



Caritas Europa, Caritas International Belgium, CIDSE and Cyprus Island wide NGO Development Platform  
Policy Statement for the High Level Panel on

## **“Free Humanity from Hunger! How to Integrate the Right to Food in the Post-2015 Development Framework”**

As the deadline for the review of the MDGs draws closer (September 2013), it is essential that the international community also starts preparing for the way forward post-2015. In parallel, the outcome of Rio+20, the UN conference on sustainable development, launched a process towards sustainable development goals that “incorporates in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages” with focus on priority areas through an “inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process.”<sup>1</sup>

How the Right to Food would fit into an overarching post-2015 framework is the main question the panel ‘Free humanity from hunger’ organised by Caritas Europa, CIDSE and CYINDEP will try to respond to.

The panel will more specifically focus on the role of the EU institutions and its member states in building a comprehensive strategy to guarantee the Right to Food in the future overarching post-2015 framework. Debates will include discussions on how to ensure an increased global sustainable food production system that eradicates hunger, as an attempt to influence the negotiation process of the new global policy framework for the next decade, as well as good practices from the field and experts on the Right to Food.

### **What is at stake?**

The evolution of hunger statistics – in absolute terms – shows that, the hunger situation is worse today than in 1996, when the International Community gathered at the World Food Summit and made the commitment to halve the number of hungry people in the world. In fact, today almost one billion people suffer from hunger, and more than 2 billion people deficient in micronutrients.

Those suffering from hunger, namely smallholder food producers, women and poor consumers are today more vulnerable to slip into hunger than previously. Food price levels have increased again according to recently published World Bank figures— a 10 per cent rise in July 2012 from the previous month. Moreover prices of food (rice, maize, wheat) have risen since 2006 due among other reasons to excessive speculations on agricultural commodities and raw materials. According to the UN ‘Food Price Watch’<sup>2</sup> report, prices are expected to remain high and volatile in the long run as a result of supply uncertainties largely related to climate change, higher demand and low responsiveness from the agricultural system.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/task-team-on-post-2015-development-agenda-issues-report/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTPOVERTY/Resources/336991-1311966520397/FoodPriceWatchJanuary2012.htm>

Moreover, food security governance has become increasingly fragmented leading to a lack of coherence and conflicting interventions. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS), as the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform dealing with food security and nutrition, is the legitimate policy-making organ which should guide international efforts to ensure coherence and avoid fragmentation; this mandate must be respected by states.

Additionally, there is a lack of coordination among organisations to respond to the global scope of this situation, which conceived their projects as isolated unilateral initiatives driven by specific interests rather than development goals.

The setting of the MDGs can be seen as the most significant collective effort ever made by the international community to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. At the same time they have been criticised for not addressing the root “causes” of hunger, disregarding essential aspects such as accountability mechanisms and monitoring systems that resulted in a lack of ownership and monitoring of the MDGs by Civil Society Organisations. Substantial progress has been achieved during the past 12 years. Nevertheless, it is unsurprising that the MDG of halving hunger will not be reached in some parts of the world. If we are indeed to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, it is imperative that the right to food be deeply integrated into future frameworks.

## **The way forward**

Caritas Europa and CIDSE expect that the EU effectively contribute to the realisation of the first Millennium Development Goal and the right to food. This implies European policies relating to assistance, investments and trade are coherent, as mandated by Art 208 of the Lisbon treaty.

Secure access to adequate and safe food is a universal Human Right, which all states of the international community are mutually obliged to respect, protect and fulfil. This includes an extraterritorial obligation not to violate the Right to Food of the people of other countries. As the world’s largest actor in agricultural trade, the EU has a special responsibility in this respect. In accordance with its significant impact on global food security and its human rights obligations, Europe must take on international leadership to uphold the right to food

The EU must demonstrate greater efforts to make Policy Coherence for Development an operational element of its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). European market reforms, which affect speculation in commodities markets, and energy policies, which incentive agro fuels, must also be subject to coherence. We urge the EU to continue to lead the way in support for the CFS and its initiatives, as this is the most legitimate organ to guide international food security governance based on the universal Human Right to food.

Caritas and CIDSE reaffirm, food is not just a commodity and agriculture is not just about producing more food. Despite historical overall boosts in production in the last 50 years, hunger is increasing. Today we produce 17 percent more calories per day per person than we did 30 years ago in spite of a 70 percent population increase, however increases in yields have not automatically translated into food security, due for instance to food/crop-for-energy-production and monopolized production of livestock’s feed instead of food for people. Hunger is not just a matter of insufficient production, and the question of unequal access is crucial as far food security is concerned<sup>3</sup>. Hence the importance of upholding the right to food.

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<sup>3</sup> FAO, IFAD, WFP, Reducing Poverty And Hunger: The Critical Role Of Financing For Food, Agriculture And Rural Development, 2002, p.9

## **We urge the EU to consider the following recommendations:**

Caritas Europa and CIDSE expect that EU assistance and investments effectively contribute to the realisation of the first Millennium Development Goal and the right to food. We strongly endorse the EU Food Security Policy Framework, and believe that the implementation plan will make a significant contribution to building a more food secure world for all. The human rights obligations of the EU (including the extraterritorial obligations of Member States) should be upheld in its support to all elements of food and nutrition security, and commit to concrete actions in this regard. The EU must also demonstrate greater efforts to make Policy Coherence for Development an operational element of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and lead the way for new international governance of food security based on the universal Human Right to food. The EU should continue to support countries in designing national right to food strategies and programmes, which fully incorporate the right to adequate, safe and nutritious food.

We urge the EU to set up, as part of the Implementation Plan, a formal mechanism for receiving complaints on the non-fulfilment of the right to food.

### **→In terms of what we expect from the post-2015 framework:**

The future development framework should present a number of characteristics:

It should be designed through a **transparent participatory process**. Decision-makers must make every effort to consult with people directly affected by hunger, poverty and injustice, involving civil society, including marginalised groups. It should clearly define who, within which timeframe and with what resources, should take what actions. The CFS's inclusive structure could serve as a model for such a process. An innovative and transparent monitoring system should also be agreed upon.

→A **right-based approach** must be used in the design of policies and country cooperation strategies and programmes of the EU and the Member States, and promoted towards partner countries to integrate in their national food security strategies. The FAO voluntary guidelines on the right to food are appropriate tools for the use of governments to improve their policy and programmes from a right-based perspective. . In view of the EU's Food Security Policy Framework we urge the EU to effectively ensure that its implementation plan upholds the right-based focus and ensures coherence among policies

→**Accountability mechanisms** should be established, allowing victims and organisations representing them to hold Governments responsible for their failure to take action. It is through the human rights framework that duty-bearers can be held accountable, since the principles of transparency and accountability are at the core of this framework. As the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, put it:

*'The right to food requires that accountability mechanisms be put in place so that victims of violations of the right to food have access to independent bodies empowered to monitor the choice made by decision makers. The right to food implies that victims must have a right to recourse mechanisms, that governments must be held accountable if they adopt policies which violate that right, and that courts are empowered to protect that right.'*<sup>4</sup> Appropriate and rigorous accountability mechanisms pertaining to all actors are crucial to achieve goals and turn aspirations or 'commitments' into obligations. The post-2015 framework must put an emphasis on building and strengthening effective mechanisms at local level in the first instance, at national level, and at international level, including for instance enforcement through binding legislation or rulings.

→ The framework should **be universally applicable** reflecting the global challenges the world faces today, but should recognize common-but-differentiated responsibility and the specific development challenges for particular regions and countries. In line with the **subsidiarity** principle, goals should be set through bottom-up, nationally-owned processes and priority-setting, specific to context.

→The framework should aim at **an integral human development**. This integral approach should take into consideration the well-being of all people, women and men, in their different dimensions: economic, social, political, cultural, ecological and the spiritual dimension including equality and non-

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<sup>4</sup> <sup>4</sup>The right to food is recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 25) as part of the right to an adequate standard of living, and is enshrined in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Art. 11).

discrimination requirement, ensuring that we focus our attention on the most marginalised and vulnerable groups. The framework needs to articulate a set of clear, concrete, legally binding objectives and indicators, which have been agreed upon through a participatory process.

### **→ In terms of how to ensure the Right to Food in the post-2015 framework:**

**→ The right to food should be the foundation of global food governance.** Considering the presentation of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF)<sup>5</sup> in October 2012 at the plenary of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), we urge the EU to actively support its adoption and effective implementation. The GSF will be the overarching framework to inform global food security policy, improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders. Its adoption including a global peer review mechanism will articulate the different activities of the Committee on World Food Security and the monitoring and implementation of the Right to Food. The CFS must be recognized as the authoritative global policy forum based on the principle of “one member, one voice”. This would require that national governments formulate their policies based on local realities with the participation of all stakeholders, including civil society. Part and parcel of this recognition is the support for CFS initiatives like the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests. As business must also respect human rights, European companies should be accountable for the impacts of their global investments on the right to food.

### **→ Sustainable production - the agro ecological model**

Lessons learned from our work and projects on the ground with those communities most affected by food insecurity have convinced us that the fight against hunger requires giving priority support to an agro ecological model which enhances resilience by mimicking natural processes such as by recycling organic matter, diversifying cropping systems, and enhancing biodiversity. The Special Rapporteur report on Agro ecology and the Right to Food demonstrates that agro ecology, if sufficiently supported, can double food production in entire regions within 10 years while mitigating climate change and alleviating rural poverty.<sup>6</sup> The support for such models of production can be operationalized through the EU’s assistance to developing countries in line with the European Food Security Plan.

### **→ Support for small-scale food producers**

The eradication of hunger cannot be achieved unless those most affected are at the centre of initiatives and policies. For this there must be a commitment to attack the issue at its root by supporting small holders to reach their full potential as producers for their families and communities.

According to the recently released CIDSE paper on Climate Change and Agriculture *“Investment in small-scale food producers via agro ecological approaches can realise multiple dividends, simultaneously increasing production, food and income security, enhancing resilience to climate-related and other livelihoods shocks, and reducing agriculture’s contribution to the greenhouse gas emissions”*

### **→ The Domestic Focus**

The responsibility of developing countries to uphold the right to food should be recognised when negotiating trade agreements and respecting their need to regulate and protect their agricultural markets. Their national food security strategy should be based on their own assessment of their local needs, in a transparent way, with the participation of all stakeholders.

Donors including the EU Member States 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.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1112/WGs/GSF/CFSSummary2](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1112/WGs/GSF/CFSSummary2)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.srfood.org/index.php/en/component/content/article/1-latest-news/1174-report-agroecology-and-the-right-to-food>