

Statement from Farmers Constituency of the APRCEM in the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 8, 2021

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Respected Chair

Thanks for giving me time to speak at this Forum. I represent CEOEDECON, India and Farmers Constituency of the Asia Poacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism.

350 million in acute hunger were added during pandemic to 1.9 billion people already facing difficulties in accessing food (FAO, 2021). 120 million children are stunted, wasted or obese. In 2019, UN food agencies (FAO, UNICEF and WFP) estimated that 3 million needed to be lifted out of hunger every single month until the end of 2030 to achieve sustainable development goals. However, that seems to be highly unlikely due to economic recession now. The lack of rapid progress on SDG 2 spirals over and threatens underachievement in other SDGs too.

The dominant food system is highly unsustainable. Neo-liberal policies, corporate driven food governance, monoculture, use of antibiotics in poultry industry, neglect of gender and social protection, long value chains, highly unequal trade and narrow interpretation of science and technology which completely neglects experiential and traditional knowledge of farmers are critical systemic issues needed to overcome to achieve rapid progress on SDG 2 and the Agenda 2030.

But here I would like to draw your attention to the issue to land which is central to farmers. Host of false climate solutions in the guise of “Nature based Solutions” and “achieving Net Zero Emissions” is increasing forest, water and land grabs. IPBES quotes IPCC report that to slow global warming by 2050 current use of land used for biofuels around 15 to 30 million ha needs to be expanded to 724 million ha, a landmass equal to Australia . (IPBES, 2019)

Nestle, which has a supply chain emission double as compared to its host country Switzerland, will require at least 4.4 million ha land for land based offsets. Nestle, Italian energy company ENI and Shell, together will require more than 20 million ha of land, equal to entire forest land of Malaysia (GRAIN, 2021). Even desirable solution like solar energy has huge land requirements and has been increasing conflict with the communities. Global Witness reports that 4 land and environmental defenders were killed every week in 2019. Asia Pacific is the second most deadly region and agribusiness the second biggest reason of conflict and killings. IPs are represented disproportionately among those who are killed.

Last but not the least, we also have serious concerns with the “World Food Systems Summit” with regard to its process and the emphasis on market based solutions and sustainable intensification of agriculture without due consideration to agro-ecology, food sovereignty, human rights and farmers rights. Only real zero emissions and real agroecological solutions and not false solutions can ensure a resilient recovery.

Thanking you