



## REPORT

### *Support to GAFSP CSO Asia*

Period covered: August-December 2017

## Introduction and Background

The GAFSP Steering Committee, the Program's decision-making body, has allocated three seats to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): a seat to represent the voice of CSOs in African developing countries, a seat to represent the voice of CSOs in Asian developing countries, and a seat to represent the voice of CSOs in developed countries. The Representatives are chosen through a self-selection process managed through their respective networks. The role of the CSO representatives is to inform/consult with their constituents on GAFSP, and represent and advocate their views on their behalf to improve the working of GAFSP. In Asia, the representative is Mr. Lyam Bahadur Darjee, Chairperson, Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA). The alternate representative is Mr. Raul Socrates Banzuela, National Coordinator of Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (National Confederation of Peasant Movements), a national farmers' organization in the Philippines.

The Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) was tapped, as a support organization to the CSO Asia representative. The objective of the support organization is to provide technical, administrative, and logistical support to their respective CSO Representative of the GAFSP Steering Committee to facilitate:

- (1) consultation among constituency CSOs
- (2) dissemination of information to CSO constituencies
- (3) dialogue between the CSO Representatives and other members of the Steering Committee (including other CSO Representatives)
- (4) dialogue between CSOs, Supervising Entities (SEs), and governments at the national level

This report presents the activities conducted from the period August 2017 till December 2017. A quick review of the whole year 2017 is given in the last section of this report.

## Actual Activities During the Period

### A. Activities directly involving the civil society representative

#### 1. ***Participation in the GAFSP Steering Committee meetings and working groups***

- a. GAFSP involvement in CFS – AFA Secretary General Esther Penunia and CSO Asia alternate and technical adviser Soc Banzuela participated in the CFS meetings held October 9-13, 2017. During this week, AFA representatives attended a meeting called for by Ms. Diana Salman, GAFSP CU Program Officer for CSO representatives. They also joined an IFAD-organized meeting between farmer leaders and new IFAD President.
- b. Steering Committee Meeting. AFA coordinated all program and logistical preparations for the participation of technical adviser and CSO Asia alternate Mr.



Raul Socrates Banzuela in the meeting of the GAFSP Joint Steering Committee held last November 5-6 in Rome, Italy. AFA helped prepare the powerpoint presentation of its activities , reflections and recommendations for the first semester of the year . AFA joined the CSO Reps meeting before and after the SC meeting. *See Annex 1 AFA activities, January- July , 2017*

- c. Participation in the GAFSP Vision Group –Although coming a bit late in the discussions, AFA through Mr. Raul Socrates Banzuela joined the later discussions of the GAFSP vision group, giving comments to documents and joining its last meeting prior to the SC meeting in Rome.
- d. Participation in the GAFSP Program Evaluation Process – AFA facilitated the involvement of key FOs in Nepal and Cambodia, who were visited by GAFSP Program Evaluation Team Leader, Tim Bene last December 2017. Tim was able to meet with Mr. Sopheap Pan of Farmer and Nature Net, Cambodia, and with Dr. Keshab Khadka from the All Nepal Peasant Federations Association.
- e. Participation in the CSO Independent Evaluation of the GAFSP Program . The three CSO representatives to the GAFSP SC have agreed in March 2017 to do an independent Evaluation of the GAFSP program. Action Aid USA took lead in coordinating the independent evaluation, and in October 2017, started the full process by drafting the ToR for the consultant. AFA supported this evaluation process by identifying a consultant from Asia (which was later hired by CSO North representative), and mobilizing its members and partner FOs in GAFSP recipient countries in Asia (excluding Timor Leste ,Yemen and Bhutan , which were at the early stage of implementations still). AFA gave comments on the evaluation design submitted by the consultant, including the evaluation’s aims/objectives , methodologies, the target respondents , the draft survey questionnaires and questions for focused group discussions (FGDs).

AFA informed the FOs in GAFSP recipient countries about the independent evaluation process and sought their support to respond to the questionnaires and to involve other FOs and CSOs in the process. AFA conducted two FGDs on the sidelines of the AFA event “ Regional Consultation on Family Farming Matters” held Dec 2-5 , 2017 in Manila, Philippines, involving 10 AFA leaders from 7 countries . AFA members also conducted four country FGDs with a total of 29 participants. Eleven individuals from six countries responded to the long questionnaire, while 17 respondents from three countries responded to the shorter survey questionnaire.

AFA likewise gave inputs and comments to the draft independent evaluation report for Asia. The final version of the Asia report will be included in the Africa report that is being conducted with the facilitation of ROPPA. The final independent evaluation report will be packaged by Action Aid USA and will contain the findings and perspectives of CSOs in Asia, Africa and in the North.

- f. Participation in the Evaluation Process of the GAFSP Project in Nepal – AFA appreciates Action Aid USAs openness to partner with AFA in its work of developing a case study in Nepal, to showcase successes and lessons learnt on the Nepal Agriculture and Food Security Project (AFSP), and use this learning to encourage further donor support to GAFSP and improvements of the future



projects implementation by GAFSP. AFA provided inputs to the Terms of Reference for the consultant, helped in disseminating information about the need for such a consultant, provided some inputs and comments to the methodology and to the report. AFA likewise informed its member and partner CSOs in Nepal about this evaluation process and encouraged them to actively participate and give inputs, especially during the interviews. The final version of this report is being produced by Action Aid USA.

## **2. Consultation with Producer Organizations and Their Networks**

- a. Regional Policy Consultation on Family Planning Matters- AFA held a regional consultation with four main aims : (1) to understand several policy instruments at the international level, namely Responsible Agriculture Investments (RAI), Contract Farming and Action Decade on Nutrition – and determine their relevance in promoting food security and nutrition ; (2) to get to know the newly formed SAFIN (Smallholder Agriculture Finance Investment Network) and see how it can work together to serve common interests for smallholders; and (3) to assess activities in 2017, particularly the cooperative development program , and make major plans for 2018.

The consultation ran for four days :

- Day 1 was spent on sharing the results of the cooperative development forum held in eight countries ( Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Nepal, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) and identify action points and ways of moving forward in 2018.
- Day 2 was spent on visiting the Soro-Soro Ibaba Cooperative (SIDC), a 40 year old agricultural cooperative with 29,000 members and Php2billion in assets.
- Day 3 was spent on discussing the main features of RAI, contract farming guidelines of FAO, the Action Decade on Nutrition, and the advocacy for IYFF+10, with invited resource persons
- Day 4 was spent on discussing AFA’s achievements in 2017 and major plans for 2018.

Among the major reflections and action points that were shared during the consultations were :

- Due to a long history of failures of agricultural cooperatives, many farmers are wary of cooperatives. Yet, cooperatives can be a potent force in poverty and hunger reduction, as successful cooperatives can attest. Thus, awareness raising on the fundamentals of cooperatives should be promoted on a much wider scale. One method of building awareness is to conduct learning visits to successful cooperatives. The success of these cooperatives can inspire other leaders, and can spark innovative ideas on how they can transform their organizations into successful cooperatives and decrease chances of failure (e.g. what is good governance in cooperatives, how to increase transparency, how to ensure benefits accrue to members). In the case of the learning visit to SIDC, the farmer leaders were introduced to the idea that an agriculture cooperative can do a full value chain, with direct forward and backward linkages. The cooperative started with hog raising as primary business, but now has an ISO certified feed mill, coop mart, organic fertilizer, gasoline station, a resort, and



offers loans and credits, insurances, and scholarships. However, learning visits should then be followed by programmatic technical assistance and capacity building with the aim of operationalizing learnings acquired. Also, an enabling environment for cooperatives is necessary; thus advocacy will still always be an important area of work for farmers organizations.

- Small scale farmers are rarely bankable, thus many financing institutions do not provide credit for agriculture production and processing. Farmers urge development finance institutions such as IFAD to respond to small scale family farmers who are not bankable but really needs to access credits and loans.
- Instruments such as the Responsible Agriculture Investments and contract farming, though voluntary in nature, can still exert some form of pressure on concerned actors ( e.g. government, big businesses) to comply with guiding principles. Many small scale family farmers are drawn into contract farming and FOs need to have the capacity to help farmers in negotiating fair deals. Documenting and conducting sharing sessions on good and bad contracts and agriculture investments will help increase knowledge and capacities on how to get the best deals in favor of farmers, as well as provide guidance on the policies to be proposed to governments.
- Farmers are looking forward to the approval of the International Decade of Family Farming but would like to realize tangible gains from such a decade. AFA needs to be very actively involved in the design and implementation of the Action Agenda for the decade, and be more proactive in calling development institutions to support this Decade, should it be approved.
- Agriculture, food security and nutrition have been traditionally interlinked , with farmers always having kitchen gardens in their farms and practicing integrated and diversified farming practices. However, decades of Green Revolution have almost wiped out this practice. Policies and programs to promote nutrition sensitive agriculture remain to be an important advocacy work for AFA at both national and regional levels.

[Annex 2 clickable proceedings of the REgional policy consultation here](#)

<http://asianfarmers.org/regional-policy-consultations-on-family-farming-matter/>

### **3. *Country support for the producer organizations and civil society organizations involved in the implementation of projects***

- a. Country Support Missions – Preparations for the country missions for Mongolia and Bhutan started in December by talking to potential hosts : NAMAC (National Association of Mongolian Agriculture Cooperatives) and Mr. Jigme Dorji, the director of FSAPP, the GAFSP project in Bhutan. The Mission in Mongolia is tentatively set in March 5-8, 2017 while the Bhutan mission is tentatively set on May 10-12, 2017.

Please also find the full country mission reports for Myanmar, Tajikistan, Kyrgyztan and Bangladesh. These missions were conducted in July and August,



and the highlights of the mission were reported already in the interim report.

[Annex 3-6 clickable links for mission reports for Myanmar, Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Kyrgyztan](#)

- b. *Knowledge Learning and Innovation Dialogues*. Two Knowledge Management Workshops were conducted during this report period. Highlights of each KM workshop are as follows :
- **Asia Pacific Women Farmers Forum , held October 2-4 , 2017, in Ahmedabad, India**, hosted by Self Employed Womens Association (SEWA). The forum was attended by around 90 Key women farmer leaders in 13 countries, including in GAFSP recipient countries Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Mongolia and Kyrgyztan. The forum was a venue to recognize the initiatives of women farmers in 13 countries in promoting food security, nutrition and climate resilient agriculture-based livelihoods. The forum served as an avenue of sharing experiences and learning from each other. At the end of the three-day forum, the women farmers showed their strong conviction and commitment to reducing hunger and poverty and to sustainable development by stating a declaration containing small but sure steps that they can do to make their plans come true.

[Annex 7 : proceedings of asia pacific women farmers forum](#)

news item in website:

<http://asianfarmers.org/asia-pacific-women-farmers-forum/>

- **South South Cooperation Forum in South Asia: Promoting Sustainable Family Farming Agriculture To Achieve SDG1 and 2, held December 14-16, 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal**, with co-organizer FAO and with the support facilitation of SAARC Secretariat and SAARC Agricultural Center. Around 70 participants consisting of farmer leaders, representatives of farmers' and fishers' organizations, government officials and scholars from seven South Asian countries as well as international development partners attended the three day meeting. FO partners of GAFSP projects in Nepal and Bangladesh attended the meeting. Ms. Kanchan Lama , Action Aid USA consultant on the evaluation of the GAFSP project in Nepal, presented key findings of the aforesaid evaluation, highlighting the good practice done by AFSP project in providing a package of services for women farmers in the target areas. Ms. Shazada Begum, a farmer leader from Bangladesh , presented its organization's seed enterprise.

All in all, there were 25 presentations on the general situation of South Asia agriculture, women farmers, youth farmers, sustainable forestry, integrated and diversified farming and fisheries, and seed sovereignty. These presentations provided a rich diversity of perspectives and good practices from which to learn from. For example both government officials and FO representatives strongly



appreciated the work of SEWA (Self Employed Womens Association ) in empowering women farmers through an integrated agricultural campaign.

The forum was a milestone in FO-SAARC relations as this was the first time that such a meeting took place between two key stakeholders in promoting food security and nutrition. Dr. Bokhtiar, SAC's Director, said that with the very good experience in collaborating in this event, both organizations, AFA and SAC , can look forward to more cooperation with the aim of strengthening FO-SAARC relations to promote sustainable family farming agriculture.

[Annex 8 event proceedings of the South South Cooperation Forum](#)

<http://asianfarmers.org/south-south-cooperation-forum-centers-on-sustainable-agriculture-sdgs-women-youth/>

## B. Activities Directly Involving AFA

1. **Financial management.** AFA executed all expenditures and regularly collected financial reimbursements with the necessary supporting documents.

2. **Administrative management** – AFA provided administrative and logistics support to all trips of the CSO Asia representative and staff, country missions and knowledge forum conducted under this Project, including drawing up the contracts for local hosts, resource persons and translators. AFA regularly uploaded news, articles and reports related to GAFSP in the AFA website <https://gafspasiancsos.wordpress.com>. AFA FB page AsianFarmers AFA also contains news, photos about GAFSP-related activities, among others.

## Insights and Recommendations

1. During the year 2017, AFA conducted/facilitated the following :
  - active participation of CSO-Asia representatives to two meetings of the GAFSP Steering committee
  - active participation in the GAFSP vision group
  - eight country missions ( Timor Leste, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Kyrgyztan, Tajikistan) with a cooperative development forum
  - three knowledge learning and innovation dialogues ( on strengthening water user associations and promoting sustainable water management held in Kyrgyztan, Asia Pacific Women Farmers Forum held in India, and South South Cooperation Forum in South Asia held in Nepal)
  - one Asia producer meeting (Regional Consultation on Family Farming Matters, held in Philippines)
  - CSO/FO participation in the ongoing GAFSP program evaluation processes at country ( Nepal, Cambodia) and Asia levels
2. All these activities resulted to the following
  - stronger interactions between FOs and SEs and government implementors at country levels and a set of recommendations to improve engagement of FOs in national



### GAFSP projects

- increased awareness of CSO constituency , particularly key FO platforms, in the workings of GAFSP at national and global levels ( e.g. the reform process in GAFSP)
- articulation of Asian FO perspectives, realities and recommendations during producer consultations and meetings of the GAFSP Steering Committee and Vision Group
- new ideas learned from good practices on family farming agriculture which were shared during the various KM workshops

### 3. With regards to CSO engagement in GAFSP projects at national level:

Aspect	Cam	Lao	Myan	Nep	Bang	Bhu	Mon	Taj	Kyrg	TLeste
Design	x	/	/	x	x	x	x	x	/	x
Natl Steering Com	x	x	n.a.	/	/	na	/	x	na	x
Monitoring	x	x	na	/	x	na	x	x	na	na
Implementation	/	/	na	/	x	na	/	/	na	x
Govt in CSO mission	/	/	na	x	x	na	x	/	/	x

- CSOs in three countries ( an NGO in Laos, FOs in Myanmar, Krygyztan) were involved in the design phase,
- FOs in two countries ( Nepal, Mongolia) were part of the national steering committees
- FOs in one country (Nepal ) was involved in monitoring processes
- CSOs in all countries which are in implementation phase have involved CSOs in implementation, hiring them for TA / service delivery, but these are all NGOs ( no FOs )
- Government implementors in Cambodia, Laos, Tajikistan and Kyrgyztan have accompanied the GAFSP CSO mission team

4. The table above shows that much still has to be desired with regard to participation of CSOs, especially FOs, in project designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and representation in national steering and management committees, though there are notable positive developments in Myanmar, Nepal ( for the next project) , Kyrgyztan, Laos, Cambodia. The participation of CSOs , especially NGOs, in the implementation phase is already high but we look forward also to increased participation of national FOs during the implementation and monitoring phases of the projects.

5. AFA would like to be actively involved in the GAFSP reform process by participating in the working groups and in the program evaluation processes. AFA hopes to encourage FOs especially from the GAFSP recipient countries to also actively participate in the on going evaluation processes to improve the working of GAFSP and ensure the benefits reach the small scale farmers and that the gains will be sustainable , and not just project-driven.