considerations by integrating a wealth of other dimensions, including regional and territorial development, public health and nutrition, the promotion of the autonomy and equality of rural women, and the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources.

**Caio Galvão de França and Adoniram Peraci Sanches**

“

Peasant family farming is ... caught between upstream agribusiness seed producers and industry, on the one hand, and downstream large-scale distribution oligopolies on the other.

**Abdourahmane Ndiaye**



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations**

**ipea** Institute for Applied  
Economic Research

Ministry of  
**Planning**

Ministry of  
**Agrarian Development**

