

DECLARATION OF INTENTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE



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On the occasion of the International Year of Soils,
We, governments, representatives of farmers and agricultural sectors,
international organizations, scientific and technical research institutes,
local government authorities, development banks, foundations, private businesses
and non-governmental organizations confirm our will to work
for the transition towards productive, highly resilient agriculture based on
appropriate soil management which is essential to soil health
as emphasized by the World Soil Charter.

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We

- emphasize the need to ensure food security, to adapt agriculture to climate change and to ensure the availability of food in quantity and quality, the sustainable management of natural resources, economic and social development and the safeguarding of material heritage,
- note that over 33% of the world's soils are threatened by soil degradation and that climate change is accelerating this process; an increase in soil carbon stock through an increase of soil organic matter could reverse this process and promote adaptation to climate change with multiple co-benefits,
- recognize the role that forests, agro-forestry and trees in the landscape play in the build up and conservation of soil carbon,
- wish to make maximum use of the potential of agriculture to ensure food security by adapting to climate change while at the same time contributing to limitation of greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere, supplementing the necessary efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally and generally throughout the economy,
- recall that maintaining carbon-rich soils and restoring and improving degraded agricultural soils are essential to develop our ability to feed 9.5 billion people by 2050. Healthy soils are needed for food production and the provision of other essential ecosystem services,
- recall that farming practices, soil health management systems and landscape development that enhance soil carbon, such as agroecology for example, contribute to the preservation of natural resources and biodiversity,
- acknowledge that increasing, or maintaining according to the prevailing conditions, the carbon content of agricultural soils is a major challenge for agricultural and sustainable development policies,
- emphasize the need for robust monitoring and assessment systems based on scientific evidence and the need for appropriate investment in research in order to properly guide our actions,
- wish to mobilize to facilitate the participation of farmers and stockbreeders, rural communities and all actors in soil management to play a full part in this dynamic and to implement farming and landscape practices suited to local conditions and national issues with the aim of conserving or increasing the carbon content of soils,
- recall the importance of financing and distribution programs to support adoption of these new practices and mobilization of stakeholders at all levels, seeking an efficient use of existing financial mechanisms in the areas of development, climate and combating land degradation,

- recall the necessity of protecting existing legitimate land rights, including informal rights, and their holders, in coherence with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (CFS 2012) and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS 2014),
- remain convinced that action and commitment on the part of all actors in the agricultural and land-management sectors will enable the promotion of implementation of adapted policies and the channeling of appropriate funding to the different components of the Initiative.

We fully support the "4 per 1000: Soils for food security and climate" Initiative.

We recognize, in regard to our respective missions and mandates, the need:

- to strengthen our public policies, our tools and our actions to foster sustainable and inclusive agricultural and rural development that provides for the implementation of practices that maintain or enhance carbon stock in agricultural soils,
- to encourage the launch of research programs in order to improve knowledge on soil-carbon storage, to assess the performance of farming techniques and methods of restoring degraded land with regard to carbon storage,
- to support a participatory approach to building innovative solutions and their adoption for the benefit of farmers and the general population, notably by means of training and education programs, and
- to share our projects, actions, experience and results in this area, in particular the results of research, through a common platform and to organize at regular intervals meetings for discussion and stock-taking with the support of a scientific and technical committee.

We commit to put in place a formal governance structure through an inclusive and transparent process, guaranteeing fair participation by the various stakeholders, and taking into consideration the need to collaborate with existing, relevant initiatives by seeking synergies with them around soil health issues, wherever possible.

Done at

on 1 December 2015