

Session 3
Farmer Constituency
Mr. Wali Haider

Statement of the Farmer's Constituency from APRCEM at the APFSD 2016

Read By: Wali Haider, Roots for Equity, Pakistan & Focal Point of the Farmers Constituency

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Respected Chair, Excellences, Delegates. Colleagues from the UN Agencies, Major Groups and the CSOs

I am Wali Haider from Roots for Equity, Pakistan representing Farmers' Constituency at the Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism.

We heartily welcome the emphasis that Executive Secretary Ms. Shamshad Akhtar placed on the urgent need to remove poverty and hunger, in her opening remarks. Asia Pacific faces special and additional challenges with regard to poverty and hunger and in ensuring sustainable development. More than 65% of global population in hunger is located in Asia Pacific. While Goal 1 and Goal 2 has special emphasis on removing hunger and including food security, many other goals also touch upon the measures supporting this goal. However, we are concerned that well understood concept of food sovereignty, which connects sustainable agriculture, food security, self-sufficiency, synergistic relationship between the farmers and farming, and national sovereignty in terms of policy space on issues of food and agriculture has suffered an obvious oversight within the SDGs,

Dear Chair, Excellences and Friends,

Though we have enough food production to feed the global population, reportedly more than 800 million people lie in the vicious circle of hunger. If we are to consider nutritional and food safety aspect, the number of people having inadequate food will rise manifold. Climate change impacts, poisoning of land with excessive use of chemical fertilizers and the pesticides, emphasis on industrial agriculture despite the fact that a number of studies including that from IAASTD saying that small and family farmers are the ones who feed the world. Lack of right to land and secure tenurial rights to the farmers and particularly women farmers, grabbing and subversion of agricultural land, neoliberal policies including economic, trade and aid policies adversely affecting rights and sovereignty of farmers, small food producers, indigenous people and fisherfolk etc.

The push for liberalization of agriculture under the WTO rules followed by a plethora of free trade agreements has provided global corporations market access to the developing countries, while agricultural products from developing countries are subject to various tariff and non tariff barriers in developed countries market. Farmers in developing countries also face hugely unequal playing field with large export oriented subsidies in developed countries, while food stocking programmes in poor and developing countries are under intense pressure by developed countries to be dismantled. Trade liberalization in its wake has allowed wide-spread practice of chemical intensive industrial agriculture, agro fuel production, and genetically engineered seeds and crops.

Agriculture and food production being marked as a lucrative sector has resulted in a tsunami of land grabs. At the same time, the pursuance of mega development projects for economic development and climate change mitigations such as mega dams, mining, oil exploration, creation of national parks, high voltage transmission and distribution lines and pursuance of extractive industries and special economic zones in indigenous territories and other rural communities with subsequent militarization process has led to land alienation and destruction of survival sources, cultures and identity of indigenous peoples, small scale farmers, fishing communities.

We strongly recommend that APFSD roadmap must

Recognize indigenous people's rights over their land and resources and take their free, prior and informed consent before pursuing any forms of development processes affecting their land.

Recognize and ensure land rights of small and landless farmers, including women farmers;

Land lease to the private sector including foreign sovereign states, corporations and investors should not be allowed, especially when land rights of small producers and communities are being violated;

Ensure the right to healthy, nutritious, culturally appropriate food for all.

Recognition and implementation of local and traditional knowledge systems for food and agricultural production to strengthen the livelihood, health of local communities and to conserve biodiversity;

Premised on food sovereignty, promote and implement sustainable agriculture practices in order to cope with climate crises and environmental catastrophe.

Eradication of toxic chemical agricultural production systems that are injurious to the health of all living-beings, pollute ecological systems and destroy biodiversity.

Economic growth model must be premised on ensuring decent livelihood that delivers a living wage to all small producers especially women.

Thank you for your attention.