

Statement to be delivered during UNEA Ministerial Plenary on the theme: “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post 2015 Development Agenda, including Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)” by the Farmers Major Group.

Thank you, Chair,

My name is James Benjamin Cole, I am an Organic Farmer and I speak on behalf of the Farmers’ Major Group.

Achieving a world free from poverty, hunger and malnutrition, where the right to adequate food is realized for all people, will be crucial in an ambitious post-2015 development agenda, including SCP. This cannot be achieved without a shift to resilient, diverse and productive agriculture and food systems, which are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable, protect animal welfare and have a special emphasis on small-scale food producers and supporting their livelihoods.

We, small-scale food producers play a critical role in food systems at all levels – from the local to the national, regional and global, yet, we are increasingly marginalized. Suffice to say, small family farms represent the vast majority of farms in the world (with women farmers in the majority) and are a critical engine of food supply – despite often operating under great constraints in terms of asset base, access to non-hazardous inputs, safe and farmer friendly technology, extension services, reliable markets and the like.

Today, approximately one-third of all food produced for humans is lost or wasted, this amounts to around 1.3 billion tons a year. Two-thirds of this is due to post-harvest crop losses. Pesticides toxicity has contributed to poisoning up to five million agricultural workers per year.

The year 2014 is the International Year of Family Farming, which is an opportunity to highlight the potential of family farmers around the world to contribute to productive and sustainable food systems. We therefore ask UNEA and Honorable Ministers to input to the work of Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and to the Secretary General’s Synthesis report. In line with this, we would like to offer the following proposals for your consideration:

- The goal title of the proposed Goal 2 Open Working Group Zero draft should highlight the SHIFT to sustainable agriculture and food systems.
- Food systems that are to be implemented should be more productive, sustainable, diverse, resilient and efficient, maintain and regenerate natural resources and ecosystems, and contribute to human health.
- Agro-ecology and organic agriculture and farmers' control over their production should be promoted, especially their seeds and indigenous species of livestock and fish, should be strengthened, avoiding the violation of their rights of use, as expressed by farmers at the IFAD Farmers Forum, which is the highest level and widest gathering of representatives of 2 billion farmers worldwide.

- Markets should be functioning and accessible for all, especially smallholders and women farmers, through sustainable transportation and the reshaping of trade policies, including phasing-out and redirecting export and other harmful subsidies, and measures to mitigate excessive food price volatility.
- The current global rate of food production losses (crops, livestock and fish) and waste throughout the food supply chain should be halved, including reducing overconsumption and protein loss and waste.
- The non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in livestock production systems, and the elimination of the use of hazardous pesticides should be addressed.
- The precautionary principle should be strictly applied on new technologies including the area of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO).
- Inclusive and transparent decision-making processes on food, nutrition and agriculture at the national and international levels should be established.

We also ask you to urgently discuss and identify the role of UNEA and its collaboration with the Committee on World Food Security in the further formulation and implementation of the SDGs on Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture.

We wish the UNEA lots of success and you can count on our cooperation.

I thank you.