



Declaration of MAKAAM's National Convention of Women Farmers

19 March 2016

*In this National Convention of Women Farmers held in Bapatla, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, women farmers from 18 states of India do hereby adopt and declare the following to **Recognise, Empower and Support** women farmers:*

Recognizing that in India, a majority of female workforce is concentrated in agriculture and more women-days go into every acre of land cultivated than man-days, across crops and regions;

We resolve to collectively produce sufficient grains and pulses for our own needs first and address demands and within our households and communities and create and secure sustainable livelihoods. We resolve to resist development that is based on unsustainable use of natural resources and denies us the right to secure livelihoods and access to our natural resources. We reaffirm our right to the use of commons

We resolve to challenge and resist violence of all forms against women farmers in the fields, forests, in households and work place, and to secure and strengthen our autonomy in all spheres.

Recognising that without addressing women farmers' issues, agricultural growth, livelihood security or food security cannot be sustained; we call upon the State

1) To restructure its policies around basic livelihood resources and their use to ensure that rural women's livelihoods are comprehensively ensured so that food security, income security, social protection (including healthcare, insurance, childcare services and pension) as well as bodily integrity are all protected

2) State should prioritise rain-fed agriculture, where small and marginal women farmers are involved, to promote food crops to ensure food security and climate change mitigation and adaptation

3) State should prioritise land rights for Dalit landless, single, tribal, and differently-abled women in the distribution of public lands

4) Recognising that joint titles do not necessarily empower women, state should promote independent land rights for women

5) Recognising that fragmentation of land is cited as an excuse to deny independent right to women, women should be given fair share in the income from such land to secure their rights

6) We recognize that women are the primary users and protectors of the common lands, and demand that their rights and entitlements therein should be protected

7) State should ensure that in land distribution policies, the parcel of land distributed is viable in terms of size, type of land as well as land development investments for women farmers

8) Recognize and record women farmers who are tenants and sharecroppers, and ensure access to various entitlements as cultivators; and also ensure rehabilitation in the case of state displacement of tenant/share cropper farmers

9) Recognize single women farmers as a significant category that should receive priority attention for access to knowledge, schemes and support services

10) Women farmers whose husbands have committed suicides should be supported to take up sustainable agriculture practices and for their children's education. Their inheritance rights should be secured.

11) State should ensure and improve access to schemes, programmes and entitlements for all women farmers.

- 12) Promote and support diversity-based ecological agriculture based on women's traditional knowledge and post- modern technologies, since it allows more autonomy for women in farming, is sustainable, addresses food and nutrition security, protects the environment from adverse effects of chemical farming, and also reduces risks related to climate change.
- 13) Include modules on women farmers and women's land rights in the training of agriculture officers and extension personnel and revenue officials respectively
- 14) Appoint women extension officers/Mahila KisanMitra within the agriculture extension system, who can promote kitchen gardens and herbal/traditional medicines along with otherservices for farm women.
- 15) Ensure representation of women in equal numbers in councils and committees at village/block and district levels for implementation of schemes such as ATMA and for implementation of FRA, commons governance, etc.
- 16) Review customary laws and ensure gender justice in their implementation
- 17) We demand that the government enact a women farmers entitlement statute to legally protect the rights of women farmers
- 18) Data systems need to be strengthened, including cultivation records to reflect women as cultivators and producers
- 19) Policymakers, planners and programme implementers should be informed of the need for specific focus on the issues of vulnerable women groups such as single women farmers and women farmers in fragile hill terrains in semi arid and dryland regions, and women farmers with disabilities
- 20) The state must sensitise administration and functionaries to promote ecological agriculture and women's land and livelihood rights.
- 21) State should develop a commons policy framework with gender and equity focus
- 22) State should implement the Forest Right Act (FRA) and the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act before any change or diversion in the status of commons.Any diversion of lands from commons should be considered only after livelihood needs of commons-dependent groups are taken into account.
- 23) Companies should be charged with the task of ensuring that environmental damage is not caused by their activities, and they should be penalised for contamination of commons, including water commons.
- 24) Recognizing ambiguities about departmental jurisdictions when nomadic pastoralists cross borders and closure or blockade of their grazing lands and travel routes without their

knowledge, we demand that nomadic pastoralists and other traditional grazers, especially women, should not be prevented or obstructed from such grazing practices and departments concerned should take all steps to ensure the same.

25) Collectivize small and marginal farmers and support their institutional development for marketing to realise better prices

26) Strengthen land literacy, marketing and value addition training for women farmers

27) Enhance access to credit and working capital for women farmers and their collectives; provide infrastructure support, water, electricity, KisanCredit Card, etc.to make farming viable.

28) We demand the universalization and effective implementation of maternity entitlements for all women farmers, the provision of nine months wage compensation and assurance of access to free and quality public health care

We, as MAKKAM, will extend our outreach to increased numbers of women farmers to strengthen our voices to achieve our rights

We will focus to organise informal sector rural women workers, farmers and commons-dependent communities to access resources to improve our livelihoods.

We will build our grassroots organizations to support each other and strengthen Gram Sabhas to access our entitlements.