

DEMANDS FOR A FUTURE WITHOUT HUNGER

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON GLOBAL HUNGER AND FOOD SECURITY

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Today 925 million people suffer from hunger.

The agriculture intensification programmes of the 1960s and 1970s contributed to reducing world hunger (although they were not sustainable and came at huge social and environmental costs, for example the Green Revolution in India). By contrast, the neo-liberal policies pursued by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the 1980s resulted in an increase in food insecure people, which by 2009 exceeded one billion people.

At least 75 percent of the food insecure are farmers. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for these people living in poverty and hunger. Caritas says, on their behalf, that food is not just a commodity for market speculation and agriculture is not just about producing more food.

Eradicating hunger is the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals, a series of anti-poverty targets governments promised to achieve by 2015.

Official reports from UN agencies show encouraging projections towards the attainment of this objective in the overall developing world¹. However, if this may be true for the world's emerging economies which inflate global statistics, the same trends do not apply to low-income countries, where inequality and vulnerability remain unchanged.

Dying of hunger in our world of plenty is a scandal and the denial of the most basic human right: the right to food.

Core elements of Caritas demands:

Realise the Right to Food

- The right to food must be the guiding principle in the design of policies and country cooperation strategies.
- The FAO voluntary guidelines on the right to food are appropriate tools to be used by governments to improve their policies and programmes from a right-based perspective. The right to food should be the foundation for a reform of global food governance. Caritas calls upon governments to continue strengthening their efforts in implementing the guidelines.

¹ The Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, United Nations; the World Bank, PovcalNet, at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:23130032~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

Recognise the importance of agriculture for development

Agriculture has always been the main source of food. Today, in all parts of the world, especially in developing countries, an important share of the workforce is engaged in agricultural activities.

Agriculture shapes significantly local traditions and culture and plays a core role for social, environmental and economic sustainable development. Agriculture has to be supported taking into account these three sustainability pillars.

- Relevant policies and international aid should promote the **multi-functionality of agriculture** by addressing food security challenges not only from the angle of food production but also by taking into account the socio-cultural environmental and economic dimensions of agriculture.
- In this regard, particular attention should be given to preserving traditional knowledge and enhancing farming skills and knowledge on biodiversity, with special attention to women, who produce more than half of the food in the world.
- Access to information on food prices and the ability to stock crops will spare local farmers from depending on instable market prices and will safeguard local production for longer periods of time.

Support family farming

- Small-scale farmers and agro-pastoralists account for 2.8 billion people (45 percent of the world population) and account for 30 to 60 percent of the world's Least Developed Countries' GDPs. Supporting this farming model would allow millions of families to live decently, producing sufficient, healthy and affordable food, without jeopardizing the natural resources of tomorrow or altering participation in international trade.
- Smallholder farmers and farmers' organisations must be actively consulted in the design and implementation of any decision taken on agriculture under the UNFCCC and under the related national programs, as with other processes affecting them.
- Small-scale agriculture must be recognised as a viable solution towards food security, community adaptation to climate change as well as mitigation.
- Rich countries should increase investments in small scale farming and spend at least 10 percent of their development budgets in this sector to improve:
 - access of small farmers to sufficient and quality land to cover their own demand for food, and possibly their communities' demand;
 - access to other quality and sufficient inputs (e.g. water, seeds, labour, financial services);
 - food chains at local, national and sub-regional levels.

Help food systems to cope with climate change

- Improved systems of food production, stockpiling, food distribution and local market access may all contribute to food systems adapted to cope with climate change. In adopting such measures it will be important to ensure that they contribute to sustainability and that increased financial support comes from rich countries.

- The international community must succeed in concluding a legally binding climate protection agreement to reduce greenhouse emissions in developed countries by 40 percent until 2020 (compared to 1990). The next chance for such an agreement is the UN climate conference in Qatar at the end of 2012.

Ensure policy coherence to combat poverty and hunger

- International and national governmental and parliamentary institutions must ensure that their policies are coherent with development objectives. Trade policies, for example, should not increase the wealth of few large producers while harming the economic and social conditions of small farmers. A speaking example is the removal of all custom duties on agricultural imports between Mexico, Canada and the United States².

Stop unjust trade in agriculture

- Trade rules must comply with human rights commitments, and with the principles of participation, transparency and accountability.
- The European Union must immediately remove all remaining incentives in the Common Agriculture Policy for dumping subsidized European agricultural goods onto developing countries' markets. This practice literally destroys local agriculture, damages the local economy and reduces economic access to food for local consumers.
- Activities of large companies that control the agro-food production should be better regulated, for example by introducing compensatory fees for damage, imposing stricter standards in investment countries and stronger transparency requirements.
- The EU must stop pushing countries of the global South to subscribe to unfair bilateral agreements such as the EPAs. Affected countries must have the right to protect their agricultural production by means of agricultural tariffs and export restrictions.

Regulate market speculation on food

- The EU and the G20 must adopt a stronger regulation of financial markets for the benefit of small local producers: there must be more transparency in order to make speculators on food staples visible; Caritas emphasises that food must be protected as a common good, rather than being regarded as any other commodity; limits must be introduced in order to hinder the monopoly of single traders.
- A tax on financial transactions with the potential to stabilise financial markets should be introduced.
- Financial institutions must assume their social responsibility in their lending practices. For example, they should require from large borrowers specific impact assessments demonstrating that new investments in developing countries will not disrupt local markets and entail volatility in food prices³. New global and transnational mechanisms

² The complete liberalisation of agricultural trade achieved under the North American Free Trade Agreement put the already poor, small Mexican farmers at high risk of unemployment and poverty. Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano-CEPS, *Mensaje de las consecuencias para los indígenas y campesinos de la desgravación arancelaria del Tratado de Libre Comercio*, January 2008.

³ See for example the Social and Environmental Assessment required by the "Equator Principles", Principle 2. <http://www.equator-principles.com/index.php/about-the-equator-principles>

for stabilising prices of food staples that avoid speculation in agricultural commodities and raw materials should be supported.

- Priority should be given to the establishment of food stocks on local, national, European and international levels when the ratio of stocks/use is lower and makes the market particularly vulnerable to shocks. In order to encourage food production and the creation of stocks for local food security, local authorities should be able to control import and export through specific regulations such as taxation.

Stop land-grabbing

- Caritas welcomes the adoption of the FAO voluntary guidelines on responsible governance for land tenure, ensuring that:
 - the local population land use rights are protected from land deals,
 - procedures are transparent,
 - civil society is involved in due time and
 - an obligatory human rights assessment is conducted beforehand.
- Caritas calls for a compulsory accountability framework to ensure implementation including a complaint mechanism for the land grabbed unlawfully to be returned to the legitimate owners.
- Banks must inform their clients of their investments on land deals and/or speculations.
- Agribusinesses must be compelled to disclose their direct or indirect involvement in land deals.

Implement moratorium on import of agro-fuels

The current trend on agro-fuels (or bio-fuels) cultivation on a large scale is ill-conceived, accelerates land grabbing and compounds an already unfair trade whilst not solving the problems of climate change or energy security. For example, the EU is committed to ensure that 10 percent of its fuel needs for road transport is provided through so-called “renewable” energies, mainly supplied by agro fuels.

- Caritas calls for a **moratorium** on imports of agro-fuels into the EU and on subsidies that encourage the development and large scale production of agro fuels.
- The EU should abandon any objective of satisfying a portion of its energy needs with agro fuels, removing all subsidies to their production and establishing goals of reducing fuel and agro fuel consumption.

Implement just food security governance

- Greater sovereignty is to be recognized to developing countries to regulate and protect their agricultural markets and negotiate trade agreements, so that they can adequately respond to their needs. Their national food security strategy should be based on their own assessment of their local needs: this assessment should be prepared with inputs from civil society organisations which often deliver essential basic services to the population, especially to the poorest and most vulnerable.
- Donors should align their support on the local needs and national strategies, in compliance with the ownership and alignment principles of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness.

- The voice of the small producers, which can be channelled through farmers' organisations, women's organisations and rural networks in the definition and monitoring of public policies, is vital to ensure access to food. Olivier de Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, calls for a "triangular approach" to development cooperation, where concerned citizens (small producers, women, change agents) actively participate alongside their national governments and donors.
- A strong civil society is essential for good governance. Therefore development aid actors must particularly focus on backing up civil society.

Give emergency food assistance a longer perspective

- EU emergency food aid interventions should be based on real needs assessed in the local context. Mid- and long-term effects in the phases of recovery, rehabilitation and development should be taken into account in the choice of tools to address emergency situations.
- The international community must engage more in developing solutions for violent conflicts – mainly those 'forgotten crises'.



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