

The State of Food and Agriculture 2018 (SOFA) - Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development

CFS 45 Panel Discussion

- It is a pleasure to take the floor on behalf of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism, as facilitator for the Africa region. I represent the Network of Farmers Organizations and Agricultural Producers of West Africa (ROPPA), a network that covers 15 countries in the ECOWAS and 50 million family farmers.
- Migration generally refers to the mobility of peoples, inherent to societal and human transformation. It has been happening since time immemorial and will always exist. The phenomenon we are currently experiencing, however, is the denouncing of people who suffer from poverty and hunger, as a result of inadequate public policies that continue to increase the inequality gap between rich and poor, and widen the urban-rural gap.
- The 2016 World Bank report states that 80% of people living in poverty reside in rural areas, from which 70% depend on agriculture and 40% do not have a basic education.
- According to the African Development Bank, over 70% of young people in Africa live under the poverty line, and between 10 and 12 million young people enter the employment market, although there are only 3.1 million jobs available per year. As per the African Development Bank estimates, in West Africa 3 million young people enter the employment market per year, although there are only 900 000 jobs available.
- The question is: what sustainable solutions are there to these major issues in Africa? The answers, whatever the context may be, lie in a territorial approach, which builds on family farmers' innovation capacity and resilience; family farming being the predominant food production system.

■ In this context, we highlight 3 major challenges:

- (i) Improve the situation of rural youth on family farms, local communities, and states;
- (ii) Make finance mechanisms available and accessible to rural youth, for men and women equally, so that they can develop sustainable jobs in the agro-sylvo-pastoral production and fisheries sectors;
- (iii) Advance appropriate, inclusive and coherent public policies that foster sustainable employment and the large-scale introduction/establishment of rural youth in the agro-sylvo-pastoral production and fisheries sectors.

■ Access to resources is one of the main rights issues raised in the effort to break away from and respond to these current challenges. For this reason, the Declaration on Peasants' Rights is an important instrument to reduce inequalities between agriculture and other sectors, to decrease the urban-rural gap, and to foster the implementation of the SDGs, which is why all should support its adoption. Additionally, the Decade on Family Farming is a real opportunity to encourage the adoption of the declaration and to assert these rights.

■ Through its strategic plan, ROPPA has committed to promote the Decade on Family Farming, in synergy with several other networks of food and agricultural systems actors in West Africa and elsewhere.