



Press release

Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2012 **WHO DECIDES ABOUT GLOBAL FOOD AND NUTRITION?** **Strategies to Regain Control**

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Occupy the Food System!

Civil society organizations call for a turnaround in global decision-making on food and nutrition

Civil society representatives launching the fifth annual report on the right to food and nutrition state that it is impossible to combat the causes of hunger while keeping existing power relations untouched. "Food and power are related. It is almost impossible to find one person among the powerful in society and politics worldwide, who does not have enough to eat," said Huguette Akplogan-Dossa, the Regional Coordinator of the African Network on the Right to Food (ANoRF). "The tendency is for exclusion from economic and political decision-making to go hand in hand with incidence of hunger and malnutrition."

The global report *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2012*, with the title "Who Decides About Global Food and Nutrition? – Strategies to Regain Control," gives a multitude of examples of the severe violations of the right to food and nutrition that the current food system is provoking: from forced evictions and land grabbing by companies or corrupted members of governments, as illustrated by the articles on Mexico and on the Arab Spring, to inappropriate food supply programs or speculative investments in agrofuels, described in the articles on Bangladesh, Paraguay and the Philippines. "Those who protest because they have been deprived of their land and cannot feed their family from their work are often arrested and victims of violence. This is unacceptable," said Gerald Staberock*, Secretary General of the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT).

"We can no longer accept chronic hunger or food riots being portrayed as consequences of natural disasters or anonymous market failures," stated Lalji Desai from the World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples and Nomadic Pastoralists (WAMIP) based in India. "The terrible living conditions for hundreds of millions of people actually are caused by the loss of control over their food and nutrition, and that's why we struggle for our right to self-determination and food sovereignty."

The *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2012* focuses on exposing who is really in control of decision and policy-making when it comes to food and nutrition. "Far too often, agribusinesses and nutrition companies use their weight and influence to increase their profit margins, and to manipulate the rules to

their interests and convenience, without regard for the best interests of small-scale food producers and the survival of their communities - let alone the moral and legal requirements of the human right to food," observed Peter Prove, Executive Director of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA).

"In terms of the food security of the first food, the global breastfeeding movement continues to call for greater vigilance around the more aggressive marketing of baby and toddler foods, using new promotional avenues on the internet, especially social networking, via mothers' clubs, educational foundations targeting students, and as business interest NGOs etc. These tactics serve to keep global breastfeeding rates low over decades despite various efforts by the Ministries of Health in countries, and by breastfeeding advocates," notes Sarah Amin, Executive Director of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

In reaction, social movements and other expressions of civil society have engaged in strategies to regain people's control over food and nutrition. "With the reform of the Committee on World Food Security, an innovative way of inclusive governance has been established. It has been a breakthrough for those civil society groups that traditionally have been excluded from decision making processes on all levels," said Flavio Valente, Secretary General of FIAN International. "The time has come to occupy political space and fight for the primacy of human rights."

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For more information, and to download the report: <http://www.rtfn-watch.org>

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