

■ PROGRAM ON ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

# Fostering the Engagement of Smallholder Farmers and Fishers in the Policy Process

The Case of the United Nations Decade of  
Family Farming (UNDF) and the Agriculture  
and Rural Development Knowledge and  
Policy Platform (ARDKPP) in the Philippines

*Honey Bermudez Tabiola*



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# Fostering the Engagement of Smallholder Farmers and Fishers in the Policy Process

**The Case of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF) and the Agriculture and Rural Development Knowledge and Policy Platform (ARDKPP) in the Philippines<sup>1</sup>**

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*Honey Bermudez Tabiola<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> This study was commissioned to the UP CIDS Alternative Development Program (AltDev) by the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA) and the Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka [National Movement of Farmer's Organization] (PAKISAMA). UP CIDS AltDev is part of the Agriculture and Rural Development Knowledge and Policy Platform (ARDKPP).

<sup>2</sup> Honey Bermudez Tabiola is a graduate student at the MA Political Economy Program at the Taipei School of Economics and Political Science, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan, R.O.C.. He wrote this paper in 2023 during his time as a Research Analyst at UP CIDS AltDev. The author would like to acknowledge the immense contribution of Ms. Irish P. Baguilat (AFA) and Mr. Raul Socrates Banzuela (PAKISAMA). Both provided guidance and assistance in the conceptualization of the study and the data-gathering process.

## Introduction

During its seventy-second session, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaimed the years 2019 to 2028 as the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDF). The proclamation was directly built on the achievement of the UN's International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) in 2014; it placed family farming at the center of national agendas and agricultural, environmental, and social policies toward equitable and sustainable development. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (2019, 8–9), the “UNDF serves as a framework for countries to develop public policies and investments to support family farming and contribute to the achievement of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

The UNDF taps into the pivotal role of family farming in promoting “diversified and innovative food systems,” while contributing to the 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development. For the FAO and IFAD, “nothing comes closer to the paradigm of sustainable food production than family farming” (p. 7). Recognized for their multidimensionality and multifunctionality, family farmers<sup>3</sup> are seen as “key actors” and “caretakers” as they “produce most of the world’s food,” “preserve biodiversity,” “manage natural resources and ecosystems,” “preserve and share traditional knowledge,” and “contribute to the resilience of people and ecosystems” (p. 10). In essence, family farmers commit to the attainment of the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection.

Additionally, the UNDF aims to promote interventions that support family farmers and their organizations through “coherent, cross-sectoral policies,” while simultaneously addressing challenges related to environmental degradation, climate change, economic and social inequalities, as well as agricultural and rural development (p. 9). These policies and indicative actions are included in the UNDF's Global Action Plan (GAP), providing “detailed guidance” for various stakeholders. Stakeholders include the following: “local and national governments, parliamentarians, specialized agencies and other relevant bodies of the United

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<sup>3</sup> FAO-UN defines family farming (and all family-based agricultural activities as “a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production that is managed and operated by a family, and is predominantly reliant on the family labour, including women. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve, and combine economic, environmental, social, and cultural functions” (2021, 38).

Nations, international financial institutions and other international mechanisms, regional bodies, farmers and producer organizations, academic and research institutes, civil society organizations, and small and medium enterprises, as well as the private sector” (pp. 13–14).

The UNDPF exemplifies an important turn in global governance, which emphasizes consultation and participation with non-state actors. This phenomenon is called multistakeholder governance (MSG) or multistakeholder initiatives (MSIs). As a system of governance perceived to fill a political vacuum in tackling critical global challenges, MSIs “operate through a mix of formal and informal rules, norms, and enforcement that undergird goals, strategies, activities, and internal relations...creat[ing] systems of governing that enforce views and discourses,” often promoted by more powerful stakeholders (Manahan and Kumar 2021, 8). Ideally, an effective MSI tackles a clearly defined multidimensional set of problems that require coordinated action among a list of stakeholders with common but often conflicting vested interests. These stakeholders negotiate and decide on processes and time frames, engage in a learning process (i.e., no longer tied to fixed positions), commit to sharing relevant information, engage in good-faith negotiations, and have sufficient power to subvert the effectiveness of an outcome that is inconsistent with their respective interests (pp. 5–6). Depending on the MSI, stakeholders usually involve the following: UN bodies and other intergovernmental organizations, donors and governments from the countries of the Global North, regional institutions, international NGOs, trade unions, businesses/industries, affected grassroots communities, academic and research institutions, government offices or agencies of countries in the Global South, international financial institutions, development finance institutions, and philanthropies. Slowly, these MSIs penetrate and take root on a national soil within state-society networks.

In the Philippines, the state-society network that powers the UNDPF implementation is the Agriculture and Rural Development Knowledge and Policy Platform (ARDKPP). The ARDKPP is a technical working group composed of various international and local stakeholders, which include prominent family farmers’ organizations (FFOs), non-government organizations (NGOs), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Department of Agriculture (DA) and DA-Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), academic and research institutions, and civil society organizations (CSOs) (ARDKPP 2021, 1).



Indeed, the reincarnation of Philippine democracy in 1986 birthed a new politics of interaction between the state and society, as in most restored democracies. The repertoire of CSO strategies for interacting with the government has expanded from “a politics of protest and contention to one of influence and reform” (Magadia 2003, 140). In many of these post-authoritarian democracies, while CSOs still use demonstrations, rallies, marches, and signature campaigns, they also employ crucial additional strategies as autonomous dialogue partners. These strategies include programmatic demand-making and advocacy.

This discussion paper focuses on the global declaration of the UN Decade for Family Farming (UNDDFF) as a case study on the implementation of an MSI in the Philippines. It seeks to answer questions, including: How was the UNDDFF cascaded from the global level? How is it taking shape within the domestic political context of the Philippines, involving the concerned agencies of the government, various societal organizations, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and other key stakeholders in the agricultural sector?

The qualitative methods used for data gathering include key informant interviews with stakeholders, a focus group discussion, discourse analysis of some key documents, and a literature review. The study was conducted from July to September 2023, and focused on data from 2019 to 2022, spanning from the start of the national implementation of the UNDDFF to the completion of the baseline and profiling study (i.e., the initial phase of the ten-year implementation).

This paper is divided into five sections. The first section sets the background and general context of the study. The second section highlights the global declaration of the UNDDFF, and its integration into the Philippine context through the Agriculture and Rural Development Knowledge and Policy Platform (ARDKPP), detailing its emergence, major activities and accomplishments. The third section describes the explanatory framework of Jose Magadia (2003), which explains the factors that facilitate and constrain the interaction among government agencies, societal organizations, and other key stakeholders. The fourth section contains the analysis of the data according to the three dimensions of Magadia’s explanatory framework, namely (a) the state sector (e.g., the concerned government agencies), (b) the societal organizations (e.g., the Farmers Organizations and CSOs), and (c) the policy domain of agriculture and rural development. The last section contains a list of the challenges encountered by the stakeholders and some recommendations to address them.

# Centering Family Farmers: UNDFE and the ARDKPP

## *About the UNDFE*

The policies and indicative actions promoted by the UNDFE are hoped to guide the plans and strategies of all actors at different levels of governance. The Global Action Plan (GAP) identifies various “modalities of action,” including data collection on specific issues, advisory and extension services, communication and advocacy activities, and capacity development of farmer organizations and other stakeholders, among others (FAO and IFAD 2019, 14). These actions are spelled out and clustered under seven pillars, namely:

**Pillar 1:** Develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming.

**Pillar 2:** Support the youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming.

**Pillar 3:** Promote gender equity in family farming and the empowerment of rural women.

**Pillar 4:** Strengthen family farmers’ organizations and capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers, and provide inclusive services in the urban-rural continuum.

**Pillar 5:** Improve socio-economic inclusion, resilience and well-being of family farmers, rural households and communities.

**Pillar 6:** Promote sustainability of family farming for climate-resilient food systems.

**Pillar 7:** Strengthen the multidimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations that contribute to territorial development and food systems, thereby safeguarding biodiversity, the environment, and culture.

Given the generic nature of the indicative actions and policies under the seven pillars, the UNDFE promotes their contextualization to align with the diverse sociocultural and socio-economic conditions at national, regional, and local levels in various countries.

The operationalization of the GAP utilizes various implementation modalities that are “country-driven, inclusive, and bottom-up,” as well as “participatory” (p. 15). The initial steps in the implementation include “synergies with other international bodies and processes”<sup>4</sup> and “agreed international frameworks.”<sup>5</sup> Another implementation modality particularly relevant to this study is the national and regional action plans. These action plans map ongoing relevant actions and assess the needs various actors within a country or region to “build integrated and well-tailored interventions.” This is consistent with the seven pillars and interlinked with the broader SDGs (p. 15).

An International Steering Committee (ISC), composed of representatives of Member States and various organizations of family farmers, has been established to oversee the implementation of the UNDF. The IFAD and FAO serve as the global secretariat for the ISC. Furthermore, the ISC of the UNDF regularly gather “country demands,” which would inform the kind of support that FAO and IFAD shall extend to family farmers’ organizations, primarily through their experience in facilitating multilateral exchange and cooperation among key actors. It is hoped that by 2024, 100 National Action Plans of Family Farming will have been adopted in various countries and regions.

For monitoring and reporting purposes, an ad hoc Working Group on Monitoring shall conduct various activities to enhance coordination among stakeholders for timely synergies, accountability, and dissemination of best practices (FAO and IFAD 2019). Specific activities include review of global and country/region-specific family farming situations; progress, trends, challenges encountered, and lessons learned; assessment of the effectiveness of the UNDF; and providing advice based on the country/regional reviews. Finally, the Secretariat of the

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<sup>4</sup> Examples of these related processes include “UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, the UN Decade of Water 2018-2028, and the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030” (FAO and IFAD 2019, 15).

<sup>5</sup> Examples of international frameworks include “the Voluntary Guidelines to support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security to Food, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, the UN Declaration of the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, among others” (p.15).

UNDFE to the UN Secretary-General shall submit biennial reports to assess achievements and improve interventions that have been carried out. A Global Forum on Family Farming is also held every two years to assess and track the progress of the UNDFE.

### *About the ARDKPP*

The genesis of the ARDKPP can be traced to a joint advocacy among farmers' federations at the local, regional and global levels, CSOs, and the Department of Agriculture to draft a UN Resolution in 2012. This resolution eventually became the UN Declaration for the International Year for Family Farming (IYFF) in 2014 (ARDKPP 2021). The IYFF is "the first and only CSO-led UN year, organized through the World Rural Forum, where organizations like Asian Farmers Association (AFA), AR Now!, Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka<sup>6</sup> (PAKISAMA), and Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (AsiaDHRRA) consolidated numerous Farmers' Organizations and CSOs in the Philippines and Asia" (Solomon, 2022). PAKISAMA, a FFO (Family Farmers' Organization) and AFA member, also served as convener of FFOs and CSOs engaged with the government in the celebration of the IYFF. In 2019, the Philippines and the AFA became official members of the International Steering Committee (ISC) of the UNDFE, the committee responsible for governing and overseeing its conceptualization and implementation.

Another kernel of the ARDKPP was the series of intermittent national conferences on issues related to family farming and agriculture. These had been disparately held by the government, family farmers' federations, and NGOs prior to 2014. Since 2006, IFAD Philippines has been convening a conference, "Knowledge and Learning Market (KLM)," which later evolved and was renamed "Knowledge and Learning Market and Policy Engagement" (KLMPE). This renaming signifies not only its focus on knowledge-sharing thrust but also its emphasis on amplifying best practices and policy recommendations on agricultural and rural development issues (ARDKPP 2021). Over the years, the KLMPE conferences

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<sup>6</sup> Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) translates to National Movement of Farmers' Organization.

have produced four books<sup>7</sup> on the best practices of family farming, along with collections of policy briefs, proposals, and strategic thrusts. These books also contain video summaries of all KLMPEs, narrative and photo documentations, and a growing number of products traded in each KLMPE event.

In 2017, the Agriculture and Rural Development Knowledge and Policy Platform Technical Working Group (ARDKPP TWG) was established. It emerged from the organizations that had jointly managed and organized the annual KLMPE conferences (ARDKPP 2021). Since 2017–2018, the said technical working group has been recognized as the Philippine’s National Committee on Family Farming (NCCFF) by the World Rural Forum (WRF).

## Major Activities

### *KLMPE Conferences*

The KLMPE conference is an annual two-day event, organized and originally conceptualized by IFAD-Philippines in 2007. It started as a “knowledge-sharing session that was meant to bring together stakeholders of IFAD-assisted projects in the Philippines and engage the general public in the process” (Arban n.d., 5). It features “exhibits, product displays, interactive workshops, testimonies and cultural performances” (p. 5). Eventually, the conference expanded to include “policy engagement sessions.” In fact, three out of the nine conferences generated resolutions and statements that were submitted to the representatives of Philippine policymakers. In 2017, the platform that emerged from these annual conferences was named the ARDKPP.

To mark the start of the global implementation of the UNDRR in the country, the 2019 KLMPE Conference brought together more than 300 participants

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<sup>7</sup> The four books are knowledge products published by IFAD-Philippines, which feature the annual Knowledge Learning Market and Policy Engagement (KLMPE) Conferences. They document the best practices of stakeholders on rural development models and products during the knowledge-sharing sessions. They also contain the commitments, partnerships, and agreements on key priority policy and program measures that were forged during the dialogues among various stakeholders. The KLMPE conferences tackle themes related to asset reforms, climate change and resiliency, agri-governance, youth and gender in agriculture, and enterprise development.

from various FFOs, CSOs, academe, inter-government organizations (IGOs), and relevant government agencies such as DAR and DA, among others. The validation of the results of the consultations/survey for localizing the UNDFP action agenda was conducted among FFOs and CSOs participants (ARDKPP 2021, 66). The conference also culminated with a “Joint Civil Society Declaration of the United Nations Decade (2019–2028) of Family Farming,” which contains the seven UNDFP pillars alongside localized key result areas, performance indicators, and targets. The declaration was read, discussed, and approved in the plenary session.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, KLMPE conferences have transitioned to virtual spaces via Zoom.

### ***National Action Plan (PAP4FF)***

The Philippine National Action Plan for Family Farming (PAP4FF) is the national action plan of the country designed to contextualize the implementation of the UNDFP Global Action Plan. A series of consultation meetings and planning workshops was organized and clustered into three, namely (1) DA-attached agencies and bureaus; (2) NGA, SUCS and research organizations; and (3) CSOs, youth groups, NGOs, and farmers’ organizations. The PAP4FF is described as follows (p. 64):

The PAP4FF provides a roadmap to implement the UNDFP and to ensure alignment to the achievement of the SDGs. Developed based on a common strategic vision, the PAP4FF aims to guide all relevant national stakeholders to consolidate, align and reinforce their actions and define policy interventions in support of family farming at the national level.

The bases of the PAP4FF include (1) the general objectives and seven pillars of the Global Action Plan of the UNDFP; (2) existing national strategies and activities of various stakeholders that support family farmers in the country; (3) available instruments and inter-institutional mechanisms that address issues related to family farming; (4) specific commitments of the stakeholders addressing the jointly identified needs (p. 64).

The PAP4FF contains the following: a conceptual framework that describes the needs and gap assessment of the situation of Filipino family farmers, the parameters of the definition of “family farming” in the country, and an analysis of the main challenges and needs of the farmers. It also outlines their strengths and opportunities. The document also includes phases of the ten-year implementation, alongside expected results, activities, and indicators of success.

The crafting of the PAP4FF serves as a site of interaction and even contestation among stakeholders. It is one of the terrains on which various stakeholders make their claims, assert their interests, and negotiate. That said, this study draws particular attention to the drafting of the PAP4FF as a process and product of the interactions between state actors and societal organizations. In light of this, a brief account of the journey of developing the said national action plan is provided to lay the groundwork for the analysis in the next section. The following subsection heavily draws from the chronology of events related to the crafting of the PAP4FF, which is contained in Annex 2 of “Philippine Action Plan for Family Farming 2019–2028” (pp. 66–70). For a more comprehensive account, please refer to the said document.

#### **November 24–25, 2014**

##### ***KLMPE IYFF***

The 2014 KLMPE IYFF was initiated by IFAD-Philippines together with DAR. IFAD expanded its working group to include CSOs, FFOs, and the DA. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) organized the initial meeting involving various stakeholders at the DAR office. The said meeting was attended by representatives from DA, PAKISAMA, Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRRA), Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA), AFA, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), and IFAD. With the assistance of the World Rural Forum (WRF), PAKISAMA also initiated a series of consultations among FFOs and CSOs concerning the IYFF. The IFAD Knowledge Learning Market (KLM) expanded its working group and renamed it to Knowledge Learning Market - Policy Engagement (KLMPE). Since then, KLMPE has been collaboratively developed and overseen by a diverse Technical Working Group (TWG) including members from the DA, DAR, AFA, PAKISAMA, PhilDHRRA, ANGOC, TRIAS, WE-Effect, CSA, and IFAD. This TWG pooled its human and financial resources to bring together

270 leaders of family farmer groups, along with CSO leaders and staff, representatives from agricultural agencies, international NGOs, and inter-governmental organizations such as IFAD and FAO.

#### **November 2015–2018**

##### ***KLMPE IYFF +1, KLMPE IYFF +2, KLMPE IYFF +3, KLMPE IYFF +4***

Since 2014, a two-day KLMPE conference has been taking place annually, organized by the same TWG. Over the years, four volumes of books comprising a hundred exemplary practices on family farming have been created. Additionally, condensed video recapitulation and collections of written policy recommendations and strategic priorities have been generated. In 2017, the platform was formally named as ARDKPP.

#### **August 23, 2019**

##### ***Issuance of Special Order No. 792, series of 2019***

Under the directive of Secretary William D. Dar of the DA, a specific mandate was given through a special order to establish the NCFE. Furthermore, the role of chair for the NCFE was assigned to DA-ATI.

#### **November 12–13, 2019**

##### ***KLMPE IYFF+5***

To mark the initiation of the worldwide implementation of the UNDFE, participants of KLMPE 2019 from various FFOs and CSOs verified the outcomes of surveys and consultations aimed at adapting the UNDFE action plan to the Philippine context. This was accomplished through a workshop focusing on the seven pillars of the Global Action Plan. The occasion facilitated engagement between FFOs and policymakers, with the aim of tailoring a UNDFE national action plan (NAP). During the plenary sessions, a UNDFE declaration encompassing the seven fundamental pillars, along with strategic directions and performance indicators, was deliberated, read, and mutually agreed upon. The local action plans generated from this conference would become a substantive contribution to the subsequent drafts of the NAP.



**January 22, 2020**

### ***ARDKPP Assessment and Planning Meeting***

A meeting was organized to assess the progress within the ARDKPP and plan for the next steps. It was attended by representatives from various organizations, including DA's International Affairs Division (DA-IAD), Special Projects Coordination And Management Assistance Division (SPCMAD) of DA, Special Area for Agriculture Development (SAAD) of DA, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Fisheries, Coastal Resources and Livelihood Project (FishCoRAL), Department of Agrarian Reform – Convergence on Value Chain Enhancement for Rural Growth and Empowerment (DAR-ConVERGE), AFA, AsiaDHRRRA, PhilDHRRRA, IFAD-FAO Medium Term Cooperation Project on Capacity Building for Farmers Organizations in the Philippines (MTCP-Philippines), PAKISAMA, UP-CIDS-AltDev, FAOPH, and IFAD-PH. Ms. Maria Catherine Castillo from DA-IAD, the contact person for UNDIFF-Philippines, provided the group with an update on the established UNDIFF committees within DA, along with ongoing coordination with organizations based in Rome for UNDIFF matters. Of notable significance, a committee had already been formed within DA and is under the leadership of Dr. Rosana P. Mula. This committee's task is to develop the National Action Plan (i.e., PAP4FF), with intentions to collaborate with other agencies and establish connections with CSOs and FFOs. The ARDKPP platform was identified as the primary avenue for engagement, particularly for non-governmental and FO stakeholders. Meanwhile, participants recognized these developments within the Department of Agriculture (DA) as a chance for the ARDKPP platform to play a strategic role in supporting the UNDIFF PAP4FF processes.

**September 29, 2020**

### ***UNDFF Implementation Planning Zoom Conference***

The activity was led by the ARDKPP TWG with fifty-two participants. The planning conference aimed to update everyone on the recent initiatives of various stakeholders including DA-ATI who shared the output of the recent brainstorming session regarding the drafting of the National Action Plan for Family Farming. It is during the event that the DA-ATI expressed their plan to involve the CSOs and FFOs and other multi-stakeholders in series of consultation-workshops. Additionally, during the event, the PAKISAMA urged the DA-ATI to consider ARDKPP as a platform for UNDIFF National Action Planning.

**October 28, 2020**

***Follow-up Conference thru Zoom***

PAKISAMA organized an online gathering, which drew fifty attendees from diverse stakeholders associated with ARDKPP-ILC NES. Among them were delegates from various departments within DA. The event's agenda included deliberations on the preliminary schedule and strategies for ensuring the PAP4FF's optimal inclusivity, feasibility, and responsiveness to the needs of FFOs.

**November 17–23, 2020**

***Series of National Consultative Meeting and Planning Workshop on the Crafting of the National Action Plan for Family Farming 2019–2028***

The series of workshop was led by the DA-ATI and DA-IAD in partnership with FAO, IFAD, and SMART. Ms. Amy Chua and Mr. Veejay Calutan of the Philippines Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture (PPSA) facilitated the series of consultations.

- The initial session took place on November 17, attended by representatives from various agencies within the DA.
- The subsequent session, held on November 19, included participants from non-DA government agencies (NGAs), the Congress and Senate Policy Department, as well as academic and research institutions.
- The third session, conducted on November 23, included participants from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Family Farmers' Organizations (FFOs), youth groups, volunteer organizations, and more.

**November 27, 2020**

### ***FFO-CSO Meeting***

Fourteen members of the ARDKPP TWG from FFOs and CSOs met virtually and evaluated the ongoing progress of the UNDFP PAP4FF. The session involved examining strengths and exchanging of recommendations and observations for enhancing the content and process of developing the PAP4FF. The attendees decided to suggest an enhanced action plan, involving FFO-CSO members in the drafting committee, and to host a KLMPE Conference on December 11 to review and endorse the draft. At the same event, IFAD and FAO agreed to brief Dr. Rosana P. Mula of ATI about the meeting's outcomes.

**December 2, 2020**

### ***Meeting between IFAD, FAO, and DA representatives***

IFAD and FAO representatives met with Dr. Rosana P. Mula (DA-ATI) and DA Undersecretary (Usec.) Rodolfo V. Vicera. The IFAD delegation included Mr. Alessandro Marini, Mr. Jerry Pacturan, and Mr. Yolando Arban. Meanwhile, FAO was represented by Ms. Tamara Duran and Mr. Fidel Rodriguez. In this interaction, they introduced the ARDKPP and conveyed the concerns of FFOs and CSOs. The DA and DA-ATI expressed their commitment to expanding FFOs and CSOs' engagement in the PAP4FF Steering Committee. Furthermore, they agreed to participate in the scheduled December 11 KLMPE Conference to present the draft and facilitate collaborative discussion among participants.

**December 3, 2020**

### ***Multi-stakeholder Consultation-Workshop***

The final installment of the consultation-workshop series led by DA-ATI concluded. It focused on consolidating outcomes from three prior consultations. The Zoom-based session had approximately forty attendees, who provided insights and recommendations to refine the draft action plan.

**December 11, 2020**

***KLMPE 2020, IYFF +6***

The conference saw 229 attendees, primarily family farmers from various provinces, along with IFAD and FAO Country Directors, DAR and DA Undersecretaries, BFAR Director, and leaders from national family farmers' federations (e.g., PAKISAMA, Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan (PKSK), among others), CSOs (e.g., Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), PhilDHRRRA, KAISAHAN Tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), among others), and other agricultural agencies (e.g., WE Effect, among others). The outcome produced feedback and suggestions on the DA-ATI's current PAP4FF Draft.

**January 5, 2021**

***Writershop on the Integration, Polishing, Firming up of the Draft National Action Plan for Family Farmers***

Dr. Rosana P. Mula chaired the writershop, joined by representatives from PAKISAMA, AFA, ANGOC, Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS), Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), ATI, and Philippine Commission on Women (PCW). Eight generated points from the 2020 KLMPE Conference were expanded and largely embraced. As a result, a streamlined outline was produced, containing sections on background, problem analysis, strategic interventions, and institutional arrangement. The overarching objective, performance indicators for each pillar—aligned with the seven global action plan pillars—and the institutional mechanism—a multi-stakeholder NSC chaired by the President—were detailed and approved. The FFOs-CSOs were tasked with further developing the problem analysis, including situational context, gaps, challenges, and their own initiatives. This collaborative effort aims to finalize the PAP4FF draft.

**February 11, 2021**

***Presentation of the Draft of the 10-Year PAP4FF***

Dr. Rosana P. Mula presented the draft of the PAP4FF, which already incorporated much of the work done by FFOs and CSOs, to dignitaries, legislators, and key decision-makers. The attendees included Senator Francis ‘Kiko’ Pangilinan, Dr. Romulo Emmanuel Miral, Jr. from the Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department, Mr. Alessandro Marini, IFAD’s Country Director, and Ms. Tamara Duran, Asst. FAO Representative to the Philippines. Mr. Peter Turingan and Ms. Mace Solatre from the Senate Economic and Planning Office, DA Chief of Staff Dr. Leocadio S. Sebastian, Usec. Rodolfo V. Vicerra, Dr. Virginia Cardenas, and other multisectoral partners were also present.

**March 2, 2021**

***Final Writeshop for Integrating, Polishing, and Finalizing the PAP4FF Draft***

This event resulted from the presentation made to the key decision makers on February 11. The participants of this activity were the same individuals from the January 5 writeshop.

**April 8, 2021**

***Presentation of the PAP4FF Draft during the Task Group on Food Security (TGFS) Meeting, chaired by Secretary William D. Dar***

The PAP4FF signing and launch event is set for May 2021, coinciding with the Farmers’ and Fisherfolk’s Month Celebration.

In the chronological account provided, the push and pull of synergy between state actors and societal organizations can be observed. The process and final product of the PAP4FF—forged within various KLMPE conferences and series of online and on-site meetings—suggests how various stakeholders navigated the landscape of varying motivations and interests underpinning the platform. The next section looks into the forces and the energies that animate these processes, and describes how these interactions pan out.

## **Explanatory Framework: State-Society Dynamics within the Context of Multistakeholder Institutions (MSI)**

### *The UNDP as a Multistakeholder Institutions (MSI)*

In some 27 out of the 103 global MSIs they had catalogued, Manahan and Kumar (2021, 46) found out that UN System Organizations serve as a strategic partner to various stakeholders, doubling at times as funders, initiators, convenors, hosts, advisors, implementers, and lead institutions for other 32 MSIs. Manahan and Kumar also noted that most MSIs anchor their very existence in contributing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, they found out that the common strategy of many MSIs involves the combination of convenorship (i.e., creating synergistic relationships among the identified stakeholders) and knowledge production (i.e., conducting research and creating frameworks that attempt to explain the problems and propose some solutions).

Additionally, Manahan and Kumar (2021) mapped MSIs that were formed between 2000 and 2021 across various sectors, such as food and agriculture, health systems, internet and data governance, climate and environment, and education. While they are open to the possibility that a MSI can be made effective and responsive to the needs of affected communities, they also draw attention to some concerning trends. These include, but are not limited to, a business/industry's dominant representation in the decision-making bodies of MSIs, and the lack of focus and emphasis on human rights (e.g., the right to food, health, education, access to the internet and a healthy environment), which "often comes in conflict with neoliberal (i.e., market-based) frameworks that advance the corporate sector," among other pressing concerns (p. 33).

### *The State-Society Dynamics within the ARDKPP*

The resurgence of Philippine democracy after 1986 meant that the state and society actors could craft and implement policies and programs, discuss the redistribution of resources, and perform support services, among others. With the breakdown of authoritarian rule, CSOs or societal organizations have gained "greater leverage in bargaining with power holders" in the government by employing new skills and mobilizing mass media and technology to press their demands and explore platforms of dialogue, networking, and negotiation with

government agencies (Magadia, 2003, 142). For CSOs, in a sense, their interaction with the government meant their “willingness to work with [the] traditional elite . . . even while safeguarding autonomy” (p. 148).

Additionally, for Magadia, an “irony” of the Philippine context is that the rise of societal organizations results from the weakness of its political party system. The societal organizations occupy the political vacuum in the absence of strong mass-based political parties and the perennial practice of party switching among traditional politicians. For him, these organizations have been “accepted by traditional elite power holders and technocrats as autonomous partners” in various government mechanisms and processes (p. 144). A crucial facet of democratic governance is the presence of consultation mechanisms. In the Philippines, the participation of civil society within government processes comes in the form of “the appointment of civil society leaders in government positions, the creation of new government offices for consultation, and the general acceptance of nonstate actors as participants in policy processes” (p. 143). The 1987 Philippine Constitution has institutionalized the participation of civil society to facilitate more substantive influence on policy formulation.



■ **Figure 1.** 3 Factors that Shape State-Society Interaction. Source: Magadia (2003, 7)

This paper uses Jose Magadia's explanatory framework to examine state-society relations. Interaction between the state sector and societal organizations is animated by three conditions.

The first condition is the presence of **incorporative state sector**, where concerned state agencies are open to the participation of societal actors and to hearing out their demands. This so-called "openness" of state agencies is further facilitated by (a) institutional openings (e.g., emergence of new offices, new policies); (b) the presence of key allies within the agencies; and (c) crisis events, such as violent incidents or natural calamities, that draw enormous public attention and compel the state agencies to open avenues of participation. This "openness" may be solicited by the state or initiated or asserted by societal organizations.

The second condition is the presence of **efficient, reform-oriented pivotal societal organizations**, where civil society organizations articulate their policy positions comprehensively and efficiently, or what is called "**Programmatic Demand Making**." These organized groups are better able to promote their policy preferences and influence state actors; they are composed of professional or semiprofessional staff, have strategic cohesion in their demands, have clear decision-making strategies, and perform strategic support services that complement various efforts of other stakeholders, including forging linkages with influential allies in other sectors.

The third condition is **making and sustaining a high-profile policy domain**. Government authorities perceive a policy issue as high-profile when issues surrounding a policy seem disruptive to the dominant power structures and holders. It is also high-profile when other influential sectors are involved in the issue, creating cleavages among various state agencies.



## Analysis

What conditions drive the interaction between the state sector and the societal organizations? What factors animate the “openness” of the agri-agencies to the demands of the societal organizations? What has enabled and/or hampered the societal organizations to stake their claims and influence the content and the contours of the PAP4FF? What is it about the profile of the national action plan for family farming as a policy issue domain that lends itself to the involvement and investments of many stakeholders and the power structures in the country?

Following Magadia’s framework of state-society synergy, this section takes a closer look at the three dimensions of the national implementation of the UNDF, reflecting and analyzing the experiences of stakeholders of the ARDKPP in crafting the PAP4FF. In particular, we look at (1) the level of openness of the state sector (i.e., the relevant agricultural agencies); (2) the quality of engagement of the societal organizations within the ARDKPP (i.e., FFOs, CSOs, and NGOs); and (3) the profile of the PAP4FF and agriculture as a policy domain.

The paper suggests that the achievement of drafting the PAP4FF is driven by (1) the openness of the DA-ATI, related agricultural agencies, and other NGAs to the demands of the societal organizations within the ARDKPP; (2) the efficient and strategic “programmatically demand making” of the societal organizations; (3) and the high-profile of the PAP4FF as a policy domain. Each of these will be explained in the following sections.

### *An Incorporative State Sector*

The concerned agricultural state agencies who are members of the ARDKPP may be characterized as “incorporative,” that is, these state agencies are open to the participation of societal organizations and to hearing out their demands. This “openness” is made possible by (a) institutional openings and (b) the presence of sympathetic “key allies” within the agencies.

#### **1. Institutional Openings**

First, “institutional openings” facilitate the reception of the DA-ATI and other state agencies to the input and demands of the societal organizations. On the global level, the Declaration of the UN Decade for Family Farming (UNDF)

interpellates state agencies of member states to center the participation of farmers and producer organizations in the operationalization and contextualization of the Global Action Plan. The UNDFP puts a premium on bottom-up approach and inclusive participation (FAO and IFAD 2019, 15):

As a precondition for the successful implementation of the UNDFP, a bottom-up approach to implementation is recommended, in participative and inclusive processes, placing family farmers at the forefront. While encouraging multi-actor collaboration at all levels, the Global Action Plan also invites all actors to revise their specific roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis the support of family farming and increasing the sustainability of our food systems.

Because of this purported emphasis on “bottom-up participation,” UNDFP also sees to it that the International Steering Committee (ISC), which oversees the implementation, includes family farmers’ organizations, alongside representatives of Member States.

The second institutional opening is on the national level. Following the global declaration of the UNDFP, the DA issued Special Order (SO) Nos. 792 and 546, series of 2019 and 2020 respectively, formally creating the National Committee for Family Farming (NCFP) for the UNDFP (2019–2028) and designating the DA-ATI as the lead agency. Consistent with the intention of the global declaration, SO Nos. 792 and 546 mandate the composition of the NCFP to include not just Government Line Agencies and Agriculture Units and Agencies, but also societal organizations such as “farmer organizations, civil society organizations, private sector, academe and research institutions, youth/ volunteer organizations, and international organizations” (DA Special Order No. 546 Series of 2020, p. 2). For CSOs, this is an important formal institution that provides a guaranteed space for organizations outside the state to influence and contribute to the national implementation of the UNDFP.

Lastly, it becomes clear that, at both international and national levels, the role of the IFAD and later the FAO as intergovernmental organizations is instrumental in building bridges among relevant government agricultural agencies and CSOs and FFOs. This bridge-building is useful in, say, organizing the 2014 IYFF, among other activities. The credibility and efforts of the

IFAD, with the support of FFOs-CSOs, have been foundational in the creation and maintenance of the ARDKPP.

## 2. The Presence of Key Allies Within the State Sector

Institutional openings are only effective when they are being utilized by state officials and personnel who have the authority and mandate to make decisions. With no one other than the DA Secretary institutionalizing the creation of NCCF, a few key officials within the DA have also emerged to fulfill their mandate of nationally implementing the UNDF. This includes providing space for societal organizations (i.e., FFOs and CSOs) for participation and inclusion (ARDKPP 2021, 67–70).

One of the identified key officials is Ms. Maria Catherine Castillo of the DA-IAD, the liaison officer for the UNDF Philippines. On January 22, 2020, during an ARDKPP Assessment and Planning Meeting, Ms. Castillo updated the ARDKPP on the committees within the DA especially created for the UNDF. Ms. Castillo also encouraged the societal organizations to meet with the DA secretary to discuss the directions and activities of the ARDKPP and explore how these can be linked to the UNDF implementation (p. 67).

Another key official is Dr. Rosana P. Mula of the DA-ATI, the designated Chairperson of the NCCF. Dr. Mula created a committee within the DA to produce the National Action Plan (NAP), and committed that the DA enjoin other government agencies, FFOs, and CSOs in the drafting process. From November 17 to 23, 2020, DA-ATI and DA-IAD, in partnership with FAO, IFAD, and SMART, led a series of national consultative meeting and planning workshop on crafting the NAP (p. 68). When FFOs and CSOs within the ARDKPP expressed their deep concerns about the narrowness and insufficiency of their participation in the drafting of the NAP, the IFAD and FAO representatives mediated and met with Dr. Mula and Usec. Rodolfo V. Vicera. During the meeting, Dr. Mula and Usec. Vicera expressed their willingness to enhance the quality of participation of the societal organizations. Moving forward, the comments and recommendations of the FFOs and CSOs from the KLMPE 2020 Conference have been incorporated in the subsequent workshop convened and chaired by Dr. Mula, with societal organizations, to polish the NAP. The results of the workshop were presented

to dignitaries, legislators, and key decision makers on February 11, 2021, for further review and refinement.

Dr. Mula has been the go-to person for societal organizations and the IFAD and FAO representatives whenever they have important concerns, views, and interventions. By actively soliciting feedback and input from other ARDKPP stakeholders through numerous workshops and meetings, Dr. Mula has created a space for productive dialogue and collaboration with FFOs and CSOs.

### ***“Programmatic Demand Making” of Societal Organizations***

The efficient and strategic “programmatic demand-making” (PDM) of the organized groups is another important dimension of the interaction within ARDKPP. FFOs and CSOs articulate their policy positions comprehensively and efficiently to promote their policy preferences and influence the state actors.

Their strategy of programmatic demand making is facilitated by four factors: (a) deployment of professional or semiprofessional staff; (b) strategic cohesion on their demands; (c) having clear decision-making strategies; (d) performing strategic support services that complement various efforts of other stakeholders, including forging linkages with influential allies in other sectors.

#### **1. Deployment of Professional or Semiprofessional Staff**

Societal organizations within the ARDKPP devote key staff to represent their organizations and participate in the activities of the ARDKPP. Most, if not all, of these staff are salaried, full-time professionals, each bringing a set of skills and expertise. Each organization assigns a regular staff to keep track of the developments and contribute to the joint activities within the platform. This observation suggests that societal organizations are invested and committed to the goals and objectives of the ARDKPP. Member organizations have their own key people whom DA-ATI, IFAD, and FAO representatives can readily contact for close coordination and for organizing ARDKPP activities.

Additionally, the staff possess various skills including organizing virtual and on-site events, writing funding proposals, implementing funded projects,

conducting research, analyzing agricultural policies and programs, and mobilizing partner communities and organizations, among others. Most importantly, in organizing ARDKPP activities annually, these member organizations pool their financial resources to pay for the venue, food, equipment, and other necessary expenses.

Through the numerous activities and gatherings of the ARDKPP, the staff have developed a sense of trust, community, and camaraderie within the platform. Additionally, member organizations have already been collaborating in other projects, campaigns, and advocacies on agricultural and rural development issues outside the ARDKPP. For example, ARDKPP members, such as ANGOC, AFA, AR Now!, PAKISAMA, Task Force Mapalad, have been partners of the International Land Coalition (ILC) in promoting asset reform in relation to land and resource rights.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Cohesive Demands

Equally important as the constant and committed presence of the staff from societal organizations is the quality of their participation. The FFOs and the CSOs within the ARDKPP are united in their key demands and in asserting their presence, particularly in (1) ensuring that the ARDKPP constitutes the civil society component that forms part of the NCCF, and (2) that the National Action Plan truly embodies the voices and interests of the family farmers' organizations.

First, FFOs and CSOs within the ARDKPP has to make sure that they are the organizations to be tapped for the national implementation of the UNDDF. As enshrined in DA Special Order No. 792, series of 2019, state agencies are mandated to enjoin the societal organizations to contribute to the realization of the UNDDF in the country. On January 22, 2020, during the ARDKPP Assessment and Planning Meeting, the DA expressed that the involvement of CSOs would be key in the implementation of the UNDDF. It is also considering the ARDKPP as “the most likely platform for the FFOs stakeholders' participation” (p. 67). Given this, the FFOs and CSOs saw an

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<sup>8</sup> Tipanan, “List of Contributing Organizations,” *Annual Journal of the National Engagement Strategy (NES) Philippines Platform 2*, no. 1 (January 2019), ISSN 2651-8112.

opportunity to contribute to the UNDF national processes. During the meeting, the societal groups emphasized the value in reviewing the existing body of works from previous collaborations, such as the “local action plans” generated by the November IFYY+5 Conference 2019, and various policy proposals, documented best practices, and joint declarations produced in previous KLMPEs since 2014. The groups also decided to broaden the reach of the ARDKPP by including agri-cooperatives and strengthening the annual KLMPE conference as a national gathering of farmers in the country. On September 29, 2020, during another UNDF Implementation Planning Zoom conference, PAKISAMA, representing the societal organizations, urged the DA-ATI once again to consider the ARDKPP as the CSO partner for the national implementation of the UNDF.

The cohesion of the demands of the societal organizations is always forged in a series of meetings and planning. The organized groups also make sure there is push back whenever the quality of participation is compromised. For example, by the last quarter of 2020, it had been confirmed that member organizations of ARDKPP would be part of the national consultations and meetings for drafting the NAP. The three-part consultation series focused on the inputs of different agencies of the DA (November 17); other NGAs besides the DA, Congress and Senate Policy Department, academe and research institutions (November 19); and CSOs, FFOs, youth, and volunteer organizations (November 23).

Despite the space given to the societal organizations, there was a growing sense of discomfort and discontent regarding the process and outcome of drafting the NAP at one point. Consequently, on November 27, 2020, fourteen FFOs-CSO members of the ARDKPP TWG met on Zoom to evaluate the ongoing process. While the groups recognized the value of being invited to these consultations, they felt that the process could still be improved. In the meeting, the following observations emerged: (1) the current draft of the NAP was not built on the body of work of the ARDKPP in the past six years; (2) there was no explicit recognition of the ARDKPP TWG as a national multi-stakeholder platform on family farming, which is also duly recognized by the FAO and IFAD; (3) there had been limited participation given to the FO and CSO members of the ARDKPP TWG. During this meeting, the societal organizations decided to propose concrete steps to enhance their participation, namely (1) the inclusion of FFO-CSO members

in the drafting committee and (2) making the 2020 KLMPE Conference as a space where the NAP could be properly discussed and approved. The IFAD and FAO representatives present at the meeting agreed to convey these recommendations to the DA-ATI.

On December 2, 2020, a meeting among IFAD and FAO representatives, the DA, and the DA-ATI was conducted. IFAD representatives, namely Mr. Alessandro Marini, Mr. Jerry Pacturan, and Mr. Yolando Arban, as well as FAO representatives, Ms. Tamara Duran and Mr. Fidel Rodriguez, conveyed the observations and proposals of the FFO-CSO members. In response, the DA and DA-ATI agreed to the proposals of the FFOs and CSOs, and committed to present the draft of the NAP for review and feedback at the then upcoming virtual December 11 KLMPE Conference.

At the said KLMPE Conference, the stakeholders convened. One of the highlights was the presentation and feedback session on the draft of the NAP. The session generated various recommendations from the participants, which were further polished and elaborated upon by FFO and CSO members at the final writeshop held on January 5, 2021. Annex 2 of the PAP4FF (ARDKPP 2021, 69–70) listed the revisions proposed by FFO-CSO members as follows:

### **1. Definition**

The global definition of family farming was adopted and was modified to suit the Philippine realities.

### **2. Situationer, Gaps, and Challenges**

A deep analysis of the situation of Filipino farmers is needed. Members of ARDKPP are requested to elaborate further on the key problems and challenges of farmers and their organizations.

### **3. Overarching Goal**

It was proposed that the overall goal be revised to zero hunger and zero poverty among family farmers by 2028.

#### **4. Strategic Action Pillars**

The first strategic action pillar was changed from being called “Platform” to “Policy and Program.” A second pillar called “People” was added.

#### **5. Policy Agenda**

Important policy agenda such as the National Land Use Act, Magna Carta for Young farmers, among others must be included in the main document, not in the annex.

#### **6. Logical Framework**

FFOs and CSOs suggested the integration of the proposed Key Result Areas/Pillars, performance indicators, and targets in the framework.

#### **7. Governance**

The multistakeholder nature of the NCFE must reflect its structure from the Steering Committee, Technical Working Group, Joint Secretariat, and Task and Sub-task forces. Additionally, it was suggested that the President of the Philippines shall head the NCFE Steering Committee.

#### **8. FFO-CSO role in the drafting**

FFOs and CSOs shall be consulted and included in the drafting committee.

Upon a thorough discussion, inputs from the societal organizations were adopted and integrated to the PAP4FF document. The next phase commenced, focusing on the conduct of baseline-and-profiling study of family farmers in the country. In the process, there were also missed opportunities for collaboration and engagement. One example was the design and the conduct of the baseline-and-profiling study. PAKISAMA applied and received funding from the European Union to assist its government partners in ensuring maximum participation of FFOs and CSOs in drafting and implementing the PAP4FF. Members of the ARDKPP collaborated with PAKISAMA to design and propose data gathering tools, which would aid whoever was chosen by DA-ATI to conduct the research study. However, from the start to its completion, FFO/CSO members of the ARDKPP were not regularly updated and consulted about the study, precluding any form of engagement and cooperation for



enhancing the conduct and output of the study. As Ms. Melissa Alamo,<sup>9</sup> Project Coordinator of PAKISAMA, explained it:

*Concrete sana maging engagement natin yung conduct ng baseline study. Tapos na pala [laughs]. Nagawa noong June [to] December 2022 at doon sa tatlong provinces iyung na-cover nila. Tatlong agro-ecological zones lang kasi: coastal, lowland, upland. Sa Albay, sa Bulacan, at sa Benguet iyung areas doon sa baseline study. Kung babalikan mo diba in 2021, our engagement with Dr. Mula, nagkaroon tayo ng writeshop sa pagformulate ng tool. Diba cinonsolidate pa nga natin 'yung [research] tools na pwedeng magamit as a support ng ARDKPP kung sino man 'yung mapipiling consultant ng DA-ATI. Meron na tayong readily available na translated tool in English and Filipino for family farmers. [. . .] Someone ba from ARDKPP o yung partner communities nila na-tap sa baseline study? Sa part po namin sa PAKISAMA, wala kaming narinig. So iyun yung malaking opportunity na pwede nating pagsimulan eh.*

The conduct of the baseline study could have been a concrete form of engagement. But it's completed [laughs]. It was done in June [to] December 2022, and they covered three provinces. Because there are only three agro-ecological zones: coastal, lowland, upland. Albay, Bulacan, and Benguet are the areas in the baseline study. If you recall in 2021 with our engagement with Dr. Mula, we had a writeshop on formulating the [research] tool. We even consolidated the tools that can be used as a support of the ARDKPP whoever is chosen as DA-ATI's consultant. We even have a readily available translated tool in English and Filipino for family farmers. [. . .] Was someone from ARDKPP member organization or their partner communities tapped to participate in the baseline study? From the part of PAKISAMA, we didn't hear anything. So that was a missed opportunity for collaboration we could have maximized.

<sup>9</sup> Melissa Alamo (Project Coordinator, PAKISAMA), focus group discussion facilitated by Honey Bermudez Tabiola (author) and Irish P. Baguilat (Coordinator, Sustainable Agriculture & Women Farmers' Agenda, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development), Zoom videoconferencing, September 14, 2023.

For Ms. Alamo, the design and conduct of the baseline study could have been more collaborative had it enlisted the help of ARDKPP members ~~with~~ across the country, especially in areas where the study had been conducted. Moreover, four members of the ARDKPP, who are part of the global alliance focusing on agriculture agencies, were also not consulted or actively involved in the design and conduct of the study. For example, Ms. Marlene Ramirez,<sup>10</sup> Secretary General of AsiaDHRAA, made a preliminary observation that the baseline study had a limited conception and list of service providers catering to family farmers, primarily focusing only on government agencies. According to her, the study did not make it clear that CSOs and development partners have also their own package of services to farmers, such as directly financing farmers' organizations, among others.

Overall, this section described the ability of the societal organizations of ARDKPP to identify and assert their demands with their partners in the state sector. They were proactive in identifying the gaps in their participation, and actively lobbied for how these could be overcome, regardless if the attempt was successful or otherwise.

### 3. Clear Decision-Making Strategies

The identification and consolidation of the demands among FFOs and CSOs at the ARDKPP undergo a certain dynamic process—a reminder that the process is as important as the product. At this point, it is clear that the processes among the societal organizations in the ARDKPP are characterized by inclusiveness, full participation, and consensus. Decisions are made hours upon hours of meeting and deliberation (both on-site and virtual). Moreover, drafts of proposals or documents are circulated online a few days or weeks prior to the meeting. This also allows members to send their comments and amendments in case they can not attend the meeting proper. In the meeting, the proposals and suggestions are exhaustively discussed until they have been refined and galvanized.

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<sup>10</sup> Marlene Ramirez (Secretary General, AsiaDHRAA), focus group discussion facilitated by Honey Bermudez Tabiola (author) and Irish P. Baguilat (Coordinator, Sustainable Agriculture & Women Farmers' Agenda, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development), Zoom videoconferencing, September 14, 2023.

## 4. Performing Strategic Support Services

Because of their committed and skilled staff, the societal organizations can perform strategic support services that complement or run parallel to the activities of their government partners. Given the enormous preparation for events, the staff of societal organizations have been the prime movers of the annual KLMPE Conferences. They are in charge of designing the program and implementing the activities under it, including conducting the trade and photo exhibit, publishing in a book case studies of best practices on family farming, and gathering policy proposals for policy dialogue that would later serve as resource materials for drafting the NAP.

Individually and collectively, member organizations conduct various initiatives to further the goals of the UNDFP in the country. For example, PAKISAMA proposed and secured funding from the European Union (EU) through a project, “Ensuring Maximum Family Farmers Participation in PAP4FF Implementation,” in partnership with the DA-ATI. The major objective of the project was to strengthen the participation of the FFOs and CSOs in completing the PAP4FF, and increase their awareness of and involvement in its implementation.

With PAKISAMA as the implementing entity, various FFOs and CSOs inside the ARDKPP TWG contributed, in one way or another, to fulfill the major objectives of the project. All eleven planned activities by FFOs and CSOs were completed, except for convening the government’s National Council for Family Farming (NCF). The support activities included (PAKISAMA 2021, 1–2):<sup>11</sup>

### 1. Designing of the Baseline and Profiling Study

FFOs and CSOs helped in designing and producing the tools for baseline and profiling study. ARDKPP member organizations formed a Technical Working Group (TWG) to aid the preparation of the baseline and profiling study. The TWG also conducted a series of workshops to draft and finalize the performance indicators of the seven pillars in the PAP4FF, as well as developed data gathering tools

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<sup>11</sup> PAKISAMA, 2021, *Narrative Report on “Ensuring Maximum Family Farmers Participation in PAP4FF Implementation,”* (April 1, 2021 – December 18, 2021).

(individual and organizational tools translated both in English and Filipino) to aid the conduct of the baselining and profiling study on family farming in the country.

## **2. Actual Desk and Field Research**

Desk research on secondary data was done to inform better the baselining study based on agreed indicators. The Department of Agriculture allocated 10 million pesos for actual baseline field research. DA-ATI has also contracted the Philippine Association of Agriculturists, Inc. (PAA, Inc.) to conduct the actual research.

## **3. Drafting of Communication and Sustainability Plans**

The societal organizations drafted and implemented a comprehensive communication plan which aimed to relay customized messages and information to key stakeholders and to the general public about PAP4FF, namely briefers, social media cards, audio-visual materials, press releases, and webinar series. They also crafted a sustainability plan which outlined some key points to strengthen the implementation of PAP4FF even amidst the transition to the next administration.

## **4. Establishment of a Website and a Mobile Platform**

A PAP4FF website was established, and a mobile platform was designed. Dedicated email, website, and social media accounts, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, were created and are now beginning to garner their respective following. A Google Drive was also set up and used as database of documents and visibility materials.

## **5. Brieger on PAP4FF**

Hundreds of copies of PAP4FF briefers in English, Filipino, and Cebuano were produced and disseminated in various other social media channels. The briefers are reviewed and finalized by member organizations. These were also printed and distributed to various family farmers' organizations.

## **6. 2021 Knowledge Learning Market-Policy Engagement Conference**

The two-day KLMPE Conference was attended by participants from FFOs, NGOs, government agencies, intergovernmental organizations, advocates and support groups. PAKISAMA, on

behalf of ARDKPP, presented updates and the next steps of the implementation of PAP4FF.

### **7. Drafting Committee Deliberation and Adoption**

FFOs and CSOs engaged with DA-ATI while working on the final draft of the PAP4FF before presenting the document to the public.

### **8. Sectoral Consultations and Selection of Representatives to NCFE National Steering Committee**

Consultations were held during the ARDKPP-led PAP4FF launch last July 2021 to discuss general situation, offer recommendations, and secure commitment from the government. Consultations and selection of representatives of ARDKPP to the NCFE were also discussed in both KLMPE and ARDKPP meetings. PAKISAMA drafted an Executive Order with the aim of catalyzing the formation of the National Council for Family Farming and the selection of FFO/CSO representatives to the NCFE National Steering Committee, Task Forces, and Secretariat.

### **9. ARDKPP Network Coordination**

Meetings were conducted among active members of the ARDKPP to sustain and strengthen the platform. A Google group email and a dedicated messenger group chat were created to facilitate easier communication. To discuss the next steps for 2022, an ARDKPP meeting was held on December 15, 2021.

### **10. Finalizing PAP4FF Draft and Joint Declaration Statement of FFOs and CSOS.**

FFOs and CSOs drafted and agreed on a joint declaration statement on PAP4FF through a Zoom conference. The unity statement was translated in both English and Filipino. It was posted on the website and all social media accounts of PAP4FF.

### **11. Participation of FFOs/CSOs in PAP4FF Official Launch**

FFOs and CSOs participated in the PAP4FF launch, led by the government on May 27, 2021. Representing family farmers, Sectoral Leader Ireneo Cerilla from PAKISAMA gave a speech, sharing his hopes about the PAP4FF initiative for family farmers.

Other activities that complement the government's efforts in popularizing PAP4FF include organizing a separate public launch on July 21, 2021, by ARDKPP members (led by PAKISAMA). In localizing the PAP4FF, related projects include producing six podcast episodes, writing four articles featuring family farmers, conducting two national consultations and orientations with key sectoral leaders, and producing a ten-minute orientation video on the PAP4FF.

The NCFE meeting was the only activity not accomplished. It was set to be conducted on August 6, 2021, but was later postponed due to conflicting schedules of government agencies. In a meeting, representatives from the DA-ATI expressed that the formation of the NCFE is scheduled for 2022.

Overall, this section revealed that societal organizations within ARDKPP employed their intellectual and human resources to assert their demands, views, and sentiments to the DA-ATI, their lead government partner. They also tapped their connection with IFAD and FAO to advance their demands in a cohesive and strategic manner. The societal organizations know full well that it takes pressure to have their demands heard and active engagement, such as providing support or taking initiative, to aid government agencies in their activities. From the narrative report of PAKISAMA (2021), some key takeaways from the project were proactivity, meaningful participation, and the importance of persistence and mobilizing resources and institutions:

Do not wait for the government to write the plan. Propose. (p. 12) [. . .] The government may not have the same sense of urgency as family farmers who actually suffer hunger and poverty. Many government agencies face various constituents and concerns that may compromise the achievement of targets as planned. FFOs/CSOs did not wait to be convened, they convened themselves and fill out the gaps. [. . .] These provide them the moral ascendancy to demand action from partner government agencies (p. 13).

## High-Profile Policy Domain

The members of the ARDKPP TWG, particularly the FFOs and CSOS, are banking on the high-profile global declaration of the UNDFP to advance the interests of Filipino family farmers. It is also clear that the Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), such as the IFAD and FAO, have been proactive mediators and bridge builders between societal organizations and state agencies.

### 1. Problem Analysis that Unsettles the Status Quo

For Magadia (2003, 65), “[a]ny reform policy would be potentially threatening to those who enjoy clear advantages in a given status quo. In the agrarian question, there is no question that any talk of reform would place landowners on the defensive.” In the case of institutionalizing a national action plan (NAP) for agriculture and rural development in the Philippines, reforms enshrined in the PAP4FF are all the more threatening to the current power structure in the country. This is due to the quantity and quality of proposed interventions in the final draft of the NAP. In other words, the FFOs and CSOs are upfront on how they view the ills of Philippine agriculture and how these might be overcome.

First, FFOs and CSOs keenly asserted their critical diagnosis of the challenges plaguing the Filipino family farmers, which was later accepted in the final draft by all stakeholders. In the “Gaps and Challenges” section of the NAP, the societal organizations within the ARDKPP made sure that the complexities of Philippine realities were surfaced and examined.

According to the NAP, the first impediment to the flourishing of the family farmers is “weak governance,” which is “characterized by the elite capture of the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches, and shrinking democratic spaces contribute to the weak implementation of existing asset reform laws.” This occurs alongside the absence of fundamental laws that secure the empowerment of farmers (ARDKPP 2021, 28).

The second impediment is “weak citizenship,” which pertains to the steady dwindling of the number of FFOs that has inevitably led to their continuous deprivation of needed government programs, which are only made available to organizations, not individual farmers. Meanwhile, existing organizations

have been offering incomplete services to their members due to because of the weak capacities of mainly volunteer-driven management and staff.

The third impediment is “weak partnership,” which is related to the limited constructive engagement of CSOs with government officials and family farmers. This in turn partly arises because of the first two impediments. It is noteworthy that the “Problem Analysis” reflected in the NAP not only identifies technocratic and bureaucratic impediments but also deeply recognizes elite interests and power dynamics at play, weakening the capacities of family farmers as organizations, citizens, and partners in multistakeholder mechanisms. To put in another way, the problem analysis is not short-term, myopic, and cosmetic. It does not stop at bureaucratic and technocratic fixes but confronts the systemic and multilayered nature of the problem head on as a product of elite power politics and special interests (Tadem 2020).

## **2. Policy Proposals that Threaten Power Structure**

Out of the critical diagnosis of the challenges of family farmers, members of the ARDKPP allotted a particular section in the NAP to enumerate a few key policies that need to be reviewed, amended, or even jettisoned. The FFOs and CSOs particularly insisted that some problematic key policies need to be spotlighted. They volunteered to elaborate on the flaws and/or deficiencies of some of these policies.

The NAP draws attention to not just one but at least five highly contentious policies (pp. 21–26) that could disrupt dominant economic and political interests in the country. Individually and collectively, the policies speak of the systemic marginalization and disenfranchisement of specific types of family farmers: rice farmers, fisher families, Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries’ families, indigenous peoples, women, and youth engaged in agriculture, among other types. Moreover, the short commentaries on these policies at the NAP suggest that the problems confronting agriculture and rural development are intrinsically and intersectionally imbricated with other policy domains. They have to do with gender inequality, environmental destruction via runaway extractivism, marginalization of the indigenous peoples, etc. The exposition calls for either amending the existing policy or submitting it for a comprehensive review for its merits and infirmities.



To illustrate, one of the existing policies and its amendatory counterpart on which the FFOs and CSOs articulated their position is on the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER). The PAP4FF states that “the FFOs/CSOs support the pending legislation on CARPER or CARP Extension with Reforms to complete the land acquisition and distribution (LAD) and for the government to fully subsidize the amortization payments of ARBs” (p. 22). The FFOs and CSOs also believe that the following interventions—“issuance of tenure instruments, speedy resolution of agrarian reform cases, expansion of the ARB services to include housing, health insurance, education, transportation, among other services, and the review of the Local Government Code (Republic Act 7160), which authorizes LGUs to reclassify agricultural lands for other uses as stated in Section 20 of the Code” (p. 22)—are interventions worth exploring to ameliorate the situations of landless family farmers.

Other policy recommendations are as follows: (1) further review of the Rice Tariffication Law, owing to the claims over its adverse impact on local rice farmers; (2) invoking the Indigenous Communities Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA) Bill and its recommendation for a “national ICCA registry, the creation of a process of documentation, recognition, inclusion of IPs’ rights in local government plans, the identification of penalties for prohibited acts within their territories, and the assurance of funds needed to manage them” (p. 23); (3) speeding up the delineation of municipal waters under the 1998 Philippine Fisheries Code (Republic Act 8550); and (4) repealing the 1995 Philippine Mining Act, implementing a moratorium on large-scale mining operations, and passing the Alternative Minerals Management Bill (AMMB), which has strong safeguards for the rights of communities and for the conservation of environment (pp. 22–25).

## Challenges Encountered

### 1. The challenge by DA-ATI in inviting other government representatives as a bureau

The National Committee on Family Farming (NCFE) is a multistakeholder platform composed of CSOs, as well as various government agencies. As a bureau within the DA and lead agency of the NCFE, the DA-ATI finds it challenging to summon other government agencies to meetings and gatherings. Ms. Rose Ann P. Leonor<sup>12</sup> (DA-ATI) explains this difficulty:

*Ang nakikita kasi namin, this [NCFE] involves different agencies or departments ng government, as well as CSOs, NGOs, and other private sectors. Si ATI, bilang isang bureau lang under the DA, ay hirap talagang imbitahan 'yung ibang departments. So during one meeting nakita namin na kahit 'yung Cabinet Secretary which is ini-implement na ngayon nung—kung aware kayo sa Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP) program led by DSWD [Department of Social Welfare and Development]—na talagang Cabinet Secretary 'yung nagpapatawag to convene yung different departments ng government sector, as well as the participation of CSOs and NGOs.*

*So 'yun po, si ATI, bilang isang bureau lang ng DA, ay hirap talagang kumuha ng participation nung different government departments. Kung meron man siyang makuha, iba iba pa yung pinapadala po during the consultations, meetings or kung ano man 'yung concerns na hinihingi namin sa kanila.*

What we observe is that this [NCFE] involves different agencies or departments of the government, as well as CSOs, NGOs, and other [members of the] private sector. ATI, as a bureau under the DA, finds it challenging to invite other departments. So during one meeting, we noticed that the Cabinet Secretary, who currently implements the—if you are aware of the Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger

<sup>12</sup> Rose Ann P. Leonor (Policy and Planning Division, DA-ATI), in discussion with Honey Bermudez Tabiola (author) and Irish P. Baguilat (Coordinator, Sustainable Agriculture & Women Farmers' Agenda, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development), Zoom videoconferencing, August 31, 2023.

and Poverty (EPAHP) Program led by DSWD—that it is actually the Cabinet Secretary who convenes the various departments of the government sector, as well as the participation of CSOs and NGOs.

So, that’s it. ATI, as a bureau under the DA, finds it difficult to get the participation of different government departments. Even if it gets some people, those sent to our consultations, meetings, or whatever concerns we ask of them, often vary or do not attend consistently.

Whether issuing an Executive Order or mere “flexing of its muscle” given its already existing mandate by virtue of the abovementioned Special Order, it would be up to DA-ATI, in consultation with its FO/CSO partners, to figure out how to best contribute to the endeavor in ways that is strategic, dynamic, and beneficial to all stakeholders.

## **2. Interaction of the NCFE with PCAF and similar platforms within government**

Currently, within the DA, the Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) is one agency that already convenes committees involving different CSOs and FFOs within the agriculture sector. These national sectoral committees are clustered according to commodities, such as rice, corn, coconuts, fisheries, among others.

The TWG members of the NCFE, particularly articulated by the DA-ATI, are concerned about figuring out how the NCFE would interact with the PCAF and other similar platforms within the DA and other government agencies that also cater to the needs of Filipino family farmers, while considering their respective mandates and processes. Specifically, a complexity would be making sure that these mechanisms are operating simultaneously in ways that are not overly fragmented, thus avoiding the creation of siloes. Ms. Leonor recalls one occasion of a potential sign of fragmentation:

*I think ARDKPP yata na forum 'yun, na merong isang farmer na nag-raise kung ano na ang update doon sa hinihingi nilang machinery sa PhilMec [Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization]. So, bilang ako na nandoon, as a representative ng DA, I just took note kung ano yung concern na 'yun ng isang farmer organization and relay[ed] it to PHilMech. Hindi ko talaga alam kung anong context, or kung anong consultation 'yung nabanggit, or kung nag-agree man sila doon na PHilMech will give 'yung machinery na 'yun doon sa farmer organization. So 'yun po, that shows how fragmented yung kung magkakaroon man tayo ng different sets of consultations with our family farmers.*

*And to address it, dapat “ma-in place” na talaga natin 'yung ating mga technical working groups which involve the different departments and agencies, kahit within the DA lang, para at least may common platform ba. Nandoon lahat na ri-raise 'yung issues at aware ang lahat kung ano man 'yung issues ng family farmers.*

I think during one ARDKPP forum, there was a farmer who asked for an update on the machinery they had requested from PHilMech. As a representative of the DA, I took note of the concern of the said farmer organization and relayed it to PHilMech. I really don't know what context, or what consultation was mentioned, or if PhilMec already agreed to give some machinery to the farmer organization. So, that shows how fragmented it is to have different sets of consultations with our family farmers.

And to address it, we should really “put in place” our technical working groups involving different departments and agencies, even if only within the DA, so that at least there is a common platform. Everyone is there to raise issues, and everyone is aware of whatever issues the family farmers have.

Ms. Leonor is referring to an inquiry—made by a member of a farmer organization at the ARDKPP forum—regarding a request for machinery at PHilMech. Considering that she was the only person from the DA present, she felt that she had to respond by noting the inquiry and committing to relay it to the concerned government agency. She believed that the NCFE could potentially become a common platform where FFOs can effectively raise issues and inquiries to concerned government agencies, and facilitate better communication. She added that although she was not quite familiar

with the details of how the other platforms within DA agencies operate, she believed “it would really be advantageous on both the government, as well as the agriculture sector, to have one platform where FFOs can raise all their concerns.” Still, she was hopeful that once the technical working groups at the ARDKPP become active, these concerns would be sorted out. This goes beyond treating family farming narrowly from the perspective of the commodities they produce.

In a separate Focus Group Discussion, Ms. Marlene Ramirez, Secretary General of AsiaDHRAA, stressed that there are parallel mechanisms to address the needs of family farmers. According to her, it is a reality that must be confronted and is expected by the CSOs. The challenge now for CSOs and FFOs is knowing what mechanisms are available and figuring out how to navigate and influence them. For her, multistakeholder mechanisms within the government line agencies, such as the NCFE, are usually driven by government realities and agenda. This is why it is important for FFOs and CSOs to have a clear idea of the role of the ARDKPP as a FFO/CSO-led mechanism. However, for Ms. Ramirez, the NCFE within the DA is “not a substitute” for already existing mechanisms for policy dialogue and consultations.

### **3. Cascading ARDKPP activities to Local Government Units (LGU)**

One important task by the DA-ATI is cascading the ARDKPP activities to different LGUs. Throughout the series of national consultations in drafting the PAP4FF, the DA-ATI only invited the DILG, which oversees all LGUs in the country. This means there were no LGUs present in shaping the action plan. The DA-ATI only relied on the DILG to disseminate information to different municipalities, provinces, or cities. However, for Ms. Leonor, the LGUs’ active involvement in the implementation of the PAP4FF is crucial. They are mandated to offer frontline services to family farmers at the grassroots level. She hopes this problem would be sorted out once different task forces at the national level are put in place, setting in motion the creation of their local counterparts in various LGUs.

On a positive note, Ms. Leonor also shared that there had been an impetus for the active involvement of LGUs. Some of them have participated in the baseline and profiling study on family farming, which was conducted by the Philippine Association of Agriculturists, Inc. (PAA, Inc.) and supervised by the DA-ATI. During the data collection process, the DA-ATI oriented some participating LGUs about the PAP4FF and the need for the baseline study to inform government policies and programs.

Overall, the challenge of cascading and popularizing the PAP4FF is perceived as a crucial issue of the government and its partners in civil society. As noted in a survey questionnaire by a lead personnel from a CSO within ARDKPP, “there seems to be no government agency championing the implementation of the PAP4FF. A simple Google search corroborates this concern. After it was launched, there were no articles, updates, postings on PAP4FF from government websites.”

## Recommendations

The following recommendations come from various stakeholders interviewed for this case study:

Overall, it is recommended to lobby the current DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. and Philippine President Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos Jr., who is also the Chairperson of the National Steering Committee of the NCFE in accordance to the PAP4FF, to issue an Executive Order that focuses on the national implementation of the PAP4FF. Doing so would institutionalize the activation of the NCFE and guarantee its annual budget allocation. In lieu of an EO, a national legislation on family farming may also be explored. This EO or national legislation should include the following provisions:

1. Given the strategic importance of family farming in addressing various SDGs, the President must convene the NCFE to mobilize various agencies in a whole-of-society approach. He must also appoint a government official (e.g., a Cabinet Secretary) from outside the various government departments to help him convene and oversee the meetings, gatherings, and activities of the NCFE.

2. Pay close attention to how the NCFE interacts with existing platform mechanisms within the DA. This is to avoid overlaps, fragmentation, and siloes, as well as to reinforce synergies across these platforms towards consolidating the needs and concerns of FFOs, leading to more focused and strategic interventions.
  3. In terms of the structure of the NCFE, FFOs, CSOs, and development partners shall sit as Co-Convenors or Co-Chairs with the Cabinet Secretary. This co-convenorship shall signal co-ownership of the platform.
  4. To facilitate the cascading of the ARDKPP activities to the local level, the DILG is encouraged to issue an Administrative Order or Memorandum Circular to facilitate the compliance of various LGUs.
  5. Meanwhile, all members of the ARDKPP are enjoined to continue advocating for the convening of the National Council for Family Farming. At the same time, the ARDKPP must mobilize local members in setting up municipal and city federations of FFOs, supported by allied NGOs, to push the drafting of municipal and city action plans for family farming and to urge the mayors to convene the councils. FFOs and CSOs can also work together in mobilizing their members to engage in the current food procurement programs of the government to feed school children, and other constituents.
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