

Round Table 1 - Monitoring and analysis of progress with the implementation of short-, medium-, and long-term measures

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- 1) The “Food Crisis” is not new, especially for those who have faced hunger and malnutrition over the last decades. When the 1974 World Food Conference was held; at least 900 million people were undernourished in the world, according to FAO. Since then, hundreds of millions died of malnutrition and even more had their dignity and quality of life deeply affected by Hunger and Malnutrition.
- 2) Today, after many Summits and repeated commitments in the part of Governments and Heads of States, close to a billion people are still undernourished and more than 2 billion face serious micronutrient deficiencies that put their lives at risk, especially children and women, and hinder the achievement of their human potential. We cannot afford more of the same solutions.
- 3) The crisis is not about lack of production of food. Massive violations of the right to adequate food world-wide and systematic impunity of these violations are at the very core of the crisis.
- 4) Facing hunger is not an agricultural issue alone which can be easily solved by increased food production at any cost and by reductionist technological fixes and magic bullets.
- 5) Today we produce enough food to feed the world population. The real questions are who produces this food, for what reasons, what food stuffs are produced and how, under what model of production; whether small producers have access to local markets and fair prices, and whether consumers have enough purchasing power to acquire enough and adequate food.
- 6) Hunger and malnutrition are deeply imbedded in structural economic, social and political imbalances that continuously favour encroached economic and political interests of few, and systematically exclude a significant part of the world population from the benefits of social and economical development. Hunger is to a large extent female due to different dimensions of gender discrimination. This is a crisis of exclusion.
- 7) The human right to adequate food is only realized when the food is produced, distributed consumed and transformed in such a way that leads to healthy, active and dignified human beings, both as producers and consumers. This is what States must promote.
- 8) It is clear that the majority of those going hungry are those who live in the country side and who are involved in agriculture related productive activities.
- 9) To overcome this, access to and control over rural resources such as land, water, seeds and infrastructure are key conditions for rural communities to enjoy their human right to adequate food. Unequal distribution of land remains one of the main roots of widespread hunger.
- 10) This problem has been aggravated for the last decades because of the lack of comprehensive agrarian reform initiatives, the expansion of mega-projects in mining, unsustainable tourism, and monoculture agrobusiness. Currently we are facing a scandalous process of land grabbing related to the agrofuels boom, leasing out of huge agricultural areas to states that want to achieve food security through food production abroad, and land speculation by big investors.
- 11) There is no quick technical fix. These are good only for those who benefit economically and politically from them. The world must tackle the root causes of the power imbalances and injustice in the world, if it effectively wishes to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. These imbalances have to be overcome both (1) in national policies which often discriminate against

poor and /or rural people, particularly households headed by women; and (2) in internationally supported development policies which most of the time lead to small holder farmer evictions from their traditional lands.

- 12) This means having to go beyond the proposed two track approach of: emergency assistance to the hungry associated with structural changes in the mid on long term. The new approach must have the courage to establish coherent rights based strategies and institutional frameworks at national and international level towards the realization of the Right to Adequate Food and of the fundamental right to be free from Hunger.
- 13) Peasants, indigenous peoples, fisherfolk and other food producing rural communities are demanding Food Sovereignty as a way to realize the human right to adequate food, they are demanding justice and observation of their rights, and not charity or help. At the core of this proposal is the peoples' right to participate in decision making and define their own food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries systems; and to build their livelihoods and increase food production within a sustainable and inclusive agrarian development, contributing to a diversified and nutritious diet for all and limiting the negative climate impact of agricultural production.
- 14) Unfortunately these social actors, as well as the majority of the governments from developing and most affected countries, were not adequately represented either in the preparation of the Comprehensive Framework of Action, of this conference or in the round tables.
- 15) A rights based approach calls governments to orient their policies towards those most affected and to do the utmost to improve their situation, and to guarantee their participation in the process. Over the last decades rural development was kept very low in the agenda of most developing countries, and of international development assistance. No attention was paid to those groups faced with hunger and malnutrition
- 16) The diagnose of the Food Crisis, discussed at the special session of the Human Rights Council, in May 2008, pointed to the fact that important root causes of the crisis can be found in a set of international public policies, carried under the umbrella of the Consensus of Washington, which reduced the capacity and policy spaces of developing countries, in particular the poorest ones, to promote and regulate economic and social public policies. Loan conditions, free trade and investment agreements imposed the opening up of domestic markets to food imports, the reduction of public support to their national agriculture, and ultimately led to a greater dependence of food imports, and vulnerability. This was aggravated by the huge expansion of the agribusiness and the progressive reduction of Overseas Development Aid in these countries.
- 17) These international policies have led to massive human rights violations causing impoverishment, marginalization, and eviction of small farmers, traditional populations, fisherfolk, pastoralists and indigenous populations, with a major burden on women.
- 18) States must be held to account on their obligations to promote the realization of the Right to Adequate Food, under the International Covenant of Economic Social and Cultural Rights and International Human Rights law.
- 19) This accountability must be based on national and international strategies, elaborated with broad participatory consultation of the social groups most affected by hunger and the clear definition of goals, timelines, intermediate benchmarks, responsibilities, allocation of funds, reporting procedures, accountability, recourse and redress mechanisms, within the rights based approach, according to the Voluntary Guidelines on the RTF (FAO) and the General Comment 12 (CESCR), which should include the following steps:
 - a) assess and identify the most affected and vulnerable

- b) end all types of discrimination
 - c) check national and international policies and make them focus on the most affected
 - d) monitor the impact of policy decisions
 - e) allow for recourse and redress mechanisms.
- 20) These strategies must be developed within the rights based principles of:
 - a)Participation; b)Accountability; c)Non discrimination; d)Transparency; e)Empowerment; f)Human dignity; g)Rule of law.
 - 21) This poses the challenge of governance of the response to the crisis. Initiatives such as the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security bear the risk of taking the responsibility and accountability away from the multilateral UN system (with one state, one vote; and not one dollar one vote) and of bypassing this system and its standards.
 - 22) We do not need the creation of new instruments, especially if they do not provide more transparency and accountability and duplicate existing structures. A meaningful reorientation and coordination of global food and agriculture governance requires a profound evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of already existing institutions and mechanisms such as FAO, IFAD; WFP , CGIAR, UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), UNICEF, from a human rights perspective in order to strengthen and improve their coordinated work, and effectiveness
 - 23) This call to invest in and rely on the existing UN system to ensure a democratic global governance over food and agriculture is rooted in the fact that only such a governance has the potential to guarantee the respect of key universal standards among which human rights. Human rights and in particular the right to food can in turn be crucial to the achievement of policy coherence, accountability and of the far reaching policy changes which the world needs so urgently, both at international and national levels.
 - 24) In general, the articulation and close collaboration among the UN human rights bodies (in particular the UN Human Rights Council), and the FAO's Committee on Food Security, should be pursued in order to achieve an effective, transparent, and participatory monitoring of both human rights obligations under international law and political commitments as entailed in declarations and instruments agreed upon by the international community, such as the Voluntary Guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, adopted by states under the auspices of the FAO.
 - 25) Humankind is at a new crossroad. Either we repeat the errors of the past and the future generations will rightfully blame the present governments and organizations for not taking seriously enough the suffering of billions of human beings and being accomplice of renewed violations of human rights, or we demonstrate to ourselves that we can reverse the priorities and decide to put people at the center of the public policies.
 - 26) I am sure that the people who go hungry today are willing to do their part, and place all their positive energy towards a change of the existing situation. The central question is whether the UN and the States are willing to effectively meet their obligations towards this goal.
 - 27) This Conference can not find the final solution, but it can critically analyze what went on until now, including the very limited transparency and participatory mechanisms used to prepare this Conference, and propose a more inclusive national and international process, based on a strengthened multilateral system, that can tap the creative energy of all, and generate a realistic collectively built road map, to which all can contribute according to their capacity to the common good.