

Final Recommendations of the Regional Seminar on Agroecology in Latin America and the Caribbean

Agroecology in the region has been carried out in practice for decades; by social movements of small-holder farmers, rural groups, traditional communities, indigenous peoples, artisanal fisher folk, herders, and gatherers. It has a strong scientific base and is increasingly receiving support from governments through new public policies. The practices and elements of agroecology ensure food security and sovereignty, as well as strengthen family farming.

As a result of the International Symposium on Agroecology for Food Security, held in September 2014 by FAO within the framework of the International Year of Family Farming; the Regional Seminar on Agroecology in Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Brazil from June 24th-26th, 2015.

Within the framework of the Plan of Action 2015 of the ad hoc Working Group on Family Farming and Rural Development of ECLAC and the Ministerial Declaration of ECLAC on Family Farming, approved in November of 2014 in Brasilia, Brazil, and ratified in the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government (San Jose, Costa Rica- January 2015); declared “support for the convening of a regional event on agroecology to encourage the exchange of experiences and to promote policies of sustainable development.”

Within the framework of REAF, in the XX Specialized Meeting on Family Farming of MERCOSUR (Caracas, Venezuela, December 2013), the theme of agroecology was incorporated into the agenda of the Working Group on Climate Change Adaption and Risk Management.

Taking into account the Declaration of Nyeleni-Mali on Agroecology created by the social movements of small-holder farmers, rural groups, traditional communities, indigenous peoples, artisanal fisher folk, herders, gatherers, and youth;

The participants of the seminar; from social movements, the academic sector, representatives of public entities of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and guests from other regions, gathered in this Seminar, call upon the governments of the region, along with ECLAC, FAO, REAF/MERCOSUR, and other relevant intergovernmental and international organizations to:

- Promote public policies which boost agroecology and food sovereignty; defined, implemented and monitored with active participation of social movements and civil society groups, assuring the necessary budget for its implementation.
1. Formulate and implement legal frameworks and regulations which are favorable to agroecology, in order to achieve food sovereignty.
 2. Assure the social role of land and water through agrarian reforms, land policies, and the guarantee of land rights of indigenous and native peoples and traditional communities.
 3. Promote the production of healthy, adequate food as well as the food sovereignty of the region through agroecology; recognizing that those systems have a more sustainable approach to land, water and energy.
 4. Recognize and value ancestral knowledge, traditions, local wisdom and cultural identities as a pillar of agroecology. Additionally, the public research institutions should respect and value the traditional knowledge, promoting a knowledge dialogue in their participatory research programs.
 5. Foster territorial dynamics of social innovation and technology by creating and/or strengthening the pillars of agroecology and in institutions of an interdisciplinary and intersectoral nature; with capacity to articulate processes of education, research and learning.

6. Develop specific policies which promote the productive organization of women; supporting their agroecological initiatives, strengthening their abilities to overcome the obstacles that they face, the heavy workload, the decriminalization; recognizing their historic role in agroecology and food sovereignty.
7. Recognize and encourage the active role of families and communities, including women and youth, as guardians of biodiversity; especially seeds and genetic resources. In addition, ensure that genetic resources are restored by public germplasm banks, together with social movements; connecting the discussion on food sovereignty with the discussion on seed protection.
8. Create a regional network in Latin America (a shared platform between the governments and social movements) for the exchange of best practices and information regarding agroecology, which complements the dialogue between the academic sector, governments and social movements.
9. Create mechanisms which enable the reciprocity of participatory guarantee systems among the countries of the Latin American region by promoting the link between the producer and consumer.
10. Include agroecology as a permanent topic in the agenda of the working group on Family Farming and Rural Development of ECLAC; expanding the participation of social movements and civil society and academic groups in the working group, with the support of FAO.
11. Create a program of exchange for agroecology and seeds, based on the working group of Family Farming and Rural Development of CELAC.
12. Recommend the creation of a specific working group in the REAF focused on agroecology and expanding the discussion on specific instances in which family farming includes agroecology.
13. Create conditions which restrict the practice of monoculture, the use of agro chemicals, and the concentration of land; in order to foster the increase of agroecological production by rural small-holder farmers in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.
14. Support initiatives of formal and informal education, such as rural agroecological schools; increasing the level of education in rural areas through professional training of rural youth.
15. Recognize the multifunctional role that rural small-holder agroecology plays in preserving soils, water, biodiversity, as well as other ecological functions; guaranteeing environmental preservation in a socially inclusive and economically just manner.
16. Ensure that the agroecological systems are more resilient to climate change and request that resources are set aside for the development of agroecology, as part of climate policies that guarantee food sovereignty for the people.
17. Create mechanisms to promote South-South Cooperation regarding the topic of agroecology, in collaboration with FAO, REAF, and other international and sub-regional organizations.

We wish to thank the organizing committee of this event, especially the Alliance of the People for Food Sovereignty in Latin America and the Caribbean, the FAO, ECLAC, REAF, and the government of Brazil for their efforts to hold this discussion and we appreciate the efforts of FAO in carrying out the regional seminar in Africa and Asia. We request that the participation of those from social movements, governments, and the academic sector in Latin America and the Caribbean is included.

We also applaud the initiative of ECLAC in carrying out a second seminar on agroecology during the pro tempore presidency, with support from FAO and REAF.

We would like to inform you that Nicaragua and Costa Rica intend to hold seminars in the region and ask for FAO's support.

RASCUNO