



Outcomes from the Hague Conference

15 November 2010. Following on from Hague Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change, the Farming First coalition welcomes the commitment expressed by participants to achieving the 'triple win' of improving food security, addressing climate change and improving the lives and livelihoods of rural populations.

The Road Map for Action on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change summarises the discussions from the conference that took place on 31st October to 5th November, and identifies solutions to the key challenges faced. We as a coalition welcome the emphasis on increasing agricultural productivity and sustainable intensification and on prioritising agriculture as a means for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Farming First supports the recognition of the need for increased research and technology, especially the need to address the 'uptake gap' and the need to think about delivery of tools. Sustainable agriculture is knowledge intensive and agricultural policies need to be knowledge-based. We need a stronger commitment to restoring extension and training programmes for farmers, and concrete commitments in this area were not sufficiently articulated. Innovation will be essential to achieving the challenges of the future but much can also be done by improving the uptake of existing technologies through extension services and increased investment in farmer education. In particular, we recognise the need for building farmer knowledge in Integrated Crop Management (ICM) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to enable farmers to tackle pest problems in a sustainable and efficient manner. In addition to training, improving access to information and advice through ICTs, improving availability of suitable storage, improved transport and market facilities, as well as, when needed, pesticides, is an important part of offering farmers a 'toolkit' to minimize pre- and post-harvest losses. In addition, we would suggest that women farmers should become specially targeted recipients of programmes and funding because of their vital roles in the agricultural workforce, household food procurement and preparation, and family unit support.

We also urge building effective local private sector networks of technology providers to improve farmer access to tools. It is essential for sustainability and growth that government policies and development aid work to build the local private sector and not undermine or bypass it.

We agree on the importance of creating an enabling environment for farmers to invest in their farms and to attract private sector investment. This effort should be extended to all sectors that contribute to the distribution, sale and transport of agricultural inputs, outputs and tools. Encouraging the development of storage facilities, transport firms, processing facilities and agrodealers can help farmers be more efficient and build agriculture as a dynamic economic sector.

Finally, there is a need for greater coherence and transparency in terms of the pledges and realisation of pledges made by government on the issue of food security. In the UN system, the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF) represents an effort at giving an overarching direction but how non-UN efforts (such as the G8 and GAFSP) relate, for instance, to the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) developed by the HLTF, is not clear.

Farmers must be at the centre of our efforts to ensure that research programmes, as well as training and other services, are effective and respond to actual needs. The future will require a mosaic of solutions to be applied, and efforts in research, infrastructure and services must reflect the fact that viable long-term solutions must require collaboration between all groups involved and be localised and driven by farmers' needs.