

Food Systems and Nutrition Meeting, Rome. 30 January 2019
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The CSM believes that it is essential to question – right from the start of this process – what it is that we are placing at the centre of food systems. From our point of view, health and care of both people and the planet have to be at the centre of food systems. With this perspective as a starting point, definitions will be made and actions will be taken from a broader view. Additionally, the goals sought will be in the public interest rather than respond to other interests.

To this end, we already have several people-centred tools that are built on peoples' needs. In our opinion, Human Rights provide a political framework that help us go in this direction, from the right to food to women's rights, taking into account the indivisibility of rights.

In addition to this framework, there is a context to bear in mind. It has been mentioned that over the last few years we have witnessed a transition and a change in our lifestyles. Undoubtedly, the context of urbanisation, technology and change in our lives is real, but we are not to assume that this occurs naturally, or even that this is untouchable. A context is the consequence of political decisions: policies underpin both the system and its context.

Reference has also been made to the decisions made by people regarding what they eat, thus assuming that everyone can decide, thereby forgetting that many cannot decide either because they don't have the resources, or because the food they eat in their context does not depend on them. Persons who eat at schools, and hospitals (and all places where there is public procurement), do not have any decision-making power, and we are fully aware of the fact that the food purchased for these spaces do not tend to respond to nutritional criteria.

We understand that, in this CFS process, it is a challenge to have a broad outlook on such issues as so-called "externalities". Sometimes these are considered to be external, and what's more, they are interpreted as being lineally introduced into the system, and yet we know that they are part and parcel of the system – they are both a consequence and a cause. Therefore, the interrelationship between system and externalities is not to be viewed as lineal, but rather as more complex.

In all these constructions, data is important, but the narrative around this data collection is also key: Who is behind, where and how is knowledge built. In this sense, we believe it to be essential to incorporate a 'dialogue of know-hows' (*dialogo de saberes* as it is known in Spanish) as well as ancestral knowledge, which historically has fed and still feeds the world, whilst preserving biodiversity for centuries.

We know that there is a power imbalance in food systems, and we must address this. In order to put health and care of people at the centre, we need to be able to count on

them, to promote their full participation in this process, and to guarantee equity, access to food, and livelihoods that are based on autonomy and sovereignty.

The responsibility for this process is enormous, and we must all play our part. It is the States' responsibility – not the consumers' – to guarantee the human right to adequate food and nutrition. Individuals taking decisions cannot bear the weight of the system's responsibility. Nor can we talk of the system itself as an isolated entity. Systems are a consequence of policies, which should fulfil objectives of public interest, whilst guaranteeing good health for people and the planet in the long term.