



November 19, 2020

Director-General Qu Dongyu  
UN Food and Agriculture Organization  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
00153 Rome, Italy

Dear Director-General Qu Dongyu,

The 350 civil society and Indigenous Peoples organizations from 63 countries listed below represent hundreds of thousands of farmers, fisherfolk, agricultural workers and other communities, as well as human rights, faith-based, environmental and economic justice institutions. We are writing to express our deep concern over your [stated plans](#) to strengthen official ties with CropLife International. We strongly urge you to reconsider this alliance.

Deepening collaboration with CropLife, a trade association representing the interests of corporations which produce and promote dangerous pesticides, directly undermines FAO's [priority](#) of minimising the harms of chemical pesticide use worldwide, "including the progressive ban of highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs)." It also undermines the principles set out in FAO's Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management, and ties the agency with producers of harmful, unsustainable chemical technologies — relinquishing FAO's role as a global leader supporting innovative approaches to agricultural production that promote the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, sustainability and resilience.

Reliance on hazardous pesticides is a short-term fix that undermines the rights to adequate food and health for present and future generations, as stated in the 2017 [report](#) of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food.

A recent [analysis](#) of industry records documents that CropLife members, BASF, Bayer Crop Science, Corteva Agriscience, FMC and Syngenta, make more than one-third of their sales income from HHPs — the pesticides that are most harmful to human health and the environment. Their primary aim is to maximise sales of their products, irrespective of health and environmental harms, and whether or not these products are necessary or actually benefit farmers. FAO, in contrast, should aim to increase farmer access to practices and tools that help them grow their crops sustainably without harming their health.

In addition, CropLife member companies [explicitly target](#) developing and emerging countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia as expanding markets for their products, taking advantage of weak controls on registration and commercialization of pesticides. The proportion of their HHP sales is even higher in these countries, where safety regulations are often less robust, and harms to human health and the environment are greater.

The global pesticide corporations that make up CropLife are well known for aggressive marketing of HHPs that are responsible for a wide range of devastating health harms to farmers, farmworkers and rural families around the world. One recent systematic literature review (in press) found that a significant percentage of farmers around the world suffer unintentional acute pesticide poisoning every year. Farmers, [agricultural workers](#) and those in rural communities also suffer increased rates of certain types of cancer as well as reproductive, neurological and developmental disorders due to pesticide exposure. As recently highlighted by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, pesticide products produced by CropLife member companies have also decimated [pollinator populations](#) and are wreaking havoc on biodiversity and fragile ecosystems. Some specific examples include:

- *Syngenta's herbicide paraquat* is one of the most acutely toxic pesticides in the world, and has been linked to Parkinson's Disease and many other health harms. Banned in Europe since 2007, it is still exported and in widespread use.
- *Corteva's insecticide chlorpyrifos* harms brain development, resulting in developmental delays and lower IQs. It has been banned in several U.S. states, Europe and four other countries, but production and use continues.
- *Bayer's imidacloprid* and other neonicotinoid systemic insecticides have devastated pollinator populations. One [recent study](#) found that overall, U.S. farmland is 48 times more toxic to insects than it was 20 years ago.
- *BASF's fipronil* has been implicated in [mass bee deaths](#) in many countries, including France, Brazil and South Africa.

These are just a few examples of the harmful impacts of the hundreds of products produced and promoted by the corporations that are members of CropLife International.

CropLife frequently asserts that it aims to provide “environmentally friendly” technology, through the genetically modified (GM) seeds that its member corporations also produce. A large

proportion of these seeds, however, are engineered to be used in conjunction with proprietary chemical herbicides. These GM seeds are thus primarily a mechanism to boost associated chemical sales, and ensure continued profit from pesticides such as glyphosate and now (in response to glyphosate resistance in weeds) the highly drift-prone herbicides 2,4-D, dicamba and glufosinate. These technologies lock farmers into ever escalating use of pesticides, particularly when resistance develops.

An alliance with CropLife also undercuts your agency's critical — and urgently needed — support for agroecology, an ecologically-based approach to farming which [FAO itself notes](#) “can support food production and food security and nutrition while restoring the ecosystem services and biodiversity that are essential for sustainable agriculture.”

In contrast, CropLife's purpose is to advocate for use of its members' products. These antiquated chemical solutions to pest control run directly counter to the urgently needed transition to innovative, knowledge-intensive ecological approaches that FAO has been supporting in recent years. Agroecological systems have proven to be economically viable across the globe, promote rather than harm human health, and are more “resilient and robust so they can withstand increasing volatility and climate shocks, deliver affordable and sustainable healthy diets for all, and decent livelihoods for food system workers” — the [exact goals](#) your agency recently highlighted on World Food Day.

We strongly urge you to reconsider and discontinue this deeply inappropriate alliance with CropLife.

Sincerely,

Million Belay, General Coordinator  
Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)

David Azoulay, Environmental Health Program Director  
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

Ana Maria Suarez Franco, Executive Coordination Team  
FIAN International

Kirtana Chandrasekaran and Martin Drago, Food Sovereignty Program Coordinators  
Friends of the Earth International

Sophia Murphy, Executive Director  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)

Andrea Carmen, Executive Director  
International Indian Treaty Council (IITC)

Pam Miller and Tadesse Amera, Co-Chairs  
International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN)

Sue Longley, General Secretary  
International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied  
Workers' Associations (IUF)

Kristin Schafer, Coordinator  
Pesticide Action Network (PAN) International

Laurent Gaberell, Agriculture and Food Expert  
Public Eye

Chee Yoke Ling, Executive Director  
Third World Network

**On behalf of the undersigned civil society and Indigenous Peoples organizations:**

*International & Regional Organizations*

ActionAid

CIDSE

Ecoropa

ETC Group

Food & Water Action Europe

Foodwatch

GRAIN

Grupo de Trabajo Agroecología Política del Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO)

Health and Environment Justice Support

Indigenous Environmental Network

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Africa

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Asia Pacific

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) North America

Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAPAL)

Sociedad Científica Latinoamericana de Agroecología (SOCLA)

United Confederation of Taíno People

Water Justice and Gender

*Argentina*

Acción por la Biodiversidad

Cátedra Libre de Soberanía Alimentaria - Universidad Nacional de La Plata

Ecos de Saladillo

Global Catholic Climate Movement, Argentina Chapter

Grupo de Ecología del Paisaje y Medio Ambiente (GEPAMA), Universidad de Buenos Aires

Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria (INTA)

Los Caminos de la Agricultura

Naturaleza de Derechos

Pro Eco Grupo Ecologista - Asociación Civil

RAAD

Taller Ecologista

*Australia*

National Toxics Network Australia

*Austria*

ÖBV - Via Campesina Austria

*Bahrain*

Environment Friends Society

*Belgium*

Corporate Europe Observatory

Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

FIMARC

*Benin*

Ciradd-ong

Jinukun / Fédération AgroEcologique Bénin

La Grande Puissance de Dieu

Organisation Béninoise pour la Promotion de l'Agriculture Biologique (OBEPAB)

*Bolivia*

Comunidad de Estudios Jaina

*Brazil*

Agapan

Aliança para Alimentação Saudável

Articulação Nacional de Agroecologia

Associação Brasileira de Agroecologia/aba-agroecologia

Associação Casa da Videira

Associação de Combate aos Poluentes

Brazilian Institute for Consumers Protection

Campanha Permanente contra os agrotóxicos e pela vida

Castilla Consultoria

Ciclovida - LifeCycle

FLD-COMIN-CAPA

Fórum Mudanças Climáticas e Justiça Socioambiental

Instituto de Bien Estar

Instituto Maniva

Lopez Fonzaghi FLC

Marcha Mundial por Justiça Climática/Marcha Mundial do Clima

Movimento Nacional Contra Corrupção e pela Democracia

Movimento Urbano de Agroecologia

Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra

Terra de Direitos

Toxisphera Environmental Health Association

UFAPE

*Burkina Faso*

Association Yelemani

Fédération Nationale des Organisations Paysannes

Terre A Vie

*Cameroon*

Research and Education Centre for Development (CREPD)

Front Africain pour le Défense de la Nature et de l'Homme

CHASAADD-M

*Canada*

Canadian Biotechnology Action Network  
Climate Emergency Institute  
Daraja Press  
Food Systems Roundtable Waterloo Region  
GE Free Comox Valley, British Columbia  
Kids Right To Know  
Lush Cosmetics  
National Farmers Union  
Nature's Path Foods Inc.  
No More GMOs - Toronto  
Peas in a Pod Films  
Safe Food Matters Inc.  
SeedChange  
Socio-Economic And Environmental Development Solutions (SEEDS)  
Toronto Non-GMO Coalition  
Vigilance OGM

*Chile*

Agrupación de pequeños regantes y no regantes del río Mostazal  
Alianza por una Mejor Calidad de Vida  
CAC Ovalle  
Centro de Educación y Tecnología, Chiloé  
Comité Socioambiental Coordinador Feminista 8M  
Cooperativa La Cacerola  
Cooperativa Semilla Austral  
Exige Vivir Sano  
Laboratorio de agroecología  
Observatorio Latinoamericano de Conflictos Ambientales OLCA  
Particular  
Red de Acción por los Derechos Ambientales RADA  
Red por la Defensa de los Territorios, RDT Araucanía  
Semilla austral  
Valles en Movimiento

*Colombia*

Asociación de Trabajo Interdisciplinario - ATI  
Fundaexpresion

*Costa Rica*

Agropecuaria Colibri

*Democratic Republic of Congo*

Front Commun pour la Protection de l'Environnement et des Espaces Protégés

*Ecuador*

Chaupi Molino  
Fundación EkoRural  
Naturaleza con Derechos  
Que Rico Es Comer Sano y de Nuestra Tierra  
Red de Guardianes de Semillas  
Red por una América Latina Libre de Transgénicos

*El Salvador*

El Salvadorian Center for Appropriate Technologies (CESTA FOE)

*Ethiopia*

Ethiopian Society for Consumer Protection  
MELCA-Ethiopia  
PAN Ethiopia  
PELUM Ethiopia

*France*

CCFD-Terre Solidaire  
Coordination SUD  
Engineers Without Borders - Agriculture and Food sovereignty  
Génération Futures  
Groupe de Recherches et d'Echanges Technologiques (GRET)  
Justice Pesticides  
La Maison de l'Artemisia



SOL, Alternatives Agroécologiques et Solidaires  
Urgenci International CSA Network

*Georgia*

Biological Farming Association Elkana

*Germany*

Association of Ethical Shareholders Germany  
Coordination Gegen Bayer-Gefahren  
German NGO Forum on Environment and Development  
INKOTA Netzwerk  
México vía Berlín, e.V.  
Partner Suedmexikos e.V.  
Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Germany  
Starfish Organic  
Umweltinstitut München e.V.

*Ghana*

Abibinsroma Foundation  
Food Sovereignty Ghana

*Guatamala*

International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)  
Movimiento Agroecologico de América Latina y el Caribe (MAELA)

*Guinea*

Carbone Guinée

*India*

ASHA-Kisan Swaraj (Alliance for Sustainable & Holistic Agriculture)  
Doctors for Food Safety and Biosafety 2) Initiative for Health & Equity in Society  
Jagori Rural  
Kalanjium Women Farmers Organisation  
Kalpavriksh  
Living Farms  
NavAnubhuti Welfare Society

Navdanya International  
Pesticide Action Network (PAN) India  
Rasthria Vyavasaya Vruthidarula Union  
Salt Films  
Society for Rural Education and Development  
Sunray Harvesters  
The Sahayak Trust  
Women's Collective

*Italy*

Migos MST Italia  
Parma Sostenibile  
Schola Campesin  
Society for International Development  
Society for New Initiatives and Activities (SONIA) for a Just New World

*Ivory Coast*

Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement

*Jamaica*

The Caribbean Poison Information Network

*Japan*

Consumers Union of Japan

*Kenya*

Common Ground for Africa  
Haki Nawiri Afrika

*Kyrgyzstan*

Agency for Development Initiatives (ADI)

*Liberia*

Faith and Justice Network  
Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment

*Luxembourg*

Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM)  
Cercle de Coopération des ONGD du Luxembourg  
Natur and Umwelt a.s.b.l.  
SOS Faim Luxembourg

*Malaysia*

Consumers' Association of Penang  
Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth)  
Sustainable Development Network Malaysia

*Mauritania*

CERAI

*Mexico*

Academia Mexicana de Derecho Ambiental  
Asamblea de los Pueblos Indigenas por la Soberania Alimentaria A.C  
Asociación Nacional de Empresas Comercializadoras de Productores del Campo (ANEC)  
Campesinos en la Lucha Agraria SC de RL de CV  
Casa Cem- Vias Verdes A.C.  
Centro de Investigación Laboral y Asesoría Sindical (CILAS)  
Fronteras Comunes  
Grupo de Estudios Ambientales (GEA)  
Maela Mexico  
Observatorio Universitario de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional del Estado de Guanajuato  
Red de Accion sobre Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas en México (RAPAM/ Pesticide Action Network Mexico)  
Red de alternativas sustentables agropecuarias de Jalisco  
Red Mexicana de Periodistas Ambientales  
ReLANS  
Via Organica

*Morocco*

Coordinadora Ecologica Casablancaca

*Mozambique*

Alternativa - Acção pela Emancipação Social  
Justica Ambiental

*Nepal*

Solidarity of South Asian Farmers and Producers  
Youth For Environment Education And Development Foundation (YFEED Foundation)

*Netherlands*

Both ENDS  
Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF)

*New Zealand*

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Aotearoa

*Nigeria*

Health of Mother Earth Foundation

*Norway*

BERAS International Foundation

*Pakistan*

Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum

*Paraguay*

Sociedad Científica de Agroecología, Agricultura Familiar Campesina y Economía Solidaria  
(SOCAAFES)\  
Sociedad de Estudios Rurales y Cultura Popular (SER)

*Peru*

ALSAKUY Agroecológica

*Philippines*

Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group)  
IFOAM Asia Inc  
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS)  
Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Philippines

*Senegal*

Fahamu

Fédération des Agro-Pasteurs de Diender (FAPD)

Nous Sommes la Solution - Célébrons l'Agriculture familiale Africaine

Réseau National des Femmes Rurales du Sénégal

*Serbia*

Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development

*South Africa*

African Centre for Biodiversity

Biological Systems Consulting & Research

Biowatch South Africa

Center for Integrated and Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET)

Ekogaia Foundation

GMO Poison Free Zones South Africa

Masifundise

Michael Hall Photography

PGS South Africa

Sustaining the Wild Coast

South African Organic Sector Organization (SAOSO)

Southern African Rural Women's Assembly

*Spain*

Agroecosystems History Lab

*Switzerland*

Bread for all

Fastenopfer

Landwirtschaft mit Zukunft/Agriculture du futur

Solidar Suisse

SWISSAID

Swiss Technology Production

*Tanzania*

Tanzania Alliance for Biodiversity (TABIO)

*Thailand*

Ecological Alert and Recovery - Thailand (EARTH)

*Tunisia*

Association de l'Education Environnementale pour les Futures Générations

Association Pour la Protection de l'Environnement et le Developpement Durable de Bizerte

Association Tunisienne d'Agriculture Environnementale

*Uganda*

Bio Vision Africa (BIVA)

*Ukraine*

Chemical Safety Agency

*United Kingdom*

AG Young & Sons

Banana Link

Bat Conservation Trust

Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust

Climate & Ecological Emergency Bill Alliance (CEE Bill)

EcoNexus

Garden Organic, UK

GM Freeze

GMWatch

Organic Farmers & Growers CIC

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) UK

Soil Association

The Gaia Foundation

*United States*

Agroecology Fund

Alaska Community Action on Toxics

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas

Alliance for Natural Health

Beyond Pesticides

Beyond Toxics

California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation  
Caribbean Agroecology Institute  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Center for Food Safety  
Center of Southwest Culture, Inc.  
Chiron Communications - Deep Agroecology  
Clean Power Lake County  
Community Agroecology Network  
Community Alliance for Global Justice  
CR Research/Consulting  
Crossroads Community Food Network  
Data for Justice  
Earthjustice  
Environmental & Public Health Consulting  
Family Farm Defenders  
Farm And Ranch Freedom Alliance  
Farm Women United  
Farmer and Cook  
Farms Not Arms  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Food & Water Action  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
GMO Free USA/Toxin Free USA  
Groundswell International  
Hanover Co-op Food Stores of New Hampshire & Vermont  
Informed Green Solutions  
International Organic Inspectors Association  
J Langevin Consulting  
Kansas Rural Center  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Maryland Pesticide Education Network  
Material Research L3C  
Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance

Montana Organic Association  
National Family Farm Coalition  
National Organic Coalition  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
Nell Newman Foundation  
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council  
Northeast Organic Farming Association, Mass. Chapter (NOFA/Mass)  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)  
Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP)  
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center  
Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association  
Organic Advocacy  
Organic Consumers Association  
Organic Seed Alliance  
Organización Boricúa de Agricultura Ecológica de Puerto Rico, CLOC-LVC  
People and Pollinators Action Network  
Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe  
Pollinate Minnesota  
Pollinator Stewardship Council  
Real Food Media  
Regeneration International (RI)  
Resilience Project  
Salem Community Gardens  
Schaghticoke First Nations  
Science and Environmental Health Network  
Seed the Commons  
Straus Family Creamery  
Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville (SAL)  
The A Team Foundation  
The Oakland Institute  
Toxic Free NC  
Transformations CDC  
Tribal Link Foundation  
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights



Vermont Farmers Food Center  
Washington Biotechnology Action Council  
Women's Voices for the Earth  
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation  
Zigbone Farm Retreat

*Uruguay*

Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAPAL) Uruguay

*Venezuela*

Fundacion Aguaclara  
Inparques  
Instituto para la Producción e Investigación de la Agricultura Tropical (IPIAT)

*Zambia*

Mijarc  
ReSCOPE Programme  
Zambia Alliance for Agroecology and Biodiversity

*Zimbabwe*

Njeremoto Biodiversity Institute (NBI-Zimbabwe)  
Zimbabwe Smallholder Organic Farmers Forum