



10 JUNE 2024

## Statement of Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples on the end of the FAO partnership with CropLife International

Eleven organizations representing civil society and Indigenous Peoples across the globe welcome the statement by the UN Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) that it has officially ended its Letter of Intent (LoI) with pesticide industry lobby group CropLife International. We believe that this is an important victory especially for farmers, farmworkers and rural communities who suffer most from pesticide harms.

On 15 May 2024, PAN International received written confirmation from FAO Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol that the LoI between FAO and CropLife International signed on 2 October 2020 came to an end almost exactly three years after its agreement. We have been informed that the FAO concluded its LoI with CropLife on 3 October 2023 in line with a review of all LoIs entered into prior to the development of FAO's Strategy for Private Sector Engagement (2021-25) and the related new due diligence framework.

**Since the signing of the LoI, over [430 civil society and Indigenous Peoples' organizations](#) from nearly 70 countries, [nearly 200,000 individuals](#) from over 107 countries, 250 [scientists and academics](#), nearly 50 philanthropic groups, and the [UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food](#) have called on the FAO to rescind its agreement with CropLife to Stop the #ToxicAlliance.**

We have called attention to how the agreement [tied the FAO directly](#) to the world's largest manufacturers of the most deadly pesticides, companies such as Bayer, Syngenta and Corteva. We consistently raised concerns about the #ToxicAlliance in public and formal communications to the FAO leadership and Member States, dialogues with FAO officials, as well as global actions.

We believe that such vigilance had a significant impact on how the FAO moved forward with what CropLife [claimed](#) was a "strategic partnership agreement." In its communications with us in the course of this campaign, the FAO has maintained that the LoI did not constitute a formal engagement or partnership, but an "exploratory framework which may, or may not, lead to further engagements."

We commend the FAO leadership for its decision to not further formalize its engagement or partnership with CropLife. We welcome and encourage the role the FAO now plays toward [delivering on its commitments](#) in the new [Global Framework on Chemicals](#) (GFC) and leading the work on implementing these commitments through the Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides (HHPs), in coordination with WHO and UNEP. The FAO has a golden opportunity to show that it will make substantial progress on phasing out the most hazardous pesticides known as HHPs worldwide, and supporting the transition towards sustainable, resilient and equitable production systems under the agroecological paradigm.

We enjoin the FAO to not enter into any future partnership with the pesticide industry, bearing in mind that its [due diligence framework](#) includes specific sets of exclusionary criteria for high-risk sectors and makes clear that the agency must not pursue partnerships with entities that are not in compliance with human rights obligations or have the potential to negatively impact communities and the environment.

As a UN organization, FAO is obliged to serve the public interest and uphold human rights. Towards that, it must take effective measures to [end undue corporate influence](#) on its strategic direction and work, and, among others, provide full transparency about voluntary contributions and about all engagements with the corporate sector. FAO should expand the scope of the new diligence framework to include clear, accessible and effective accountability mechanisms to address duty of care, grievance, liability, and remedy.

We remain concerned about the FAO's continuing informal engagements with CropLife and call for greater transparency and accountability in this regard. We will continue to monitor FAO's actions and encourage the FAO to direct its engagements and resources towards phasing out HHPs, reducing reliance on pesticides, and transitioning to agroecology. To reach these goals, the FAO must strengthen its collaboration with organizations of small-scale food providers, Indigenous Peoples and civil society.

We sincerely thank all individuals, organizations, Peoples, and other allies who supported the campaign to Stop the #ToxicAlliance. Let us continue to ensure that our global food systems are not captured by corporate interests and prioritize human rights and the planet over profit.

Pesticide Action Network International

Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA)

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

FIAN International

Friends of the Earth International

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)

International Indian Treaty Council (IITC)

International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN)

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

Public Eye

Third World Network