

CSO FORUM DECLARATION TO ICN2

From November 16-18, we, social movements representing peasants, small-scale fishers and fishing communities, pastoralists, urban poor, consumers, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and agricultural and food workers, came together with the representatives of public interest civil society organizations that have actively engaged in the preparatory process of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), to share our values, and aspirations, to join forces in our common vision on how to eradicate malnutrition in all its forms, and to hold governments and intergovernmental organizations to account on their obligations and commitments.

It is unacceptable that in a world of plenty more than 800 million of our brothers and sisters go to bed hungry every night and over half a billion are obese. More than 150 million children suffer from stunting, over 50 million children are wasted, more than 40 million children are obese, and approximately 800,000 babies die every year because they are not optimally breastfed. The injustice of malnutrition has meant that several thousand of our children have died since this discussion started. These problems should have been tackled a long time ago.

22 years after ICN1, this conference is taking place without properly evaluating progress or failures and without significant participation of civil society, in particular those most affected by hunger and malnutrition in all its forms. We deplore that ICN1 has sunk without trace and we do not want this to happen for ICN2.

The conclusion of the ICN2 negotiations is a welcome step, in particular its focus on malnutrition in all its form. However, we consider it inadequate to confront the scale of the global malnutrition challenge.

We reaffirm that food is the expression of values, cultures, social relations and people's self-determination, and that the act of feeding oneself and others embodies our sovereignty, ownership and empowerment. When nourishing ourselves and eating with our family, friends, and community, we reaffirm our cultural identities, interdependence with nature, control of our life course and human dignity. Understanding the challenge of malnutrition in all its forms therefore requires a holistic and multidisciplinary analysis, one that combines the political and technical perspectives.

We recognize that the current hegemonic food system and agro-industrial production model are not only unable to respond to the existing malnutrition problems but have contributed to the creation of different forms of malnutrition and the decrease of the diversity and quality of our diets. Trade agreements, support of agribusiness models and promotion of monoculture and GMO, corporate grabbing of land, oceans, lakes, rivers and aquatic resources, and lack of investment in small-scale food production, have led to displacement and impoverishment of small-scale producers all over the world. The lack of respect to the mobility of many producers, their forced sedentarization, the lack of respect to communal tenure of their natural resources, and the privatization or destruction of governance structures, have all caused malnutrition and environmental damage with irreversible consequences on productive systems.

This has also led to profoundly negative environmental impacts such as soil erosion and contamination, ocean acidification, loss of fertility, reduction of biodiversity, and climate change. Marketing of ultra-processed products have contributed to the surge of obesity while unethical

practices by breast milk-substitute producers continue to undermine the life-saving practice of breastfeeding. The persistence of gender inequalities and the continued violations of women's rights are among the root causes of women and child malnutrition. No proper nourishment is possible if the hearts and minds of people are violated.

Taking this into account, we reaffirm that nutrition can only be addressed in the context of vibrant and flourishing local food systems that are deeply ecologically rooted, environmentally sound and culturally and socially appropriate. We are convinced that food sovereignty is a fundamental pre-condition to ensure food security and guarantee the human right to adequate food and nutrition. In this context, it is necessary to reaffirm the centrality of small-scale and family food producers as the key actors and drivers of local food systems and the main investors in agriculture. Their secure access to, and control over, resources such as land, water and aquatic resources, adequate mobility routes, local seeds, breeds and all other genetic resources, technical and financial resources, as well as social protection, particularly for women, are all essential factors to ensure diversified diets and adequate nutrition.

It therefore becomes imperative to tackle the political, social, cultural and economic determinants of malnutrition in all its forms, including undernourishment, stunting, wasting, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity, and diet-related non-communicable diseases. However, the framing of any policy, programme and action plan on food and nutrition should be the unambiguous understanding of the rights to adequate food and nutrition, health and safe water, as fundamental human rights, which identify people as rights-holders and states as duty-bearers with an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil these and other related rights.