



## Call to participate in the Social Movements/ NGOs/CSOs Parallel Forum to the World Summit on Food Security 2009

**We the people demand: Food Sovereignty now!**

**Rome, 13-17 November 2009**

*"One does not sell the earth upon which the people walk"*

Tashunka Witko - 1840 – 1877

Given that, for the first time in history, the growing numbers of the hungry has surpassed the one billion mark, the FAO Council has decided to hold a world summit on food security, November 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> in order to keep the challenge of food insecurity at the top of the international agenda.

The overall purpose of the Summit is to agree on key actions to tackle this crisis. In words of FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf "The silent hunger crisis – affecting one sixth of all of humanity – poses a serious risk for world peace and security. We urgently need to forge a broad consensus on the total and rapid eradication of hunger in the world." The key challenges of the Summit are identified as:

- To eradicate hunger from the earth. Not only to ensure sufficient food production to feed a world population that will grow by 50 percent and reach 9 billion by 2050, but also find ways to guarantee that everyone has access to the food they need for an active and healthy life.
- To put in place a more coherent and effective system of governance of food security at both national and international levels.
- To make sure developing countries have a fair chance of competing in world commodity markets and that agricultural support policies do not unfairly distort international trade.
- To find ways to ensure that farmers in both developed and developing countries can earn incomes comparable to those of secondary and tertiary sector workers in their respective countries.
- To mobilize substantial additional public and private sector investments in agriculture and rural infrastructure and ensure farmers' access to modern inputs to boost food production and productivity in the developing world, particularly in low-income and food-deficit countries.
- Considering that 30 or more countries are currently experiencing food emergencies, to agree more effective mechanisms for early reaction to food crises.
- To ensure that countries are prepared to adapt to climate change and mitigate negative effects.

In addition to the meeting of Heads of State and Government, parallel to the summit three special events will be organised by National Parliaments; the Private Sector; and thirdly by NGOs, CSOs and farmers' and other food producers' organizations.

### **Social Movements/ NGO/ CSO Parallel Forum**

As soon as the summit was announced, social movements, NGOs and other CSOs started to dialogue with FAO to organize a parallel Forum of Civil Society which will include farmers, indigenous peoples, rural youth, women and other social organizations. The moment is particularly important for civil society and thus requires their major mobilization to change mainstream agricultural and food policies and effectively address the root causes of hunger and poverty in the current situation of multiple crises (climatic, economic, financial and food crises). This change can only be effected

through the active participation of the food producers' social movements and NGOs / CSOs representing the people most affected by hunger.

An International Steering Committee of the Forum (ISC) composed of different constituencies and balanced in terms of regions and gender was autonomously set up by the organizations interested in actively organizing this Forum. The ISC is made up of representatives of the two main global farmers' organizations, three regional farmers' organizations, the two main fisherfolk's global forums, pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples' organizations, agricultural and food workers, environmental organizations, agro-ecological networks, the urban poor, youth, human rights organizations, international non governmental organizations, the ad-hoc group of international non governmental organizations in formal status with FAO, the secretariat of the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, and the Italian Platform for Food Sovereignty acting as the national host committee<sup>1</sup>.

### **Guiding principles of the Forum**

- The planning of the Forum involves the full range of constituencies affected by hunger and food insecurity, including social movements and CSOs & NGOs, particularly those from developing countries, committed to the eradication of hunger and the realisation of the right to food and food sovereignty.
- Participation in the Forum itself also reflects these same constituencies
- Priority is given to voices from developing countries
- The Forum will respect pluralism as well as ensure a balance of gender, regions and constituencies
- Each constituency will have the opportunity to organise its own thematic discussions, whilst priority is given to rural youth, women, Indigenous Peoples and the thematic issues of "access to resources" and "models of production"
- A range of views are heard on how to address the problems of hunger, malnutrition and violations of the right to food.

### **Objectives of the Forum**

- To facilitate the participation of women, small-scale food producers, farmers and peasants, Indigenous Peoples, artisanal fisherfolk, food and rural workers, youth, the urban poor, environmental organizations, human rights defenders, NGOs and other CSOs working for the realization of the right to food and food sovereignty and to ensure that their voices are heard in the World Summit on Food Security.
- To seek the commitment of governments and UN agencies to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, the realization of the right to food and the people's food sovereignty agenda.
- To strengthen alliances, foster dialogue on the causes of world hunger and food crises, work towards a shared understanding of the changes and solutions required and an agenda for action.

### **Central Themes of the Forum**

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1 "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal - fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations" Nyéléni Declaration (Mali, February 2007).

1. Who decides about food and agriculture? Where are decisions taken?

The global food crisis is also a crisis of governance of the food systems. Decision making about food and agricultural policies has been increasingly put beyond democratic control serving particularly the interests of corporations and economic elites, in both North and South. International Financial Institutions have unduly concentrated a lot of decision making power imposing policies which have undermined national and regional food sovereignty. Decades of deregulation along with corporate-driven food and agricultural policies have led to massive violations of the right to food. **This thematic bloc will discuss the need to change current rules and regimes governing food issues, how to allocate/use existing resources, working towards a new, human rights-based governance of food systems, both at the national and global levels (such as the reformed Committee on World Food Security).**

2. Who controls food producing resources?

The lion's share of food is produced by women, farm workers and by small-scale food producers. And yet they are dramatically losing access to, and control over, food producing resources such as land, water, seeds, livestock breeds, fishing grounds, etc. Anticipated profits from the agro-export business, the increase in agrofuels and rising food prices, have triggered a strong demand for land and water to expand monocultures and industrial agriculture. This development, together with other factors such as armed conflicts, extractive industries, tourism, industrial and infrastructure projects and accelerated urbanization have led to violent dispossession of rural communities and widespread land grabbing. It is taking place in a world with pre-existing skewed land repartition, often inherited from colonial times. **This thematic bloc will discuss how to defend ourselves from land grabbing and how to ensure that our rights to land and territory are respected in a gender equitable way.**

3. How is food produced?

The current models of industrial agriculture, fishing and livestock raising promoted by agribusiness corporations and many governments and by a number of international institutions are major contributors to climate change because of their dependence on fossil fuels and other chemicals that result in high emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs). They also lead to changes in land use, destruction of forests and watersheds, degradation of soils and depletion of water supply and fishing-grounds. Extreme climate variations and natural disasters associated with climate change are worsening, resulting in the loss of arable lands, changes in natural growing conditions, destruction of livelihoods and reduced availability of food. **This thematic bloc will discuss which models of agricultural, fishing and livestock production, along with related policies (e.g. investment) are the best options to cool down the planet and to reduce people's vulnerability to climatic variations; and how women, Indigenous Peoples, peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists, rural and urban communities can contribute to solving the climate crisis and ensuring sustainable and culturally appropriate availability of food for all respecting the right to food framework.**

4. Who has/needs access to food?

With half of the global population now living in cities, the question of how to feed urban communities in a manner that is sustainable and that guarantees the right to adequate food is all the more pressing. While the needs of urban and rural populations are often treated as separate and even competing issues, the reality is that they are inextricably linked. The same forces that are driving peasants and Indigenous Peoples off the land are spurring rising rates of food insecurity and diet-related health pandemics in cities throughout the world. **This thematic bloc will deal with rural-urban linkages and how to guarantee access to food for all. Proposals on how to support peoples in zones of conflict and how to organize food aid under the principles of Food Sovereignty will be discussed. The issue of countries depending on food imports and with a limited endowment of natural resources will be examined and effective and sustainable ways to meet their food needs will be discussed.**

## **Methodology**

Each working group will produce a summary of the current situation for their issues, a proposed plan of joint actions, and one or two paragraphs for a final declaration. Participants will work with a methodology based on active participation in workshops on the central themes supplemented by a few plenary sessions. Based on the conclusions of the working groups, a final declaration of the Forum will be drafted and then submitted to the Summit.

## **Date and venue**

November 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009,

Città dell'Altra Economia (CAE- ex-Mattatoio) and Faculty of Architecture (Università Roma Tre), Rome.

The venue for the plenary (CAE) can accommodate max. 500 participants. Rooms for the working groups have also been booked in the Faculty of Architecture next to it.

Accommodation and local transport will be organized by the IPC secretariat only for delegates. Since there might not be sufficient rooms for everybody, priority might be given to participants from the South.

Simultaneous interpretation from and into Spanish, English and French will be provided by the fundamental contribution of a team of 26 volunteer professional interpreters and 6 technicians.

## Funding

Some funding is being provided by the Mayor of Rome, IFAD, and the governments of Norway, Catalunya and Switzerland. Organizations are encouraged to seek further funding.

The aim of the Steering Committee is to cover the costs for participation (tickets, food and accommodation) of 300 delegates. The steering committee will decide which applicants will receive support from these funds based on the relevance of their work and experiences to the issues of the Forum and the possibilities open to them to find their own funds. All other participants will be expected to cover their own costs.

## How to participate as a delegate

In order to guarantee a strong and balanced representation of different constituencies and regions in the Forum, the International Steering Committee agreed upon the following rules.

Quotas:

According to Gender:		According to regions:		According to Constituencies:	
Women:	60%	South East Asia & Pacific	20%	Farmers:	15%
Men:	40%	South Asia	15%	Indigenous Peoples:	15%
		Africa	25%	Fisherfolk:	15%
		Americas	20%	Youth:	15%
		Europe	10%	Women:	15%
		WESCANA	10%	Agricultural workers:	10%
				Pastoralists	5%
				Urban poor:	5%
				NGOs:	5%

According to these quotas, a decentralized process coordinated among the regions and the constituencies will prepare a list of candidates, indicating which delegates can fund their travel and stay and which delegates need funding. The Steering Committee of the Forum will finalise the list.

## Other participants

Beyond these quotas, self-financed participants can participate in the Forum as observers. Due to space limitation in the Forum's venue, the total number of self-financed observers will be limited.

Self-financed observers should send their request to participate to the ISC at the contact given below.

Guests from different sectors (NGO, academic, journalists, etc.) and governmental officials will be invited to join the Forum for specific contributions.

**For more information please contact**

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