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para la
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y la
Alimentación

CONFERENCE

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Porto Alegre, 7-10 March 2006

FINAL DECLARATION

1. We, the Member States, gathered at the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), hosted by the Government of Brazil, strongly believe in the essential role of agrarian reform and rural development to promote sustainable development, which includes, *inter alia*, the realization of human rights, food security, poverty eradication, and the strengthening of social justice, on the basis of the democratic rule of law.

2. We recall the outcomes of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) in 1979 and the Peasants' Charter, which emphasized the need for the formulation of appropriate national strategies for agrarian reform and rural development, and their integration with overall national development strategies.

3. We recall the significant steps taken by the whole membership of FAO in adopting a set of Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to

Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, which is one essential consideration when dealing with the need to promote rural development.

4. We recall the commitments to achieve the internationally-agreed development goals reaffirmed during the Millennium Summit and the Sixtieth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2005, as follows: “Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development.”

We have therefore adopted the following Declaration:

5. We recognize that food insecurity, hunger and rural poverty often result from the imbalances in the present process of development, which hinder wider access to land, water and other natural resources, and other livelihood assets, in a sustainable manner.

6. We reaffirm that wider, secure and sustainable access to land, water and other natural resources related to rural people’s livelihoods, especially, *inter alia*, women, indigenous, marginalized and vulnerable groups, is essential to hunger and poverty eradication, contributes to sustainable development and should therefore be an inherent part of national policies.

7. We recognize that laws should be designed and revised to ensure that rural women are accorded full and equal rights to land and other resources, including through the right to inheritance, and administrative reforms and other necessary measures should be undertaken to give women the same right as men to credit, capital, labour rights, legal

identification documents, appropriate technologies and access to markets and information.

8. We recognize that resource-based conflicts have been a major cause of civil unrest, political instability and environmental degradation over time in many parts of the world.

9. We recognize the need for rural development policies and programmes to ensure better preparedness to increase resilience and respond effectively to natural and man-made disasters.

10. We acknowledge that many global trends may influence patterns of development, in particular, rural development.

11. We reiterate the importance of traditional and family agriculture, and other smallholder production as well as the roles of traditional rural communities and indigenous groups in contributing to food security and the eradication of poverty.

12. We recognize the need to facilitate increased and environmentally sustainable agricultural productivity and fair trade, and follow with attention negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda, and on operationally effective instruments for special and differential treatment, among others, so as to enable developing countries to effectively take account of their development needs, including food security and rural development.

13. We reiterate that agricultural policies need to find balance between national policy space and international disciplines and commitments. Indeed, agricultural policies are an important tool to promote land and agrarian reform, rural credit and insurance, technical assistance and other associated measures to achieve food security and rural development.

14. We recognize that policies and practices for broadening and securing sustainable and equitable access to and control over land and related resources and the provision of rural services should be examined and revised in a manner that fully respects the rights and aspirations of rural people, women and vulnerable groups, including forest, fishery, indigenous and traditional rural communities, enabling them to protect their rights, in accordance with national legal frameworks.

15. We emphasize therefore that such policies and practices should promote economic, social and cultural rights, in particular of women, marginalized and vulnerable groups. In this context, agrarian reform and rural development policies and institutions should involve stakeholders, including those producing under individual, communal and collective land tenure systems, as well as fishing and forest communities, among others, in relevant administrative and judicial decision-making and implementation processes in accordance with national legal frameworks.

16. We emphasize that agrarian reform and rural development policies, laws and institutions must respond to the needs and aspirations of rural people, taking into consideration gender, economic, social, cultural, legal and ecological factors, and therefore should involve relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process.

17. We acknowledge the important role of social justice, a democratic rule of law and an adequate legal framework for agrarian reform and rural development.

18. We recognize the crucial role of the State to provide fair and equal opportunities and promote basic economic security for women and men as equal citizens.

19. We are convinced of the importance of equity including, *inter alia*, gender aspects and social inclusion in sustainable rural development, where dialogue, exchange of

information, capacity building and experiences are essential elements for the enhancement of agrarian reform and rural development policies in the world.

20. We recognize the importance of establishing just, effective and participatory land and water policies, respecting relevant international obligations, especially for women, marginalized and vulnerable groups.

21. We therefore recognize the need for establishing administrative systems conducive to efficient registering, titling, and surveying of land holdings, improved legal, institutional, and market infrastructure, including laws governing water use, and the formal recognition of customary and communal use rights in ways that are transparent, enforceable and consistent with community interests.

22. We recognize the importance of improving equal access to finance, for both men and women, improving mechanisms to reduce transaction costs, including for remittance transfers, in order to mobilize resources and facilitate their focused contribution to strengthening capacities for rural development.

23. We recognize the need to provide enabling policies, legislation and services, in particular those related to rural production and commerce, technical assistance, financing, capacity building, health and educational measures, infrastructure and institutional support, in order to obtain the fullest possible integration of rural areas into national development efforts

24. We acknowledge the need for expanded opportunities for employment and income for rural people and development of men and women farmers' associations, organizations of family farmers, other producers and rural workers, cooperatives, and other rural organizations.

25. We recognize that States have the primary responsibility for their own economic and social development, which includes national policies for the implementation of agrarian reform and rural development strategies. In this context, we recognize the crucial role of the partnership of governments, civil society and other stakeholders for the sustainable implementation of agrarian reform and rural development.

26. We recognize the need to ensure fishing, forest, mountain and other unique communities' rights and their access to fishing, forest and mountain areas and other unique environments within the framework of sustainable management of natural resources.

27. We reaffirm that agrarian reform and other efforts towards the eradication of rural poverty should take into account the preservation and conservation of land, water and other natural resources, and not result in the loss of those resources, particularly for indigenous peoples, such as pastoralists, shepherds and nomadic peoples, nor in the assimilation and erosion of their cultures.

ICARRD Vision

28. We propose that rural development policies, including those on agrarian reforms, should be more focused on the poor and their organizations, socially-driven, participatory, and respectful of gender equality, in the context of economic, social and environmentally sound sustainable development. They should contribute to food security and poverty eradication, based on secure individual, communal and collective rights, and equality, including, *inter alia*, employment, especially for the landless, strengthening local and

national markets, income generation, in particular through small and medium sized enterprises, social inclusion and conservation of the environmental and cultural assets of the rural areas, through a sustainable livelihood perspective and the empowerment of vulnerable rural stakeholder groups. These policies should also be implemented in a context that fully respects the rights and aspirations of rural people, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups, within national legal frameworks and through effective dialogue.

ICARRD Principles

29. We agree on the following principles:

- National and inclusive dialogue as an overarching mechanism to ensure significant progress on agrarian reform and rural development.

- Establishment of appropriate agrarian reform mainly in areas with strong social disparities, poverty and food insecurity, as a means to broaden sustainable access to and control over land and related resources. This should be achieved through a programme based on coherent, ethical, participatory and integrated policies, on, among others, technical assistance, financing, service provision, capacity building, health and educational measures, infrastructure and institutional support, which aim at achieving overall efficiency of the productive systems, optimizing agricultural productivity, increasing employment opportunities and well-being of the people to make rural development truly effective and equitable.

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- Support for a participatory approach based on economic, social and cultural rights as well as good governance for the equitable management of land, water, forests and other natural resources within the context of national legal frameworks focusing on sustainable development and overcoming inequalities in order to eradicate hunger and poverty.

 - Enhanced support to developing countries, including capacity building and adequate technical assistance, in order to guarantee small-scale uses of productive natural resources for family agriculture and small producers, in particular rural people, women and vulnerable groups, such as indigenous people, forest and fishing communities, pastoralists, peasants, and landless people, to ensure food security and sustainable livelihoods.

 - Support for applied research, technology development and transfer by national and international research institutions and extension services, to meet the needs of women farmers, traditional and family agriculture and other smallholder producers as well as traditional rural communities and indigenous groups, in the context of sustainable production systems.

 - Adoption of policies and programmes for rural development that promote decentralization, through empowerment at local level, with a special focus on the poor, in order to overcome social exclusion and inequalities and promote sustainable development, gender equality, and new economic and employment opportunities.

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- Promotion of practical, simple, affordable and accessible administrative mechanisms to secure land rights, taking particularly into account marginalized groups.

 - Strengthening the role of the State to develop and implement more just and people-centred development policies and programmes to ensure food security and the well-being of all citizens, particularly programmes aimed at addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS and other diseases on rural communities and livelihoods.

 - Support for local knowledge and experiences, assuring availability and effective access by traditional and family agriculture and other smallholder producers as well as women farmers, traditional rural communities and indigenous groups to adequate information and technologies for production, income diversification, enhanced market linkages at all levels giving priority to local and national markets, promotion of high quality local and traditional products, and developing the means to maintain and rehabilitate the resource base.

 - Support to increased local, national, regional and global partnerships, international solidarity and support to organizations of small farmers, landless people and rural workers, in order to provide more harmonized technical assistance/advice, investment and exchanges, and foster participatory monitoring and evaluation of the impact of agrarian reform and rural development.

30. We pledge our actions and support to implementing the ICARRD Principles in order to achieve the new vision of agrarian reform and rural development, through the following:

1. We will develop appropriate mechanisms through a lasting platform at global, regional, national and local levels in order to institutionalize social dialogue, cooperation and monitoring and evaluation of progress in agrarian reform and rural development, which are crucial to promote social justice and to enhance an environmentally sustainable agrarian reform and rural development, more focused on the poor and respectful of gender equality.
2. We will recommend that FAO's Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in close coordination with its Committee on Agriculture (COAG), adopt appropriate measures to implement the ICARRD Declaration. In order to monitor the implementation of the ICARRD Declaration, we will also recommend that the CFS adopt a set of additional reporting guidelines. These processes should include the participation of civil society, and other UN Organizations dealing with food sovereignty, food security, agrarian reform and rural development.
3. We will support International Partnership Initiatives on agrarian reform and rural development along the lines of the ICARRD Declaration.
4. We propose that the multi-stakeholder dialogue of the Special Forum to be held during the Thirty-second Session of the Committee on World Food Security, September 2006, include an agenda item on agrarian reform and rural

development, as an additional follow-up mechanism on the results of ICARRD. This will be an important agenda item to be discussed during the Mid-Term Review of the Progress in the Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action.

5. We will recommend to the Hundred and Thirty-first Session of the FAO Council, November 2006, to examine the possibility of further follow-up mechanisms designed to assist countries in the implementation of the outcomes of ICARRD.