

DRAFT

**Declaration of intention of support
for the “4 per 1000: Soils for food security and climate” Initiative**

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 fertility as emphasized by the World Soil Charter.

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 40% of the world’s dry land is 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,
- 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 land 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 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 development policies,
- emphasize the need for robust scientific evidence and appropriate investment in research in order to 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 and wish it to be tabled at high-level summits on agriculture, food security and climate change.

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,
- 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,
- to put in place inclusive and transparent governance to guarantee fair participation by the various actors. In this connection, a Council of Members, supported by an executive committee, will be charged with defining and implementing actions to ensure the deployment of the "4 per 1000" Initiative.

Done at _____ on 1 December 2015