

Document: Declaration of Abu Dhabi Status Update

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The [Declaration of Abu Dhabi for Global Food Security through Good Agricultural Practices](#) is an open call for global collaboration to find new approaches that will make it easier, more cost effective, and more attractive for farmers worldwide to adopt safe, responsible and sustainable production practices. The Declaration of Abu Dhabi unites public and private partners committed to developing and adopting three important measures:

- A common set of good agricultural practices.
- A system for uniquely identifying every farm that is recognized by all stakeholders.
- A mechanism for securing the commitment and reporting by supply chain partners.

The common set of practices builds upon established and ongoing work in all aspects of good agriculture and aquaculture practices, including food safety, environmental sustainability, and social responsibility. The common set of practices will draw upon existing standards and assessment tools. The resulting resource will provide broad, consistent, open-source language for sustainability criteria, applicable to farms of all sizes worldwide.

The Declaration of Abu Dhabi was successfully launched on 28 October at the [GLOBALG.A.P. SUMMIT2014](#) with a panel discussion and formal signing ceremony, supporting video message from the [UN Global Compact](#) and a dedicated [music video](#). The [founding signatories](#) included 38 organizations representing producer groups, manufacturers, retailers, government agencies, standards setters, product and service providers, academic and civil society organizations. The signatories' general assembly convened its inaugural meeting on 29 October to discuss goals, interim period governance and next steps. The assembly approved an Interim Steering Committee for the development phase, comprised of the initiating partners: International Trade Centre, Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Platform and GLOBALG.A.P. It also defined a chamber structure, three technical committees and other supporting opportunities for signatories to play to ensure the successful development of the initiative.

Signatories actively volunteer to participate in Technical Committees. The three technical committees mirror the three pillars of the Declaration: 1) Common set of good agricultural practices; 2) Unique farm identification system; 3) Mechanism for consistent reporting.

The first milestone accomplishment supports the Blue Number Initiative, a unique farm identification system with an open global registry to recognize the contribution of millions of farmers and small agricultural businesses to the world's food systems. Working neutrally under the umbrella of the United Nations Global Compact's Food and Agriculture (FAB) Principles and the Declaration of Abu Dhabi, the collaborators include the UN International Trade Centre, GLOBALG.A.P., SAI Platform, Rainforest Alliance, GS1 and Control Union. The initiative will provide millions of 'blue numbers' free of charge to any farmer or business, in any part of a food value chain, that creates a public profile with basic information such as who they are, what they grow and their GPS coordinates. They can also selectively share additional information such as compliance with national regulations, whether they have any certifications for local or international good agricultural practice, or even their network of business partners. Declaration of Abu Dhabi signatory GS1 will issue new numbers, assign existing GLNs as 'blue numbers' when desired, and coordinate with existing identification systems to ensure unique identity.

The Blue Number Initiative's public data is designed for free and non-commercial use by governments, companies and communities to build and deliver more impactful programs for rural development, increase transparency and reporting in value and supply chains, encourage the uptake of national and voluntary standards, and to empower small farmers and SMEs.

Additionally, the Declaration of Abu Dhabi has developed an innovative process to arrive at a common set of good agricultural practices. The common set will emerge through a new technical solution that engages standards owners in an ongoing harmonization process. The solution is based on International Trade Centre's [Standards Map](#), an online platform that enables its users to explore and compare over 170 sustainability standards, and build their personalized business' roadmap towards sustainable trade. Through new functionality in Standards Map, standards owners will have the opportunity to recognize the language of other standards *on the individual criterion level* as fully or partially equivalent. Each recognition event will be visually identified in the Standards Map interface, and trigger prompts to other standards to evaluate the relevant criteria for reciprocal recognition. The result will be an ongoing chain of recognition. Criteria language that is most widely recognized as equivalent will automatically populate the common set. ITC will pilot this new functionality to the Standards Map in early 2016.

Ultimately, with broad participation of standards, the ITC Standards Map platform will allow any farmer to select standards of their choice, and automatically generate a single checklist that includes all criteria with no duplication. This will ease the current confusion created by multiple standards with minor differences in technical language but not in meaning.

For questions regarding the Declaration of Abu Dhabi, please contact:

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