

6-11 February 2020

The Farmers' Forum

In conjunction with the forty-third session
of IFAD's Governing Council



Side Event at IFAD Farmers Forum – 11 February 2020

“Territorial markets as a basis for building sustainable, resilient, nutritious food systems”

The UN Decade for Family Farming provides an important occasion to shape public policies and direct investments in support of a set of actors who have always been at the center of IFAD's mission: small-scale food producers. There is increasing awareness that such support needs to be situated in the context of a holistic food system approach. The urgency of building sustainable, resilient and nutritious food systems is heightened by global challenges including climate change, rising hunger and malnutrition, youth unemployment, and poorly governed urbanization.

Markets are the linchpin of food systems. The dominant market narrative regarding small-scale family farmers focuses on integrating the latter into value chains organized around single products. The recommendations on 'Connecting Smallholders to Markets' approved by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2016, however, have highlighted the fact that most of the marketing activities of the majority of smallholders – women in particular – are carried out in local, national and trans-border markets embedded in territorial food systems. These diversified markets are the most inclusive and the most important for food security, since they channel the bulk of the food consumed world-wide. The functions they perform are not only economic, but also nutritional, social and cultural. Small-scale producers and family farms trading in territorial markets can be crucial allies in the effort to make nutritious food more available, and to defend biodiversity and genetic resources linked to territories. This holds equally for the women who market small indigenous fish species which are often the most accessible form of animal-source food, and of particular nutritional importance to poorer and more vulnerable households.

From a social and economic viewpoint, territorial markets play an important role in retaining the wealth created in the territory and redistributing the value added among the different actors, who tend to relate to each other in a more horizontal manner than in global value chains. Women play a leading role, particularly through processing and selling food products. Yet, the CFS recommendations note, 'Despite their importance, relatively little is known about these market arrangements since they are often overlooked in data collection systems, which impacts negatively on the evidence base for informing public policies'. More sensitive diagnosis is important in order to link territorial markets to value chain approaches to the benefit of family farmers and to help them meet the growing demand for food in urban areas.

This side event will illustrate different experiences with territorial markets, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and how they can be strengthened through supportive public policies at different levels and through appropriate public, but also private, investments. The side event will draw on the results of participatory diagnostics of territorial markets undertaken by small-scale producers' organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America with the support of FAO and partner CSOs. It is expected to suggest how attention to territorial markets can strengthen the economic basis for national Action Plans in the context of the UNDF as well as IFAD's work in this key area.

Panelists will include ROPPA, which will present its work in participatory market diagnostic through its Family Farm Observatory, the World Forum of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers (WFF), which will illustrate needed steps to enhance local fish marketing by women, COPROFAM and Serikat Petani Indonesia (SPI), who will present challenges and opportunities of territorial markets in their contexts. Ample space will be left for discussion. Representatives from IFAD and FAO will react briefly at the end suggesting how the proposals emerging from the session might be pursued in the context of the UNDF and the work of the two organizations.