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## **Editorial**

### **FAO Messages for International Year of Family Farming 2014**



*Family Farming is the predominant form of agriculture both in developed and developing countries. There are over 500 million family farms in the world. Their rural activities are managed and operated by a family and rely predominantly on family labour. They range from smallholders and medium scale farmers, to peasants, indigenous peoples, traditional communities, fisherfolk, pastoralists and many other groups in any region and biome of the world. Family farmers are an important part of the solution for a world free from poverty and hunger. In many regions, they are the main producers of the foodstuff consumed every day in our meals. Over 70 percent of the food insecure population lives in rural areas of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Near East. Many of them are family farmers, especially smallholders, with poor access to natural resources, policies and technologies.*

*All kind of evidence shows that poor family farmers can quickly deploy their productivity potential when the appropriate policy environment is effectively put in place. Facilitating access to land, water and other natural resources and implementing specific public policies for family farmers (credit, technical assistance, insurance, market access, public purchases, appropriate technologies) are key components for increasing agricultural productivity, eradicating poverty, achieving world food security and supports sustainable development. Family Farmers run crop-diversification based agricultural systems and preserve traditional food products, contributing both to a balanced diet and the safeguard of the world's agro-biodiversity. Family farmers are embedded in territorial networks and local cultures, and spend their incomes mostly within local and regional markets, generating many agricultural and non-agricultural jobs. Local production and consumption circuits based on family farming have a major part to play in fighting hunger especially when linked to social protection policies that address the needs of vulnerable peoples.*

***The International Year of Family Farming.*** *All the characteristics above make family farmers hold the unique potential to move towards more productive and sustainable food systems if policy environments support them in this path. The IYFF gives us a clear opportunity to further highlight the strategic role of family farmers in agricultural and rural development and strengthen their capacities. Governments may show their political commitment building juridical framework, institutions and policies for family farmers. Establishing platforms for policy dialogue with family farmers' organization in order to generate consensus, build and implement effective policies is a major target of the IYFF. International cooperation can foster policy dialogue among all stakeholders and help building concrete and sustainable solutions.*

***Vijikumar.S***  
***Editor in Chief***