

Embargo date: 8 October 2014

PRESS RELEASE

New Report Calls for More Democratic Food Systems

Rome, Utrecht, Heidelberg, Geneva, Berlin, 8 October 2014 – Food security and human rights remain deeply threatened by concentration of land ownership, corporate domination of food systems and policy incoherence, reports the *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2014*, officially launched today with the participation of the new UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Food, Dr. Hilal Elver, at the FAO in Rome.

“As we celebrate the progress made over the past decade, it is important to keep in mind that we will have to work even harder to realize the right to food in order that hunger and malnutrition no longer afflict humanity”, Dr. Elver cautioned on the occasion of the ten-year anniversary of the *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security*.

The *Watch 2014* – titled *Ten Years of the Right to Food Guidelines: Gains, Concerns and Struggles* – discusses key policy processes and highlights the increasing influence of companies in international food and nutrition governance as a growing challenge in the global struggle for the right to adequate food.

On one hand, increased power of multinational food and beverage corporations over what ends up on the consumer’s plate has led to a higher consumption of unhealthy ultra-processed foods, thereby contributing to obesity and malnutrition in both developed and developing countries.

Between 40 and 50 per cent of the adult population in Belgium and Colombia are overweight, reports the *Watch 2014*.

On the other hand, agribusiness and financial investors are taking control of natural resources and undermining the rights and food sovereignty of local communities and small-scale food producers. Such practices are promoted and condoned by governments in the name of ‘development’.

An estimated one million hectares of land have been appropriated in Mali in recent years, depriving peasant communities of their livelihoods. The expansion of mining in Sweden and its impact on peasant and indigenous populations illustrate that land grabbing is a worldwide phenomenon.

The *Watch* calls on governments to exercise political will in addressing the inequities in food systems, demanding the right to food be ‘mainstreamed’ in coherent food, nutrition, energy and trade policies.

Democratic institutions and mechanisms that engage those most affected by hunger in policy-making are among the goals of ongoing social mobilization and resistance worldwide – from Guatemala to India and Norway, as revealed in the *Watch 2014*.

As stressed by Olivier De Schutter, former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, “[t]here are major actors who are able to block change as a result of the dominant position they have acquired in the food and political systems. That is why food democracy is really the key to achieving more sustainable [and accountable] food systems.”

Contact:

M. Alejandra Morena, *Coordinator - Right to Food and Nutrition Watch*

Tel. +49 (0) 6221 65300 55 | E-mail: morena@fian.org

INFORMATION SHEET

This year's edition of the *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch*, titled '*Ten Years of the Right to Food Guidelines: Gains, Concerns and Struggles*', is dedicated to reflecting on the successes and shortfalls of the global struggle for the right to adequate food and nutrition in the past decade, and assessing emerging risks and key challenges for the future. As in previous editions, it also discusses key policy processes related to the right to food, such as the negotiation of principles for responsible agricultural investments and the upcoming Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2). The *Watch* is committed to echoing the perspectives and experiences of a wide range of actors, particularly civil society, social movements, and academics.

The contributions in the *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2014* reveal the following:

- The Right to Food Guidelines, adopted by the FAO in 2004, have been instrumental in increasing the visibility and the understanding of food as a human right on the global level, emphasizing the obligations of States and the role of rights-holders as well as the need for a holistic view of food systems, based on the indivisibility of human rights.
- Civil society resistance, mobilization and participation play a key role in the implementation and accountability for the right to food, as shown by the articles on Mali, India and Guatemala. Social mobilization is now more important than ever before as corporate and economic interests are entering into virtually all public policy spaces and increasingly taking control of natural resources worldwide.
- Efforts towards the realization of the right to food are undermined by the lack of a holistic approach, which would require a greater focus on access to, and control over food production resources, as well as providing direct links for those defending worker's rights for the urban poor, nutritional-well being and the rights of future generations, within the food sovereignty framework.
- Lack of accountability and policy coherence remain major challenges. There is a need to ensure that food, nutrition, energy and trade policies are coherent with States' human rights obligations. Human rights treaties must be at the core of mandatory regulation at the national and international level. A major challenge is thus the important task of making them truly enforceable at all levels.

Download the *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch* (in English, Spanish and French) and subscribe to our newsletter at: www.rtfn-watch.org | Follow the *Watch* on Facebook! www.facebook.com/RtFNWatch

Read the civil society report '*Ten Years of the Right to Food Guidelines: Progress, Obstacles and the Way Ahead*' at: www.fian.org/10-years-rtf-guidelines

Watch the video '*The Right to Food - A People's Struggle*' at: www.fian.org/10-years-rtf-guidelines

The *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch* is the main monitoring tool of the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition. It is published by Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service, FIAN International and Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO Cooperation) in partnership with the African Network on the Right to Food (ANoRF/RAPDA), Centro Internazionale Crocevia, DanChurchAid (DCA), Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA), Habitat International Coalition (HIC), International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), Observatory of ESCR (Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF), People's Health Movement (PHM), Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD), REDSAN-CPLP, Terra Nuova, US Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA), World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), World Alliance of Mobile and Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP) and World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT).