

Ensure the right to food for all and everywhere!

Civil society organizations' statement on the Conference "Policies against Hunger 2025"

Berlin, 3 July 2025

From 23rd to 25th June the German Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity hosted the Policies against Hunger Conference in Berlin, which aims at supporting the global implementation of the human right to food. Civil society organizations (CSOs) participated with a diverse international group from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, including representatives of peasants, Indigenous Peoples, women's organizations, urban groups and NGOs.

With support from a strong CSO delegation, the Policies against Hunger Conference renewed the call for a rigor implementation of the human right to food by states and multilateral organizations like the FAO. The good participation of civil society, including representatives from social movements, made a difference in the debates. And it is key for a human rights-based approach to tackle hunger, echoing the slogan of social movements „nothing about us without us!“.

The conference also made commitments toward the upcoming international agenda on food security and the right to food, embarking on the role of the CFS, FAO and the Global Alliance against Poverty and Hunger (GAPH). Brazil, heading the GAPH, emphasized on the central role public policies play in ending hunger. CSOs encourage the German government to further support the Right to Food approach, also at the 2026 Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) and deepen engagement with rightsholders.

During the conference, subtitled "From Rights to Action," five themes were addressed: access to land, gender equality, the role of the bioeconomy, agricultural value chains and the right to food in the Global North.

From the outset of the conference, CSOs reminded the ministry that it was impossible to discuss the right to food without addressing the dramatic situation of hunger and malnutrition in Gaza, resulting from the systematic violation of the right to food and the use of starvation as a weapon of war and extermination. In response, the ministry agreed to address the issue on the second day. While acknowledging the efforts made by the German government to provide a space for such a discussion, we called on it to unequivocally condemn Israel's use of hunger as a weapon of warfare, to use all political, legal and diplomatic means to enforce international law, to fully support the enforcement of the orders of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) – including an immediate halt to arms trade with Israel –, to implement sanctions and to ensure the immediate suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement on the basis of its Article 2, which requires all parties to respect human rights. In addition, the CSOs insisted that Germany use all means to ensure that Israel allows the immediate and unconditional provision of food and humanitarian aid to the population of Gaza, provided by multilateral aid agencies, which act according to the principles established by international humanitarian law, and stops the operations of the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) and its private militarized "humanitarian" aid.

With regard to the thematic focus of the Conference, we made substantial contributions to the debate, emphasizing the following aspects:

The right to land and territories: CSOs and social movements called on states to provide political and financial support for the second International Conference on Agrarian Reform and

Rural Development (ICARRD+20), to be held in Colombia in February 2026. As land concentration and natural resource grabbing – including green grabs – by corporations and financial actors continue, further marginalizing Indigenous Peoples and peasant pastoralist and fishing communities, redistributive agrarian reforms and the protection of collective and customary land rights must be at the heart of increased efforts to implement the CFS Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Rio Conventions. Human rights-based tenure policies must guarantee the right to land and natural resources of rural populations and Indigenous Peoples, recognizing their holistic relationship with their territories. In the face of climate change, rapid biodiversity loss, and the ongoing destruction of ecosystems, placing territories under the control and management of rural communities – especially young people – is an urgent matter of social, intergenerational, and environmental justice. As CSOs, we welcome the explicit commitment expressed by the German government during the conference to support the ICARRD+20.

Gender and diversity: CSOs emphasized that the productive work performed by women in the food system must be recognized and that reproductive and care work must be the shared responsibility of all actors in society. They also highlighted the importance of implementing existing normative frameworks to overcome gender inequality in food systems, such as the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls. However, they also addressed the shortcomings of these guidelines and the need to go beyond their achievements. For example, it is important to include LGBTQI+ communities in discussions on gender equality and social justice, and to seriously address violations of the right to food faced by women and girls in the context of war and armed conflict.

Bioeconomy: CSO and social movement participants expressed their rejection of the bioeconomy as a means of combating hunger and transforming food systems, as it fails to address the structural factors of hunger, malnutrition, discrimination, exploitation, and power imbalances, while fueling extractive activities and biomass trade based on land grabbing and neocolonial models. Several examples of the application of the bioeconomy in violation of the rights of peasants and rural populations were reported, particularly in Brazil and Africa. Instead, small-scale food provider organizations and NGOs called for strong support for agroecology as a genuine tool for transformation towards sustainable and just food systems embedded in territorial markets and based on the 10 agroecological principles of Nyeléni, the 13 principles of the CFS High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, and the provisions of the UNDROP. As CSOs, we regret that the rejection of the bioeconomy by small-scale food producer organizations present at the conference, based on concrete evidence, was not reflected in the Chair's summary.

Value chains: The discussion revolved around the issue of certification, which many peasant representatives questioned, given that the burden and costs of certification are often borne by small-scale food providers and that the concentration of power in value chains prevents them from reaping the fruits of their labor. Social movement and CSO representatives also emphasized the need to address debt and free trade agreements, as these mechanisms force Southern countries to prioritize exports over meeting the food needs of their populations and prevent small-scale food producers around the world from earning a decent income. Moreover, CSOs stressed the need to combat the concentration of corporate power in value chains and to ensure that companies are held accountable for human rights abuses throughout value chains, calling on all States to actively engage in the process of developing a binding instrument on

transnational corporations and other business entities in relation to human rights, which is currently being negotiated within the Human Rights Council. In addition, CSOs emphasized the relevance of recognizing local non-monetized food systems and popular solutions to hunger, such as the public procurement program and school feeding programs in Brazil. As CSOs, we reiterated the duty of companies to respect the food sovereignty of small-scale producers, including those who wish to remain outside of global agro-industrial value chains.

Right to food in the Global North: Affected persons, rights holders, and CSOs emphasized the need for political recognition of food insecurity in Northern countries and called for greater emphasis on national policies to address the violation of the right to adequate food in the Global North. Such policies include increasing social security to a level that allows for the purchase of nutritious and culturally appropriate food, halting the privatization of food security through food banks, implementing an inter-ministerial dialogue on the right to food and guaranteed school meals free of cost for all pupils, while ensuring the purchase of locally and agroecologically produced food. CSOs also called for policies that promote fair income for peasants and smallholders as well as agricultural workers, so that those who produce food do not find themselves in a situation of food poverty. CSOs particularly emphasized the need for an analysis of the power of food systems and the inclusion of those affected in the design and implementation of public policies aimed at improving their situation. Finally, CSOs denounced the use of food waste to provide food aid to marginalized people as a way of greenwashing unsustainable business models and means of supporting corporate food systems.

Finally, we express our objection to the support expressed on the conference's closing panel for the Food Systems Summit Pathways and the FSS+4 Stocktake. As CSOs, we have denounced the Food Systems Summit for its pro-business bias and consider that the pathways and reflection are not relevant, as they serve vested economic interests rather than the realization of the right to food.

This statement is signed by:

Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), Asian Rural Women's Coalition, AS-PTA Agricultura Familiar e Agroecologia, Coordination Féministe pour la Souveraineté Alimentaire (CFSA), Eastern and Southern Africa small scale farmers Forum (ESAFF), FIAN Deutschland, FIAN International, INKOTA-netzwerk, Landworkers Alliance, La Via Campesina, Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee (PKRC), Polo Sindical e das organizações da agricultura familiar da Borborema, URGENCI, Weltfriedensdienst