



## IATP joins allies to request a meeting of the FAO director-general with civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organizations

February 26, 2021

MINNEAPOLIS—Yesterday, the [Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy](#) (IATP) joined Pesticide Action Network International (PAN International), civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organizations in sending a formal request to meet with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Director-General Qu Dongyu to discuss widespread public concern with FAO's announcement last November of plans to formalize a partnership with CropLife International (CLI), the global trade association of the world's biggest agrochemical corporations, which produce and promote many of the Highly Hazardous Pesticides, as already identified by the FAO. CLI's goal of advocating for the continued use of the pesticides that its members sell stands in direct opposition to the FAO's goals of supporting holistic and inclusive politics and the practice of agroecology.

The 11 civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organizations that sent the joint letter and meeting request co-sponsored the letter to FAO Director-General Qu sent in November 2020, in which over [350 civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organizations](#) expressed their deep concerns with the FAO's plans to strengthen its official ties with CLI, a move the groups said would undermine the FAO's independence, its mandate as a U.N. institution and the principles set out in its Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management. Subsequently, [250 scientists and academics](#) wrote to the director-general expressing similar concerns. The director-general's response dated November 27, 2020 did not satisfactorily address these concerns.

IATP is particularly concerned that this alliance with CLI undercuts the FAO's support for agroecology, an approach that offers viable and sustainable proposals for generating ecologically-based food and farming systems, which the [FAO itself describes](#) as a response to the challenges of climate change and the need for a transition to a resilient food system. Public support for agroecological transitions is essential to addressing the multiple crises we face in our food and agricultural systems, while improving the food and nutrition security as well as wellbeing of millions of people directly working in it; FAO's partnership with CLI flies in the face of FAO's [ongoing efforts to support agroecological approaches](#) in member countries including India, Mexico, Senegal and several others.

As rights holders and members of civil society, the letter's authors maintain that the FAO should immediately abandon its proposed alliance with CLI; develop an integrated policy to prevent conflicts of interest to ensure that corporate "solutions" are not influencing the FAO's work regarding sustainability, biodiversity, human health and food sovereignty; and fulfill its commitment to ensuring all voices are heard by meeting with these groups as a matter of highest priority.

Read the letter to the FAO director-general [here](#).