

CSO FORUM DECLARATION TO ICN2

Accountability and Follow-up

ICN2 is another step in addressing a long overdue problem. There is an urgent need to strengthen governmental commitment and raise the level of ambition. This must be achieved through an effective follow-up process, with the active participation of social movements and civil society organizations, with a clear timeline to reach the objectives as well as specific indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress.

Strong accountability is imperative for ensuring that the commitments made at ICN2 truly contribute to ending malnutrition in all its forms. We appreciate the efforts by FAO and WHO to coordinate their work plans in the light of the ICN2 outcomes and welcome the UN General Assembly (UNGA) endorsement and oversight. However, we remain concerned that the governance and accountability mechanisms for the implementation of the ICN2 outcomes appear unclear, fragmented, disconnected and duplicative. In this context, we call upon Member States to commit to developing a coherent, accountable and participatory governance mechanism, safeguarded against undue corporate influence. Such mechanism should be based on principles of human rights, social justice, transparency, and democracy, and directly engage civil society, in particular the populations and communities which are most affected by different forms of malnutrition.

We recommend the following platforms as appropriate for follow-up:

Firstly, we recognize the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) - reaffirming its role as the foremost inclusive government-led global platform among all concerned actors - as the critical space where policy coherence for food security and nutrition needs to be established. In this context, it is important to build consistency between the ICN2 follow-up process and the CFS Global Strategic Framework. As the CFS, despite its mandate, has thus far primarily focused on food security, we urge CFS Member States to fully integrate nutrition in its workplan and ensure that the World Health Organization (WHO) is officially included in the Secretariat and Advisory Group.

Secondly, Member States should ensure that the post-2015 development framework is consistent with the imperatives of food and nutrition security and includes ambitious goals and targets, with robust indicators and accountability to those ends across all relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Thirdly, Member States must also establish nutrition targets and intermediate milestones, consistent with the timeframe for the implementation of the agreed six World Health Assembly (WHA) global nutrition targets (2025) and the relevant targets in the WHO Global Monitoring Framework for NCDs. As such, reporting and monitoring of progress towards these targets should take place in the context of the WHA along with reporting on nutrition policy commitments.

Lastly, Member States should request that the Human Rights Council ensure that the ICN2 follow-up and related policies are coherent with the respect, protection and fulfilment of the right to adequate food and nutrition and related rights.

Human Rights and rights-based approach to food and nutrition security

We call upon Member States to ensure that national and international public policies respect, protect and fulfil human rights obligations, and act in accordance with the realization of the right to adequate food and nutrition and related rights.

Women are the primary agents of change in combating malnutrition in all its forms. ICN2 has thus far failed to take this evidence into due account. The full realization of women's human rights is central to the pursuit of the right to adequate food and nutrition for all. As such, we call upon Member States to institute policies that empower women, including paid maternity leave, support for breastfeeding in the workplace, and universal social protection. We also call upon Member States to ensure the social recognition of unpaid work – through social and community support mechanisms –and to promote the gendered redistribution of household tasks. We further urge Member States to ensure that all forms of violence against women are eradicated.

Women's sexual and reproductive rights and health also have a direct impact on combatting malnutrition and must therefore be guaranteed, including committing to efforts to end child marriage and prevent unwanted adolescent pregnancies.

Breastfeeding is the first act of food sovereignty in all its dimensions. The support of breastfeeding and optimal young child feeding must be an integral part of health care systems and health policies, and free from commercial influence. We call upon Member States to ensure that the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding guides policy and programme action. We also call upon Member States to protect children from aggressive and inappropriate marketing of breast-milk substitutes by adopting the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and relevant WHO resolutions, and establishing effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Micronutrient interventions and supplementation should not undermine breastfeeding and local bio-diverse culturally appropriate sustainable foods, and be in-line with government nutrition policies.

Small-scale farmers, pastoralists, small-scale fishers and fishing communities, agricultural and food workers, Indigenous Peoples, landless people, rural women and youth, are the main producers of food around the world and their contribution to guarantee healthy diets is essential. Nonetheless, they suffer daily violations of their human rights. For this reason, we urge Member States to respect peasants' rights and the environment where they live, and welcome and support the creation of an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group at the UN Human Rights Council on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

Indigenous food systems sustain and nurture our cultures and traditional economies. However, systemic violations of Indigenous Peoples' rights to lands, territories, oceans, seas, inland waterways, lakes, and other resources, has disproportionate and negative impacts on livelihoods, including access to traditional foods. We emphasize the need for a human-rights based approach to nutrition and food as understood through the lens of existing human rights standards, including the 2007 United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People's Rights as a minimum standard.

We call upon Member States to cooperate in supporting productive systems in areas of marginal productivity, protecting resilience mechanisms such as seasonal mobility corridors, as well as communal and seasonally used lands, and withdrawing the barriers to mobility, thereby reducing the need of local communities for humanitarian assistance.

We also request that Member States pay special attention to agricultural and plantation workers. There are over 200 million hungry and malnourished workers without sufficient income to buy enough nutritious food for themselves and their families. The solution is not to provide food supplements: employers should be responsible for paying workers a living wage.