

PAPER 7: FOOD SECURITY

THE EARTH SUMMIT 2012 SHOULD GIVE STRONG SUPPORT TO SMALL SCALE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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ABOUT GLOBAL TRANSITION 2012

Global Transition 2012 is a collaborative initiative between Stakeholder Forum and **nef** (new economics foundation) that focusses on the Green and fair Economy theme towards the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (UNCSD), also known as 'Rio+20' and 'Earth Summit 2012'.

GOAL

To achieve an outcome from the UNCSD 2012 that catalyses a 'Global Transition' to an economy that maximizes wellbeing, operates within environmental limits and is capable of coping and adapting to global environmental change.

PURPOSE

To build a global civil society and stakeholder movement to promote alternative models of economy that can deliver sustainable development to people, countries and generations that builds on the three pillars of sustainable development: social, environmental and economic.

THE INITIATIVE CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

- **Research and Thinking and Policy and Advocacy:** to **commission** and **publish** a series of research reports and think-pieces that will provide the evidence based analysis and address critical components of a Global Transition and translating research and thinking into key policy outputs towards Rio+20 and beyond and organising workshops with governments to discuss policy options; and **building capacity** and **developing tools** for countries to institute policies and systems that move towards a Global Transition;
- **Coalition Building and Dialogue:** **building a coalition** of actors and organisations from the global North and South committed to the principles and objectives of a Global Transition;
- **Submissions:** making **official submissions** to the Rio+20 process based on think pieces and dialogue;
- **Information and Resources:** publishing informative **guides** and **briefings** on aspects of the green economy; in particular developing a 'how to guide' for the green economy Roadmap work that is underway in a range of sectors and contexts.

ABOUT STAKEHOLDER FORUM

Stakeholder Forum is an international organisation working to advance sustainable development and promote stakeholder democracy at a global level. Our work aims to enhance open, accountable and participatory international decision-making on sustainable development. Stakeholder Forum works across four key areas: Global Policy and Advocacy; Stakeholder Engagement; Media and Communications; and Capacity Building. Our Global Transition 2012 initiative sits within our work on Global Policy and Advocacy.

ABOUT nef

nef (the new economics foundation) is an independent think-and-do tank that inspires and demonstrates real economic well-being. **nef** aims to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environment and social issues. We work in partnership and put people and the planet first.

MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to provide feedback on this paper, get involved in the Global Transition 2012 initiative, or put yourself forward to write a paper/blog, please contact Kirsty Schneeberger, Senior Project Officer at Stakeholder Forum: kirstys@stakeholderforum.org

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the main problem in the nexus of food security. Industrial food systems and other unsustainable practices are causing dramatic environmental damage, including reduction of biodiversity and soil fertility, overuse and pollution of water, and are substantially contributing to climate change. These kinds of food systems

and food production undermine the possibilities for producing enough and healthy food for actual and future generations. At the same time these industrial food systems impoverish millions of small-scale food producers, are creating increasingly bigger waves of poverty, hunger and migration, and are causing health problems at a large scale. There are one billion people food insecure but at the same time abundant unhealthy foods and diets are affecting at least 2 billion people, causing obesity, heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes and other diseases, and serious pandemics are likely to occur in the near future.

But, it is also the main solution. Viable food systems exist. They have evolved and adapted over millennia in traditional forms of agriculture and are now more relevant than ever. They can be combined, if appropriate, with latest knowledge on agro ecology and other forms of sustainable production. Small scale food producers provide the food for about 70% of the population today, and small scale agroecological and other forms of sustainable agriculture and food production, developed in the framework of food sovereignty, can

- eliminate most of the hunger and poverty,
- drastically reduce climate change and its impact, restore biodiversity, soil fertility and water resources,
- improve livelihoods and provide rewarding employment for billions of people,
- produce enough, high quality, diverse and nutritious food for 9 billion people or more.

THE PROPOSITION

1. Ensure that agriculture in all its dimensions is a core issue at the UNCSO in Rio and subsequently in global policy and practice. Agriculture is both a main cause and solution to the world's environmental, climate and social problems. Industrial food production is a key cause of environmental and social harm and needs urgently to be reduced in size and impact. The solution is in smaller-scale, ecological food production systems, currently practiced by millions of small-scale food producers, whom if supported can substantially increase availability of food, eliminate hunger, increase equity and reverse environmental degradation. These systems, which currently deliver food for 70% of the world's peoples and could provide more, if supported and protected, are mainly sustainable, resilient, (agro)ecological and biodiverse. They are essential for the survival of humankind, for the preservation of biodiversity, helping reduce climate change and for socially fair and ecologically sustainable development and poverty eradication.

2. Give strong and increasing support to small scale, agroecological and other forms of sustainable, ecological food production, research in this area and enabling conditions, to ensure a shift away from environmentally and socially destructive industrial food production in order to produce enough and healthy food for the projected 9 billion people or more; create employment, vibrant communities and fair economies for billions of people; help reduce climate change; maintain and enhance ecosystem functions, biodiversity and other natural resources. The important role of women in agriculture and their special needs must be recognized and supported.

3. Regulate, encourage and support the transformation of industrial and other forms of unsustainable agriculture towards smallholder based agroecological and other forms of sustainable, ecological food production. Governments should in cooperation with farmers' and peasants' organizations develop policies and concrete actions necessary for such a transformation thus providing small farmers access to land, water, local seeds, local markets, credit, agroecological technologies and participatory education schemes. Governments should regulate and make the industrialized agriculture pay for its negative environmental and health impacts.

4. Support food sovereignty as the overall framework for food and agricultural policies and encourage communities, peoples, states and international institutions to recognize and realize food sovereignty. Food sovereignty puts the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples and communities at the center of food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries policies, rather than the demands of markets and corporations that prioritize internationally tradable commodities. It localizes food systems and values the knowledge and skills of small-scale food providers, and works in harmony with nature through using smaller-scale, ecological forms of food provision.

5. Emphasize the important role of the organizations of small scale food producers.

Strong social movements are vital for making the changes in policies and practices which are needed, as well as for democratic and sustainable development of societies. It is therefore of utmost importance to support and help

strengthen the organizations of peasants / small scale food producers and food providers, and especially to strengthen the participation and role of women. It is also important to pay special attention to and support active participation of youth and women in these organizations. The organizations of peasants / small scale food producers and providers must be consulted on all relevant issues and given a leading role in defining policies and actions for food and agriculture.

6. Welcome the reformed UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) as the governing body for food, agriculture and rural development policy and related financial issues, and as the interlocutor on these issues within the proposed new UN environmental network (see no 12);

7. Give the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) a mandate to identify current deficiencies and shortcomings impeding the implementation of existing plans and proposals, and to develop a work plan for implementing the decisions of UNCSO 2012, Chapter 14 of Agenda 21 and UNCSO 16/17, the findings of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD,) and the recommendations on agroecology by the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on the right to food in his annual report 2010 submitted to the Human Rights, making sure that the views and concerns of small scale food providers are taken into account and responding to their mandate to increase food security

8. Call for all countries to establish their own structures/mechanisms for following up the implementation of the findings of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) with full participation of small-scale farmers, peasants, pastoralists, fishers and other small scale food providers.

9. Support the adoption of a UN Declaration on Peasant Rights. .

Across the world, peasants and small farmers, agricultural workers and landless people are victims of violent oppressions, criminalization, discrimination, expulsion from their lands and alienation from their livelihoods. In order to address these unique patterns of violations, there is a need for specific provisions and mechanisms to fully protect the rights of peasants. An international instrument to respect, protect, fulfill, and uphold peasants' rights should therefore be created within the UN.

10. Resist the commodification and commercialization of nature and all forms of carbon trading, such as REDD+, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) etc, that would include agriculture and soil carbon sequestration in the carbon market. Such market-based mechanisms do not address the root causes of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture but tend to provide perverse incentives to polluters and benefit the emitters;

11. Condemn multi-genome patent claims and encourage governments to block or rescind such claims. Governments must also develop a clear intergovernmental process for examining the impact of intellectual-property regimes on living materials and processes;

12. Establish a new, broad, participatory and transparent UN environmental network. Within this network, Southern governments, backed by civil society, can coherently address the full range of climate, environmental and social issues currently covered by a variety of treaty bodies, funds and offices;

13. Commit the UN - in 2012 to a negotiating process leading to an international technology assessment (bio, nano and geoengineering) and information mechanism that strengthens national sovereignty and choice and respects the Precautionary Principle and builds the capacity of developing countries and communities to assess the health, environmental, economic and social impacts of new and emerging technologies;

14. Assert the integrity of the multilateral community over technologies intended to address climate change. This requires the establishment of a legally-binding prohibition on all forms of geoengineering;

15. Underline that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must be respected. Industrialized countries should pay their ecological and climate debt to developing countries, including payment for the damages caused by their historical greenhouse gas emissions.

CONCLUSION: Policies Rio+20 can adopt immediately

There are many immediate actions and practical policy initiatives which can be implemented now that will immediately strengthen food sovereignty, reduce environmental damage and support the innovative work of peasants / small scale food producers and providers. 20 proposals are listed in the document this article is based on (see www.timetoactrio20.org). Below are the policy points dealing with the food crisis.

- a) Restore public support for agriculture to address the food crisis. Agricultural assistance declined from \$8 billion in 1984 to \$3.4 billion in 2004 (2004 US\$). Governments should cooperate to place an annual \$5 billion surtax on the food oligopolies over at least the next 25 years to recoup a portion of these losses. The recovered funds should go directly to peasants' organizations to support their initiatives.
- b) Convert "land-grabs" to peasants' fields. There is growing international recognition that public or private internal or cross-boundary land grabs are destructive of the environment and food security. The estimated 80 million hectares of land involved in these transactions should be made available to peasants and converted into 26.7 million farms of roughly 3 hectares each.
- c) Convert biofuel land to food. New policies should transfer biofuel land to landless or land-poor peasants (4.6 million families could get 3 hectares each) – potentially doubling farm production (average farm size in Africa and Asia is currently 1.6 ha.) The \$11 billion annual subsidy should support agro-ecological developments on the farms.
- d) Secure sufficient, nutritious and appropriate food for at least 9 billion people by 2050. Today, the cereals used for animal feed could meet the annual caloric needs of more than 3.5 billion people. The current world population is just under 7 billion. There is no technological barrier to meeting our future food needs.
- e) Adopt policies that reduce soil erosion to protect long-term food security. Today, the industrial food chain leads to an annual loss of topsoil amounting to 75 billion tonnes and costs the world \$400 billion. An oligarchy of ten global fertilizer companies discourages good soil management. Peasant soil conservation systems utilizing naturally occurring soil microorganisms are responsible for fixing 140-170 million tonnes of nitrogen – equivalent to \$90 billion in chemical fertilizers. Policies must support these conservation strategies.
- f) Reduce crop losses: Today, annual food losses equal more than half of the world's cereals crop (2.3 billion tonnes), meaning unnecessary production of roughly 500 million tonnes of GHG. Food losses in industrialized countries range between 90 and 111 kg per person per year. New policies should immediately lower OECD crop losses by 90% – at least to sub-Saharan African and South Asian levels of 9–11 kg per person per year.