

FIAN Open Letter to Governments on World Food Crisis

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is also the year in which States are about to finally approve the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, that will finally put an end to the unbalanced protection given to these rights.

The failure of States and intergovernmental organizations to minimally reduce the number of chronic hungry in the world, despite repeated commitments to do so, and the recent “rebellion of the hungry” spreading through dozens of countries in the world, is a clear demonstration that the Consensus of Washington, the market led globalization and the associated agribusiness led, chemical intensive monoculture agriculture are not the answer to peoples problems.

It is unacceptable that 850 million human beings still have to live and daily go to sleep hungry. It is unacceptable that 2 billion people still live in dire poverty, while a minority of billionaire companies and individuals continue to impose their private interests on national governments and intergovernmental organizations, with no effective public and participatory regulation by States and intergovernmental organizations. This reality demonstrates blatant and systematic violations of the Right to Food, as enshrined in international Human Rights Law.

Social movements and civil society organizations have repeatedly alerted states and intergovernmental organizations, against the impact of reducing the capacity of national governments to regulate their national agricultural and food security policies, to support local agriculture, to regulate food dumping, to maintain food stocks, etc. Measures were imposed on many countries, even those who suffered the most with the colonial process, through structural adjustment processes, debt renegotiation, trade liberalization treaties and more recently in poverty reduction strategies.

Despite these alerts, agribusiness continues to influence governments and intergovernmental organization. The increasing appropriation of the already unequally distributed resource of cultivable land results in more displacement of traditional populations and peasants, more violent evictions, more criminalization of social movements and human rights defenders, with the destruction of the local diversified production of food, more dependency on food imports and more hunger, and malnutrition.

The more recent call for production of agrofuels just adds to the root problems. It is just the prescription of “more of the same remedy”, that is, to supposedly prevent further complications of climate change with more of the present agricultural model that is one of the main causes of greenhouse gas emissions, and one of the main root causes for hunger, evictions, violence, slave, child and bonded labor, among other human rights violations.

State and Intergovernmental organizations and officials are responsible and accountable for their actions and omissions, vis-à-vis their population. The present state of affairs demonstrates that the political will of states clearly prioritizes the interests of the minorities instead of the welfare of a overwhelming part of the world population. These priorities must be reversed.

FIAN International, the human rights organization for the human right to adequate food, calls States and intergovernmental organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions to:

1. Meet their obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights law, taking urgent action to impose regulations on the present expansion of the market led agricultural liberalization process, to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of the people, with special attention to the promotion of the human right to feed oneself, including the access to productive resources, within the framework of Food Sovereignty.
2. Take immediate measures to support national governments in guaranteeing that the victims of acute hunger and chronic hunger as well, are assisted and supported in their quest to survive and to recover the capacity to produce or acquire the food or means necessary to feed themselves, in dignity. This must be made the effective priority zero at international and national level, with the allocation of adequate funds.
3. Ensure coherence of all food related national and international policies with the obligations under the right to food. In particular, policies on agriculture and fishery, trade and investment, development and energy, should contribute to promote and never undermine the full realisation of the right to adequate food.
4. Guarantee that FAO includes the protection and promotion of the right to adequate food, in line with what its states members approved in the Guidelines on the Right to Adequate Food, as the framework for the global goals and strategic objectives under revision, within the FAO reform process.
5. Impose an immediate moratorium on the goals for agrofuel production, to avoid a further deterioration of the present hunger crisis.
6. Impose an immediate moratorium on land grabbing, land evictions and expansion of land allocation for the expansion of agribusiness led agriculture,
7. Immediately implement measures to fully support small farmer and peasant based sustainable, agroecological diversified food production, at global level
8. Guarantee that the discussion of alternatives for climate change are carried out in a fully participatory process, at all levels, and that the alternatives chosen take into account the precautionary principle and the need to effectively socially and economically include the most excluded and poorest.



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