

## FINAL DECLARATION OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT ICARRD+20

**We**, representatives of the official delegations participating at the Second International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development +20 (hereinafter, ICARRD+20 or the Conference) who subscribe to this Declaration, **recognize** the essential role of agrarian reform, sustainable rural development policies and responsible land governance to promote food and nutrition security, ending hunger and poverty, conflict prevention, and the transformation of living conditions for peoples and communities in rural areas through just, equitable, and sustainable actions, with a view to implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

**We value** previous efforts and recognize their contributions made to the adoption of the Peasants' Charter (1979); of the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security" (VGGT, 2012); of the "Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security" (2004); of the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (UNDRIP, 2007); of the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas" (UNDROP, 2018); and of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD, 1992) and its decision (2019) to integrate the VGGT in the agenda of soil degradation neutrality. We recognize that the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028) serves as reference point and tool for advancing agrarian reform policies and for the protection and promotion of rights to land and territory.

**We affirm** that ICARRD+20 promoted and organized by the Government of Colombia, co-organized by the government of Brazil, and supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), contributes to the global alignment of the agendas on land, soil protection, biodiversity, and peace, linked to climate action and to food and nutrition security. Furthermore, it renews and updates the principles of Porto Alegre Declaration (2006) and reaffirms the commitment of States to human rights and with secure and sustainable access to land and other essential natural resources for peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

### **WE HAVE THEREFORE CONSENTED THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION:**

1. **We recognize** that rural peoples and communities in their diversity form a plural universe that includes, among others, peasants; smallholders, family farmers; Indigenous Peoples; Foresters; riverine, fishing, coastal communities; pastoralists; agrarian workers and other working people in rural areas; landless people; Afro-descendants, local communities, people of different generations; people living with disabilities, as well as rural women, young people, girls; and other groups in vulnerable

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situations. For ease of reference, 'peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' will be used throughout this Declaration, unless otherwise specified.

2. **We note with concern** that the growing convergence of environmental, climatic, and food crises deepens inequalities and land and natural resources conflicts, with effect on the quality of life of present and for future generations, affecting disproportionately peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. This situation is reflected in a trend towards land concentration and changes in land use, which modifies its agricultural purpose and leads to socio-environmental conflicts and human rights violations, such as forced displacement and dispossession. This directly impacts the productive capacity, agricultural diversification, and food supply of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, compromising not only their permanence and vitality in the territories, but also the economic and food resilience of society as a whole.
3. **We note** that hunger and malnutrition, food insecurity, poverty, and rural unemployment are phenomena intrinsically linked to inequality in access to and control over land, water, and other natural resources. This inequality prevents peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from having the necessary conditions to create dignified and sustainable livelihoods over time.
4. **We underline** that biodiversity loss, soil degradation, overfishing, and the degradation of marine and inland water ecosystems, as well as water scarcity are not isolated phenomena, but rather interdependent processes that mutually accelerate one another, leading to desertification, the loss of ecosystems and their functions and natural services. Ecosystem health is essential for soil fertility and the regulation of the water cycle; therefore, its deterioration affects agricultural productivity, fisheries, the availability of drinking water, and social well-being.
5. **We recognize** the challenges of the current agrifood system and the need to prevent agricultural land from being treated exclusively as a financial asset, in order to curb its concentration and unsustainable use, as well as to reduce barriers to access. Within the framework of national regulatory systems and consistent with domestic legislation, and with the objective of transforming agrifood systems to promote collective and sustainable management, we recognize the importance of protecting biodiversity and moving towards fairer, more sustainable, and resilient agrifood systems, and we propose complementarity with peasant, smallholder, family, and community farming and sustainable production.
6. **We consider** it a priority to strengthen the capacities of formal and customary justice systems, to ensure effective access to justice and the protection of tenure and property rights of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. To this end, we promote peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms, the establishment of specialized agrarian judges, the strengthening of legal certainty, and the efficiency of judicial processes, consistent with national constitutional systems and

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domestic legislation. These measures contribute to rebuilding the social fabric and preventing violence in the territories.

7. **We note with concern** any form of dispossession and forced displacement inconsistent with national legislation that disregards the rights to land and territory, affects the integrity of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. We resolve to promote traditional production and exchange practices, while supporting sustainable development of resources
8. **We note with concern** that women and girls face greater barriers in accessing land tenure, ownership, and secure, documented rights to land, forests and water, as well as in enjoying adequate housing, engaging in agriculture and related primary and post-harvest activities, and accessing community infrastructure such as care facilities and sanitation.
9. **We reaffirm** our commitment to creating opportunities for young people to strengthen their capacities as agents of change and to build their life projects in rural areas with dignity, through actions that reduce gaps arising from adult-centered normative and institutional frameworks, as well as unequal inheritance systems, and that improve their access to education, health, culture, technology, connectivity, and productive and financial resources.
10. **We recognize** that States have the primary responsibility to formulate and implement policies and strategies for agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and responsible governance of land tenure, in accordance with their own economic and social development priorities. These policies represent a strategic public investment, with social, economic, and environmental returns, and are necessary to combat hunger and poverty, and to reduce inequalities. To maximize their impact and ensure their implementation, it is crucial to foster partnership among governments, peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, civil society, the private sector, and other interested parties.
11. **We value** the active, free, and meaningful participation of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities as rights holders and agents of change in the design, implementation, and monitoring of policies on agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and responsible governance of land tenure. We likewise recognize the importance of alliances and broad social participation—among social movements, producers, consumers, workers, academics, governments, the private sector, and other stakeholders—to counter the concentration, grabbing, dispossession, and change in the use of land, water, forests, and agrifood systems.
12. **We call** for the establishment of a structure and system which will be headed by a Coordinating Committee, under the auspices of FAO, that will draw up guidelines and a funding model for the identification of the country that will host the next ICARRD. The guidelines must include a commitment to a rotational system on a regional basis in order to ensure that the opportunity to host the conference is provided to all regions, so as to

promote equitability, inclusivity and shared ownership. The conference should be organized at most every three years. This approach will enable those States that wish to make a bid to host the conference to follow their internal governmental approval processes towards the formalization of their bid.

## ICARRD+20 VISION AND PRINCIPLES

- 13 **Driven by our determination** to implement policies of agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and responsible land tenure governance, we seek to transform the conditions of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, through fair, equitable and inclusive actions, that recognise the participation of social organisations and movements in the following areas: ending hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition; the promotion of gender equality and equity; generational inclusion; social, economic, environmental, agrarian and climate justice; promoting equitable access to, control of, and distribution of land, water, and productive resources; the implementation of fair, sustainable and resilient agrifood systems that consider food production, distribution, exchange and consumption; differentiated protection for peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and their active, free and meaningful participation; the respect for free, prior and informed consent for its right-holders; the strengthening of local markets; access to justice; regenerative land and soil use; respect for human rights; recognition and protection of human rights and nature defenders; as well as peacebuilding and conflict prevention.
- 14 **We, therefore, agree** on the following principles to guide agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and responsible land, forests, fisheries tenure governance and sustainable water management policies:
  - 14.1. Recognising the contribution of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, to food production, biodiversity conservation, soil protection, the maintenance of marine and inland water ecosystems, water sources, climate adaptation and mitigation, and supply food in both rural and urban areas.
  - 14.2. Promoting equitable access to, control over and distribution of rural land, fisheries, forests, water and land with agricultural potential, as well as responsible governance of land, forest and fisheries tenure and sustainable water management, in order to democratise rural and urban societies.
  - 14.3. Protection and recognition of all collective, communal, and community-based forms of ownership, use, and tenure of land, fisheries, forests, water and territories, including those recognised by customary law and common property systems.
  - 14.4. Differentiated protection of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, in line with the principles of non-discrimination, gender equality and equity for the formulation and implementation of agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and responsible land, forests, fisheries tenure governance policies and sustainable water management.

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- 14.5. Active, free, and meaningful participation, and respect for free, prior, and informed consent.
- 14.6. Promoting agroecological and other innovative approaches to achieve fair, sustainable and resilient agrifood systems to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition.
- 14.7. Conservation, protection, and restoration of biodiversity, ecosystems, soils for food production for the benefit of present and future generations.

## ICARRD+20 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15 To intensify the implementation of the Committee on World Food Security's (CFS) Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security (VGGT), the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the context of National Food Security, Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF), the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment, and the implementation of the decisions under the three Rio Conventions, within policies and legislative frameworks on agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and land tenure governance.
- 16 To promote policies and governance frameworks that encourage the protection of rights and the active, free and meaningful participation of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, in collective action. Support their autonomous organisational processes, social mobilisation and enforcement of rights, which contribute to overcoming inequalities in access to and control of land, fisheries, forests and water.
- 17 To encourage that responsible land, forests, fisheries tenure governance, sustainable water management, sustainable rural development, and agrarian reform policies include affirmative actions to promote equal access to rights and to counteract structural discrimination affecting peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. There must be differentiated measures for the recognition and strengthening of Indigenous Peoples and local communities: We urge States to design and implement differentiated policies.
- 18 To recognize the diversity of property regimes and to promote the harmonization of customary law with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, thereby strengthening community-based norms so that the recognition and registration of property rights, land use, and tenure—especially collective and women's rights—reflect the progressive and redistributive nature of agrarian reform and responsible land tenure governance policies, in accordance with national and international human rights frameworks.

- 19 To advance comprehensive policies that foster sustainable and equitable access to and control of land, forests, fisheries, and water; strengthen access to financial services and technical assistance; promote community organization and partnerships; consolidate markets for peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, including public procurement programs linked to smallholders and family farming, such as those for school meals, that promote infrastructure and economic opportunities for fair, equitable, inclusive, and resilient rural transformation.
- 20 To ensure gender equality and equity in agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and responsible land tenure governance policies by promoting women's effective access to land, financial services, including credit, appropriate technologies, and productive support services, including health services and care centers. Furthermore, to ensure the full recognition and exercise of their inheritance and conjugal property rights; to adopt affirmative measures that eliminate the structural barriers which have limited their participation and autonomy in rural areas; and to promote monitoring indicators.
- 21 To strengthen the capacities of rural youth to develop their life projects in rural areas by facilitating access to land and other productive assets through inclusive mechanisms not limited to inheritance, promoting the right to education, and creating conditions for both agricultural and non-agricultural rural employment.
- 22 To promote equitable access to science, research, and the dissemination of both traditional and scientific knowledge in order to foster the generation of solutions tailored to their intended contexts and that advance sustainable rural development; as well as to promote access to appropriate technologies and equipment to ensure digital inclusion and reduce barriers in rural work, thereby supporting the well-being and retention of youth in rural areas.
- 23 To expand the coverage of social protection and equitable access to essential public services for peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and to integrate social protection into sustainable rural development policies as a strategy to eradicate rural poverty and hunger in both rural and urban areas.
- 24 To advance the development and implementation of sustainable management and cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms for land, forests, fisheries, water, and the environment, taking into account national legislation, priorities and country specific contexts, as well as strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation and for the transformation of agri-food systems, in order to: protect the intended use of land according to its agrological and ecological conditions; ensure the long-term productivity of marine and inland waters; reconcile the various uses of land and water resources; safeguard the rights of peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities; and promote transitions toward fair, sustainable, and resilient agri-food systems. We encourage States to recognise and support agroecological and other innovative approaches, artisanal fisheries, traditional knowledge systems as important

pathways for climate adaptation and mitigation in the rural sector. Rural development policies, rural advisory services and technical assistance must prioritise the transition towards fair, sustainable, and resilient agrifood systems, as pathways for climate adaptation and mitigation in the rural sector.

- 25 To promote equal access to justice in rural areas and mechanisms for the resolution of disputes concerning the use, tenure and ownership of land, natural resources and agricultural production activities, including fisheries and livestock, to foster peacebuilding, legal certainty and conflict prevention; and to adopt appropriate and effective measures to prevent the dispossession and displacement inconsistent with national legislation and to support peasants, smallholders, rural workers, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities with sustainable development practices for equitable growth of economy for uplifting the standards of living in rural areas.
- 26 To protect and promote food production within peasant, family, smallholder and community-based agriculture, as well as the supply of local, national and international markets, recognizing its contribution to the realization of the human right to adequate food.
- 27 We recommend policy coherence for climate action, biodiversity loss, soil degradation with agrarian reform and sustainable rural development.

### **ICARRD+20 FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

We commit to supporting the implementation of the Principles and Policy Recommendations of ICARRD+20 in order to achieve the renewed Vision of agrarian reform and sustainable rural development, through the following follow-up actions:

- 28 To encourage urgently the Government of Colombia and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to present the outcomes and recommendations of ICARRD+20 to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the FAO Council, the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the FAO Committee on Forestry (COFO), and the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), as well as to other relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system concerned with food security, the human right to adequate food, agrarian reform and rural development, climate change, combating desertification and drought, and biodiversity conservation, for their further consideration.
- 29 To encourage the Global Land Observatory to generate knowledge and data, and to continuously register the state of land tenure and land governance. We commit to enhance capacities at public and community level to produce relevant and robust national data and where relevant report on agrarian and land reforms within existing multistakeholder platforms and in line with national and global commitments.
- 30 To consider the outcomes and recommendations of ICARRD+20 in the preparations for the High-Level Forum to be convened within the framework of the Committee on World

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Food Security (CFS), entitled “Advancing Equitable Land Governance for Food Security and Nutrition: A Global Review of Progress on Agrarian Reform and Tenure Rights,” to be held in 2027.

- 31 To promote the exchange of experiences and good practices in the implementation of the CFS-VGGT, and to recommend the CFS to report periodically on the status of implementation and progress of the CFS-VGGT, as well as on the outcomes and recommendations of ICARRD+20, with the support of the Global Land Observatory.
- 32 To invite FAO, as well as the other United Nations agencies in Rome, to consider the policy recommendations of ICARRD+20 in promoting international cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, in order to mobilize technical and financial resources for regional and global initiatives on agrarian reform, sustainable rural development, and the responsible governance of land tenure.

#### **Appendix: Participating Countries**

- Albania
- Germany
- Armenia
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Cameroon
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- El Salvador
- Eswatini
- Spain
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Kenya
- Kosovo
- Lebanon
- Mauritania
- Mexico
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Norway
- The Netherlands
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Viet Nam
- Zambia

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