

**Intervention from Isabel Álvarez Vispo - Urgenci, Spain**

**10 October 2017**

**Launch of the HLPE Report on Nutrition and Food Systems**

We, the Civil Society Mechanism, wish to comment on the Summary and Recommendations of the report, as these are the only parts that we have been able to access in different languages.

First of all, we wish to thank the HLPE for the great effort in writing this report, and in integrating nutrition in the CFS, by linking nutrition to the different dimensions of food systems. Civil society has always defended the need for a holistic human rights-based vision of nutrition that goes beyond dietary patterns, and thus we believe that it is essential to have a broader perspective that covers the life span of food: from the land and seeds with which it was produced, to the plate.

We welcome the report's inclusion of certain aspects that we have recently been insisting on, such as the issue of conflict of interests and a focus on the most vulnerable. Nonetheless, we are concerned by other aspects of this report.

Firstly, we believe that the recommendation to recognise women's rights and their empowerment as an essential part of the realisation of the right to food is a positive step forward, yet we find it regretful that so much emphasis is placed on women's role as caretakers rather than on the need to guarantee the realisation of all women's rights so as to improve their participation in and access to livelihoods.

Secondly, we find the classification of food systems worrying, as it equates traditional markets and small-scale food production to poor diversity, limited choice and less reliable food options, whilst "modern" food systems are characterized by these very features.

This is particularly worrying because once again we need to recall that small-scale food systems are still feeding the world. Through agroecology, there are fewer hungry people in the world than there could be, and whilst peasant farmers have grown 2 million varieties of 7000 crop species, and small-scale fishers fish over 15000 fresh water species, the so-called "modern" food system only grows approximately 150 crops and is centred on 5 livestock species. Quantity should not be confused with diversity.

Lastly, the responsibility of consumers in demanding healthy diets is emphasised. Allow me to point out that I have never heard of consumer demands for non-healthy diets. It is up to public policies to ensure that those products that consumers have access to are healthy and nutritional. Today, we all know that this is not the case. For many years now, policies have encouraged changes in food cultures, and therefore the onus should be placed on policies and responsible policy-makers.

Thank you.