

## **Impacts of plantations on Food Security and Nutrition – CFS workshop 17 Sept 2019**

### **Panel questions**

*Question 1: A 7<sup>th</sup> of the world people depend on forests and the CSM facilitates the participation of millions of indigenous peoples and forest communities who live in and around forested areas. What are your perspectives on plantations?*

*Question 2: What are the CSM expectations of the CFS and other institutions to ensure the RtF and connection between forests and plantations.*

### **CSM presentation**

At the outset we would like to recall the reason we are all here today. This event on the impact of commercial tree plantations on food security and nutrition was the result of a plenary demand by the CFS 2017. It was in recognition that while there were important outcomes from the policy process on sustainable forestry for FSN, there were limitations to both the process and the content – especially the lack of proper debate on plantations. So this event is about making the policy process more valid and stronger.

The policy recommendations made some important progress – especially the recognition that forests include people, and that people are at the center of the relations between forests and food security and nutrition; and the spiritual, social, cultural, political and economic importance of forests to our constituencies. It also reaffirmed womens rights and FPIC as central pillars of the RtF. All these are threatened by the expansion of industrial plantations.

As the CSM we facilitate the voices of millions of small scale food producers including forest peoples and indigenous peoples to bring their experiences and reality to this discussion.

The reality of industrial monoculture plantations for our peoples is conflict, land grabbing and destruction of our food sovereignty. Industrial (monoculture) tree plantations share the same characteristics as industrial agriculture and thus have the same impacts on people and the environment – extensive agROTOXIN and chemical fertilizer use, soil and water pollution, deforestation and destruction of other biomes like grasslands and savannas, land grabbing and resource grabbing, depletion of water sources due to intensive water use, harassment and sexual violence towards women, unfulfilled promises related to job creation. They are a threat to diversity in species, crops, foods, identities and cultures that are so vital to ensuring the Right to Food and Nutrition in the future.

Land conflicts and human rights violations are common because companies prefer fertile, agricultural lands used by communities. Forest peoples cannot grow, gather, fish or hunt in an industrial pine, acacia, rubber, teak or eucalyptus monoculture plantation, both for physical and biological reasons and due to restrictions on access, once commons and the common good are replaced by private property. In Brazil they call therefore these plantations ‘green deserts’. Another extremely concerning trend

is the promotion of genetically engineered, transgenic trees, including the deregulation of a transgenic eucalyptus tree in 2015 in Brazil, in spite of contamination of pollen and honey of thousands of Brazilian beekeepers, with unknown risks for people's health.

Our communities have been producing and using oil palm, rubber, and timber for hundreds of years but with completely different models of production and control – integrated into forest and local food production systems and for local consumption. All current evidence including from the latest IPCC and IPBES reports confirm that the model of industrial monoculture plantations that extract natural resources mainly from the global south to feed unsustainable levels of consumption in rich countries is unsustainable and its expansion will increase the risk of desertification, land degradation, food security and sustainable development.

An important aspect of the problem is how plantations are conceptualised by Institutions and Governments. Despite decades of documented negative impacts and conflicts from our communities FAO still describes plantations as a category of “forests”. According to the FAO definition, forests are nothing more than an abstract collection of trees with certain physical characteristics. Obviously, trees are indeed crucial elements of a forest, but what this conception leaves out is that forests are also composed of plants, insects, birds and animals, as well as forest and forest-dependent peoples and communities.

This is not a technical issue. Categorizing forests and just trees and not an ecosystem facilitates an extractivist view of forests with dangerous results:

It masks deforestation and allows primary forest to be replaced by plantations with no net forest loss.

It commodifies the forest as trees with just carbon – so that now industrial plantations can be categorized as ‘forest restoration’ or ‘reforestation’ with millions of hectares being planned under climate targets. This is doubly dangerous since climate change is one of the biggest threats to FSN and industrial plantations are a false solution to climate change. They can at best store carbon temporarily and scientific evidence increases showing they are extremely poor carbon stores if compared with forests. But also because of the expansion biomass plantations for wood pellets in industrialized urban centers - while replacing forests and expelling small scale food producers and forest peoples negative impacts on FSN and the Right to Food of local communities and globally.

The reports from new expansion frontiers of plantations in Africa in countries like Mozambique and Tanzania are stories of despair, no jobs and the loss of lands in regions where most people still live in the rural areas. It is unacceptable that institutions and Governments close their eyes for such realities and continue legitimizing such expansion schemes as ‘reforestation’.

Evidence is also clear that the best way to manage and protect forest ecosystems is forest-dependent communities taking care of their forests, of their territories, through practices of community-controlled forest management and agroecology which includes protecting collective rights of indigenous peoples and local communities

including access to and control of their own commons and livelihoods. This also has a direct bearing on food security and nutrition – 70% of the world is fed by small scale food producers which includes all forest communities.

As well as being highly beneficial for forest-dependent local communities and Indigenous Peoples, CFM under control of communities is an effective and economically viable system that offers a win-win solution to biodiversity loss and climate change and ensures the Right to Food. Several studies have shown that such systems improve community wellbeing, management of resources and reduce deforestation even more than protected areas.

We now have good examples of public policies to improve community management for example from Indonesia which is leading to less forest conversion and improved food sovereignty.

We live on a finite planet where there is no such thing as unused or marginal land. We are entering a situation of ever more intense conflict over land use – and we urgently need to have an inclusive and frank debate of who wins and who loses when certain types of land use models are promoted. If we wait another few years we will see more forests burn and more peoples displaced.

The CSM firmly believes the CFS and COFO as the global platforms with the mandate on RtF and forests must enable this debate with the full participation of affected peoples in our constituencies.