

TO: Members of the HLPE
FROM: The undersigned CSOs
RE: The HLPE Draft Report On Climate Change
Date: 19 April 2012

Dear Members of the HLPE,

We are prompted to write by the zero draft of the HLPE report on food security and climate change. We are pleased the HLPE took up this vital issue, and appreciate the work that has gone into the draft. A number of our organizations have submitted more detailed comments separately. This letter, however, reflects the shared concern on behalf of the undersigned CSOs that the draft report does not do justice to the intellectually innovative and politically important mandate given to the HLPE, and, through the HLPE, to the project teams the panel employs.

The world is at a critical time in the debate on climate change. Policy-makers have relatively little time left to make the changes that most scientists agree we need to avert catastrophic change. Climate change is already affecting food production and food security, and is expected to have even more adverse impacts in the near future. The report fails to convey this urgency.

The authors of the draft report acknowledge anthropogenic climate change is real, dangerous and something policy-makers can do something about. But then they fail to follow through on this analysis. Some governments (mostly from developed countries) are focused on carbon markets and on mitigation by small-scale food producers as solutions. We strongly disagree with this approach, as do many governments, some of which have expressed their disagreement within the UNFCCC process. These governments, supported by a significant number of scientists, are persuaded that much more is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to reduce vulnerability to food insecurity. So are we.

The heart of the challenge is to mitigate the agricultural practices that are known to contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. These are practices that are largely, though not only, common in the agriculture of OECD member states. The second step is to acknowledge that small-scale producers, especially in developing countries, have already had to adapt. They need investment in agricultural technologies that will build resilience in the face of less predictable growing conditions. Carbon markets will not generate the money needed for such investments. Third, there are a series of agricultural practices, a number of them known collectively as agro-ecology, that have proven benefits to the environment and that build resilience in the face of climate change. The HLPE report should highlight such approaches to agriculture because of their demonstrable benefits from a food security perspective and because of what they contribute to both mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

The CFS is a committee on *world* food security. It is addressing a world – our world – in which poverty and vulnerability persist, surrounded by wealth and waste. It is the practices and technologies of the richest countries that are mostly responsible for causing climate change, and it is the livelihoods of some of the world’s poorest people that are in jeopardy as a result. This dynamic can be changed through actions taken to address climate change. It is the dynamic the CFS must grapple with if it is to contribute to ending food insecurity. The HLPE reports must support governments in this politically difficult but absolutely vital work.

The HLPE is a unique entity. Its credibility matters to the CSOs who helped ensure its creation and who strongly support its role. That role is to bring evidence-based knowledge and research to the inter-governmental debate at the CFS. The HLPE needs to focus on its strengths: it brings together a broad range of stakeholders, it explicitly acknowledges alternative forms of knowledge, and its mandate is to provide evidence-based analysis and intellectually honest recommendations to multilateral policy debates. It is no small task, but it is an exciting one. The report on climate change and food security falls short. We very much hope a second draft of this critically important report can take up the challenge. We remain at your disposal, and at the disposal of the project team, to assist in any way you think useful.

Yours sincerely,

ActionAid International
African Biodiversity Network
Asian Farmers Association
Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)
Brot für die Welt
Campaign for Real Farming
Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)
Canadian Foodgrains Bank
Center of Concern
CIDSE
Community Technology Development Trust
Cumberland Countians for Peace & Justice
Eastern and Southern Small Scale Farmers’ Forum (ESAFF)
EcoNexus
Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
FAHAMU
Fair World Project
Farmworker Association of Florida
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Food & Water Watch
Fundaciòn Cosecha Sostenible Honduras
Fundación Instituto Mayor Campesino

Gaia Foundation
Greenpeace International
The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Inter Pares
Intercontinental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations (INOFO)
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)
International-Lawyers.org
Local to Global Advocates for Justice
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
MIJARC
MISEREOR
Movimiento Agroecologico de America Latina-Maela
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility United Church of Christ
Never Ending Food
Nord-Sud XXI
The Oakland Institute
Organic Consumers Association
Oxfam
Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific (PAN AP)
PLANT (Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples)
Rescope Programme, The Sustainability Centre
The Second Chance Foundation
SOLIDARITÉ
Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN)
Tearfund
Third World Network
USC Canada
Uganda Environmental Education Foundation (UEEF)
UK Food Group
WhyHunger
WOCAN (Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management)