

Regional FAO/NGOs-CSOs Consultation for Europe and Central Asia, Baku (Azerbaijan), 15-17th of April 2012

CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT

Global Strategic Framework

Hunger is increasing in all parts of ECA. The **root-causes** are agricultural policies that are not used to support local small-scale producers. Agricultural production is linked to the International Financial Institutions, international trade and speculation. Increasing informal and casual labour, the loss of social protection in rural areas and low wages are pushing more waged agricultural workers into poverty and hunger.

In the ECA, many small-scale producers and waged agricultural workers, especially seasonal workers are excluded from social protection and have difficulty surviving cold winters without income. The current crisis has also led to generalised austerity programmes; new segments of the population now suffer from poverty and hunger. The most vulnerable groups are the aged, youth, migrant workers and small-scale food producers

Public legislation and civil society must jointly protect the Commons and the public provision of goods and services. There is a decrease in land available for local food production, due to increased property speculation in urban areas, land-grabbing for industrial food and agro-fuel production. **Water must remain a common good**, with guaranteed free access and sanitation for private households and small-scale agro-ecological production. It must be protected from big privatised projects such as dams.

Family farmers also need access to local market places. Big agri-business products are pushing small-scale producers out of their traditional market space. This is aggravated by international dumping and WTO rules. We support the regulation of food production to guarantee fair prices for small-scale producers in local and national markets.

Many urban **young people** have lost the habit of cooking for themselves. They often buy « convenience foods » in supermarkets. **Diets** are changing and becoming less nutritious and less healthy due to increased consumption of highly processed foods and reduced consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables. There is a need to raise awareness of consumers and to strengthen local food nets and access to healthy locally grown traditional foods as well as supporting educational cooking and nutrition courses. This should be linked to national legislative instruments, including safety nets.

Traditional seed breeding and participatory methods should be prioritised over hybrid or GMO crops and seed patenting by the multinational seed companies. Traditional, local indigenous seeds and landraces should be protected by farmers saving and re-sowing their seeds. This guarantees the **preservation of biodiversity**, and is an integral part of traditional sustainable organic agriculture. Farmers should be supported to produce their own seeds from the local regional varieties. The dimension of Food Sovereignty in the GSF needs to be strengthened to achieve this.

CSOs should participate in monitoring at all levels and governments should provide them with the political space to do so. This is particularly important in spatial planning, to preserve land for small-scale production and support access to land for young farmers, allotments and community gardens. Clauses that favour the access of small-scale local producers and producers groups to public tenders should become the accepted norm. Governments should also extend the **minimum coverage of social protection** to all rural workers and ensure the workers core ILO Conventions, including the right to negotiate a living wage, are fully implemented in practice.

Land

Farmers, fishers, pastoralists and other smallholder food producers and local communities are facing a huge lack of fair, adequate and secure access to land, water, fisheries and forests. This significantly undermines their livelihoods, national and regional food security, food sovereignty, poverty eradication, preservation of biodiversity and natural resources, climate change mitigation and adaptation to global warming. This is essentially the consequence of **insufficient responsible governance of tenure of land and other related natural resources.** Concrete issues faced by relevant communities include land- water- fisheries- and forest- grabbing practices, inducing

expropriations that violate legitimate tenure and human rights, gender inequity, unsustainable uses of land and other natural resources (such as agricultural practice that causes water pollution and soil degradation). **Youth face difficulty gaining access to land. Spatial planning policies are not consistent with sustainable development.** The **lack of active participation of CSOs in decision making-processes affects access to land and other natural resources, and consequently the livelihoods of local populations.**

We call upon all Member-States, in close consultation and with the active participation of CSOs and especially of organisations representing the most vulnerable and marginalized groups to:

- Take immediate actions **to improve land, water, fisheries and forests tenure and governance**, especially through the effective implementation at national level of the CFS Guidelines on **Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security**.
- Ensure the adoption, during the 38th Session of the CFS in October 2012, of a consistent approach to close implementation of these Guidelines, including preparation for that specific session within the CSM;
- Take **immediate actions to stop the short-term land- water- fishery- and forest- grabbing practices**, based on definitions adapted to national and local contexts. States should seriously consider the possibility of implementing national moratoria on investments involving large-scale land, water, fishery and forest transfers of legitimate tenure rights;
- Support **Community Land Trusts**
- Ensure that the upcoming CFS consultation on RAI (Responsible Agricultural Investments) examines how **public and private investments in agriculture can best support food sovereignty, small-scale production and especially women's and agricultural workers' rights**. The CFS consultation on RAI should examine the successful experiences of networks of self-organized CSOs such as **local food councils**;
- **Adopt coherent approaches** from a responsible land- and other natural resources-governance perspective **in engaging the RIO+20 UN Summit**, and avoid using the mainstream "green economy" concept for promoting the commodification or the creation of financial speculative markets of the Commons.
- **Pay specific attention to closing the gender gap in agriculture**, with particular regard to equal and secure access to land and other resources.

Fisheries

The social and economic role of European and all small-scale fishers of the world must be defined and recognized nationally and internationally. **Small-scale fishers face many challenges**, including some that require immediate action before irreparable damage occurs. **Pollution from industrial agriculture and extractive industries** continues to increase and threaten fish stocks. "Trash islands" in the oceans now occupy space equivalent to big countries. Hunger for oil is so great that experiments are underway to extract oil from deep-sea areas. Technology is too limited to guarantee protection from catastrophes or deal with the **pollution that harm fish stocks and threaten the livelihoods of fishers** and artisanal activities in large coastal areas.

Land-grabbing is seen as an imminent threat to small-scale farmers. But **sea-grabbing** through the **enforcement of fishery management systems** that put fishing rights up for bids just like any other commodity is a **threat to the very existence of small-scale fisheries world-wide**. Sea-, water- and land-grabbing has many faces. The Aral Sea and Lake Urmia are examples where serious damage has already occurred.

For **land-locked populations inland seas and lakes need to be preserved. Sustainable fish-farming and aquaculture require new regulation and legislation that protects both fish farmers and consumers**. There is a need for clarification as to whether this field falls under scope of fisheries or agricultural legislation, as this currently varies from country to country.

The effect of **different fishing gear** on the marine environment should be considered and included in the implementation of fishery management systems. The huge **difference of fossil fuel consumed** by small-scale and industrial should be taken into consideration. The fundamental link between coastal communities and coastal fisheries is perceived as "old fashioned" thinking. These are the greatest challenges and threats that small-scale fishers are facing today.

Management systems should always be created in close co-operation between fishermen and scientists. The traditional knowledge of fishermen is constantly overlooked and in many cases, science spends time, energy and funds on reinventing the wheel.

Building management systems where these stakeholders work hand-in-hand will lead to success.
-Management systems where **environmentally friendly fishing-gear and low energy-consuming vessels are rewarded** will lead to co-operation and trust.

Small-scale fishermen are the farmers of the ocean. ECA States should implement laws and regulations that guarantee rights and obligations including the moral duty to cooperate with scientists to find the **path to a sustainable harvest of the marine environment.**

The current path is a blind alley. Small-scale fisheries are not a problem, but a big part of the solution for a sustainable future.

Solidarity economy

Social and Solidarity Economy allows organised civil society to develop and implement sustainable social and economic innovation in cultural and locally participatory adapted ways. Local economies thrive, and wealth is redistributed within the community. An increasing, significant number of people at global level are jointly working in **sustainable local economy networks.** These networks are a non-State public space that is connected at regional, national and international level. These CSO actors are a resource that should be **empowered to promote local sustainable food nets** based on organic, agro-ecological production aimed at **building a more resilient society.**

Social and solidarity economy can strengthen all the actors in local food webs through a **systemic and participatory approach to local economies,** based on Food Sovereignty, including Community Land Trusts, Community Supported Agriculture, alternative short food distribution systems, ethical finance, local currencies, housing, and other essential services for all the actors.

ECA countries should look to Latin American countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia or Brazil for inspiration in their constitutional promotion of Food Sovereignty, Solidarity Economy and sustainable local food webs.

Regional and Local Authorities

Regional and Local Authorities do not determine national agricultural policies, but are **key decision-makers in spatial planning.** They should **guarantee privileged access for small-scale producers** to land, local markets and public procurement of food for canteens, and all local food- and socially-related policies.

They should be considered and identified as **key actors in the process of building successful global governance of agri-food systems.** They link the general framework of agri-food policies to territorial implementation.

In global governance, **Regional Governments and Local Authorities should support Local Food Councils** to promote, manage and evaluate:

- Spatial planning with **sufficient agricultural land for small-scale producers and civil society to produce, distribute and sell** fresh, local, organic food in urban and peri-urban areas, including allotments and community gardens, avoiding use of agricultural land for energy production (biomass, solar energy fields);
- **Appropriate planning of housing** that includes adequate storage and cooking facilities;
- **Local and territorial economy** that facilitates local small-scale producers' networks;
- **Privileged access for small-scale producers to local procurement** for public canteens (schools, hospitals, etc.);
- **Public water management** that guarantees access to water for households and small-scale producers;
- The **respect of workers rights** and equality-based jobs;
- **Participatory budgeting;**

- **Local currencies** to decommodify food and to develop local economies decoupled from international trade.