

CSM preliminary messages for the ADVISORY GROUP AND BUREAU VIRTUAL MEETING ON COVID-19
19 March 2020

Points on the impact of the Corona crisis on food security and nutrition:

- Thank you to the CFS Chair and Secretariat for organizing this call; also, many thanks to the HLPE for the note and recommendations; CSM had consultations in the past few days and we have several key points that are building on the recommendations drafted by the HLPE;
- The Corona crisis shows the importance of Health as a public good and the outstanding relevance of a Public sector and public policies that can effectively ensure the right to health in general and especially in times of emergency. Public health systems must become a priority for all countries also after the crisis will conclude. In these times of emergencies, most people understand the necessity and relevance of a human rights approach. Food and health are not just commodities, or for financial profits.
- In this crisis and in any crisis, people(s) have to come first. Food producers and health workers are now among the most important actors to address this crisis. Small-scale producers all over the world are the ones who ensure as we speak resilience of their communities and countries. They are also among the most exposed and affected by the crisis.
- Women carry huge part of the struggles against the crisis in the health sector, in the food systems, very often providing unpaid care, in all dimension where societies and communities resist this global crisis. The respect and protection of women's rights must be at the center of any effective response to the crisis.
- Given the immense contribution to feed the people and their exposure in the front-line of the Coronavirus pandemic, public policies now must focus on supporting the smallholder family farmers, Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, women, youth, fisherfolks, as well as consumers and the urban poor to fight back the consequences of the crisis.
- These public policies and actions must be very concrete for each of the affected constituencies: for Food and agricultural workers this means ensuring access to health care, access to potable water and water for sanitation, ensuring sick leave payments and the provision of emergency financing to support incomes and employment, and the stop of measures such as foreclosures, auctioning of homes, cuts of water supply and power due to the debts of the households especially in rural areas.
- We remind that among the most affected and vulnerable all over the world are the aged people, the migrants, the refugees and all people living in conflicts and protracted crisis. They face a catastrophic future. They must be at the center of global attention and effective policy response.
- The most affected will be poorest. We echo the concerns voiced by FAO and others, regarding the developing countries who face particularly problematic obstacles, they need support to meet the needs of the health and food systems. Solidarity from the ground and action of support between governments across the board will be key to help all of us overcome this crisis.
- In this pandemic, we can learn a great deal about the enormous vulnerabilities and risks carried by globalized industrial systems, including globalized food systems when they get into stress. The so-called efficiencies now maximize the catastrophe. The crisis will generate a much deeper consciousness about the risk of globalization in terms of exaggerated dependency on medicine, food and other essential goods which are being produced in other parts of the world because it seemed to be cheaper. These globalization wins for some can turn into high costs for the public. Is essential to build consciousness about the structural failures of our globalized and corporate driven systems, including food systems. We cannot stress enough that food systems must be transformed.
- In line with the recommendations of the HLPE, the CSM is collecting experiences of solidarity actions around the world where peasants and smallholder farmers prevent food price speculation and distribute seeds, where consumers and communities collaborate closely to ensure that all people have enough food through short circuits, where people help their parents and neighbors in getting their food.

- This kind of deep solidarity within communities and societies, within and among countries and regions is what we need in this moment and the near future.
- The CFS has elaborated policy guidelines and recommendations that are of outstanding relevance in this situation. They point to smallholder oriented public policies which acknowledge the fundamental role of peasants and smallholder farmers and Indigenous Peoples in generating resilience in their communities, territories and countries. The essence of our message is that the re-localization of food systems and public support to territorial markets is now fundamental to building resilience in dramatic circumstances.
- We believe that these elements should be among the key messages of the CFS Chair's statement on the pandemic and the call for effective policies that prevent this crisis to generate even more hunger, malnutrition, poverty, inequality and conflict.
- These preliminary thoughts are only a few we collected within the CSM Advisory Group in these last two days. We will contribute with a more comprehensive document, consulted with a larger group of CSM Working Groups and constituencies in the coming week.

Now we would like to add a Point on the implications on CFS processes:

- We strongly believe that this situation shall lead the CFS to revisit its schedule, to slow-down and re-plan its meetings and processes this year.
- Physical participation of delegations and their presential interaction in transparent and collective discussions are essential. Written contributions or virtual meetings can play a supplementary role but cannot replace the open meetings and interactive dialogue.
- In that sense, we urge the CFS Bureau to consider revisiting the schedule of the CFS in the context of this pandemic crisis.

Finally, **with regards to the Food Systems Summit** the CSM would like to know more information about the preparation of the meeting with the Special Envoy for the Food Systems Summit, announced by the CFS Chair to take place on 31st of March. CSM looks forward to discussing our concerns related to the Food Systems Summit at that occasion.

In anticipation of this discussion we call on governments of countries to engage with constituencies most affected by hunger and the climate crisis, to envisage a truly democratic, transparent and transformative format for a UN Summit that can take us closer to meeting SDG 2, considering that hunger and malnutrition are now being aggravated by the Corona virus pandemic.