

Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM)
Plenary Statement @CFS47 | 11 February 2021
**Special Session: "Impacts of CFS Policy Products on Country-level Food Security and Nutrition
and COVID Recovery"**
Nzira Deus – World March of Women, on behalf of the CSM Youth Working Group

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My name is Nzira de Deus. I am a member of the World March of Women Mozambique and a co-coordinator of the CSM Youth Working Group.

As my sisters and brothers from the civil society and indigenous people's mechanism have made clear, we are in the midst of multiple crises. In October, we shared the many challenges that youth are facing during the pandemic: we have lost employment and access to education, we have gone hungry and women have borne an increased share of domestic and care responsibilities.

In the past few days, many member states assured us that the Food Systems Summit would address these crises. As the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food has just emphasised, the CFS - not the Summit - has the mandate and legitimacy to respond to covid-19. The idea that the Food Systems Summit offers solutions makes no sense. The Summit will aggravate crises we are facing. Rather than embracing human rights-based approaches, it is silencing them. Rather than listening to those most affected it is ignoring them. And rather than strengthening the multilateral system of the UN it is privileging corporate interests. CSM has already sent a letter to the CFS Chair in which we express these grave concerns regarding the Summit. The participation of civil society, especially youth, will be on our own terms. We will not jump on a train that is going in the wrong direction.

Last October, we shared our vision with you of genuinely sustainable and healthy food systems, grounded in human rights. But there was no response. None of the debates this week made us feel that you actually listened. However, we are young, and we are not (yet) tired of repeating our vision like the refrain of a song, the lines of a poem, the words of a prayer. So we recite our vision once again, and hope it won't be forgotten this time.

We, the rights-holding constituencies of the CSM, are already realizing this vision. We are defending our territories and ecosystems. We are practicing agroecology, and creating and preserving Indigenous and traditional knowledges. We are growing nourishing food while respecting, protecting and restoring natural ecosystems. We are maintaining territorial markets and shortening the distance between producers and consumers.

This work we are doing on the ground gives us hope. But without the support of public policies, we are struggling. The policy processes on youth and women offer a crucial opportunity for member states to consider what vision they will follow and what actions they will take.

The youth of the CSM urge member states to recognise the two divergent pathways ahead. One offers a narrow vision of the future, where the role of youth in agriculture and food systems is reduced to entrepreneurship and technological innovation, where corporate agribusiness controls government policy and instrumentalises youth, and the right to food and dignified livelihoods is further marginalised. This is the pathway we are now on. It is presented as a pathway to transformation, but it won't change anything. It will only make the problems worse. But we can change direction. And youth are here to be part of this change. We are bringing solutions to the table. But to contribute to the solutions, we need to be meaningfully included in discussions that affect us. We need a participatory and consultative

process in the CFS so that ALL youth voices are heard and considered. Our food systems cannot be reduced to a business. Our foods are our livelihoods and our future. We are here, we are committed, and we are relying on you to listen to our voices and take action, now.

Thank You Mr. Chair