

## **CSO FORUM DECLARATION TO ICN2**

### **Sovereign local food and agricultural systems based on agroecological principles**

Nutrition must be rooted in local food systems based on food sovereignty, small-scale food producers, agroecological principles, sustainable use of natural resources, local seeds and livestock breeds, traditional knowledge and practice, and local markets, guaranteeing sustainable and resilient biodiversity and diversity of diets.

We denounce the negative economic, social, environmental and cultural impacts caused by the global grabbing of land, oceans, lakes, rivers, and aquatic resources, and their grave impact on food sovereignty.

We call upon Member States to recognize that small-scale food producer-led sustainable, resilient local food systems can best respond to the threat of climate change, and commit to concerted actions that strengthens local food systems, including promoting local and regional markets and ensuring healthy ecosystems. This will most certainly drive significant improvements in nutrition, and contribute significantly to the prevention of malnutrition of all its forms.

We also call on Member States to ensure that Regional Governments and Local Authorities establish appropriate and multi-actor local food policy governance bodies that include the consumers and small-scale local food producers. Furthermore, we call for reforms of current local food procurement practice for school canteens, homes for the elderly and hospitals, and other public institutions as well as social groceries to include clauses that privilege the provision of fresh local produce by small-scale local producers.

### **Coherent and coordinated management of nutrition throughout the lifecycle and at all levels**

We support an integrated approach to malnutrition that builds community capacity, promotes optimal infant and young child feeding, especially breastfeeding, improves dietary intake for women and children during the first 1,000 days, and improves nutritious diets, along with supplementation as per the World Health Organization's recommendation in areas where micronutrient deficiencies are known to be a public health problem.

The policy and program commitments that must follow ICN2 should address the root causes of malnutrition in all its forms among all age groups, including infants, young children, adolescents, adults, the elderly, disabled, and marginalized, working poor and other vulnerable groups. This includes accelerated progress on all six of the WHA global nutrition targets--stunting, anaemia, low birth weight, overweight, exclusive breastfeeding and wasting--and Global WHO NCD targets.

In order to do this, we call upon Member States to recognize that the nutrition of young children, adolescent girls and women - particularly in the 1,000 day window between pregnancy and age two - is of paramount importance as it helps set the foundation of human development.

We call upon Member States to fully embrace the "*do no harm*" principle as the baseline of any policy, including agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food, and ensure that these policies *at a*

*minimum* do not harm people's nutrition and rather aim at improving people's nutrition status. Furthermore, situations of crisis and protracted crises often produce international and regional aid programs that do not meet the real nutritional needs of affected communities and are carried out without consulting local communities.

The large majority of deaths in children under-five due to malnutrition do not happen in acute emergencies but in relatively stable countries. It is imperative that the ICN2 follow-up addresses the profound social, economic and political determinants of malnutrition, and in particular, the high levels of acute malnutrition. In this context, we urge governments to support appropriate treatment approaches, such as the Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), and preventive measures that empower communities and strengthen health and food systems, as well as resilient livelihoods and production systems. We also call upon Member States to commit to integrate actions designed to improve nutrition across all sectors and programmes, including those focused on water and sanitation, education, women's empowerment, and agriculture. We also urge Member States to recognise, validate, respect and protect traditional knowledge that guarantees nutrition.

We further urge Member States to address the underlying causes of malnutrition at the community level related to food, care and health so that existing product-based approaches are limited to certain circumstances, including the treatment of acute malnutrition, and do not interfere with human rights- and food-based, local, bottom-up, capacity-building approaches for the prevention of all forms of malnutrition.

Consumers have a right to healthy, affordable, accessible and culturally adequate food options, and to be protected (particularly children) from aggressive marketing of unhealthy food and beverage that promote malnutrition, obesity and diet-related NCDs. We call upon Member States to develop and implement policies that encourage the consumption of naturally nutritious diets, promote physical activity in healthy environmental conditions, and discourage the over-consumption of salt, sugar and saturated fats. Ultra-processed food and beverage products, especially when they are affordably priced, need to be regulated through economic and legislative measures.

Consumers have the right to know, in easy to understand terms, the nutritional content of food and beverages as well as have full information on the presence of potentially harmful substances as well as ingredients from GMO crops at any level of the production chain.

### **Democratic governance of food and nutrition and global regulatory framework**

We are deeply concerned that, under current trade and investment regimes (both bi- and multilateral), the governmental policy space for advancing public health, food and nutrition related measures is severely limited.

We therefore urge Member States to protect the public policy space for food, nutrition and health by ensuring that trade and investment agreements are compliant with existing international obligations in relation to the right to adequate food and nutrition, the right to health and other human rights. Furthermore, we call on Member States to guarantee effective public

participation and ensure that the views of the most affected are taken into full consideration in relation to trade and investment negotiations.

The realization of the right to food and nutrition, and the right to health, are hampered by economic, social and political inequalities as well as by existing power imbalances. There is an urgent need to ensure proper regulation and accountability of powerful economic actors, such as transnational corporations. In this respect, we call upon Member States to regulate those practices and initiatives of the corporate sector, both intra and extraterritorial, that might negatively interfere with the enjoyment of the human right to adequate food and nutrition, women's rights and the right to health. Among others, these activities may include land and water grabbing; soil, food, water and human contamination with agrochemicals; the commodification of seeds and livestock breeds; the marketing of breast milk substitutes; and the production and marketing of ultra-processed and junk food in particular though not exclusively to children. We therefore welcome the establishment of an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on a legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights and stand ready to support governments' action in this area.

The policy space of Governments must be protected, in all phases and at all levels, against conflicts of interest introduced by inappropriate relationships with powerful economic actors, including transnational corporations. In this respect, Member States and UN agencies are urged to design and implement effective rules and regulations on conflict of interest, and review and potentially terminate or re-design in conformity with these rules and regulations, all Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and multi-stakeholder arrangements.

## **Conclusion**

22 years – an entire generation – have passed since the first ICN. It is unacceptable that millions of people continue suffer from and die of preventable causes of malnutrition in all its forms. This violence must stop immediately.

We call upon Member States to make clear and firm commitments at both national and international levels to ensure the full realization of the human right to adequate food and nutrition and related rights. We will not watch idly as another 22 years pass by.

We stand ready to play our part and take up our responsibilities. We demand that Member States and the UN system live up to their obligations.

We hereby declare a worldwide People's Decade of Action on Nutrition.

The time for action is now!