



Federal Ministry  
of Food  
and Agriculture

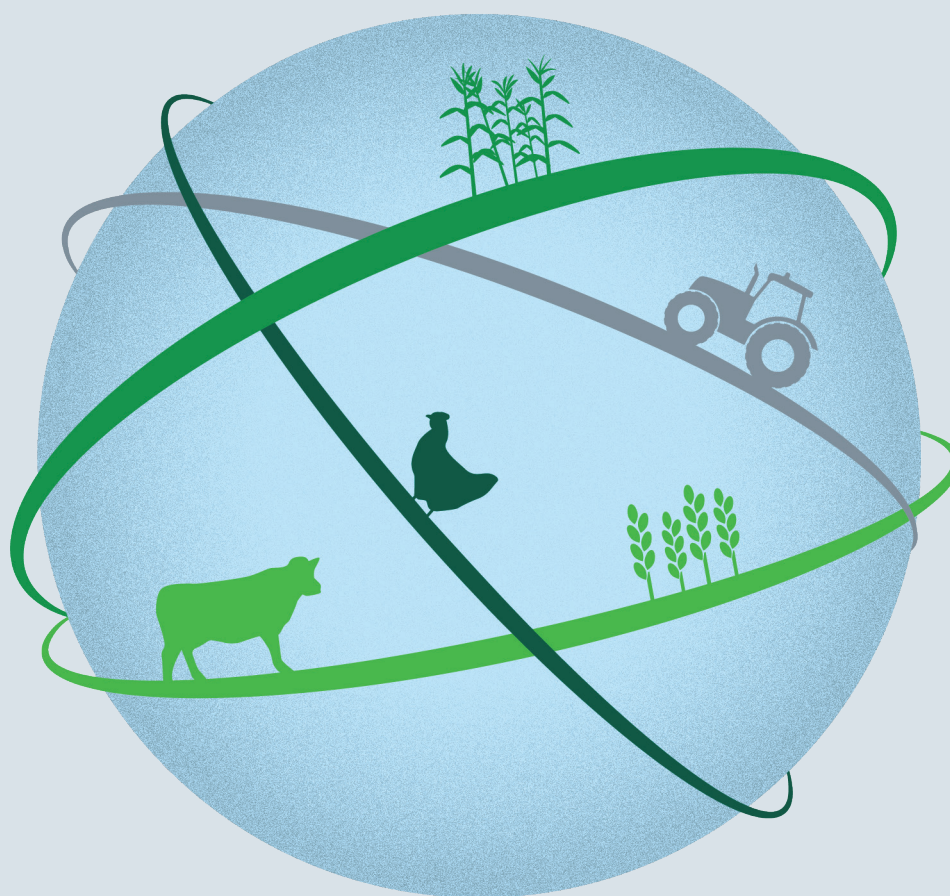
GLOBAL  
FORUM FOR FOOD AND  
AGRICULTURE

# 14<sup>th</sup> Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference

**Final Communiqué 2022**

Sustainable Land Use: Food Security Starts with the Soil

goes virtual



28 January 2022 – the English version is authentic

## Global Forum for Food and Agriculture

### 2022 Communiqué

## Sustainable Land Use: Food Security Starts with the Soil

### Preamble

1. We, the agriculture ministers of 68<sup>1</sup> nations, have assembled virtually on 28 January 2022 for the **14th Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference** on the occasion of the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA). We commit to take concrete actions for the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and to safeguard global food security and nutrition as well as to enhance standards of living for farmers. We emphasise our commitment to the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, to the Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to the Paris Agreement. Given the food security impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we recall our support for sustainable food systems. In this context we highlight the **UN Food Systems Summit**, which advocated ending hunger and malnutrition and building more sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems.

2. We stress that healthy soils are key in order to combat the global challenges of our times, in particular the production of sufficient nutritious and safe food, adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, and the halting and reversal of biodiversity loss. We also emphasise the importance of ensuring a holistic approach, jointly tackling environmental, economic and social issues. We underline that **sustainable land use** by all sectors and **sustainable soil management** are crucial for the contribution of agriculture to all SDGs. Against this background, we see the need to significantly strengthen the sustainable use and management of our land and soils with the following actions:

### Call for action

3. We reaffirm the Paris Agreement's long-term goal to hold the increase in the global average temperature. In addition, we will intensify existing efforts to increase the adaptation of agricultural systems to **climate change**. We will strive to maintain or increase the stocks of soil organic carbon, including by supporting agricultural practices that sequester carbon and improve soil health and water holding capacity. We underline the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in particular from cultivated, drained peat soils, for climate change mitigation. In this context, we support the ambition of the 4 per 1000 Initiative and the FAO's RECSOIL actions. We note the COP26 Presidency's Policy Action Agenda for Transition to Sustainable Food and Agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> Please find attached the list of participants.

4. We commit to maintain and enhance **soil health** and **soil conservation**. We stress that healthy soils have the ability to sustain the productivity, diversity, and environmental services of terrestrial ecosystems. We advocate for the implementation of locally adapted measures to enhance soil health.

5. We are aware that healthy soils are rich in **biodiversity**. They are therefore resilient and fertile and remain productive in the long term. For this reason, we commit to strengthen activities to promote the protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable use and management of soil biodiversity in agricultural soils. The responsible use of pesticides, and sustainable integrated pest management can be an important contribution to this. Organic farming and the sustainable management of soils can make an important contribution to protect and improve soil biodiversity. At COP 15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), we will advocate for an ambitious Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

6. We commit to minimise **soil pollution** and, where feasible and appropriate, to remediate existing polluted soils, noting the findings of the FAO global soil pollution assessment report.

7. We stress the importance of integrated **water resource** and quality management for soil health and vice versa. We will therefore promote measures to improve sustainable water management and natural water flows and retention in the agricultural landscape. We will also take measures to minimise water quality degradation from agricultural activities. We will furthermore work to ensure sufficient water quality to facilitate agricultural production.

8. We will work to ensure that the management of nutrients, including the integrated use of different types of **fertilisers**, becomes more sustainable and efficient, even better geared to the nutrient needs of crops, trees, pastures and grassland, while reducing nutrient losses, mitigating climate change and improving biodiversity. We will ensure that local soil characteristics, cropping systems, environmental and climatic conditions and weather patterns are taken into consideration in order to avoid negative impacts on natural resources and biodiversity, as mentioned by the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers.

9. We support policies that promote and mainstream **sustainable soil and land management**. We recommit to the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management (VGSSM) adopted by the FAO Council in 2016 as a guiding instrument. In this context, we highlight the importance of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) to further promote sustainable soil management. We recognise the value of and will strengthen support for transitioning to more sustainable agricultural systems, e.g. as included in the Policy Recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that Enhance Food Security and Nutrition. We emphasise the need to maximise the positive impacts of sustainable pasture management on soil health.

10. We advocate for coherent, **cross-sectoral policies** to avoid negative effects from other sectors and remits on agricultural soil and land. We stress the importance of participatory land-use planning systems for the systematic assessment of land potential for sustainable,

integrated rural development and sustainable food systems. We underline the importance of minimising pressure on land resources, that **soil sealing** should be reduced as far as possible and that de-sealing and other remediation measures should be implemented. We advocate to protect land for agriculture in order to ensure food security, while respecting environmental objectives.

11. We underline that knowledge about soil and land resources is the basis for achieving sustainable soil management. We emphasise the importance of **high quality soil data**, *inter alia* based on soil diagnosis, for guiding decision-making and we encourage the sharing of knowledge and technology to measure and monitor soil health. We support the development and use of global soil health indicators, indexes and assessment tools. We will therefore strengthen soil information systems. We take note of the Global Soil Information System and the outcome document of the Global Symposium on Soil Biodiversity held in April 2021, which *inter alia* recommends establishing the Global Soil Biodiversity Observatory.

12. We commit to prevent further **soil degradation**. We will further improve and disseminate sustainable techniques, technologies and innovations to tackle threats to soil health and to improve sustainable agricultural practices. In particular, we see the necessity of site-adapted, context-specific and resource-efficient measures. We will continue efforts to restore and conserve, where appropriate, natural habitats which enhance soil health.

13. We recall that, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we committed to combat desertification, to restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and to strive to achieve a **land degradation-neutral world by 2030**. In this context, we commend the work of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and encourage Parties to take bold action at the UNCCD COP15 in Abidjan, Côte D'Ivoire, in May 2022. We will aim for a successful United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

14. We recognise that **desertification, land degradation and drought** represent massive threats to global food security, nutrition and sustainable food systems worldwide. To address these threats and restore degraded soils, we advocate for site-specific measures such as appropriate changes in soil and land management practices e.g. through improving long-term tenure security, **restoring** productive and biodiverse landscapes, and promoting the cultivation of legumes among others, where appropriate. We welcome in this context measures such as the African Union's Great Green Wall of Africa, which can have an important impact for the political stabilisation and social stability of the region. We underline that restoring degraded land and soil requires long-term commitments.

15. With due recognition of the importance of **forests**, trees, pastures and other vegetative cover for the protection of soils from erosion and excessive heat and for improving precipitation, moisture retention, biodiversity, and water quality at local and regional level, we reiterate our goal of halting deforestation and the degradation of forests and other ecosystems by 2030, in line with the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use. We underline the need to accelerate the restoration of natural forests and other landscapes, taking into account the rights and needs of indigenous peoples, and to promote sustainable

forest management. We appreciate the abundant expertise of respective international organisations.

16. We recognise the importance of promoting and improving public and private **research and innovation** in the fields of sustainable land, soil and water management. Research and innovation is also needed for land, soil and ecosystem restoration. We encourage international collaboration on soil research, climate-smart agriculture and food systems innovation, including through the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (GRA). We will promote the exchange of knowledge in sustainable soil management and best practices.

17. We advocate that **new technologies** and **digital solutions** are developed and implemented in a responsible, equitable, science and risk-based manner. We emphasise the need for readily available, accessible and affordable solutions for everyone, especially for smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, women and youth. We will take measures to ensure that our farmers have access to **training and advice** for assessing soil conditions and for managing soil sustainably. In the context of digital solutions, we welcome the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, a voluntary and inclusive multistakeholder forum to be hosted by FAO to facilitate open, transparent, and inclusive exchange of knowledge and best practices on the digitalisation of the food, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry sectors as well as land-use planning, land-use change and sustainable soil management.

18. We recognise the great importance of genetic resources diversity and crop and livestock **breeding** for sustainable agriculture, for productivity growth in agriculture and for sustainable soil use and management. In this context, we support initiatives for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture. We therefore support the development and use of climate-adapted crop varieties and livestock breeds for sustainable agriculture. As a contribution to this, we will continue to promote international research alliances.

19. We will strive to increase **public awareness** regarding the importance of healthy soils for healthy food. In this regard, we commend the importance of the World Soil Day as an important awareness-raising platform. In this context, we reaffirm the importance of internationally agreed voluntary guidance, and the use and application of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN) to provide equitable and equal access to **healthy diets** through sustainable food systems. We also commit to continue our efforts to halve per capita global **food waste** at retail and consumer level by 2030 and to reduce **food losses** along the production and supply chain, including post-harvest losses.

20. We stress the importance of developing sustainable **investment** mechanisms and incentives for the adoption of sustainable soil and land management practices informed by the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI). We will strive to promote coherent agricultural policies and incentives that encourage investments, management practices and general services that enhance sustainable agriculture and soil health.

21. We will continue to advocate for the development of approaches that support sustainable agricultural **supply chains that support our goal of halting deforestation and forest degradation**. These approaches should be based on the principles of scientific integrity and transparency and must be consistent with international trade rules. The OECD-FAO Guidance on Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains is a valuable reference.
22. We emphasise that long-term, affordable and secure **access to agricultural land** through ownership, use rights and other forms of legitimate tenure is of great importance for local and global food security. Governance of tenure is crucial to achieve land degradation neutrality as well as to restore ecosystems. In this context, we strongly support the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (**CFS VGGT**) and will support their implementation as we mark their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In particular, we support the access of women, young farmers, family farmers and indigenous peoples to land.
23. **Land acquisitions** cannot violate human rights of concerned parties and should take into consideration social and environmental impacts. We are concerned by the increasing concentration of agricultural land tenure that hampers competition. We see that it can be difficult for farmers and local land users to afford their land. We will ensure appropriate priority for farmers on farmland e.g. by preventing land speculation and protecting against price abuse, etc.
24. At the **2024 GFFA**, we will discuss the progress made regarding the commitments in this communiqué.



## List of participants

1. Argentina
2. Australia
3. Azerbaijan
4. Bangladesh
5. Barbados
6. Belgium (Flanders)
7. Bhutan
8. Bulgaria
9. Canada
10. Chile
11. Croatia
12. Cuba
13. Cyprus
14. Czech Republic
15. Denmark
16. Ecuador
17. Egypt
18. El Salvador
19. Eritrea
20. Estonia
21. Finland
22. France
23. Georgia
24. Germany
25. Hungary
26. Indonesia
27. Ireland
28. Japan
29. Jordan
30. Kazakhstan
31. Kingdom of Bahrain
32. Kosovo\*
33. Kyrgyz Republic
34. Lao PDR
35. Latvia
36. Lithuania
37. Luxembourg
38. Madagascar
39. Malta
40. Namibia
41. Nepal
42. New Zealand
43. Nicaragua
44. Norway
45. Oman
46. Philippines
47. Poland
48. Republic of Armenia
49. Republic of Mauritius
50. Republic of Moldova
51. Romania
52. Russian Federation
53. Saudi Arabia
54. Seychelles
55. Slovakia
56. Slovenia
57. Somalia
58. South Africa
59. South Sudan
60. Switzerland
61. Thailand
62. The Netherlands
63. Ukraine
64. United Arab Emirates
65. United Kingdom
66. Uruguay
67. USA
68. Zambia

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.