



## Increasing agricultural productivity and production in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable manner<sup>i</sup>

A major challenge for governments is to meet increased demand for sufficient and nutritious food, resulting from population and income growth and changes in diets, in the face of decreasing availability and quality of natural resources. The challenge includes growing urban poverty and poverty in middle-income countries. A further consideration is the impact of climate change on agricultural production, nutrition and food systems that will increase the risks of food insecurity, especially for producers living in marginal environments and for small-scale food producer households.

Meeting the challenge calls for yield increases and overall productivity gains in food and agricultural production in the context of a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable agriculture. It also requires a focus on the nutritional quality of food and broadening the food basket through increased dietary diversity.

The productivity of most of the world's small-scale food producers is still far below what could be achieved. This "yield gap" is usually a result of farmers being unable to access productivity-enhancing inputs and technologies, having insecure or inappropriate land access and tenure, lacking knowledge and training opportunities (especially for women and young people entering rural labour markets), being served by inadequate commercial infrastructure, including inter-regional networks, facing high market costs for inputs and lacking information about sales price options<sup>ii</sup>. Productivity is also negatively affected by the disease burden often inflicted by ailments such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

**States, international and regional organizations and all other appropriate stakeholders are therefore recommended, among others, to:**

1. Strengthen institutional capacity of developing countries to implement effective policies that enable small-scale food producers to access technologies, inputs, capital goods, credit and markets<sup>iii</sup>;
2. Encourage secure and equitable access to, and sustainable use of, natural resources, including land, water and biodiversity, for women and men without distinction<sup>iv</sup>;
3. Support the conservation of, access to, and fair and equitable sharing of, the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, in accordance with national law and international agreements<sup>v</sup>;
4. Reverse the decline in domestic and international funding for agriculture, food security and rural development in developing countries, and promote new investment to increase sustainable agricultural production and productivity<sup>vi</sup>;
5. Work to increase public investment and encourage private investment in country-developed plans for rural infrastructure and support services, including – but not limited to – roads, storage, irrigation, communication, energy, education, technical support and health<sup>vii</sup>;
6. Stimulate investment in smallholder agriculture, with close coordination between public- and private-sector investment (*see Section C – “Increasing smallholder investment in agriculture”*);
7. Strengthen the access of small-scale food producers and others in the food value chain to financial and risk management instruments, such as innovative insurance, weather risk management, and finance mechanisms<sup>viii</sup>;

8. Promote a significant expansion of agricultural research and development, and its funding, including by strengthening the work of the reformed CGIAR, supporting national research systems, public universities and research institutions, and promoting technology transfer, sharing of knowledge and practices<sup>ix</sup>;
9. Look for ways to enhance the transfer of the research results and technologies to farmers and to ensure that research activities respond to their needs and concerns, involving farmers in that process. Promote technology transfers, knowledge sharing and capacity building through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation<sup>x</sup>;
10. Improve extension services to support dissemination of information and knowledge, ensuring that the needs of women farmers are fully recognized and met;
11. As appropriate, support the development and strengthen the capacities of existing cooperatives, producer organizations, and value-chain organizations, with a particular focus on small-scale food producers and ensuring the full participation of women farmers<sup>xi</sup>;
12. Promote more sustainable agriculture that improves food security, eradicates hunger, and is economically viable, while conserving land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, biodiversity and ecosystems, and enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters<sup>xii</sup>;
13. Consider, as appropriate, an ecosystem approach in agricultural management in order to achieve sustainable agriculture, including for example, but not limited to, integrated pest management, organic agriculture, and other traditional and indigenous coping strategies that promote agro-ecosystem diversification and soil carbon sequestration<sup>xiii</sup>;
14. Improve animal production services, including veterinary services<sup>xiv</sup>;
15. Promote primary and higher education on agriculture also through the development of professional curricula;

16. Work to conserve and improve forests as valuable ecosystems that contribute to the improvement of agricultural production;
17. Use internationally agreed standards elaborated by existing intergovernmental standard settings bodies.

---

<sup>i</sup>This section draws from a number of frameworks and international documents, in particular the Declaration of the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, the VGRtF, and the UCFA, in particular Outcome 2.2 and 2.3

<sup>ii</sup> UCFA, paragraph 59.

<sup>iii</sup> Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security, paragraph 19

<sup>iv</sup> Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security, paragraph 25; UCFA paragraph 65.

<sup>v</sup> Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security, paragraph 25.

<sup>vi</sup> Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security, paragraph 7.3.

<sup>vii</sup> Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security, paragraph 17.

<sup>viii</sup> CFS 37 Final Report, paragraph 29, iv and paragraph 50, o; UCFA, Outcome 2.2

<sup>ix</sup> CFS 37 Final Report paragraph 50 b).

<sup>x</sup> G20 2011 Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture, paragraph 14.

<sup>xi</sup> Declaration of the World Food Summit on Food Security, paragraph 19; COAG 2010 Final Report, paragraphs 17 and 19 d), UCFA, paragraph 63.

<sup>xii</sup> Rio+20 outcome document, para. 111

<sup>xiii</sup> COAG 21 (2009) Final Report, paragraph 27., UCFA Outcome 2.3

<sup>xiv</sup> UCFA, Outcome 2.2