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 commercialisation 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 Taino 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 Medido Ambiente (GEPAMA), Universidad de Buenos Aires
Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuria (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 Justica 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

Burkino 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 Araucania
- 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
Générations 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 via Berlín, e.V.
Partner Suedmexikos e.V.
Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Germany
Starfish Organic
Umweltinstitut München e.V.

*Ghana*
Abibinsroma Foundation
Food Sovereignty Ghana

*Guatemala*
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 Emwelt 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 Indígenas por la Soberanía 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- Vías 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 Acción 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 Ecológica Casablanaca
Mozambique
Alternactiva - 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 Développement 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 Boricuá 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