

**Regional FAO/NGOs-CSOs Consultation for Europe and Central Asia, Baku
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CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT

1. Global Strategic Framework

More and more people are suffering from hunger across the ECA and one of the **root-causes** of this are agricultural policies not being used to support local small-scale producers. Agricultural production is linked to International Financial Institutions, international trade and speculation and along with increasing informal and casual labour, the loss of social protection in rural areas and low wages, these things are pushing more waged agricultural workers into poverty and hunger.

In the ECA, many small-scale producers and waged agricultural workers – especially seasonal workers – are excluded from social protection and have difficulty surviving cold winters without any income. The current financial crisis has also led to wide ranging austerity programmes in many countries, which in turn has led to new segments of the population now suffering from poverty and hunger. The most vulnerable groups are the elderly, young people, migrant workers and small-scale food producers.

Public legislation and civil society must act together to protect both the Commons and the public provision of goods and services. There is now less land available for local food production, which is due to increased property speculation in urban areas and land-grabbing for industrial food and agro-fuel production. **Water must remain a common good**, with guaranteed free access and sanitation for private households and small-scale agro-ecological producers. Waterways must also be protected from large privatised projects such as dams.

It is also essential for family farmers to have access to local markets. This is especially important at a time when large-scale agri-business producers are pushing small-scale producers out of their traditional market spaces, which has been aggravated by international dumping and WTO rules. We support the regulation of food production to guarantee fair prices for small-scale producers on local and national markets.

Many **young people** who live in cities and other urban areas have fallen out of the habit of cooking for themselves. They often buy convenience foods in supermarkets and their **diets** are becoming less nutritious and unhealthier. In main, this is because people are eating more highly processed foods and less fresh fruit and vegetables. There is a need to raise the awareness of consumers and to strengthen local food nets and access to healthy locally grown traditional foods. There is also a need to support cooking and nutrition courses. These should be linked to national legislative instruments, including safety nets.

Traditional seed breeding and participatory methods should be prioritised over hybrid or GMO crops and seed patenting by the multinational seed companies should also be curtailed. Traditional, local indigenous seeds and landraces should be protected by farmers saving and re-sowing their seeds. This guarantees the **preservation of biodiversity**, and is an integral part of traditional, sustainable organic agriculture. Farmers should be provided with support to produce their own seeds from local and regional varieties. The dimension of Food Sovereignty in the GSF needs to be strengthened to achieve this.

CSOs should participate in monitoring at all levels, and governments should provide them with the political space to do so. This is particularly important in spatial planning, in order to preserve land for small-scale production and support young farmers' access to land, allotments and community gardens. Clauses that favour the access of small-scale local producers and producers groups to public tenders should become the accepted norm. Governments should also extend the **minimum coverage of social protection** to all rural workers and ensure that the workers core ILO Conventions, including the right to negotiate a living wage, are fully implemented in practice.

2. Land

Farmers, fishers, pastoralists and other smallholder food producers, as well as local communities in general are facing a huge lack of fair, adequate and secure access to land, water, fisheries and forests. This significantly undermines their livelihoods, national and regional food security, food sovereignty, poverty eradication, preservation of biodiversity and natural resources, climate change mitigation and adaptation to global warming. This is essentially the consequence of **insufficient responsible governance of land tenure and other related natural resources.** Concrete issues faced by the affected communities include land, water, fishery, and forest grabbing practices, inducing **expropriations that violate legitimate tenure and human rights, gender inequity, and the unsustainable use of land and other natural resources** (such as agricultural practice that causes water pollution and soil degradation). **Also, young people are finding it increasingly difficult to gain access to land. Spatial planning policies are inconsistent with sustainable development.** The **lack of active participation of CSOs** in the decision making-process **affects access to land and other natural resources, and consequently the livelihoods of local populations.**

We call upon all Member-States, in close consultation with, and with the active participation of CSOs and especially organisations representing the most vulnerable and marginalized groups to:

- Take immediate action to improve land, water, fishery and forest tenure and governance, especially through the effective national level implementation of the CFS Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security;
- Ensure the adoption, during the 38th Session of the CFS in October 2012, of a consistent approach to close implementation of these Guidelines, including preparation for that specific session within the CSM;
- Take immediate action to stop short-term land, water, fishery and forest grabbing practices, based on definitions adapted to national and local contexts. States should seriously consider the possibility of implementing national moratoria on investments involving large-scale land, water, fishery and forest transfers of legitimate tenure rights;
- Support Community Land Trusts
- Ensure that the upcoming CFS consultation on the principles of responsible investments in agriculture examines how public and private investments in agriculture can best support food sovereignty, small-scale production and especially women's and agricultural workers' rights. The CFS consultation on agricultural investments should examine the successful experiences of networks of self-organized CSOs such as local food councils;
- Adopt coherent approaches from a responsible land, and other natural resource, governance perspective in engaging the RIO+20 UN Summit, and avoid using the mainstream "green economy" concept for promoting the commodification of, or the creation of financial speculative markets of the Commons;
- Pay specific attention to closing the gender gap in agriculture, with particular regard to equal and secure access to land and other resources.

3. Fisheries

The social and economic role of small-scale fishers in Europe and across the world must be defined and recognized both nationally and internationally. **Small-scale fishers face many challenges,** including some that require immediate action before irreparable damage occurs. **Pollution from industrial agriculture and extractive industries** continues to increase and threaten fish stocks. "Trash islands" in the oceans now occupy space equivalent to large countries. The appetite for oil is so great that experiments are underway to extract oil from deep-sea areas. Technology is too limited to

guarantee protection from catastrophes or deal with the **pollution that harm fish stocks and threaten the livelihoods of fishers** and artisans in large coastal areas.

Land-grabbing is seen as an imminent threat to small-scale farmers. But **sea-grabbing** through the **enforcement of fishery management systems** that open fishing rights to bidding, just like any other commodity, is a **threat to the very existence of small-scale fisheries world-wide**. Sea, water and land-grabbing have many faces and the Aral Sea and Lake Urmia are examples where serious damage has already occurred as result of these things.

For people who live in **land-locked areas, inland seas and lakes need to be preserved. Sustainable fish-farming and aquaculture require new regulation and legislation that protects both the fish farmers and consumers alike**. There is a need to clarify whether this falls under the scope of legislation relating to fisheries or to agriculture, as this currently varies from country to country.

The effect of **different types of fishing gear** on the marine environment should be considered and included in the implementation of fishery management systems. The huge **variance in the amount of fossil fuels consumed** by small-scale and industrial producers should be taken into consideration and the idea that the fundamental link between coastal communities and coastal fisheries is "old fashioned" needs to be challenged, These are the greatest challenges and threats that small-scale fishers are facing today.

Management systems should always be created in close co-operation between fishers and scientists. The traditional knowledge of fishers is constantly overlooked and in many cases, science spends time, energy and funds on reinventing the wheel.

Building management systems where these stakeholders can work hand-in-hand will lead to success, and promoting management systems where **environmentally friendly fishing-gear and low energy-consuming vessels are rewarded** will lead to co-operation and trust.

Small-scale fishers are the farmers of the ocean. ECA States should implement laws and regulations that guarantee rights and obligations including the moral duty to cooperate with scientists to find the **path to a sustainable harvest of the marine environment**.

The current path is a blind alley. Small-scale fisheries are not a problem, but a big part of the solution for a sustainable future.

4. Solidarity economy

The social and solidarity economy allows organised civil society to develop and implement sustainable social and economic innovation in cultural and locally participatory ways. This allows local economies to thrive, and wealth to be redistributed within the community. An increasingly significant number of people across the globe are working together in **sustainable local economy networks**. These networks are non-state public spaces that are connected at regional, national and international level.

These CSO actors are a resource that should be **empowered to promote local sustainable food nets** based on organic, agro-ecological production aimed at **building a more resilient society**.

The social and solidarity economy can strengthen all the actors in local food webs through a **systemic and participatory approach to local economies**, based on food sovereignty, including community land trusts, community supported agriculture, alternative short food distribution systems, ethical finance, local currencies, housing, and other essential services for all the actors.

ECA countries should look to Latin American countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia and Brazil for inspiration in their constitutional promotion of food sovereignty, the solidarity economy and sustainable local food webs.

5. Regional and Local Authorities

Regional and local authorities do not determine national agricultural policies, but are **key decision-makers in spatial planning**. They should **guarantee privileged access to land and local markets for small-scale producers**, publicly procure food for canteens, and be responsible for all local food and society related policies.

They should be considered and identified as **key actors in the process of building successful global governance of agri-food systems**. They link the general framework of agri-food policies to territorial implementation.

In global governance, **regional governments and local authorities should support local food councils** to promote, manage and evaluate:

- Spatial planning; with **sufficient agricultural land – including allotments and community gardens – for small-scale producers and civil society to produce, distribute and sell** fresh, local, organic food in urban and peri-urban areas, avoiding the use of agricultural land for energy production (biomass, solar energy fields);
- **Appropriate planning of housing** that includes adequate storage and cooking facilities;
- **Local and territorial economy** that facilitates local small-scale producers' networks;
- **Privileged access for small-scale producers to local procurement** for public canteens (schools, hospitals, etc.);
- **Public water management** that guarantees access to water for households and small-scale producers;
- The **respect of workers' rights** and the right to decent work;
- **Participatory budgeting**;
- **Local currencies** to decommodify food and to develop local economies that are decoupled from international trade.