



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 352 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

Greenpeace International

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

Health and Environment Justice Support

Indigenous Environmental Network

Oxfam International

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
Fundaeexpresion

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