The Declaration of Abu Dhabi for Global Food Security through Good Agricultural Practices

DRAFT 29 October 2014

This draft document describes the formation of the Declaration of Abu Dhabi Collaboration (hereafter "the Collaboration") which seeks rapid and widespread adoption of safe and sustainable agricultural production practices in support of global food security.

Vision

The Declaration of Abu Dhabi for Global Food Security through Good Agricultural Practices is a global private-public collaboration that will establish new approaches to make it easier, more cost effective and more attractive for farmers worldwide to adopt safe and sustainable production practices.

Purpose

In pursuit of a food secure world, The Declaration of Abu Dhabi unites public and private partners committed to developing and adopting a common set of criteria for good agricultural practices along with supporting farm identification and reporting systems. The common criteria build upon established and ongoing work in all aspects of good agricultural practices, including food safety, environmental sustainability, and social responsibility. The resulting public criteria will serve as a consistent language for sustainability evaluation, applicable to farms of all sizes worldwide, and a foundation for the purposes of training, compliance and assessment. Our success will enable critical efficiencies and speed adoption of sustainable agriculture practices, yielding a safe and plentiful food supply.

The Problem

As the global population rises, we are increasingly constrained by the finite resources available for agriculture and aquaculture. We need higher productivity and more efficient use of natural resources to ensure that a growing world population can overcome hunger and malnutrition, without compromising biodiversity and eco-systems.

There is a broad consensus that many current agricultural practices are unsustainable. Full internalization of the external costs of agricultural production (degradation of soils, depletion of fresh water resources, loss of biodiversity, contribution to climate change, social inequities, etc.) will not be realized in the foreseeable future. At the same time, there is little willingness in the market to pay for more sustainable alternatives.

Third-party and company sustainability standards and certification schemes as well as developments in national agricultural policies have spurred the adoption of more sustainable production systems over

the past 20 years. However, the uncoordinated approaches and duplicative requirements placed on farmers have created inefficiencies that have slowed progress.

Transformation towards more sustainable agricultural production systems is not happening fast enough.

We need new approaches that will make it easier, more cost effective, and more attractive for farmers worldwide to adopt safe and sustainable production practices.

Aspirational Outcomes

The collaboration aspires for the following outcomes of our successful and ongoing work:

- We will establish a global common language for sustainable agriculture.
- Farmers, regardless of size, sector, location or markets, will have a clear common guideline for good agricultural practices to follow.
- Government policies will be linked with real practices on the ground.
- Capacity building programs will focus on that same content.
- Certification programs and market leaders with B2C labels will use this as an integrated building block, freeing them to focus on points of differentiation and the efficiency and quality of their delivery of verification services.
- Global reporting will be facilitated by a unique identifier for each farm, allowing for a more accurate gauge of progress.

Approach

"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." (1996 World Food Summit).

The Collaboration is focused on the dimension of food security that ensures physical availability of food, or the "supply side" of food security, though widespread adoption of good agricultural practices. In line with FAO, the Collaboration defines such practices as those that address environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm processes, and result in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products. We extend this definition to good aquacultural practices as well.

The Collaboration is a multi-stakeholder and inclusive initiative with the explicit intent of creating tools and solutions that are publicly accessible and broadly applicable. It seeks a practical, technical solution, not a conceptual one, with the farm it its center. The collaboration is responsible for building the three operational pillars of this initiative:

- A common set of good agricultural practices.
- A system for uniquely identifying every farm.
- A mechanism for securing commitment and reporting by supply chains.

The set of good agricultural practices generated by this initiative will be accessible to all as an open-source resource for optional, flexible use. The unique farm identification system and common reporting mechanism will be additional tools for aligning efforts for maximum efficiency, transparency and impact.

Recognizing there are many worthy private and public sector initiatives that overlap with the Declaration of Abu Dhabi in both objectives and stakeholders, the Collaboration will work actively to seek alignment, maximize resources and avoid duplication.

Participation

Participation in the Declaration of Abu Dhabi Collaboration is voluntary for any public or private organization. Signatories to the Declaration of Abu Dhabi share the goal of supporting global food security through good agricultural practices. They are pledging their organization's intention to align with the commitments outlined in the Declaration. Signatories have the opportunity to actively build the operational pillars of this collaboration.

There is no membership fee.

Signatories classify themselves in a stakeholder chamber upon entering the collaboration.

- Producers
- Buyers (Retailers, Manufacturers, Distributors, Traders)
- Governmental and inter-governmental organizations
- Scheme owners/Labels
- Product and service providers (certification bodies, fertilizer, crop protection, seed, consultation)
- Civil society and academic organizations

Signatories may volunteer for technical or advisory committee membership, and may seek election to the steering committee on behalf of their chamber. Committee membership is not compulsory.

A signatory may revoke consent and withdraw from the initiative at any time in writing and without reason, and this is effective immediately without any reprisal. The signatory loses the opportunity to shape the collaboration's efforts to establish the common criteria, farm identification system or reporting mechanism.   This does not mean the signatory would lose the ability to support the systems that result from the collaboration's work.

Non-signatories may participate as observers, with access to meeting minutes, but are not allowed to vote.

Governance

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee guides the vision and strategy of the Collaboration, and is responsible for stewarding:

- Operations
- Funding
- Partnerships with other initiatives
- Signatory engagement
- Policy

The steering committee also provides final approval to recommendations made by the Technical Committee (discussed below).

The first Steering Committee will be voted into place in time to transition governance responsibilities from the Interim Steering Committee at the First Signatories Assembly. It will be comprised of one seat for the elected representative of each chamber.

The chamber seats on the Steering Committee rotate annually. Individuals from each chamber may nominate themselves. Each signatory casts one vote for one candidate to represent each chamber. The candidate receiving the largest number of signatory votes takes the seat. Steering Committee members serve for one year, and may be re-elected to serve additional terms.

The Steering Committee requests and receives recommendations from the Technical and Advisory Committees. Each Steering Committee member has one vote, and decisions are made through consensus (>75% agree). It holds quarterly webinars and an annual in-person meeting. The Steering Committee democratically elects its own chair and vice chair at the beginning of each term (annually).

A chamber seat may be empty for no more than one year. It is the responsibility of the Steering Committee to ensure adequate representation of each chamber within the collaboration.

Technical Committee

The Technical Committee is open to any signatory and has no limit in size. It is responsible for recommendations to the Steering Committee on building and maintaining the three operational pillars of the Declaration. As such, it has three primary working groups:

- common set of good agricultural practices
- farm identification
- reporting mechanism

The Technical Committee delivers its recommendations to the Steering Committee. Each Technical Committee member has one vote, and decisions are made through consensus (>75% agree). It holds quarterly webinars and an annual in-person meeting. The Technical Committee democratically elects its own chair and vice chair at the beginning of each term (annually).

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is open to all signatories, is comprised of three equally responsible elected signatories. It is responsible for recommendations to the Steering Committee on strategic partnerships

as well as collecting and distilling public feedback on a regular basis, and recommending response. It serves as the public face of the Collaboration.

The Advisory Committee delivers its recommendations to the Steering Committee, which is in turn responsible for considering and acting on these recommendations.   It holds quarterly webinars and an annual in-person meeting, as well as ad hoc meetings.

The three seats on the Steering Committee rotate annually. Individuals from any chamber may nominate themselves. Each signatory casts vote for up to three members. The three candidates receiving the largest number of signatory votes take the seat. Advisory Committee members serve for one year, and may be re-elected to serve additional terms.

An Advisory Committee seat may be empty for no more than one year. It is the responsibility of the Steering Committee to ensure a full committee.

Initial Focus – The Interim Period

This interim period is defined as the time between the launch of the Declaration (October 28, 2014) and the first assembly of signatories after the launch, or approximately six months.

Signatories will classify themselves into chambers and volunteer for membership in the Technical and Advisory Committees. If more than three members volunteer for the Advisory Committee, the signatories will vote on their top three candidates.   An interim chair and vice chair shall be selected for the Technical Committee through the democratic process described above.

Voting in the Interim Period will cover policy and governance decisions as posed by the Interim Steering Committee. Voting will be done electronically. Each signatory will have one vote and decisions will be made by consensus (>75% agree).

An Interim Steering Committee shall be authorized to guide the Collaboration while the ongoing governance structure is established and the committees take shape prior to the first assembly of signatories.   The Interim Steering Committee members are the founding partners of The Declaration of Abu Dhabi:

- International Trade Centre
- Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Platform
- GLOBALG.A.P.

The Interim Steering Committee's responsibilities include:

- Pursuing seed funding
- Building the multi-stakeholder and representative collaboration of signatories
- Pursuing relationships with complimentary initiatives
- Establishing internal and public communication channels
- Organizing the first signatory assembly so that the technical work of building the three pillars may begin.

- Proposing governance and policy for signatory approval

The Interim Steering Committee will be in regular communication and meet as needed.

The Technical Committee will compile content for initial consideration in common set, gather examples of unique farm identification systems and gather examples of supply chain reporting mechanisms.

The Advisory Committee will begin regular reporting on public opinion and reviewing initiatives for partnership for the Interim Steering Committee.