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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

A CALL FROM CSOs TO GAFSP DONORS FOR URGENT ACTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting people's access to food with a high likelihood of moving from a health crisis to a global food crisis very soon. Family farmers are among the first to be dramatically affected. Farmers' markets have been closed in many countries to reduce the spread of the virus; hence family farmers can't access what they need or sell their produce, resulting in reduced income, food wasted, and fewer resources to survive the lean season and invest in the next planting season. Food demand, after an initial pickup due to panic buying, will likely decrease due to declining income and restricted movement caused by lockdowns, with severe impact on both producers and consumers. At the global level, nobody can predict whether and to what extent disruption along the value chain will occur, hoarding will happen, food prices will rise, and global food supply will decline for export restrictions.

The marginalized segments of the population will suffer the most, among them family farmers and agricultural workers. The consequences of the crisis will be even worse in developing countries due to weak public services capacity and lack of efficient social protection systems. This time we must learn from the past and avoid a global food crisis.

In coordination with civil society, Governments should approve urgent measures to support people's access to health, food, and social protection measures to cope with the crisis. Family farmers should be supported in production, processing, distribution, and marketing to enhance their resilience. Governments should promote public procurement schemes purchasing directly from small-scale farmers for social protection programs or public food reserves. Farmers markets should be kept open and operational with rigorous measures for people's access and farmer's health and security, in coordination with farmers' organizations. Family farmers should be provided with specific safety nets as well as cooling, storage, and transportation facilities for farmer-organized delivery. Direct relationships between producers and consumers should be promoted to ensure continued and safe access to fresh and healthy food. Stability of food production should be pursued with appropriate policies and strategies.

GAFSP was set up in 2010 as a response to the global food crisis and represents now an adequate and timely response to the new one. GAFSP can play a role in the current COVID-19 period by allowing enough flexibility to adapt the ongoing projects to the new emergency, prioritizing measures to support family farms' resilience. In doing so, GAFSP should strengthen engagement

with CSOs, especially organized FOs and cooperatives, in the re-alignment of priorities, activities and funding. CSOs and FOs can provide timely evidence of the impact of the outbreak in rural areas.

With the support of CSOs and their members, GAFSP should develop a quick monitoring of the real impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on small-scale farmers and small-scale food providers, which can be used as evidence to support these adjustments.

GAFSP can also play a role in the post-pandemic scenario by contributing to the recovery of the millions of negatively affected family farmers and by promoting the transition to a more sustainable agricultural model that respects the ecosystem and prevents the future spread of these deadly viruses.

To achieve this goal, we need a well-funded GAFSP. The GAFSP replenishment moment announced in June should be a wake-up call to Governments. Even if the replenishment event will turn into a virtual moment, we call on current GAFSP donors and potential new donors to replenish GAFSP and launch an extraordinary call for proposals targeting producers' organizations affected by the COVID-19 crisis. By following this path, the GAFSP will make a major contribution to rebuilding the food security and nutrition of millions of farmers and consumers affected by the crisis.