

## **Annex IV- CSO spokespeople Interventions at the ERC 32**

**02 and 03 November 2020**

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**02 NOVEMBER 2020**

As a representative of the Civil Society, I am speaking on behalf of a wide regional food sovereignty movement called Nyeleni Europe & Central Asia, which unites farmers, pastoralists, fisher people, Indigenous Peoples, consumers, agricultural workers, as well as rural women and youth and environmental organizations. All these constituencies play a central role in food systems as rights holders.

We are pleased to share with you the message from virtual CSO Consultation which was held in October and attended by 39 delegates and 29 observers from 23 countries across our region representing networks and organizations of all above mentioned constituencies.

The Civil Society also prepared a detailed welcoming speech and we encourage all the member states to listen to it. We thank the FAO REU secretariat for making the welcoming speech available to the member states and all participants.

### **Item 8 - Sustainable Food Systems and Healthy Diets in Europe and Central Asia**

As a result of the CSO consultation, regarding the Agenda item 8 - on **Sustainable food systems and healthy diets in Europe and Central Asia**, we call upon States to:

A. Guarantee meaningful and democratic participation of small-scale food producers in the decision making for food and agriculture at all levels.

B. Maintain a leading role in food systems and protect them against conflicts of interest.

C. Recognize the right to adequate food and nutrition and implement & promote instruments, particularly the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

D. Acknowledge the diversity of food systems and provide appropriate and balanced support for all of them, including especially local, agroecological, Indigenous, traditional food systems.

F. Support agroecology, as a practice, sharing of knowledge and a movement and integrate it all levels, such as policy, financial support and research.

G. Provide access and rights to natural resources such as land, seeds and water for peasants, fishers and pastoralists as well as Indigenous Peoples and local communities. The access to resources is fundamental, as this plays a major role in ensuring the resilience of local food systems and it contributes to effective solutions for the Climate crisis. In that sense, we would like to refer to specific problems that pastoralists of Central Asia are facing. We ask for our states to protect the livelihoods, the right to land and provide access to land and pastures for pastoralists. It is imperative to protect pastoralists against development of infrastructure or industrial projects - such as mining operations and constructions of highways and other roads, as well as touristic resorts - developed in mountain areas by the states or private sector companies.

H. Finally, the concept of sustainable healthy diets needs to move beyond health. A broader debate needs to be fostered in our region at all levels, in order to respond to and include the different visions of different stakeholders, including the social, cultural and ecological dimensions of diets.

### **Item 10 - Solutions for Youth, Employment and Developing Rural Areas in relation to the United Nations Decade of Family Farming**

We are pleased to share with you the message from virtual CSO Consultation prior to the current Conference, regarding **Solutions for Youth, Employment and Developing Rural Areas in relation to the United Nations Decade of Family Farming**, we are all aware that:

in our Region, rural communities, including rural youth suffer not only from rural poverty, but also from forced migrations due to war, climate change and oppressive economic and social conditions. These factors restrict the ability of youth - especially young women - to access land, and contribute to the false notion that there is no future for the agrarian sector. On the other hand, we are suffering from a depopulated, deserted countryside with an increasingly ageing population.

We strongly believe that this Decade on Family Farming is both an important tool and a great opportunity to promote public policies and establish a strong focus on the inclusion of youth in farming, for both new entrants and children of the small-scale food producers. We welcome the proposed document, which highlights the contribution of the UN Decade of Family Farming to the SDG 1,2,5,8,10&17 and suggests actions to be taken by the states. In this regards the CSOs call upon states to:

- Promote full participation of youth in political and decision-making processes in order to ensure development of their leadership skills (as suggested in action 8) and at the same time, ensure territorial and integrated community development and sound transformation of the food systems, by developing and implementing of the National Action Plans for the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDFE) with participation of youth (as suggested in action 1, 2);
- With regards to suggested actions 3,5&7, facilitate access to land, fish stock and other productive means, as well as information, knowledge and finances for young people (including peasants, fisher people, pastoralists, indigenous peoples); guarantee access to and development of local markets and facilitate direct sales mechanisms (including models like community supported agriculture);
- With regards to suggested actions 4&6 we call upon states to support community owned and controlled technology as well as traditional knowledge - as an important aspect where youth can contribute;

In addition, we call upon States to:

- Promote policy coherence and implement integral policies for the integration of youth in rural areas and creation of direct employment, housing, food production and development opportunities;
- Promote and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP);
- Promote agroecology and community-based local food systems, especially youth initiatives across the region, including more financial and public support - including in education and research (to be included in suggested action 3);
- Support cooperativisation and cooperation of smallholders in the region;

Finally, we request the FAO integrate the issues related to youth and the implementation of the UN Declaration on Rights of Peasants in their technical assistance to countries in the region for the sustainable structural transformation of rural areas (suggested action 9).

Besides, we have a comment regarding the UN Food Systems Summit (UN FSS). As Hunger and malnutrition continue to increase all over the world, the aims of the UNFSS are gaining more and more importance. However, we are extremely concerned by the extent to which corporate power is shaping the path towards the summit and therefore are worried that the proposed Summit risks undermining the 25 years of work in democratizing international decision-making in food and agriculture, which values the participation of those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition (e.i peasants, pastoralists, fisher people, workers, consumers, etc.). It is unclear, why this Summit was not built on the experience and results achieved by previous Food Summits and why it doesn't incorporate the global processes of the UN Decade for Family Farming and the UN Decade on Nutrition. Having said that, **the CSOs of the region, call upon governments and FAO to allow a transformative, inclusive and bottom-up process in Europe and Central Asia that is not captured by corporations and that can influence the global process in the framework of the UNFSS.**

## INTERVENTIONS - 3 NOVEMBER 2020

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## **Item 12 - Results and Priorities for FAO in the Region**

### **Strategic Objectives of REU**

The CSO consultation welcomes the strategic objectives of FAO REU.

The full involvement of **Civil society** (smallholders, indigenous people, fisherpeople, pastoralists, agriculture workers and consumers with the support of our allied NGO) will be essential to achieving them as we represent the **backbone of the food production and food systems in the region**. During this period of pandemic and crises, we have also shown how our central role is to achieve a sustainable food system with full involvement of youth and women.

We are committed to contributing to the strategic objectives as follows:

### **1) Formulating effective policies, promoting digital innovation and facilitating rural transformation, with emphasis on smallholders and youth**

#### ***Contribution to SDG 1,2,5,8,10,17***

#### **A) Promote and implement UNDROP and UNDRIP in the Region**

We need a drastic paradigm shift from a trade- to a rights-based approach for food and agricultural policies – as the trade approach has been proven a failure many times at different levels in the region. This is why the dissemination and implementation of both UNDROP and UNDRIP at Regional, national and local level is crucial.

#### **B) Digitalisation**

- We will promote innovation processes led by small-scale food producers and their communities with the purpose of making food systems sustainable, healthy and just. (Recognition of traditional knowledge to be innovative is essential).
- Promote small-scale food producers efforts, in alliance with technological sovereignty initiatives, to assess on-going digitalization initiatives.
- Promote equality and digital inclusion, as well as the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas in all its programs and initiatives related to digitalization.
- Promote the Recognition and protection of the individual and collective economic rights to data of Indigenous Peoples, peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists, workers throughout food systems and consumers are of utmost importance. Applying a precautionary principle to all activities in the

promotion of digitalization in food and agriculture is key to halting data grabbing from small-scale food producers and indigenous people.

- Contribute to establishing appropriate regulatory frameworks for the digital economy in the food and agricultural sector in order to avoid monopolistic digital ecosystems and concentration of digital power.
- Promote a convergence of different actors (including organizations and individuals outside the food sovereignty movement) to protect farmers, fisherpeople, pastoralist and indigenous knowledge from data grabbing and enhance small-scale food producers and indigenous people digital sovereignty supporting policies and practices of the food producers' lead initiatives on digital agriculture.

### C) Youth

- Promote access to land and other production-related resources for young people where there is no measure that addresses land concentration in the land-related policies despite the fact that the phenomenon of land concentration has increased exponentially, especially in Eastern Europe. States should facilitate access to land for young people, protect the soil and prevent the artificialisation of the land.
- Promote integral policies for the integration of youth in rural areas through the democratization of land, and the creation of direct employment, housing and food production that offers full rights over lands, recognises the legal rights of Indigenous communities over their territories, guarantees fishing communities access to and control over fisheries and ecosystems, and recognises the right of access to and control over livestock migration routes and pastures through the implementation of the Tenure Guidelines (VGGT)
- Promote community owned and controlled technology - this is an important aspect where youth can contribute to the food producing communities. Nevertheless not only technological innovation should be promoted but also social innovations that are based on values that strengthen local communities, with specific attention to youth, women and the most vulnerable.
- Promote the full participation of youth in political and decision-making processes in order to ensure that youth can develop leadership skills. Strong public policies are called for to achieve this.

### D) Local food systems and Agroecology

- Promote agroecology and community-based local food systems across the region.
- Support is required for more young people in the rural areas who work for the realization of Food Sovereignty through a comprehensive position on Agroecology.
- We ask for less financial and public support - as well in education and research - to be given to industrial farming and more to agroecology.

### E) Programme to Support decent livelihoods for fisher communities :

- Facilitate direct sales mechanisms, access to local markets, and Community Supported Fisheries
- Support the creation of networks for small-scale fishers (as well as preventing the domination of value chain by contract buying and middlemen).
- Ensure the recognition and equal participation of fisherwomen and young generations and make their roles in pre-, during, and post-harvest more visible and equal.

- Create increased awareness of Small Scale Fisheries activities, identity and culture and strengthen the support by policy makers, civil society, and food sovereignty actors.
- Implement the Voluntary Guidelines on Small-scale Fisheries, including awareness raising and training of all concerned.

#### F) UNDF national plans

Promote UNDF national plans that include A, B, C, D and E

- Initiatives in support of the 2022 UN International Year of Artisanal Fishing and Aquaculture (IYAFA) should be prioritised and developed. With FAO as the lead agency for the celebrating IYAFA, we are of the view it is of significant importance for the regional FAO office to work with us and the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FIAP) as part of the FAO on the implementation of the UN Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SSF Guidelines). We recommend that the FAO regional office give priority to the Global Strategic Framework of the SSF Guidelines - the mechanism endorsed by the UN Committee on Fisheries in 2016 in order to guide the implementation of the SSF guidelines
- **States** should consider the Decade of Family Farming and the Decade of Nutrition as a unique opportunity for policy coherence and governmental commitment. This commitment is based on human rights obligations and is not a mere formality. These two Decades must be considered as a real opportunity to ensure policies and public investments that benefit and support small-scale producers and family-owned small-scale farms across the region.
- **States should support the** implementation and promotion of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure (VGTT) as well as the International Guidelines Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines) at national and local level, based on the States' human rights obligations.
- **States** should make a strong commitment to implement the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, which includes right to life and adequate standards of living, the right to land and territory, to seeds, information, justice and equality between women and men.

## **2. Food system transformation and support in exploring new markets through the alignment of trade, food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary policies to meet WTO commitments and promote value chain development**

*Contribution to SDG: 1,2,5,8,12,17*

*CSO commit to working to :*

- Guarantee meaningful participation of small-scale food producers including all their constituencies (peasants, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fisherfolks, food and agricultural workers) with their diversity of food systems to whom we need to provide appropriate and balanced support
- ***Uphold policy coherence with Human Rights obligations in Food Systems.*** (The right to adequate food and nutrition needs to be recognized as closely interconnected with other human rights such as the human right to water, to health, to a healthy environment, the rights of women, the rights of children, the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, the rights of workers and the rights of indigenous peoples)
- Promote local and resilient food systems, especially localized food systems, (short food supply chains that are based on the recognition and fulfilment of the human right to adequate food and nutrition and the recognition of the positive contribution of small-scale food producers)
- Promote agroecology as a practice, knowledge and movement at policy level,

- demand the respect of access and rights to natural resources for peasants, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, such as land, seeds and water, as they are fundamental.
- **Contribute to a better understanding of diets:** sustainable healthy diets need to be considered beyond health including the social, cultural and ecological dimensions of diets.
- **and to a better understanding of innovation in food systems:** the concept of innovation needs to protect local and traditional knowledge that has historically fed our society and farmers' innovations need to be recognized, promoted and used as criteria that conditions policy making.

### **3. Promoting sustainable natural resources management and facilitating resilience in agriculture, forestry and other land-use sectors, including mitigating and adapting to climate change**

*Contribution to SDG: 1, 2, 6, 12, 13, 14*

- Promote and engage initiatives on cultivated biodiversity and foster regional and national projects that strengthen the link between agroecology and peasants/farmers rights to seeds.
- Enable effective participation of pastoralist communities in nature preservation areas and facilitate the introduction and implementation of national laws for the protection of cattle droves and transhumance practices which act as bio-corridors. Support native livestock breeders associations and research and development programmes in the field to associate extensive pastoralism and landscape management.
- Implement the guidelines on small-scale fisheries: To halt the high pressure created by marine intensive aquaculture and their link with industrial fishing in order to capture pelagic species from around the world by grabbing small-scale fishers' aquatic resources and turning them into fish meal and fish oil.

#### **Indigenous peoples preservation of natural reserves programme**

##### **We call for:**

- the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' territories as a separate land category that results in effective conservation and sustainable use.
- Recognition of and respect for customary sustainable use, including recognition of and support for community-based initiatives, Indigenous food systems, and collective actions.
- the incorporation of Indigenous and local knowledge in risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms (LMOs)
- The integration of diverse biodiversity and cultural values into national and local sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and their incorporation into national accounting and reporting systems

Finally, concerning the **Response Programme**; the documents mention many of the world's ecological, economic and social aspects related to food and agriculture. But they often superficially consider only the symptoms or effects, without sufficient deep analysis to examine the real root causes of the problem.

As it now stands, the Programme also lacks modalities or guidelines for supporting the primary food producers, and more specifically, small-scale food producers. It remains to be seen if it will or can enable the creation of locally-adapted mechanisms for supporting small-scale producers, in collaboration with social movements and CSOs.

Documents mention the precarious situation of some rural populations with primarily informal economic activities.

Agroecology, as also based on FAO documents, which supports rural communities and smallholders in much cheaper, easier to implement and climate-friendly ways, and respects peoples' rights, is not mentioned in the documents.

We invite FAO to intensify its efforts for a common policy aimed at a systemic change in food systems, respecting the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) consensus, and with closer collaboration with local communities, social movements and CSOs included in the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM).

In particular, we propose that the Response Programme should:

- Call for public policies and implement measures that guarantee peasants, Indigenous People, pastoralists, small-scale fisher people and other rural communities have continuous and stable access to land, seeds, water, and other natural resources for production, as well as to local and territorial markets,
- Develop public policies and promote legislation that protects small-scale farmers and other smallholders, including sanitary norms adapted and appropriate to local and territorial food systems based on FAO policy of Connecting Smallholders to Markets
- Provide support for and promote local, open air farmers' markets and direct sales mechanisms (including models like consumers cooperatives and Community Supported Agriculture and Fisheries), all of which have proven that they are resilient and agile and can adapt very easily to safety measures under pandemic conditions,
- Promote public procurement for schools, hospitals, prisons and other public institutions, with food secured from small-scale farms and local primary producers,
- Support needs-driven innovation and nature-friendly agricultural technologies accessible to smallholders,
- Not compromise a human-rights based approach, and respect and defend:
  - peasants' rights as adopted by the UN in December 2018 in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP)
  - rights for agricultural and food workers to secure and dignified working conditions and a living wage (ILO),
  - Indigenous People's rights to land, shelter and livelihood, as per UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
  - citizens' rights to access enough, quality, nutritious and culturally appropriate food.
- Ensure gender equality and equity and support opportunities for development for youth in rural areas,
- Strengthen legal and safe passage and where appropriate accommodation for migrant and seasonal food and agriculture workers; facilitate the regularization of migrants, and support the implementation of equal treatment provisions for all categories of workers in rural areas,
- Strengthen participatory governance by fostering small-scale food producers and Indigenous People's inclusion in debates and decision making processes at all levels, and by enhancing accountability mechanisms.

### **Item 9 - FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative: a New Approach**

Civil society understands that the Hand in Hand (HiH) initiative is country-led and country-owned, and evidence-based as well as relying on multiple partnerships, including with the private sector.

The fact that HiH is country-led and country-owned can be considered as either positive or negative, depending on the country's political positions and their willingness to dialogue with us as social movements.

We are welcoming the inclusion of the Local Governments for the first time as a very positive act in terms of local/territorial food systems and also expecting the approach to be genuinely participatory and inclusive, including at local level.

The fact that HiH also aims to be evidence-based as social movements we perceive this as an opportunity to validate and continue the great body of work done by peasants, fisherpeople, pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples as well as by those academics working by their side who can demonstrate that agroecology in all its multiple facets is the way forward and can provide precisely the social, economic and environmental effects required to achieve SDG 1, 2 and 13 as well as the preservation of agrobiodiversity that is so essential for our planet's survival.

- We urge states and local governments, to support sustainable local development in line with Regional Objectives, ensure that healthy food is reaching those most at risk of being marginalised, including local public procurement policies for schools, and supporting territorial food sovereignty in general.
- FAO to strengthen these partnerships to achieve very quantifiable and evidence-based results of sustainable healthy territorial and local markets in line with the CFS policy recommendations on Connecting Small-holders to Markets.
- FAO to support creation of a collaboration between stakeholders which HiH can be based on a bottom-up rather than a top-down partnership approach. This could support a real paradigm shift in terms of social, environmental and economic partners. Local small-scale food producers can in this way be guaranteed their land rights, rights to preserve and reproduce their own seeds, and all small-scale food producers earn a decent living. This is also true for access of indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fisherpeople and pastoralists to their traditional hunting and fishing grounds and grazing lands for those in our Region, as these are key issues, as is the need to work to preserve agrobiodiversity, both for soil and human health.
- FAO should promote equality and digital inclusion, as well as the protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas in all its programs and initiatives related to digitalization such as in the Hand in Hand Initiative, International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture etc. Recognition and protection of the individual and collective economic rights to data of Indigenous Peoples, peasants, fisherpeople, pastoralists, workers throughout food systems and consumers are of the utmost importance. Applying a precautionary principle to FAO activities in the promotion of digitalization in food and agriculture is key to halting data grabbing from small-scale food producers and Indigenous People.

HiH can indeed support us, and we can continue to work fruitfully with FAO at regional level as we have done in the past; but it must also continue to respect our identities and approaches to agroecology and support our convictions that it is through our long and on-going collective efforts that we can reach the objectives of leaving no-one behind and ensuring the right to healthy nutritious food for all that we will achieve these goals.