

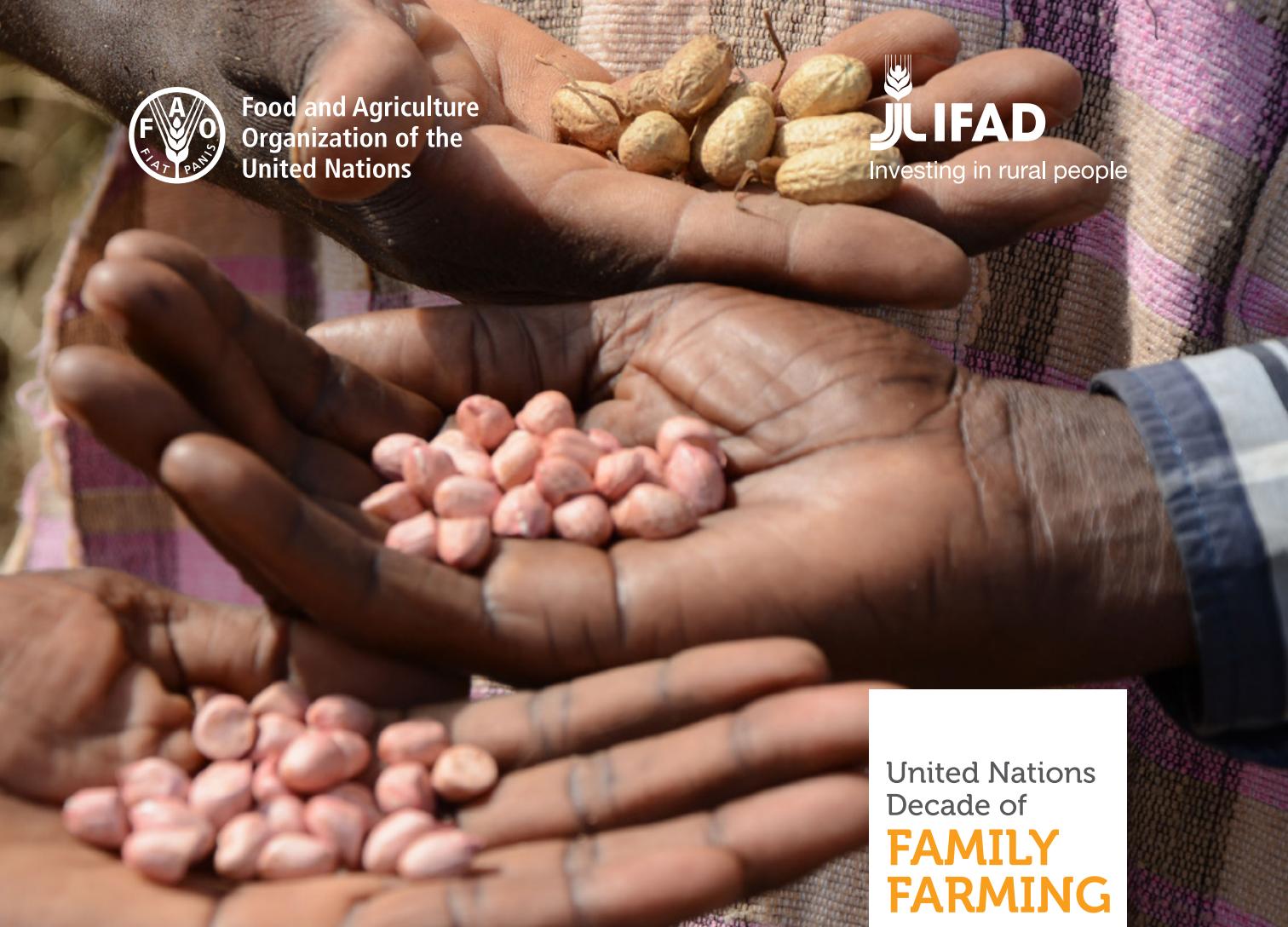


Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



ILIFAD

Investing in rural people



United Nations
Decade of
**FAMILY
FARMING**
2019-2028



Putting family farmers
at the centre
to achieve the SDGs

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In both developed and developing countries, family farming represents the predominant form of food and agricultural production. Family farmers include peasants, indigenous peoples, traditional communities, fisher folks, mountain farmers, pastoralists and many other groups representing every region and biome of the world.

Given the enormous diversity of family farmers around the world, there is no single definition of family farming. It can be regarded as “a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family capital and labour, including both women’s and men’s” (FAO, 2014).

The family and the farm are strongly interlinked, with the family providing the main part of the labour force and controlling the main resources on which the farm is based. Family and farm represent a unity that continuously co-evolves, fulfilling economic, environmental, social and cultural functions within its territorial networks.

Family farmers, considering their multi-dimensional nature, play a key role in contributing to food security and nutrition, managing natural resources, ensuring the cohesion of rural communities and preserving cultural heritage.

They produce the majority of the world’s food, providing healthy, diversified and culturally appropriate diets. They are major investors in the agricultural sector and the foundation





of business and economic structures in rural areas, generating on- and off-farm job opportunities, and significantly contributing to the endogenous growth of the rural economy.

They enhance socio-economic inclusion, improve rural livelihoods, provide inclusive services and create innovative market solutions that link urban and rural areas.

They are custodians of biodiversity for food and agriculture, guaranteeing the reproduction of natural resources while increasing synergies between crops, livestock and trees for sustainable, resilient and nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems.

They link past, present and future, transmitting local and traditional knowledge,

identity, cultural heritage and social values, and promote social equity and community well-being. Rooted in their communities, they are well positioned to offer contextualized, comprehensive and long-term solutions to problems that arise.

With affirmative frameworks in place, family farmers can play a pivotal role in simultaneously contributing to the economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability of agriculture and rural areas. The United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 (UNDFFF) serves as a framework for countries to develop public policies and investments to support family farming from a holistic perspective, unleashing the transformative potential of family farmers to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Key facts and figures

Rural poverty

- Almost **80 percent of the world's poor and food insecure live in rural areas**, mostly depending on agricultural production for their subsistence.
- **Most of the rural poor are small-scale family food producers** who depend on agriculture and aquaculture for their food and income but face many difficulties accessing productive resources, opportunities and markets.

Family farms (agriculture)

- There are more than **600 million farms in the world**.
- More than **90 percent of farms are run by an individual or a family** and rely primarily on family labor.
- Estimates suggest that they occupy around **70–80 percent of farmland and produce more than 80 percent of the world's food** in value terms.
- Worldwide, **farms of less than 1 hectare account for 70 percent of all farms** but operate only 7 percent of all agricultural land. Slightly **larger farms between 1 and 2 hectares account**

for 14 percent of all farms and control 4 percent of the land, while **farms in the range of 2 to 5 hectares account for 10 percent of all farms** and control 6 percent of the land.

- The largest 1 percent of farms in the world operate more than **70 percent of the world's farmland**.

Small-scale fisheries

- **90 percent of fishers are small-scale operators**. More than 90 percent of all small-scale fishers live in developing countries.
- **Small-scale fisheries account for half of the capture fisheries production** in developing countries.

Pastoralists

- An estimated **200 million pastoralists** herd their animals on rangelands that **cover a third of the earth's land surface**.
- Up to **500 million pastoralists derive sustenance from extensive nomadic, semi-nomadic and transhumant livestock rearing**.

Mountain farming

- Mountain farming is largely family farming. Around **40 percent of mountain populations in developing and transition countries – about 300 million people – are food insecure**, with half of them suffering from chronic hunger.
- Mountains are key ecosystems, providing goods and services, such as water, food and energy, to the entire planet, providing and regulating up to **80 percent of global freshwater resources**.

Forest farming

- Family farmers include forest communities. **Around 40 percent of the extreme rural poor live in forest and savannah areas**. The unique combination of forest and farm resources has created complex natural resource management systems all over the world.
- **80 percent of food in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa is provided by forest and farm producers**.

Indigenous peoples

- **33 percent of forests are managed by indigenous peoples** and local communities.

- There are over **370 million indigenous peoples living in more than 90 countries** across the world.
- They constitute about **5 percent of the world's population yet account for about 15 percent of the world's poor**.
- **Traditional indigenous territories encompass up to 22 percent of the world's land surface** and coincide with areas that hold 80 percent of the planet's biodiversity.

Youth

- Although the world's youth population is expected to grow, **employment opportunities for young women and men remain limited** – particularly for those living in rural areas of developing countries.

Rural women

- Almost **50 percent of farm labor is performed by women**, but they hold only 15 percent of farm land.
- **For every 100 men living in extreme poverty, there are 122 women**.

The United Nations Decade of Family Farming and the Sustainable Development Goals

Family farmers have great potential as key agents in creating and maintaining sustainable and inclusive food systems, thus helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UNDFE acts as a framework to help family farmers realize their full potential in contributing to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The UNDFE contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

by mobilizing global commitment and actions towards attaining sustainable development across its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner.

The UNDFE promotes integrated actions

supported by coherent, cross-sectoral policies, which address the environmental, economic and social dimensions of rural development and bridge the humanitarian– development–peace nexus, while placing people and their livelihoods at the centre.

The UNDFE leaves no one behind.

Many factors can contribute to a person's or a group's experience of vulnerability: poverty, poor nutritional standards, lack of opportunities, low standard of living, and other 'group-based' inequalities intersect. The UNDFE addresses issues that contribute to vulnerability, tackling inequality, discrimination and marginalisation. Improving family farmers' well-being helps turn

their potential into reality, making them agents of change who can contribute to achieving multiple SDGs.

The UNDF takes a nexus approach.

Sustainable development is by nature multi-dimensional, and the SDGs are indivisibly connected to each other. The UNDF helps to identify nexuses among the SDGs, helping to prioritize actions and reduce the risk of sector-specific interventions undermining each other, and working towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a more efficient way.

The UNDF enhances family farmers' multidimensionality to work towards achieving all SDGs. Family farmers are key actors in achieving the SDGs, as they are able

to comprehensively address different aspects of sustainable development. The UNDF integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection – and supports participation and partnerships among different actors, facilitating their work on multiple and interconnected SDGs with benefits across sustainability and development dimensions.

The UNDF focuses on enabling family farmers as a key driver to fully achieve the SDGs. The UNDF specifically focuses on innovation, knowledge sharing, capacity building and technology access and transfer as the basis to formulate impactful actions and strategies to achieve the SDGs.



Working with family farmers, reinforcing the SDGs



Poor family farmers can shift from subsistence to creating income

generation opportunities in rural areas.

Social protection policies and resilient livelihoods are key to exiting poverty traps and providing opportunities.



Family farmers can implement resilient and highly productive agricultural practices that create income generation opportunities.

Policies to improve their access to natural resources, productive inputs and tailored services unleash their productive potential.



Family farmers and their organizations can deliver inclusive rural services and contribute to territorial development.

Improved access to basic services and capacity development in rural areas is key to make family farmers agents of change.



Women farmers are essential to achieve sustainable, productive and inclusive food systems.

Gender equality in terms of improved access to resources, technology, and a greater voice in decision-making is a key step towards creating the world we want.



Family farmers enable diversified food systems that can create job

opportunities in rural areas and positively affect rural-urban mobility, particularly for youth. Access to infrastructure, technology, and to tailored innovations that meet their needs is what they need to improve our common future.



Family farmers can enable food systems that strengthen sustainable integration between urban and rural

areas. With innovative market solutions, people living in both rural and urban areas can enjoy healthy, nutritious, and safe food.



Family farmers can contribute to transforming food systems to make them more sustainable.

Policies should support family farmers in reducing food loss and in managing natural resources in a sustainable and efficient manner.



Family farmers can promote food systems that are more resilient to climate change.

Improving the ability of family farmers to adapt to climate-related shocks is a precondition for unleashing their potential.



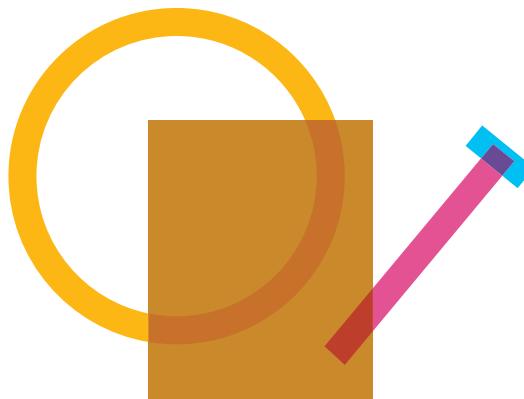
Family farmers can preserve biodiversity, environment and

culture. Safeguarding their cultural and natural heritage lies at the heart of this transformation.



Reinforcing the capacity of family farmers and their organizations

makes family farmers more able to serve their communities. Recognition, voice and an enabling environment will support their potential as agents of change.



A Global Action Plan to work together for common goals



The vision of the UN Decade of Family Farming

A world where diverse, healthy and sustainable food and agricultural systems flourish, where resilient rural and urban communities enjoy a high quality of life in dignity, equity, free from hunger and poverty.

Family farming is essential to achieve this vision.

Sensible policies, programs and regulations considering the needs of present and future generations must protect and expand the agency, inclusion and economic capacity of family farmers, putting their diversity at the centre of sustainable development and contributing to the Agenda 2030.

This journey must start now.

To achieve this vision, the **Global Action Plan** of the UNDFP provides detailed guidance for the international community on collective and coherent actions that can be taken to support family farmers. It outlines a comprehensive approach to support efforts to achieve the SDGs, in the context of the progressive realization of the Right to Adequate Food.

Designed around seven mutually reinforcing **pillars of work**, the Global Action Plan recommends a series of interconnected actions from the local to the global level. Any interventions developed during the UNDFP must always consider the diversity of family farmers. They should be context-specific, adapted to regional, national, local socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions. To guarantee the success of the UNDFP, all actions should place family farmers at the centre and be implemented through bottom-up, participatory and inclusive processes.

Pillar 1.

Develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming



Building an enabling political, social and economic environment based on the solid and sustained commitment of all relevant actors is a prerequisite for family farmers to be able to lead the transformation towards more sustainable, healthy and nutritious food and agricultural systems.

An enabling environment means that there are adequate resources and that governance and institutional arrangements are effective and inclusive. Family farmers and their organizations must have the opportunity to engage fully in multi-sectoral and multi-actor mechanisms, platforms and policy processes, as well as in advocacy and awareness-raising activities.

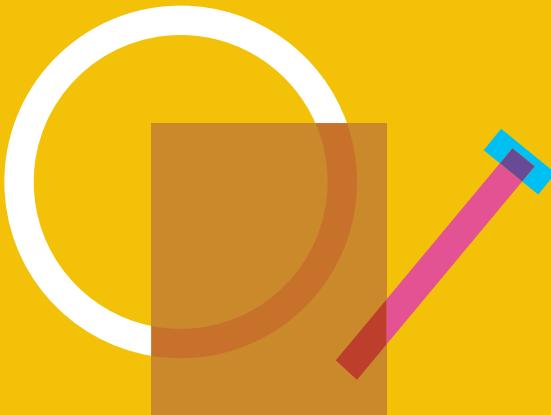
Inclusive processes, real commitments and stronger partnerships will lead to a shift from traditional sectoral policies to comprehensive, context-specific strategies and programmes that adequately support family farmers and their multi-dimensional nature.

THE WAY FORWARD:

- Implement **comprehensive and coherent policies, investments and institutional frameworks** that support family farming at local, national and international levels.
- Promote **inclusive and effective governance mechanisms** and timely and geographically relevant **data for well-targeted policy design and implementation.**
- Guarantee sustained **political commitment and adequate resourcing** by state and non-state actors.
- Create and strengthen **local, national and international cooperation** in support of family farming.



Pillar 2 - Transversal.
Support youth and ensure
the generational sustainability
of family farming



The entry of young people into farming is widely recognized as a key driver in fostering agriculture and food production and maintaining the vitality of rural areas. However, young people who aspire to a future in farming currently face multiple structural and institutional barriers.

To guarantee the generational sustainability of agriculture, it is vital to promote mechanisms that facilitate the intergenerational transfer of tangible and intangible farming assets.

Incentivising youth to enter farming will ensure continuous innovation, help revitalise rural areas and lead to reframe society's perception of family farming as a dynamic sector with constant renewal capacity.

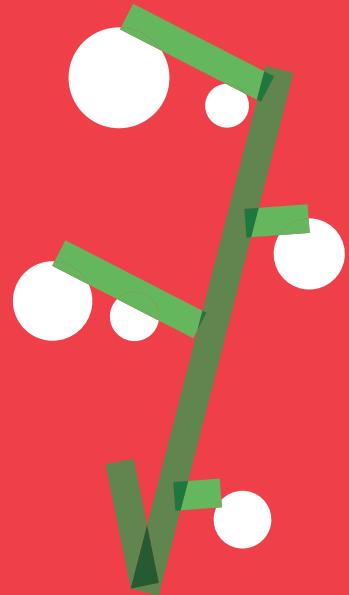
THE WAY FORWARD:

- Ensure youth have access to **land and other natural resources, information, education, infrastructure and financial services.**
- Incentivise **generational turnover** in agriculture, fisheries and forestry.
- Improve the capacity of young family farmers for **innovation** by connecting locally specific (traditional) knowledge with new solutions.
- Guarantee the **participation of young farmers in markets and in policy processes.**



Pillar 3 – Transversal.

Promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women



Rural women are essential to eliminating poverty, achieving zero hunger and creating sustainable, productive and inclusive food systems. They contribute both labour and knowledge of agricultural practices and biodiversity. They also play a unique and central role in managing natural resources, providing services, and building resilience within their families and communities.

Despite their contributions, women farmers are more likely to suffer a lack of respect for their basic human rights, and remain among those most affected by poverty and social exclusion.

This “gender gap” limits the ability of rural women to take advantage of new opportunities, and prevents them from reaching their full potential to contribute to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

THE WAY FORWARD:

- Promote equal opportunities for women to **engage** in family farming and in the rural economy.
- Increase women farmers’ access to **natural resources, (re-)productive assets, information, infrastructure, financial services** and **markets**.
- Support **women’s organization, self-empowerment, and capacity development** processes and women’s autonomy and agency.
- Promote full **participation in policy processes** and public life for rural women and their organizations.
- **Eliminate violence** against women and girls
- **Promote knowledge- and experience-sharing** among women to achieve political, social, cultural and economic progress towards gender equality.





Pillar 4.
Strengthen family
farmers' organizations
and capacities to
generate knowledge,
represent farmers and
provide inclusive services
in the urban-rural
continuum

When family farmers organize in formal or non-formal networks, farmers' associations, agricultural cooperatives or social movements, they are more able to improve their situations and achieve better and longer lasting results.

Strong, well-established organizations of family farmers can contribute to policy change, link local solutions to national and global goals, and respond to challenges such as climate change. These organizations act as catalysts, helping family farmers to exercise their rights and improving access to agricultural resources, public services, markets and policies.

Family farmers' organizations help to create vibrant and inclusive rural societies. Therefore, it is particularly important to support family farmers in developing new organizations and strengthening the existing ones, and enhancing their capacity to promote and articulate new services according to their views and the requests of the members.

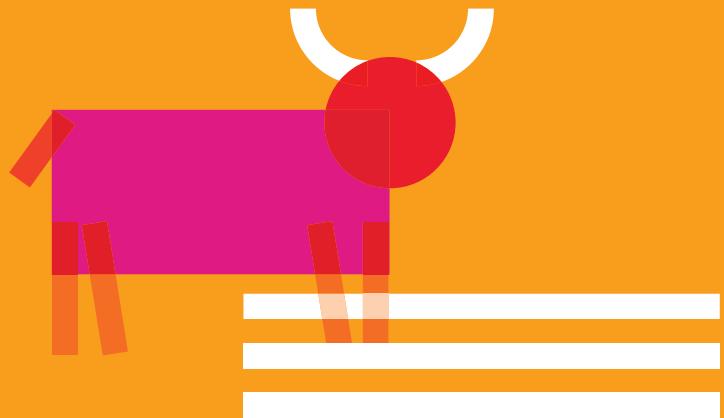
THE WAY FORWARD:

- **Strengthen the capacity** of family farmers' organizations so that they are better able to serve their members and their communities.
- Enhance the **technical expertise and capabilities** of family farmers and their organizations, making it easier for them to access and provide farming and non-farming related services which contribute to sustainable livelihoods and landscapes.
- Support organizations to become stronger, transparent and more inclusive, and support them in taking **collective action** for innovative and fair solutions.
- Improve capacities and services related to **ICTs** to ensure that family farmers' voices are heard.



Pillar 5.

Improve socio-economic inclusion,
resilience and well-being of
family farmers, rural households
and communities



Family farming is the foundation of food security and sustainable healthy food systems, and yet family farmers are among those who are most impacted by poverty and vulnerability and face the highest levels of economic, financial, social and environmental risks.

Family farmers will be less vulnerable if they have access to basic services, infrastructure, social protection systems, diversified production practices and markets. This access will allow them to overcome structural constraints and address problems that arise, allowing them to transition from the vulnerability of subsistence farming to a more secure social and economic position, from where they are better positioned to (re)invest in their farms, families and communities.

THE WAY FORWARD:

- Ensure that family farmers – particularly youth, women and their communities - have **access to social protection, services and public goods** in order to improve their standard of living and reduce vulnerability.
- Improve family farmers’ access to and control of **natural resources and productive assets**, especially for youth, women, indigenous communities and landless people.
- Increase resilience and economic viability by encouraging **sustainable and diversified production practices, innovations**, and diverse and nutritious diets.
- Improve **access to markets and income-generating opportunities** for family farmers, particularly youth and women, in order to guarantee increased participation and adequate remuneration.



Pillar 6.

Promote sustainability of family
farming for climate-resilient
food systems



Today, food production and consumption have shifted from culturally and socially embedded systems and are disconnected from local ecological and social dimensions.

In order to meet the needs of present and future generations, it is essential to accelerate the transition toward more sustainable food systems that can simultaneously provide economic opportunities, protect ecosystems and respect the cultural and social diversity of different territories.

Rooted in their communities and with an understanding of local ecologies, family farmers have the unique potential to drive this transition. They are well positioned to offer contextualized, comprehensive and long-term solutions for sustainable food systems.

THE WAY FORWARD:

- Increase family farmers' **access to productive assets and services**, in order to improve their sustainable and **responsible management and use of natural resources**.
- Support family farmers in driving transition toward sustainable food production by **improving their capacities to innovate and increase productivity in a sustainable manner**.
- Develop an inclusive market environment for family farmers which promotes **short food supply chains** and provides diversified and nutritious food, thus contributing to more sustainable food systems.
- **Improve the conditions of family farmers within inclusive and fair value chains**, in particular for women, youth and their organizations, encouraging diversification and the production of nutritious food.



Pillar 7.

Strengthen the multi-dimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations contributing to territorial development and food systems that safeguard biodiversity, environment and culture



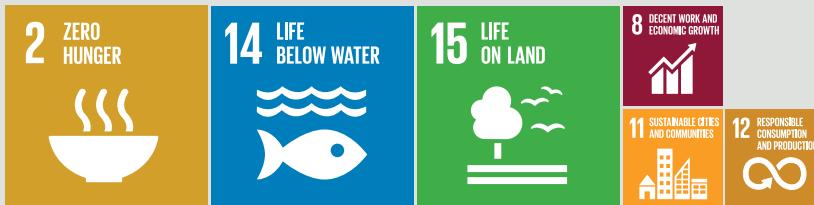
Family farmers not only produce food, but also provide several services and public goods for society: they ensure the sustainability of agro-ecosystems, landscape management and the transmission of locally- and traditionally-rooted knowledge, cultural heritage and social values.

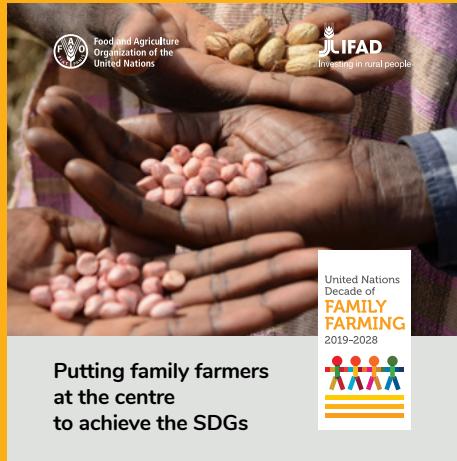
Their practices of production, consumption, and social and cultural reproduction are strongly embedded in the local communities and territories where family farmers interact, combine, transform and renew ecological, economic and social resources.

Supporting the complexity and multidimensionality of family farmers can carry the promise of promoting endogenous growth and preserving the diversity of ecosystems, genetic resources, culture and life.

THE WAY FORWARD:

- Improve **synergies between production systems** (fisheries, aquaculture, forestry, crops, livestock).
- Enhance the different **ecosystem services** provided by family farmers.
- Strengthen family farmers' role in promoting **social innovation and diversification of employment opportunities**.
- Improve **interconnections between rural and urban** areas.
- Promote innovative **economic opportunities and market solutions** to take advantage of the multi-dimensional services and goods provided by family farmers.





Joint Secretariat of the UN Decade of Family Farming

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