

Food Sovereignty through Agroecology: solutions to mend broken food systems

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OUR COMMON VISION

Our vision of a just and sustainable global food system is grounded in **human rights**, in the **respect for planetary boundaries** and the obligation to **work together** for a world where everyone’s livelihoods are protected, everyone is food secure, malnutrition is eliminated and people live in harmony with nature. As social movements we believe that **food sovereignty** is the right political approach to achieve these objectives. We recognize that small-scale food producers are the primary global investors in agriculture and the primary providers of jobs and livelihoods. We call for space for **women** and **young people** to contribute to the transformation that is underway. We need measures and indicators that value of not only physical but also non-tangible resources such as the **environment, working and social conditions** and the **redistribution of power and wealth**. As natural and man-made disasters are increasing in frequency and severity, we need a food system that is **resilient** and that can guarantee long term sustainability. This is why our vision includes the **deliberate choice of agroecology**.

The basis for this vision already exists in the **local food systems** that feed the majority of the world’s inhabitants. However, its potential is thwarted by the corporate food model and the financial speculation on agricultural commodities, supported by most governments and international institutions. Our vision is to change this and **increase support for a just and sustainable food system**, and the realization of the right to food and nutrition for all.

OUR STRATEGIES FOR CHANGING FOOD SYSTEMS

1) Resisting land and water-grabbing. To date, over 40 million hectares of land have been grabbed, leading to the concentration of land in the hands of a few, forced evictions and the oppression of peoples. This goes hand-in-hand with water grabbing. We believe that peoples’ equitable access to and control of land and water, especially for women, is essential to peace, to stopping climate change, fulfilling human rights and guaranteeing a dignified life for all. To support this, we push for the full implementation of FAO’s Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGL) as the fundamental policy instrument.

2) Promoting agroecology, rejecting its capture by the industrial food system. Agroecology is a way of life. It is not a mere set of technologies or production practices, but rather an inclusive, holistic system of food production and processing through direct, fair and short distribution chains and self-governance. Its practices are based on ecological principles, and drastically reduce dependence on external inputs. Our strategies to promote agroecology include the promotion of appropriate health and sanitation regulations, horizontal and inter-generational

exchanges of knowledge, and ensuring recognition of agroecology as a primary solution to climate change. We will fight corporate and institutional attempts to grab agroecology as a means of promoting GMOs and other fake solutions to climate change.

3) Building stable and solidarity-based markets, prioritizing local economies. Policy tools to stabilize markets are indispensable. Livelihoods, jobs and decent working and social conditions must be created and adequate, nutritious food must be available where people live, through local economies, markets and food systems. Local public procurement policies must be developed, without interference from trade agreements. Producers need access to infrastructures that enable them to trade with other parts of their country and other countries. Finally, local communities should have a role in deciding on the policy priorities between local, national, regional and global economies.

4) Creating alternative food networks. Our work aims to decentralize food chains, promote diversified markets based on solidarity and fair prices, and build stronger relations between producers and consumers. This requires supportive food safety rules and infrastructures. Community Supported Agriculture and Local Food Policy Councils are successful means of

involving all actors in decision making processes within the food chain.

5) Supporting sustainable consumption. We promote sustainable and diverse forms of food culture, the consumption of high quality local, seasonal foods and lower demand for meat and animal products. We encourage broader consumer education and the regulation of the marketing of foods that push the consumption of high-fat, high-sugar and highly processed products for children. To make global food demand more sustainable, we prioritize rolling back the use of industrial agrofuels and reducing inefficiencies that cause losses and waste. Public incentives for the production of crop-based biofuels must be stopped. Only those advanced biofuels that do not compete with food production may receive public support.

6) Protecting biodiversity and peoples' rights to genetic resources. Biodiversity is declining sharply and our increasing demands on Nature are unsustainable. Under corporate pressure, new seed laws in many countries are limiting what farmers can do with their seeds. Seed saving is being criminalized, imperilling the very basis of food production and peasant farmers' existence. Control over seeds and other genetic resources must remain in the peasants' and peoples' hands. We need public policies that: protect, respect and ensure the stewardship of biodiversity; guarantee the rights of peasants to conserve, use, exchange, and sell their seeds and breeds and protect them from biopiracy; ensure that fishing communities play a central role in controlling marine and inland waterways.

7) Fighting climate change, promoting a fossil fuel phase-out and a transition to (100%) renewable energy. Climate change is threatening food sovereignty for the whole humanity. Agroecological small-scale food production powered by renewable energy is already proving to be the fairest, most resilient and lowest carbon option for feeding our people and protecting our planet. Local food producers are aware of this and are already adapting to climate change. They need the right policies and support. Climate-smart agriculture or the other fake solutions of the 'Green Economy' are not the answer. They continue a relationship between agriculture and fossil fuels, promote increased use of toxic chemicals as well as continued corporate control and exploitation of agricultural workers.

8) Denouncing the real obstacles to change: trade agreements and financial speculation. The reduction of tariffs and standards is strengthening an agricultural and food system that is increasingly

controlled by multinationals. The WTO's Agreement on Agriculture and the proposed trade agreements such as TTIP, TPP and TISA are undermining the capacities of farmers to produce for local communities and of citizens to decide on the food they eat, as well as halting the urgent shift needed to stop climate change. The Investor State Dispute Settlement mechanism would subordinate the sovereignty of the peoples to the interests of corporations. And as food prices are no longer based on real factors, but rather coupled to trends of financial markets and speculation, there is a strong need for a new set of rules for global finance.

9) Addressing international institutions, States and Local Authorities to support the governance of food and agriculture with the full participation of civil society and social movements. It is vital that family and small-scale food producers, agricultural workers and consumers have a meaningful voice in determining decisions on food and agriculture. The influence of the corporate sector on national and international policy processes has to be rolled back. Governments must strengthen the role of the Committee on World Food Security and Nutrition (CFS) as the central and most inclusive intergovernmental platform for food governance. FAO now recognizes the autonomy of civil society and is taking up agroecology and support for small-scale food producers. We call upon other UN institutions to engage in similar processes. We also demand a full reform of the international research system to ensure the scaling up of agroecology and the inclusion of environmental and development education among the subjects taught at school.

10) Demanding public policies built in the framework of food sovereignty, solidarity economy and accessible finance. We seek to re-orient the State and its policies towards serving the welfare of people and the environment through a pluralist approach. Multi-sectoral strategies should be employed to support a reinvestment in local food production, the diversification of the economy, the creation of income-generating activities, and the guarantee of social protection schemes for all. For this, we need access to credit and finance that responds to the real needs of communities. We promote the solidarity economy as it builds on concrete practices of participatory democracy and values and relationships rather than goods. International policies should support domestic efforts towards the realization of food sovereignty, agroecological systems and the right to food and nutrition. The participation of those affected by hunger and malnutrition must be ensured.