*Intervention by Paola Romero (FIAN Colombia) of the Women and Gender Diversities Working Group of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples’ Mechanism (CSIPM) during the CFS 51 Special Event on the Anniversary of the Right to Food Guidelines on 27 October 2023.*

Thank you, representatives of member states, observers, colleagues and various participants. Thank you very much for inviting the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples’ Mechanism to the CFS 51 Right to Food Special Event.

Edilma Toro, a peasant woman from my country, told me: "we must ensure these public food policies can guarantee the recognition of peasants as rights holders, and recognise our voices and a vote in decision making spaces".

I would like to begin by bringing a retrospective look at what has happened in recent years in terms of the monitoring that has been carried out by Civil Society in the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food.

In 2018 at a special event during CFS 45 we reviewed the use and application of the Guidelines, most of the experiences that were documented were aimed at raising awareness and building capacity for development, but the least addressed was regarding violations of the right to food.

On that occasion, we presented the Report on the use and application of the Right to Food Guidelines. The result of a broad consultation among social movements, Indigenous Peoples, small-scale food producers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other organizations from different regions of the world, and in which we delivered several recommendations to CFS member states and UN agencies. These recommendations focused on drawing attention to the immediate needs to better integrate coherence and convergence with the right to food at national, regional and global levels in order to create strategies and public policies to realise the right to adequate food for all.

We have advanced in the monitoring of the implementation of the right to food through the popular consultations in the territories regarding the impacts of Covid-19 and other crises and conflicts on the right to food and food sovereignty. This year, the African Civil Society Political Assessment Report of the UNFSS national pathways was conducted.

The results of the monitoring and the consultations evidence the reality of recurrent food crises, deepening vulnerabilities and existing structural inequalities that are further exacerbated by the advancing of the corporate capture of the food system. For example we see increasing climate change catastrophes, public health emergencies and rising levels of poverty and inequality, speculation and food price inflation. On top of that some African governments claim an end to dependence on food imports, but instead of supporting peasant agroecology and territorial markets, they seem to prefer a modernization approach that concentrates investment in specialized crops, privileges privatized seeds and digitalization, promoting the development of export-oriented value chains.
Since CFS 45, we can name several instruments that were agreed upon and that include the right to food. Among them is the UNDROP ratified by the General Assembly in 2018, the Resolution on Social and Solidarity Economy ratified by the same General Assembly this year, as well as the Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment recently endorsed by this plenary.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition (SOFI) 2023 estimated that 122 million more people were hungry in 2022 than in 2019, before the global pandemic. Nearly 600 million people are expected to be chronically undernourished by 2030.

Now, I would like to call your attention to the future and take a forward-looking approach.

In the face of crises we believe we must act in transformative and practical steps to make substantial progress. To this end, we recommend:

1. Include the right to food as core in the coordination of CFS actions and in the harmonization of policies. We encourage state parties and multilateral organisations to strengthen this approach in practice.

2. Advance in indicators that make it possible to demonstrate the current situation and that take a more inclusive view of the context and the diversity of people, territories and cultures.

3. Monitor the adoption of the right to food in CFS member states as well as the political, technical and financial resources made available for its implementation.

4. Mobilise regional human rights systems to adopt the right to food as an autonomous right and to monitor, recommend and rule in favour of those whose right to food is violated.

5. Promote a progressive, intersectional and gender perspective on the guidelines to encourage structural changes.

6. That the CFS as the main inclusive international and intergovernmental platform be a source of inspiration for democratic changes in the global and local food governance architectures of member states.

7. Recognize the agency of social movements and Indigenous Peoples’, their sovereignty and their struggles at global and local levels as key actors for food governance.

8. To always keep the right to food as a guideline in all actions programmed in the new Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW).

On behalf of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples’ Mechanism (CSIPM) we would like to conclude by expressing our solidarity with all civilians in conflict zones and protracted crises, and especially with the Palestinian people, currently deprived of shelter, medical assistance, water and adequate food. We demand an immediate ceasefire and that humanitarian aid be guaranteed to the people of Gaza.
From Colombia, I firmly believe that peace is a fundamental condition for eradicating hunger and guaranteeing the right to food.