

CSIPM INTERVENTION ON AGENDA ITEM II. Coordinated policy responses to the food crisis – the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024

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For the past year, we have witnessed the weaponization of food on full display, as a genocide unfolds right before our eyes. Alongside the indiscriminate bombing, the Israeli occupation has targeted Gaza's agricultural sector, destroying over 80% of it. They have not only decimated local food systems but have blocked the entry of humanitarian aid, food, and water. Farmers and their families are being targeted and killed. Even aid convoys and aid workers have been targeted.

And the result? Gaza is now experiencing the fastest onset of famine in post-war history despite the monitoring system in place still not declaring famine. But let me be clear: this crisis did not start last October. It is, in fact, an intensification of a long-standing, systematic strategy of collective punishment.

Yet, we are still asked to remain "diplomatic", avoiding any mention of this genocide, or any other conflict, in our discussions. But what has being "diplomatic" achieved? It has led to impunity and intensification of the weaponization of food.

In Lebanon, the Israeli occupation has intensified its attack on agricultural lands, employing a scorched earth policy, destroying everything in its path, including crops, livestock, and infrastructure.

In Yemen, the suspension of most food aid has left 17 million people facing crisis-level or acute food insecurity.

In Sudan, more than half the population are experiencing crisis levels of hunger. In Congo, 23.4 million people are facing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity.

We cannot continue to ignore or remain silent about the structural causes that have brought us to this situation. Settler colonialism, occupation, wars, conflicts, and protracted crises—these are issues we have been urgently highlighting for over 15 years.

We have the Right to Food guidelines and the Framework for Action in Protracted Crises, adopted by member states in this Committee. Yet, the political will to implement these commitments has been either insufficient or entirely lacking. Even worse, member states continue to ignore their extraterritorial obligations and are complicit to genocide under International Humanitarian Law, by financing and arming wars of starvation. These documents give guidance to Member States on how to fulfil their human rights obligations. We demand an end to the genocide and the weaponization of food, calling on the United Nations and its member states for decisive action. An empty plate is a weapon.

The conclusions from this session should highlight human rights obligations based on the mandate of this Committee and using its own language.

We recall that the CFS was reformed in 2009 - in response to a global food crisis - to fight fragmented action. But today again – or still - we find ourselves in a severe, global multifaceted food crisis and this Committee has to do its job. Coordinated policy responses have never been more needed: the credibility of the entire UN system is at risk. The CFS is the most legitimate place to seek them because of its inclusive nature – especially of those most affected - the human rights framework under which it deliberates, and the evidence base provided by the HLPE.

For this reason, we welcome the summary report on the workstream on “Collaborative governance for coordinated policy responses to emerging global food crises”. This platform workstream enables the CFS to reach out to other UN spaces with which collaboration must be built to find solutions to the underlying causes of food crises, bridging gaps between Rome, Geneva and New York. Among the key topics proposed for attention in coming meetings in the summary report, the CSIPM prioritizes: protracted crisis and peace-building, debt burdens (connecting with the 2025 Financing for Development Conference), trade and overcoming food import

dependency, and climate change and biodiversity (in collaboration with the Rio COPs). We insist that it is necessary to ensure interpretation for this workstream since it is intended to provide priority voice for most affected countries and constituencies – precisely those who cannot be expected to express themselves in English.

As always, the CSIPM brings to the CFS the ‘voices from the ground’ of our constituencies: smallholder and peasant farmers organisations, pastoralists, fisherfolk, Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, agricultural and food workers, consumers, landless, urban food insecure. In our meetings over the past days we have shared the intersectional crosscutting problems we are facing and the solutions we propose. We have denounced conflict and violence in all its forms including the violated rights of workers, Indigenous Peoples and other constituencies. We have denounced corporate-led pressure to ‘modernize’ our food production, promoting industrial, export-oriented agriculture rather than the food sovereignty of our peoples. We have called out untenable urban sprawl. We have exchanged our experiences with the impacts of climate change and the need to promote our peasant agroecological principles.

For us, land, oceans, rivers, forests, seeds and all of nature are the very basis of life, but they are also contested resources. Land and ocean grabs and unequitable land distribution are root causes of increased food insecurity. We therefore welcome and support Colombia’s proposal to organize a second International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, as part of the commitment towards the realization of the Right to Food, further advancing the uptake of CFS products, such as the VGGTs.