

AE TPP Annual Members Forum Meeting 2025

FARMERS' STATEMENT

April 1, 2025

On behalf of national family farming organizations (FOs) -KAFLU, PAKISAMA, LFA, MASIPAG, and regional FOs - AFA, PAFO, PDRR - the farmers' organizations in this TPP Annual Members Forum Meeting 2025, I would like to read our recommendations.

Family farmers are not just food producers but we are knowledge producers and solution providers.

Our organizations and cooperatives are our platforms for collective actions and capacity development, enabling us to contribute to local economy and sustainable rural development. It's also our vehicle to participate in decision-making processes and contribute to transforming food systems through agroecology and sustainable resource management.

It has already been said that small-holder farmers in Asia play a crucial role in providing diverse food options for the region, yet we face numerous challenges. In light of climate change, we all agree and we already know that "business as usual" approach is no longer viable.

To sustain diverse food production while restoring degraded natural resources and mitigating climate change, farmers need to adapt locally through agroecology. This process requires sustained collaboration among farmers, researchers, and extension workers and continuous policy dialogue. Additionally, consumers must be educated about food production methods to boost the demand for agroecologically produced food.

As a network of farmers, we have organized discussions and consultations that allowed us to identify possible research areas or themes and formulate research questions, that will serve as a basis of collaborative or participatory research and innovation.

As expressed yesterday, **UN declared 2026 as the year of the woman farmer and the year of rangelands and pastoralists**. As a platform, TPP or TPP members can contribute to highlighting the work of women farmers in upholding and how they are bringing to life the agroecology principles as well as the challenges faced of women farmers. Similarly, it would be useful to highlight how agroecology supports rangelands and pastoralists.

Some of the research questions that emerged include:

1. What are the agroecological approaches (including production practices but not limited to production) that will enable small-scale farmers adapt to climate change faster?
2. What are the strategies and business models to ensure sustainability of agroecological practices?
3. What mechanisms and services that farmer's organizations, cooperatives or local organizations

The consultation done in line with the TPP One Million Voice Initiative, climate change impacts small-scale farmers and their adaptation emerged as the highly prioritized area because it is closest to farmers. Farmers' livelihood is at stake so adaptation through agroecology can be an overarching aim for farmers and their organizations. Possible areas for research include the identification and further promotion of climate-resilient agroecological practices at the village and local-level scale, farm-level

assessments that can be used by farmers' organizations, and identification of climate change manifestations which can be done through observations and measurements (changing weather patterns, precipitation rate) leading to the development of interventions. Another idea is testing, selecting varieties, and assessing/measuring suitability to local conditions. The collection and analysis of information can then be translated into the development of interventions and programs.

From 2021 to 2023, AFA, the Pacific Island Farmers' Organisation network and other partners participated in the perception survey regarding traditional or neglected underutilized food crops. We have conducted our own survey and translated the analysis into a Farmers' Declaration. These were further translated to local language and were used by national farmers' organization to engage with government agencies. One of the proposed actions include participatory development of solutions or innovations to address challenges related to the quality seed production, cultivation, processing and marketing, packaging of the traditional varieties and selected underutilized crop species (root and tuber crops, leafy but nutritious vegetables) to entice consumers and increase their market value. New methods and technology on all aspects to be researched on forgotten crops. Moreover, it is important to develop technologies that are appropriate and women-friendly. One example is small machineries for processing small grains like millets and indigenous crops. Processing machineries for millets can save a lot of women's time and lessen the drudgery. Community-based storage facilities at village level are also much needed.

Additionally these are the areas that some national farmers' organizations would like to explore further with research institutes in a participatory manner.

- Community-level approach to transformation
- Options to transform large scale monocrops using agroecology models, especially in cassava, maize, and sugarcane.
- Alternatives to reduce burning in farming
- Sustainable coffee-based systems in different context

Regarding challenges of participatory action research and community-based participatory, while we advocate for participatory action research and community-based participatory research, it is important to design them with the farmer groups to be able to address possible challenges. Experience of Lao Farmer Association showed that the main challenges in conducting community-based participatory research and learning that requires field testing and trial was convening farmers because sometimes it is scheduled during the same time as the planting and harvesting time. One of the solutions employed was identifying the most appropriate time, for example full moon date when everyone goes back home and doesn't work for a long period during the day or early morning or evening for meetings.

There were also instances where farmers hesitated to test and employ new practices in their own field because of the losses experienced by other farmers. Thus, it is important to integrate ways to compensate losses incurred by farmers or that the trial can be done in small-scale initially before applied in the entire field.

There is lack of interest among youth to join participatory research and learning activities. Thus, there should be programs designed specifically to attract youth to participate in innovation development and creation of enterprises out of the learning from the research activities, for example seed business.

We recognize the openness of TPP to promote as a co-creation an important principle that connects many of the agroecology principles.

To TPP partners, research institutions, government and policy making agencies, NGOs and other networks or platforms, we call on you to help us:

- Secure our rights and control over natural resources, especially lands, waters, and forests as we need these resources to invest long-term in diversifying our farms and making them more climate resilient.

To researchers, collaborate with us and our organizations in developing solutions to address challenges. Conduct your experiments, research, and innovation in a participatory manner, with the equal participation of family farmers through their organizations in the research agenda, design and formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the research, using in-situ approaches as much as possible.

Translate research outputs to stimulate demand for agroecologically produced food from consumers and the wider public and in turn support the marketing of our products.

Include representatives of family farmer organizations and /or cooperatives in the governance structures of research programs.

Invest in smallholder farmers and our organizations so we can be empowered to govern, manage and sustain our enterprises and services to our members to sustain agroecological approaches at the farm level.

We believe that with a strong, cohesive multi stakeholder partnership with family farmers we can effectively support the scaling up of agroecology, build climate resilience of millions of small-scale women, men, and young farmers, and collectively contribute to sustainable food systems transformation at the local and country level while also contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our recommendations!