

Food sovereignty and the human right to adequate food.

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Initially I would like to thank the organizers for the invitation to this event, which I deem to be extremely relevant at this moment in history. I am also very honored to share the podium with Suzan George, who has always been light for those wishing to understand the role of corporate capital in the causation of hunger and malnutrition. In greeting her I greet the other panelists.

FIAN international is an international human rights organizations dedicated to the protection and promotion of the human right to adequate food and nutrition, in all of its dimensions. FIAN is a membership based organization, with national offices in more than 20 countries, and members in more than 60 countries, in the five continents. FIAN's mission is to support the struggle of groups, communities and peoples for the realization of their right to adequate food and related rights, mostly by documenting cases of violation of these rights and supporting the advocacy strategy of the affected groups and respective social movements. In its 28 years of existence, FIAN documented more than 600 cases of violation, 75% dealing with land conflicts, more recently know as land, water and resource grabbing. Many of these cases involved directly or indirectly powerful economic third parties, such as Transnational corporations.

People's struggles and human rights

1. We depart from the understanding that human rights and the human rights framework are a social construction resulting from the millenary struggles of individuals, social groups, and peoples against oppression, exploitation, discrimination and abuses of power by States and other powerful economic, political and religious actors. Human rights are an ethos, a set of principles and rights, an aspiration and a demand – coming out of these struggles - for a society in which human dignity and equity, in the context of diversity, are collectively promoted, protected and guaranteed. At the same time, human rights are a framework to analyze social processes, which identifies the concentration and abuses of power in our societies, identifies those who have their rights violated, those who abuse their power, and defines the State - seen as the manager of public good, as having the obligation to guarantee these rights and as a potential violator of human rights. In defining obligations and assigning clear responsibilities, HR provide an important accountability framework against which governments can be held accountable As such, this framework can serve as a powerful tool for the advancement of peoples' struggles.

International Human Rights law is written with the indelible ink made of the blood and sweat of women, men and children who struggle individually or collectively against abuses and for justice. The incorporation of human rights content and principles into "social pacts" or accords is yanked by peoples' struggles from the elites of the time, usually in moments of brutal rupture of the social tissue, when the horror of oppression and discrimination becomes crystal clear, and the "king is nude", i.e. the situation is

intolerable and unacceptable for the majority, and this forces the elites to negotiate and accept social limits to their power.

I intend to defend the following thesis during my intervention today (I wish I spoke Italian to gain some time):

The EXPO 2015 and the Carta de Milano represent an attempt of the private corporate sector and their governmental employees, elected in different countries, to generate the largest and, in their dreams, the most legitimate Public Private Partnership, and why not to say People Public Private Partnership, to allegedly confront and help eradicate the unacceptable levels of hunger and malnutrition in the world, while allegedly reducing food waste, food safety, promoting sustainable agriculture and the human right to adequate food.

In the different initiatives linked to the EXPO, there is always mention/inclusion of a legacy post EXPO:

1. Protocol – establishes a new intergovernmental mechanism, in parallel to FAO and the CFS, to guide national governments, and complement their actions with multistakeholder PPPs. Creation of a governing mechanism and secretariat.
2. Carta de Milano – proposes itself to be “ a “compass” for the governments and for the individual citizens” having four types of subjects “citizens, enterprises and professionals, associations, public and private institutions” (sic) towards the building of a “ common house per l’alimentazione sostenibile e globale.”
 - a. In a letter from the cabinet of the Minister of Agriculture says literally that this initiative wants to leave a “legacy” after the EXPO of which the Carta will be the strong point

This project is very much in line with the strategies proposed by the Global –Redesign initiative produced by several hundred consultants for the World Economic Forum, in 2010, in the wake of ‘the so called food price volatility crisis of 2007 2008, that led to riots in more than 30 countries, and to the overturn of a few governments, some with the “discrete” support of the G8, and followed by the financial crisis that is still affecting the whole world, and led to the implementation of imposed austerity measures in several countries in Europe, with increased social and economic instability.

One of the key premises of GRI is that the political actors on the global scene have changed and that it is appropriate to acknowledge that multinational corporations, nation-states (including the UN system), and selected civil society organizations are best able to jointly manage a globalized world—and ought to do so.

A key element of the GRI proposals is to connect these rather autonomous spaces through multi-stakeholder governance arrangements (PPP). Depending on the issues involved, WEF envisages that each joint governance activity would involve a diversity of combinations of executives, government representatives, and civil society leaders, and a diversity of institutional participants that may or may not include a selection of nation-states.

Their thinking is that if globalization leaders were more involved in the policy development and program implementation of the UN, then organizations and peoples throughout the world may well look more favorably on the legitimacy of their combined efforts. The benefits of conjoining the informal market-based system with the official state-centric system are that multinationals would no longer be outside

the recognized governance gate, but would enter the system as equal or greater partners to governments in a transformed UN system.

In WEF's view, the G20 has the best opportunity to provide intergovernmental leadership on a wide range of economic, social, and environmental areas. The GRI recommends that the G20 be institutionalized and engage with ECOSOC on a regular basis. As the governments in the G20 are also members of the United Nations, this dual role can have a significant impact on the possibility of intergovernmental bodies taking a lead position on crucial global issues.

In cases where the G20 assumes to itself global leadership on a key issue, it means that the remaining governments can only address relatively minor issues or ones marginal to the interests of the G20. This marginalization of international multilateral decision-making will serve to reinforce the public view that the UN cannot act meaningfully on important matters.

GRI recommends that during the annual intergovernmental meetings of the WHO, UNESCO, and FAO, non-state actors should hold parallel sessions or create non-state structures as alternatives to intergovernmental arrangements. The function of these parallel governance sessions, according to the WEF, would be to help governments formulate policy proposals that are likely to be taken seriously by the non-state actor community, particularly the corporate sector.

WEF's third intergovernmental policy proposal is to take topics off the agenda of the UN system and move them under a multi-stakeholder umbrella. When a consortium of leading firms, governments, and civil society actors declare they are going to solve an international problem, governments at the UN are not likely to challenge them and take on this policy task alone. **Since the definition of the international aspect of a problem is often the first key element to address, there are strong reasons why a corporate-led group would want to be directly involved in managing the scope and perception of the issue.**

The introduction of multi-stakeholder governance diminishes the political space for small and medium nation-states to reflect their citizens' concern with a global problem. WEF calls these types of multi-stakeholder groups the new "geometry of cooperation" and "**plurilateral, often multi-stakeholder, coalitions of the willing and able.**"

This is exactly what is going on in the EXPO 2015. The corporations are taking the lead, with the support of G8/G20 countries. The Human right to adequate food is highjacked and derogated. The UN is sidelined and so are the intergovernmental multilateral mechanisms

And the motto is "Long live the WEF and Davos", and the G8 and G20 are serving as doormats.

All the efforts to portrait TNCs as socially responsible actors are attempts at blue or green washing their activities and at hiding the brutal reality of the social, economic, political and cultural determination of hunger and malnutrition

1. The food and nutrition area reflects the perverted nature of the present hegemonic development model. Despite significant growth in food production, hundreds of million grow hungry, billions suffer of hidden hunger, millions of children are condemned to death by preventable causes and those who survive chronic malnutrition are in risk of dying of infectious diseases, present reduced cognitive development, and later in life develop obesity and related

diseases (diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, cancer, etc.). Billions are overweight due to the low quality and monotony of diet, and the aggressive marketing of food industries, including of breast milk substitutes.

2. Land, water and resource grabbing, leading to rural exodus, violence and dispossession, sexual violence against women and girls,
3. The increasing violence, repression and criminalization against those groups, communities and peoples resisting the aggressive plundering of natural resources (land, water, seeds, biodiversity, forests, etc.), led by TNCs with the support and collusion of governments.
4. The continued structural violence and discrimination against women and girls, rendering them vulnerable to infanticide, exclusion from school, child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, bonded domestic labor, lower pay which is taken advantage by TNCs, see tea plantation workers, agricultural workers in general, textile workers, etc.
5. Low pay and degrading working conditions, denial of access to potable drinking water, etc.
6. The total impunity of governments and TNCs responsible for the violations, due to the watering down of human rights standards introduced by the Global Compact and Ruggie's principles which opened up the doors of the UN to the growing influence of the private corporate sector, through PPPs;

None of these structural causes of hunger and malnutrition are dealt with by these initiatives, not even mentioned. They will not disappear as if by magic.

The fear of the private sector

There is a new initiative by the UN Human Rights Council, to elaborate a binding treaty to regulate TNC activities, initiated by Ecuador, with the support of close to 60 countries, but no support in the EU and North America and allies. This initiative comes as a response to the decisions taken by the arbitrating mechanism of bilateral trade agreements in favor of TNC, such as the Chevron case in Ecuador. The first session of the working group will take place in July in Geneva. The CSO Treaty Alliance involves more than 500 organizations.

The recent statements by the UN SG in favor of the full implementation of the (voluntary) human rights and business guidelines, elaborated under the coordination of Ruggie, and the visibility to be given to the role of TNCs in the EXPO are smoke screens to avoid further action by the Human Rights Council.

If I still have time I would like to analyse the events related to the governing mechanism of food and nutrition in the last 10 to 15 years, in particular in the last 5 years, in light of what I said before to demonstrate my thesis

1. The offensive of the market liberalization development model, under the consensus of Washington;
2. The progressive reduction of the governing capacity of governments in the global south, under Structural adjustment and WTO rulings

3. The progressive dismantling of UN policy space and capacity
4. PPPs, Global Compact (2000 - Ruggie), and the opening up of the UN and government spaces to corporate capture
5. The food and nutrition case: an alert.
 - a. The unacceptable genocide of the excluded by preventable deaths by hunger and malnutrition.
 - b. Ineffective food and nutrition public policies which compound the impact of the macroeconomic policies, in line with the interests of the economic powers, produce and reproduce hunger and malnutrition.
 - c. Millennium Development Goal on hunger and malnutrition not reached
 - d. UN Standing Committee on Nutrition and the Committee on World Food Security were created after the International Food Conference of 1974.
 - e.
 - f. Mid 2000, both and FAO as well came under attack of OECD countries and its UN allies, under the leadership of the US and the UK.
 - f.i. The chair of SCN, at the time also chair of UNICEF, former USDA head, and former CEO of one of the Monsanto daughter companies, and negotiator of NAFTA (Ann Venneman), presently in the board of Nestle, tried to bully the SCn into accepting the participation of private sector in its policy discussions,
 - f.i.1. Reaction of civil society and bilateral representatives and some of the UN agencies led instead to the approval of a very strict “Policy for engagement with the private sector” in 2005/2006.
 - f.i.2. After internal scrimmages, and a failed attempt to approve the original proposal by the World Bank, of the precursor of SUN, then called GAP, the World Bank, withdrew its support to SCN, and shortly after WFP did the same. The demise of the SCN, as a public interest policy space took place in 2008, in the very beginning of the so called food price volatility crisis.
 - f.i.3. The SCN became the technical secretariat of the UN SUN Nutrition Network, until recently when it was replaced by a secretariat in WFP
 - f.ii. The FAO reform
 - f.iii. The CFS reform
 - f.iii.1. High Level task Force

- f.iii.2. Global Partnership on Agriculture, Food security and nutrition –G8
 - f.iii.3. Recent events
 - f.iv. The surge of SUN and the Global Nutrition Report
 - f.v. G8 Alliance and SUN.
- g. ICN 2 and its role in Nutrition governing mechanisms
 - g.i. The issue of UN Nutrition Network
 - g.ii. Interest in keeping two issues separate – food production and nutrition supplements. Captured by TNCs
 - g.iii. Role of CFS
 - g.iv. Role of WHO and FAO as standard setting agencies
 - g.v. Role of other UN agencies – SCN?
 - g.vi. Role of SUN – PPP, WFP
 - g.vii. Lack of regulation
- h. Recent events in CFS and WHO
 - h.i. CFS _ Gates, SUN and governance
 - h.i.1. I noted on pg. 392 and elsewhere too that people are and have been concerned about overly close relations with the corporate sector (including having TNCs such as UNILEVER in decision making positions), and about Col are described as people with phobias, hostile feelings, “potentially sabotaging the prospects of multi-stakeholder efforts to scale up nutrition”.
 - h.ii. WHO – confusing CFS and SUN as similar initiatives, of the same nature.

6. How does EXPO 2015 fit in all this?

Where do we go from here:

7. Human rights tools and instruments have continued to be perfected on the basis of the daily struggles of the peoples throughout the world. The evolution of the conceptual framework of the right to food in the last 25 to 30 years is an example of this.

Human rights: regulation of abuses of power and guidance of public policies

Food sovereignty and the human right to adequate food and nutrition: people's sovereignty, women's rights and regulation of TNCs

a. In the other hand, the conceptual framework of food sovereignty has been in continuous evolution, under the lively influence of the struggles of peoples and social movements to feed themselves and their communities and to preserve their livelihoods and human dignity, presents a powerful alternate conceptual framework to analyze the political and social economy of food, nutrition and health. At the same time, the concept has been further sharpened by the broadening alliances around the food sovereignty movement, with the inclusion of new social actors. The definition of food sovereignty adopted in the Nyéléni Declaration (2007), demonstrates this:

“Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal - fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just incomes to all peoples as well as the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations.”¹

8. The food sovereignty framework, of a holistic nature, guided by a world vision of world of equity in diversity, based in human dignity for all, and focused on tackling the root causes of hunger and malnutrition – without neglecting the other levels of determination - brings clearly to the center of the realization of the right to adequate food and nutrition, the dimension of **peoples' sovereignty and participation in the governance of the small scale food producers' access to and control over natural and productive resources, jobs, income, working conditions, as well as of food and nutrition and related policies, in alliance with urban slum dwellers, workers and consumers, and the regulation of powerful economic and political actors, including those acting at the international level, in particular TNCs.** At the same time the food sovereignty framework highlights the **need for the elimination of oppression and inequality at the individual and collective level, recognizing that the full realization of women's rights are central to the realization of food sovereignty.**
9. In addition, different social groups within the food sovereignty movement emphasize the **links between the promotion of biodiversity in local and regional production, along the lines of agro ecological principles and practices, as a potential tool to promote diversified healthy, safe and nutritious diets, eliminating as well the contamination of the food with agrochemicals.** This also has potential impact on **the sustainability of food systems, reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases guaranteeing the rights of the next generations, and in contributing to the reduction of the consumption of ultra-processed and fast food,** linked to the increasing levels of obesity, and related non communicable diseases in the world. More recently, urban constituencies have joined the movement, bringing in contributions related to community supported agriculture, urban agriculture and solidarity economy.
10. Placed within this framework, the human right to adequate food and nutrition can become much more powerful– as well as can be further developed - in the hands of a broader spectrum of social actors. It can be seen as an expression of what people want for their lives and for that of their descendants, help to clarify the links between the most relevant social, political and economic determinants of the suffering of different social groups, as a result of violations of this right and related rights, collaborating to the identification of those public authorities and powerful actors behind the violations, such as TNCs and other businesses, providing tools for the people and their movements to claim their rights, establish common agendas and concrete joint actions, in joint advocacy for inclusive public policies, and contributing for the possible further unification of struggles against related abuses and violations.

Governing mechanism of global food and nutrition policies: a crossroads

We must face the challenges of:

11. The bankruptcy of representative democracy
12. World Economic Forum, Global Redesign initiative, Public Private Partnerships, EXPO 2015, and the Carta de Milano.

- a. The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2 2014) and the global governance of food and nutrition
 - a.i. Follow up by UN Committee on World Food Security
 - a.ii. Follow up by WHO
 - a.iii. Follow up by SUN UN Nutrition Network,
 - a.iv. Follow up by FAO
- b. The growing presence of the Private corporate sector:
 - b.i. Corporate takeover of the UN
 - b.ii. Corporate takeover of food and nutrition public policy making
 - b.ii.1. Case of Luca del Balzo di Presenzano – Sugar guidelines
 - b.iii. The issue of conflicts of interests
- c. G8 New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition for Africa,
- d. Scaling up Nutrition Movement
 - d.i. Global nutrition report

13. The last frontiers

- e. Plundering land, territories, cultures and peoples' bodies and souls

14. EXPO 2015 a mega experiment of the GRI: six billion are excluded

The resistance

15. The global Alliance against land, water and territory grabbing and for a popular Agrarian Reform

- a. Land, Agroecological production, Healthy diet, and clean water for a dignified life for all.

16. The Treaty Alliance and the human rights regulation of TNCs

17. The Declaration of peasant rights

18. Campaign against gmos and agrochemicals

19. A joint global, regional, national and local movement towards peoples' sovereignty.

- f. Defining goals

- g. Unifying struggles
- h. Building new collective instruments

20. What to do about EXPO 2015

- a. Denounce nature of Carta de Milano e protocol de Milano.
- b. Dismantle PPP
- c. Delegitimize citizen initiative
- d. Advocate governments not to ratify
- e. ?????