

Promoting and protecting the right to food in the agricultural investment debate
[Agribusiness and Human Rights: A Briefing for Social Movements](#)

This week, from October 7th to 11th, the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) will meet for its 40th session in Rome. One of the priorities this year is agricultural investment. CIDSE, together with other civil society organisations and social movements, calls on governments and investors to ensure investment does not endanger the right to food. To inform this debate, CIDSE, the international alliance of Catholic development organisations, has published a [briefing](#).

“Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for people living in developing countries; ironically these are the most susceptible to food insecurity. There is no question that more investment in agriculture is needed to reduce poverty and improve food security, but we need to reflect upon what kinds of investment can guarantee the right to food,” said **CIDSE Secretary General Bernd Nilles**.

Most investment in agriculture is actually made by smallholders themselves, according to a report produced by a High Level Panel of Experts to inform the CFS’s discussion. CIDSE hopes that the CFS talks will reflect the report and take seriously these kinds of important local impacts on the right to food, local economic development and environmental sustainability.

The public sector plays a central role by ensuring that additional investment maximizes smallholders’ own and does not expose them to irresponsible business practices which aggravate land grabbing and compete with local food production. Priority should be given to the development of domestic food markets and local economies. States have a duty to regulate markets and private actors in line with international human rights law and standards.

“We hope this CIDSE-briefing will give those most affected by food insecurity the tools to negotiate investment conditions with states, to serve the well being of people and human rights. The briefing therefore provides information on existing mechanisms which already protect the right to food and govern the responsibilities of businesses. We must hold governments accountable for their duty to support small holder food producers and to protect them from the potential negative impacts of investment which put in jeopardy their food security” added **CIDSE Policy and Advocacy Officer on Food, Agriculture and Sustainable Trade Gisele Henriques**.

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Notes to the editors

- **CIDSE** is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies. Its members share a common strategy in their efforts to eradicate poverty and establish global justice. www.cidse.org

- **CIDSE members:** Broederlijk Delen (Belgium), CAFOD (England and Wales), CCFD - Terre Solidaire (France), Center of Concern (USA), Cordaid (the Netherlands), Development & Peace (Canada), Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium), eRko (Slovakia), Fastenopfer (Switzerland), FEC (Portugal), FOCSIV (Italy), Fondation Bridderlech Deelen (Luxembourg), KOO (Austria), Manos Unidas (Spain), MISEREOR (Germany), SCIAF (Scotland), Trócaire (Ireland)

Dates for the CFS40 are: 7th to 11th October. The program consists of policy round tables on 'Biofuels and food security' and 'Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security and nutrition', as well as discussions on the process for establishing principles in responsible agricultural investment (rai).

On Wednesday 9th October, 14:00-15:00 a side event, co-sponsored by CIDSE, titled **“Sustainable, equitable and viable food systems: civil society messages for the International Year of Family Farming and beyond”**. The event will give examples and characteristics of sustainable, equitable and viable food systems, including crop and livestock production. Examples and experiences from transition processes will be highlighted. Implications for public policies and responsible investment will be discussed.

The CIDSE briefing is intended as a tool for social movements in the field. [Agribusiness and Human Rights: Briefing for Social Movements](#) is available in English, French and Spanish

Other publications being released on the occasion of the CFS meeting includes a manual by CIDSE, [FIAN](#), [IUF](#) and [La Via Campesina](#), [Using the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition to Promote and Defend the People’s Right to Adequate Food: A Manual for Social Movements and Civil Society Organisations](#), also available in English, French and Spanish