

Adelboden Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M)

Recalling “Agenda 21” adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, July 1992), and the recommendations of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development relevant to “Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development” (SARD),

Recalling the decisions of the UN General Assembly to designate 2002 as the “International Year of Mountains”, and to convene the forthcoming “World Summit on Sustainable Development” (WSSD) in Johannesburg (26 August - 4 September 2002), and of the Kyrgyz Republic to host the “Bishkek Global Mountain Summit” (28 October – 1 November 2002),

Considering the particular importance of Chapter 14 (SARD) and Chapter 13 (Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development) of “Agenda 21” for the livelihoods of mountain people,

Considering the FAO “World Food Summit – five years later” (Rome, June 2002), whose declaration calls for an International Alliance Against Hunger, and which organised a side-event on sustainable mountain development,

The representatives of mountain people, major groups of civil society, governments and international organisations, attending the SARD - Mountains 2002 Conference in Adelboden, Switzerland, 16 – 20 June 2002, **declare** by consensus the following:

SARD as an overall approach for the mountains

Noting that, based on the experience since Rio, implementation of Chapter 14 (SARD) and Chapter 13 (Mountains), is closely linked to many other “Agenda 21” chapters which cover issues such as poverty, consumption, health, land, forests, desertification, biological diversity, fresh water, local populations, local authorities, access to resources, role of trade, role of farmers,

Noting therefore that to succeed, SARD in Mountains has to be pursued in a holistic, site-specific, integrated and flexible approach, ensuring the active participation of mountain people with all other stakeholders,

Noting that while agriculture plays a key role for the mountain people in many parts of the world, sustainable livelihood systems and integrated rural development require diversification into other economic activities,

Noting that all mountain areas and other fragile ecosystems face major challenges in the three pillars of sustainability: economic, environmental and social, taking also into account the political and cultural dimensions.

Disadvantages and potentials of mountain areas and their populations

Noting in particular that:

- mountain areas and their populations are more exposed to poverty, hunger, social and political marginalisation and conflicts, and are therefore generally behind in development,
- mountain agriculture has specificities and some inherent constraints due to geographical isolation, difficult climatic conditions and fragile ecosystems rendering production, marketing and development more difficult,
- globalisation has often had negative effects on mountain areas, and that it is important to reduce market distortions. Even if these distortions are removed, comparative disadvantages still prevail in mountain areas which therefore require special attention,

Noting that, on the other hand, mountain areas offer certain comparative advantages and have significant potentials and provide a wide range of goods and services to the rest of society, e.g. in relation to biodiversity, landscape, water, risk prevention, specific products and culture,

Noting as a result the web of interdependencies between the mountain areas and the lowlands, for example through migration and freshwater linkages,

The Adelboden Conference examined the challenges of SARD in mountains and the actions to be undertaken more specifically under the four themes: the roles and tasks of agriculture, good practices for SARD in mountains, access to resources and fair conditions of work

and calls on governments, inter-governmental organisations and other international organisations, and major groups of civil society and other stakeholders to

develop and improve policies and actions.

To respond to the many challenges of SARD in mountains, appropriate and coherent policies, instruments and programmes need to be developed and applied in a participatory way across all domains, namely in the following fields:

- **political, legal and institutional environment:** more attention and accountability to mountain issues and specificities in particular through poverty alleviation, within the context of existing local, national and international frameworks; the recognition of the rights of local communities and individuals to their knowledge, natural resources and technologies and to benefit sharing; community empowerment; property and succession rights including appropriate land tenure and cadastral arrangements; rule of law, security, political rights and democracy, decentralisation and on going local participation and good governance; role, legal status and rights of indigenous and tribal people, women, children, and vulnerable groups; decent work norms;
- **social and cultural environment:** access to food, clean water and basic services, such as population education, health, sanitation, housing, energy; fair working conditions, risk management and reduction of vulnerability; preservation of culture; ability to organise and associate, reduction of social exclusion; promotion of social safety nets and protection of the weakest (children, old, sick, disabled and those affected by HIV, especially in the developing world); consideration of assistance and support to develop alternatives to illegal crops;
- **natural environment:** combating deforestation, erosion, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, all forms of disruption of water flows and retreat of glaciers; preparedness for adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters, the use and strengthening of early warning systems; sustainable watershed and forest management; soil and eco-system restoration and enhancement;
- **economic environment:** rural infrastructure; “substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with the view of phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reduction in trade distorting domestic support... and special and differential treatment for developing countries”; market information and development; access to credit and financial services; public and private investment; economic valuation and fair compensation for environmental and other goods and services from mountains; promoting and strengthening cooperatives and competitive organisations; all forms of sustainable farming practices; diversification within and outside agriculture, niche markets, seeking value addition at the primary level thereby contributing to higher income; consumer information, norms and indicators of production, certification, labels of origin and quality.
- **capacity-building and knowledge:** research, training, technology transfer and extension; farm and eco-system management; management of local organisations, in particular farmers organisations and financial and technical support for these purposes; regional, North-South and South-South alliances and exchanges of information and best practices; income generation; capacity for policy elaboration and implementation.

To this effect, initiatives, actions and political decisions are necessary at the local, national, sub-regional, regional and global levels (“principle of subsidiarity”). They require informed participation and commitment, including own resources, at all levels based on the principles of community driven approaches and equity in multi-stakeholder involvement.

It is urgent to implement concrete solutions to conflicts that affect so many people in mountain areas.

A list of elements pointing to future work, to be further developed, identified in the discussions of the conference, is reproduced in the annex.

SARD – Mountains: combining SARD and Sustainable Mountain Development - strengthening international progress

Recognising that the challenges and progress in SARD in mountains depend on urgent action at both the general level of SARD and Sustainable Mountain Development, we call on interested countries and other partners to take the following initiatives:

- **to support the SARD Initiative and the International Partnership on Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions** being facilitated by FAO and to strengthen their emphasis on SARD in mountains.

- **to establish an Adelboden Group on SARD in mountains** as a platform for discussion of policies and policy instruments, exchange of experience, and preparation of initiatives. This group will include interested governments, FAO and other relevant international organisations, stakeholder groups and NGOs,
- **to invite FAO, governments and other relevant organisations** to make proposals for follow-up in line with the recommendations of this declaration,
- **to invite the countries and stakeholders participating in the Adelboden Conference** to promote and incorporate the outcome of this Conference and its Declaration, at the Johannesburg "World Summit on Sustainable Development" (WSSD), at the "Bishkek Global Mountain Summit" and other international venues, as well as in local, regional and national contexts.

Adopted in Adelboden, Switzerland, on 20 June 2002