

Access to data vital for empowering smallholders, building resilience

According to FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva, access to reliable information is essential for empowering farmers, particularly those in developing countries. "There is an urgent need to take the data which is available globally and to translate it to the ground level," Graziano da Silva said in remarks made during a G7 Agriculture Ministers meeting session entitled Empowering Farmers.



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The FAO director-general said the G7 countries - Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States - can play a leading role and help promote a more resilient and a more sustainable global agricultural and food systems.

Accessing information to combat hunger and poverty

Farmers, especially smallholders and family farmers in developing countries, bear much of the brunt of the impacts of climate change and other shocks including price volatility. This, in the context of a world where, for the first time in over a decade, [estimates show](#) that hunger is on the increase with 815 million people suffering from chronic undernourishment.

The FAO director-general underscored the role that improved access to quality data plays in combating hunger and poverty by providing farmers with vital information, including on access to food and other agricultural products. Local purchases from family farmers create markets and help to improve the quality and supply of food, he stressed.

This is also key for building resilience and strengthening livelihoods by disseminating information on income generation opportunities, in particular, to empower poor women. It is something that can be done relatively simply through the use of mobile telephones and in this regard, FAO is working with the private sector in the development of mobile phone apps that provide market information, Graziano da Silva said.

Better ways to forecast the weather

The FAO director-general noted that building the resilience of farmers to extreme weather events linked to climate change, including droughts and floods, also requires making better data available to more people, especially those living in poor and often remote rural areas.

FAO is working with the World Meteorological Organization to better respond to climate variability and climate change on the basis of better and more readily accessible data. Graziano da Silva noted how some 75 countries mainly in Africa, and many Small Island Developing States (SIDS), do not have the capacity to translate the weather data, including longer-term forecasts, into information for farmers.

The FAO Director-General urged the G7 to address this issue in their future deliberations.

On Monday, 16 October 2017, several of the G7 ministers will join a [World Food Day](#) ceremony at FAO's headquarters in Rome where Pope Francis will deliver the keynote speech.

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