

## REGIONAL FAO/CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATION FOR EUROPE

**Agricultural policy response and adjustment of agriculture and food systems to increasing food prices and impacts of climate change on agriculture and rural areas**

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### DECLARATION

#### World Food Crisis

The world food crisis has changed the atmosphere of international debates on food and agriculture. However, policies have not yet changed. We are clear that the crisis is rooted in decades of misguided policies and it is not acceptable to further promote “failures as usual”. The crisis which severely affects millions of human beings around the world every day, calls for an urgent and comprehensive revision and re-direction of national and international food and agriculture policies. Food riots in numerous countries have shown that for people food is vital. Food is an indispensable necessity for life – and we note that food provision is mostly done by women. Food is much more than a commodity; access to adequate food is a Universal Human Right that States have to respect, protect and fulfil at all times for every person on this planet.

FAO has principal responsibility to promote the right to food and properly to address the food crisis and its structural causes. FAO, as the UN institution responsible for food security and the implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines, has to assume leadership in responding appropriately to the food crisis. Food security is more important than trade, and therefore FAO should not leave this to the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organisation. We call on policy makers to respond to the world food crisis at the highest political levels and to ensure that any future European and Central Asian policies will foster food sovereignty and never undermine food security.

We are very concerned that many of the recipes which led to the crisis are still proposed as remedies. These include the agrochemical model of production and trade liberalization. We definitely do not “encourage further liberalization processes”, as recommended by the High Level Conference on Food Security, Climate Change and Bio-energy on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2008. For us, liberalization is part of the problem, not the solution. We reject any attempt to use the food crisis for the promotion of biotechnology and Genetically Modified Organisms. We do not accept the increasing control by a few transnational corporations of the food chain.

Our alternative vision to the still dominant neo-liberal paradigm is the Food Sovereignty framework. Food Sovereignty is more than Food Security: accountability for realizing the human right to food, access to natural resources and the promotion and protection of smaller-scale, more labour intensive, sustainable and diversified agriculture in all regions have to be at the heart of food and agriculture policy decisions. Women’s equal right to land and other resources and equal influence over political decisions are core elements of food sovereignty. We advocate for a different model of agricultural production which recognizes the multifunctional nature of agriculture, which is locally based and controlled, biodiverse and which respects social, labour and environmental standards. Farm gate prices should cover production costs.

We demand a different approach to the European Common Agricultural Policy which includes: market regulation by effective supply management and maintenance of minimum intervention stocks; support for small and sustainable family farms and coupling payments to the amount of labour; re-distribution of payments by establishing ceilings and fixed minimum payments to smallholders; powerful and inviting instruments for the promotion of ecological production systems and soil conservation and improvement strategies. The EU must respect coherence and “Do no harm” principles: Food dumping and any agriculture, trade or investment policies that contribute to violations of the right to food, including in other regions, must be stopped.

Different approaches are needed to deal with specific characteristics between and within Central Asian, Eastern and Western Europe countries. However, transparency and accountability have to rule all national and European agricultural and food policies. We need to fight monopolies, corruption and unfair corporate practices. Strong and independent civil society efforts are required to monitor these policies, especially food prices, strengthen the rights of consumers and the democratic power of citizens. Civil society networking across Europe needs to be strengthened between all regions, between food producers, consumers and other stakeholders to analyse problems, build capacities, and define joint solution-oriented actions.

In conclusion: we demand that FAO<sup>1</sup> and governments<sup>2</sup> address the world food crisis as a high political priority and as a wake-up call to re-direct current policies towards the promotion of sustainable family and peasant agriculture, food sovereignty and the full realization of the human right to food.

### **Agriculture, climate change and agrofuels**

Unsustainable farming practices and trade flows are contributing to climate change and are, as such, endangering the resilience of agricultural systems to overcome ever faster changes in soil, water and climate conditions. Future food supply and nutrition and the livelihoods of people dependent on natural resources for their physical and economic access to food are equally at risk. At the same time we face the challenge of feeding an increasing world population and so we need to go from a high-carbon, high input form of agriculture to a more diverse low-external input, low-carbon agriculture without losing yield productivity and aimed at gaining higher productivity per hectare.

The European region is a leading global emitter of GreenHouse Gases (GHGs) and European agriculture is responsible for a substantial proportion of these emissions. This is because of: intensive livestock production dependent on imported protein; the conversion of high-carbon soils (peat and forest) to crop production; and the heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides applied with low efficiency on soils with low carbon content, resulting in high N<sub>2</sub>O emissions. Bearing these facts in mind, governments and FAO should:

- urgently assess the impact of climate change triggered by these practices (and the supposed remedy through agrofuel production) on the food security and the right to food in the region and third countries
- propose measures to diminish negative impacts by closing nutrient cycles and increasing carbon content of soils (such as favoured by pasture-based cattle farming not reliant on imported feedstuffs and by organic agriculture).

In terms of their resources and capacities, governments and FAO should:

- strengthen their work on a multifunctional and multidisciplinary analysis of climate change and agriculture (including impacts of agrofuels) and adapt data collecting methodologies to take this issue into account
- put priority on analysis and action in terms of climate change mitigation in agriculture and secondly on adaptation
- promote biological, agro-ecological and landscape diversity managed by small-scale family agricultural systems to build up an insurance against future soil, water and climate perturbations.
- implement the findings of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), which calls for a move towards more agroecological and smaller-scale production, and change relevant policies accordingly including building on local knowledge and on-farm research and strengthening farmers' movements and organisations.

The fight against Greenhouse Gas Emissions must be seen in the light of a wider challenge to reduce the global footprint of the region, which is inexorably increasing at the expense of vulnerable communities in other regions, which see their local nutrients, water and energy sources exported unsustainably in the form of high-value products, while reaping almost no benefits. As a priority, the EU member states should adopt structural programmes within the CAP to decrease the import of protein crops (currently supplying 75% of feed for intensive livestock production), to promote the research of local protein production alternatives and to promote the reduction of meat consumption in citizen's diets.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO in this document refers to the Regional and Sub-Regional offices for Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

<sup>2</sup> As appropriate when referring to 'governments' we include member states of the European Union, the European Regional Group and Central Asia

Rather than being dominated by intensive livestock factories, animal husbandry must regain its place as a contributor to sustainable nutrient-recycling farming systems that use less silage, fertilizers and fossil fuels, and better conserve and sustainably use water and biodiversity.

At the same time, it is clear that a substantial proportion of the biomass needed to achieve the proposed mandatory EU agrofuels targets will need to come from third countries, which will cause similar negative impacts, including further land evictions, slave-like working conditions, poverty, hunger, soil and biodiversity erosion and deforestation. We call on EU member states to abandon mandatory agrofuels targets and to end perverse subsidies that create an artificial market demand for agrofuels. EU member states should also consider a wider moratorium on the import of agrofuels until a full impact assessment of food security and human rights including the Right to Food has been completed and accepted. If the EU intervenes in the market, targets should rather be directed towards effective sustainability goals such as improving protein crop autonomy and the market share for organic agriculture.

In order to ensure that the Right to Food, the livelihoods of vulnerable rural populations and locally-controlled rural development are protected, Governments and FAO should undertake a dialogue with countries in other regions that are expanding the production of agrofuels, or would wish to do so, and are attempting to combat climate change. This would be in order to create, in a participatory manner and based on the precautionary principle, a national framework on land use classification (for food, feed and fuel production, expansion and land conversion), land market regulation and conversion compensation measures. In addition, they should help develop a legal framework to regulate the agrofuel surge and avoid forced evictions.

Technical promotion of bio-energy should focus on local and integrated use of organic waste (biogas) and production of vegetable oils with the potential to lower the costs of local transport and farming systems and to make them more autonomous, productive and sustainable.

### **Traditional regional agricultural products and food: markets, demand and support policies**

The promotion of local and traditional products is essential for realising food sovereignty and biodiverse and resilient food production.

There is a need for specific support for the development of traditional local knowledge-based agricultural systems, which have excellent performance on each of the pillars of sustainability. This support is needed for:

- market access and promotion of the value of the produce
- networking and cooperation among producers
- direct linking with consumers / citizens
- local processing and marketing infrastructure and other facilities

Agritourism can be a relevant complement to the income of farm families in a vibrant rural community and diverse landscape.

We need a different form of regulation on hygiene standards for products of small-scale farms which are destined for local markets. Because of the current uniform standards, designed for industrial agriculture, local production, processing and knowledge are disappearing.

We need an appropriate regulation for seeds and genetic resources managed by small-scale farmers that provide them with open access to seeds uncontaminated by GMOs. Currently, international agreements and treaties, which prioritize exclusive property rights, are benefiting the interests of TNC seed corporations. National genebanks are increasingly controlled by private corporations. This is worsening at the international level where the largest 10 companies now control 60% of the commercial seed market worldwide. Governments are urged to keep seed banks and genetic resources under public control, to keep them free from intellectual property rights. Exclusive user rights (patents, IPRs, seed laws and commercial contracts) restrict local, culturally diversified food production unnecessarily and threaten local knowledge-based traditional agricultural systems.

Now, more than ever, we need food sovereignty.