

Thank you Chair!

I am Altantuya from National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Cooperatives, and speaking in behalf of CSOs. We thank FAO for inviting us here. Civil society welcomes the FAO's work to support rural smallholders, and particularly marginalized and vulnerable groups.

The rapid urbanization in many countries in Asia and Pacific is mainly due to the neglect and underdevelopment of rural areas; poor roads, poor social infrastructures, lowly farming jobs and meager livelihood opportunities. Thus, the migration of people to the cities and overseas. Moreover, there is an over-all dominance of corporate agribusiness sector in agricultural value chains, which leaves small scale men and women farmers mere producers of raw materials and price takers, contributing to lesser incomes and therefore resulting to greater food insecurity and more poverty.

Thus, a critical intervention is to properly equip smallholder producers and family farmers, through their organizations and cooperatives, to sustainably produce, process, package and distribute the food. This intervention empowers rural communities in ways that enable them to earn viable wages, make farming more attractive to the young, reduce food loss and waste .

Strategic approaches to strengthen participation of small and marginal family farmers, herders and fisherfolks' organizations in all stages of the value chain are needed strongly.

Therefore we urge Governments and FAO, to support smallholders, fisherfolks , rural workers, pastoralists and indigenous people to organize ourselves into effective models as cooperatives and commodity clusters and to have significant market power.

We recommend FAO and member states to:

- First, secure our tenure rights to lands, fisheries, forests, agrarian and aquatic reforms guided by the voluntary guidelines for the responsible governance of tenure of lands, fisheries and forests or VGGT.
- Second, provide infrastructure that are supportive of smallholder value addition and access to domestic markets, such as rural roads, communal irrigation, small scale processing units, post harvest and storage facilities, marketing information systems and market outlets that can be managed by our associations and cooperatives.
- Third, provide capitalization and appropriate investment finance and credit systems in the sustainable processing and marketing of our products such as starter funds and special credit windows and tax incentives
- Fourth, strengthen our capacities in doing sustainable, agro-ecological approaches, as well as our skills on farm planning, business development, marketing, processing value addition, packaging, labelling and entrepreneurship through various training and farmer to farmer exchanges and site visits.
- Fifth, ensure significant involvement and participation of farmers and their organizations in the decision making processes affecting the industry, the enterprise and agriculture and food in general. We ask governments to ensure the participation of organized small-scale farmers/producers in the design and implementation of public programs related to sustainable production and inclusive value-chain.
- And lastly, promote the local produce of smallholder producers through linking producers and consumers and building the trust among them , thus shortening the supply chain . Participatory guarantee systems and internal control systems are some instruments to build this trust.

Thank you for your attention.

