

**Collective Action for Ending a Collective Problem:**

**A Multi-stakeholder Project on Global Food Security**

**Report**

**25 July 2023**

**Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations,**

**Dublin City University**

Proem

*What makes the cornfields happy; under what star*

*It’s best, Maecenas, to plough the soil or train the vine*

*On elm-trees; the care of cattle, keeping of flocks;*

*All the experience those housekeeping bees require,*

*This is my song … Come bless me, gods and goddesses,*

*Who care for the land. You nourish fruits not sown by us,*

*You send to our sown fields the plentiful rain from heaven.*

*(Virgil, Georgics, opening lines)*

The word “culture” in modern European languages derives from the Latin *colere* – to take care of, tend, preserve, ‘cultivate’. ‘Culture’, in its original meaning, is inspired by the activities celebrated in Virgil’s Georgics – farmers working with commitment and reverence to create a landscape fit for habitation. Capturing the full resonance of the words ‘culture’ and ‘agriculture’ can help us to reimagine the world of work. We can begin to see that action in shared hope is our only means of sustaining the gift of life.

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I. Introduction

‘Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.’[[1]](#footnote-1)

Food insecurity is not a new challenge. Research has identified seven periods in the history of food production.[[2]](#footnote-2) Post -1945, there emerged the ‘productivist’ food regime. Europe’s and America’s farming was protected. The food industry developed strongly. This phase saw the emergence of the Green Revolution – a huge increase in food productivity based on technology linked to the use of fossil-fuel based inputs, including synthetic fertilisers and agrochemicals. During this period, overpopulation was considered to be the cause of hunger. Post-1980s, under the ‘neoliberal food regime,’ many governments saw their role primarily as facilitating private actors. Arguably we are now in a (very different) eighth period. Over the last quarter century or more, climate change, the loss of biodiversity, and new insights in the sphere of nutrition and malnutrition are reshaping the debate on food.[[3]](#footnote-3) The key pattern that can be observed across all seven or eight historical periods is a growing awareness of mutual interdependence. Recently we have also begun to see clearly the interdependence not only of countries but of subject areas: food security, climate, conflict, biodiversity, inequality.

In the aftermath of the food-and-fuel crises of 2007–2008, governments around the world recognized the need to better prioritize their food and nutrition policies and to increase investments in agricultural research, rural economies, and early-warning systems to anticipate future food crises. The year 2015 saw the adoption, separately, of two hugely important policy frameworks—the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement—establishing goals to ensure food and nutrition security and to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

The first United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) was held in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic saw entire economies shut down and food systems interrupted at the levels of production, supply chains, workforces, and retail. Over the past year and more, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has served to further highlight the vulnerability of our food systems. Energy- and fertilizer-price increases have had a major impact on global food production in 2022 and 2023 and contributed to the rise in the number of hungry people in the world, particularly in Africa and the Middle East.

In proportion to its population, Africa bears the heaviest burden of malnutrition and is currently not on track to meet the goal of ending hunger by 2030.[[4]](#footnote-4) The continent continues to face major food challenges, including acute hunger driven by conflict, drought, and other extreme-weather events; recurrent outbreaks of pests and diseases; high levels of chronic undernutrition; ecosystem breakdown; and under-productive agricultural systems; while in other parts of the world we face rising levels of obesity and poor nutrition leading to rising health costs.

Unfortunately, neither the SDGs nor the climate negotiations are on track to meet their targets, and the core challenge remains: to achieve food security for an estimated global population of 10 billion in 2050 while respecting the 1.5 °C target set by the Paris Agreement of 2015.

The goal of our multi-stakeholder project is to respond to our growing shared awareness of food insecurity by coming together as a group of colleagues to reflect on possible policy responses. Effective climate action and reimagined agricultural systems will entail the sustained coordination of actors across multiple domains. Pope Francis in his message on World Food Day in 2021 emphasized the ‘need for concerted action’ and ‘innovative solutions’ to overcome hunger and stated that ‘we must encourage active participation in change at all levels and reorganize food systems as a whole.’[[5]](#footnote-5) Action must be in keeping with such core values as equity, justice, and inclusion. In the long run, there is a case for reconsidering our models of society. A society driven too much by commerce may fail to account for such critical externalities as an unliveable climate and the loss of social cohesion. Fundamental to our project is an understanding that food security is a human right, and food insecurity results not from a lack of available resources but from injustice and structural inequalities.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The project has involved meetings in Prague in October 2022, in Dublin in April 2023, and in Rome in early July 2023. Five on-line working groups have examined, respectively: (1) food and the sacred; (2) food and human rights; (3) cross-cutting global issues in the sphere of food systems (including headline policies of the European Union); (4) politics and polarization; and (5) the future of agriculture and farming. In Dublin, we heard from experts and activists outside our group. In Rome, we spent a half-day at the headquarters of IFAD for a dialogue with the head of IFAD and key members of her team. A list of participants and speakers is at Annex 6.

First, we will discuss the latest developments relating to global food security which form the background to our work. Since the 1990s, the percentage of the global population living in what is termed ‘absolute poverty’ has declined significantly, according to World Bank figures. However, as of July 2023 the FAO calculates that the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet is more than 3 billion.[[7]](#footnote-7) In parallel, the number of people facing acute hunger and undernourishment has risen to 9.2 per cent of the global population; around 735 million people.[[8]](#footnote-8) The 2023 report notes that acute food insecurity is more pronounced in some regions than others, with Africa being the worst affected (with 20 per cent of the population facing hunger), followed by Asia (8.5 per cent) and the Caribbean (16.3 per cent)[[9]](#footnote-9) and Latin America. However, it should be noted that almost all States and regions have seen a growth in the number of people facing food insecurity, including in high-income countries.[[10]](#footnote-10) We are witnessing the likely beginning of an affordable food crisis on the European continent and elsewhere. In March 2022 we could already see a 60% increase in global food prices, compared to March 2020,[[11]](#footnote-11) and in August 2022 the price of bread in the EU was on average 18% higher than a year before.[[12]](#footnote-12) As of spring 2023 there was still no end in sight for the continuing increase of food prices in the EU.[[13]](#footnote-13)

It seems unlikely that the rising rates of food insecurity are primarily a reflection of absolute (i.e., global) availability of food. Between 2000 and 2019 the global population increased by approximately 26 per cent. In the same period, the FAO reports that global production of primary crops increased by 53 per cent, production of vegetable oils increased by 118 per cent, and meat production increased by 44 per cent. The FAO produces food balance sheets that show global food availability. In 2020 this stood at 3,000 kcals per capita per day. In 2010 the figure was 2,858 kcal per capita. In 2000 it was 2,727 kcal.[[14]](#footnote-14) It seems clear that rising rates of food insecurity and malnutrition are primarily related to structural forms of inequality—between and within States[[15]](#footnote-15)— as well as to political and organizational issues including the forms of dependency that we discuss below.[[16]](#footnote-16)

**Armed conflicts** have been identified as having a significant negative impact on food security. Civil conflicts in particular routinely cause or exacerbate hunger, malnutrition and famine,[[17]](#footnote-17) as ongoing situations in Yemen, Somalia and Syria can attest. In 2022, the top five projected hunger hotspot countries declared by World Food Programme (WFP) were Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Yemen.[[18]](#footnote-18) The latest hunger hotspot report (June 2023) reports that Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen remain at the highest concern level. Haiti, the Sahel (Burkina Faso and Mali) and Sudan have been elevated to this level.[[19]](#footnote-19) In each of these hunger hotspot countries, there has been some form of conflict.[[20]](#footnote-20) It is estimated that approximately 30 per cent of the arable land in Ukraine has been rendered unusable as a result of mining and other direct impacts of the Russian invasion, which has also impacted fuelsupplies and supplies of other agricultural raw materials.In addition, the war in Ukraine has highlighted the lack of resilience in food systems; in particular, ‘just in time’ logistics have been shown to have very limited capacity to respond to supply chain disruptions.

**The climate crisis**, too, is a significant (and worsening) factor in food insecurity. The ability of communities to feed themselves and earn a living is severely compromised by their exposure to changing and severe weather conditions, natural disasters, and environmental destruction, including soil degradation.[[21]](#footnote-21) As climate change advances, changes to rainfall patterns and seasonal average temperatures will affect the habitable range for crop species, and will deprive some farmers and communities of their traditional crops. The IPCC has warned that ‘hard’ limits may be reached in the future (that is, beyond which it is impossible to adapt, even with theoretically limitless resources).[[22]](#footnote-22) Indeed, in some areas, such as the Horn of Africa where rains have failed in four consecutive rainy seasons, those hard limits may be approaching, or may already have been reached. Climate change disproportionately affects the right to food of rural women, smallholder farmers, people living in poverty and indigenous communities, who have less ability to invest in climate adaptation.[[23]](#footnote-23)

**Poverty and growing inequality**, both within and between nations, are underlying structural factors that make some people more likely to experience food insecurity than others. It has therefore been suggested that food security should be classed as an economic public good, as a food-secure world produces numerous benefits that can be enjoyed simultaneously and from which no-one can be practically excluded, such as moral benefits, public health gains, market opportunities, and higher social stability.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Poverty and inequality are, in turn, linked to **trade and investment regimes**. In this context, we often refer to ‘liberalised’ market mechanisms, including in agriculture. However, an associate editor of the Financial Times offers a more radical critique:

What we have today is no longer a truly “free” market system that allows for productive and fair transactions between buyers and sellers who exist on an equal footing, but rather, a system of concentrated power and oligopoly.[[25]](#footnote-25)

FIAN and the FAO have argued that spikes in food prices following the invasion of Ukraine *preceded* any actual food shortages,[[26]](#footnote-26) a phenomenon which FIAN attributes, inter alia, to the overdominance of export crops, price speculation, and a poorly-functioning market in which four companies control the vast majority of the global grain trade. The top four companies also control 60 per cent of the global seed market and 70 per cent of the agrochemicals market. In several geographies, there is an urgent need to promote **market development at local level**.

**Financial incentives** offered by governments often favour economies of scale and promote large-scale, capital-intensive agriculture, thereby reducing support for smallholder farmers.[[27]](#footnote-27) Commercialisation and intensification tend to increase specialisation, with crops grown as monocultures and only a few varieties planted. Commercialised commodity seed systems extract genetic material from plants with which communities live in symbiosis, in effect disrupting that relationship.

**Financial flows** in support of the transformation of food systems are low in absolute terms. Approximately one-fifth of ODA is directed towards infrastructure, social protection, agricultural development and other interventions in the area of food systems transformation.[[28]](#footnote-28) In 2022 the trend in relevant financial flows was downwards, even as compared with pre-pandemic levels. Over 50 developing economies that are home to more than 50% of the people in extreme poverty have growing debt burdens and therefore a reduced capacity for public spending.[[29]](#footnote-29)

The ocean covers 71 percent of the surface of the earth, and aquatic foods play a key role in food security and nutrition, not just as the main source of protein for more than a billion people, but as a provider of other essential nutrients. On 8 June 2023, World Oceans Day, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres warned: ‘We should be the ocean’s best friend. But right now, humanity is its worst enemy.’ According to the FAO, 35 percent of **fish stocks** worldwide are today exploited beyond sustainable levels.[[30]](#footnote-30) Much of the problem can be traced to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU), all of which harm fish populations, ocean health, and people**.** In the Indian Ocean off Madagascar, illegal fishing may represent as much as half of the total catch,[[31]](#footnote-31) with all that this means for local fishers, related artisanal industries, and public revenue. Inadequate trade and investment regimes and misdirected financial incentives are centrally involved in our failure to deliver on ‘an evolving and positive vision for fisheries and aquaculture in the twenty-first century’[[32]](#footnote-32) – and in the continuing pollution of our coastal waters with chemicals, plastics, and human waste. Fisheries are the subject of annex 5 of this report.

A questionable corporate influence on food systems can be seen in the growing problem of low-quality food. **Ultra-processed foods** and foods with extremely high fat, sugar, and salt content aggressively advertised by the industrial food industry are creating concentric health crises, in which the prevalence of both malnutrition and obesity are rising. Unhealthy diets are responsible for millions of deaths every year,[[33]](#footnote-33) as well as adding to pressures on public health- and welfare systems. As ‘junk’ foods tend to be less expensive on a per-calorie basis than equivalent fresh-, whole- and other high-quality foods, individuals and groups with lower incomes or suffering from economic exclusion are most likely to be negatively affected.[[34]](#footnote-34)

It has been argued that we risk **‘corporate capture’** of food-related international organisations. A lack of transparency in relation to voluntary contributions means that it is often unclear whether a risk assessment has been carried out and what procedures, if any, have been undertaken to evaluate proposed partnerships.[[35]](#footnote-35)

**Waste** is major factor in food insecurity. An estimated 14 per cent of food is lost during production, storage, transport, processing and distribution12, with an additional 17 per cent wasted downstream.13

There are more than **476 million indigenous people** in the world, spread across 90 countries and representing 5,000 different cultures. 80 per cent of the planet's remaining biodiversity is estimated to be located in their lands. Indigenous peoples’ traditional knowledge and knowledge systems represent (in political parlance) an integrated approach to the pursuit of multiple public goods and offer potential insights for the design of a sustainable future for all. Respecting and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples strengthens their role as custodians of nature and serves as a significant confidence-building measure in the wider picture.

To sum up the present situation: Sustainable Development Goal 2, adopted in 2015, looks forward to a world free of hunger by 2030. In reality, the situation is worsening. The right to food, a customary human right and a right upheld in several international conventions, has been severely compromised over a long period. According to a conservative estimate, the number of people *dying* of hunger is around 8 million per year, many of whom are children.[[36]](#footnote-36)

Moreover, SDG 2 cannot be viewed in isolation; most of the other SDGs are linked to food security. The SDGs embody, in embryo, a vision of transformation based on the global citizenship of nation States and a common medium-term plan for humanity. The pursuit of resilience in food systems will have a multiplying effect[[37]](#footnote-37) as we seek to realise this vision. The adaptation of food systems is closely related to other public goods[[38]](#footnote-38) such as preserving resources, including water and soil; addressing climate change; promoting biodiversity; protecting the oceans; and guaranteeing affordable and healthy diets for everyone. Investment in food security is cost-efficient, greatly reducing the need for emergency aid. Like the green economy, food systems transformation can become a focus for creativity and innovation in the business sector. The pursuit of resilience in food systems may help us to see beyond disagreements and to begin resolving conflicts. We argue in the section of this report devoted to polarisation that food security reduces political instability, conflict, and forced migration.

Our first recommendation (see below, under ‘principal recommendations’) is that a values-led approach to politics and security in the perspective of 2030 or 2050 should give an over-riding priority to sharing the primary goods of life while also accepting a longer-term responsibility to promote the ecological and climatic conditions on which life depends.

to preserve resources, including water I– as well as our climate and biodiversity – while guaranteeing access to affordable

II. Working Groups

II. A ­– Food and the sacred

Discussions on food security are complex and require a precise focus and expert knowledge. However, what is also needed is perspective: an inclusive vision that holds the many strands of reflection together. In this project, we have approached the subject of food security through the twin lenses of food and the sacred and food and human rights. A sense of the sacred and a commitment to human rights converge in support of an overall vision. In the words of one member of our group, we need to *bring a communal dimension back into the centre of our thinking and action…we are not just individuals achieving our own goals but rather we are fundamentally building our society together.[[39]](#footnote-39)*

As part of our consideration of food and the sacred, we posed the following three questions to the representatives of several different faith communities represented in the Dublin City Inter-Faith Forum:

* What role do food and fasting play in your religious tradition?
* What are the values and principles that underlie the practices of your community in relation to food?
* What lessons can we learn from the festivals and occasions where food plays a role?

A central conclusion is that religious traditions associate food with concepts and values such as sharing, celebration, community, and solidarity. In *Deus Caritas Est* Pope Benedict XVI writes about the Eucharist as follows: ‘Eucharistic communion includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn. A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.’ [[40]](#footnote-40) Here is Maimonides: ‘To eat and drink on a festival in the company of your family without providing for the poor and distressed is not ‘the joy of the commandment’ but the joy of your stomach. It is a disgrace.’ According to Gandhi, ‘To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and the promise of food as wages.’[[41]](#footnote-41) Sikhs welcome guests for free meals in their houses of worship. As a member of the Irish Sikh community states: ‘Langar [the distribution of free meals] was started by Guru Nanak to feed the visiting Sangat [the community] who were coming to listen to his sermons and discussion … The same vegetarian food is served to everyone irrespective of caste, creed, status; to king, saint or pauper. It is the service of mankind …’

In Islam during Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, and in many other religions, food is paired naturally with fasting. The abstinence from certain types or all food and drink can further patience, introspection, discipline, appreciation, detachment and compassion. Fasting, temperance, and dietary rules, as practiced in faith communities, have considerable relevance to the transition in food habits that is now so urgently needed at the global level.

Many religions, including Hinduism, teach that wasting food is intrinsically wrong because food is a gift that requires gratitude. In many traditions, eating is preceded by prayer. To accept that the earth and the food it yields are in some sense ‘given’, or sacred, has ethical implications going beyond food security. In response to the 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the World Council of Churches (WCC) General Secretary Rev. Prof. Dr. Jerry Pillay stated: ‘The pursuit of short-term financial gains through aggressive land use and wanton resource extraction has wrought immeasurable costs to life and all creation and will impose a heavy burden on our children for millennia, imperiling their very future. As Christians we believe that life-in-creation is a sacred gift from God.’[[42]](#footnote-42)

In the battle to ensure food security for all, it is increasingly recognized that political processes need to be complemented by *multi-stakeholder forms of cooperation* at many levels. We need ‘due diligence to ensure that the relevant stakeholders are included.’[[43]](#footnote-43) In the light of the values described here, we urge the inclusion in multi-stakeholder processes of the representatives or nominees of churches and faith communities, for several practical reasons.

First, faith communities are open to a dialogue drawing on deep cultural sources, such as respect for nature and a holistic understanding of what it means to be human. Religious perspectives bring to the debate on food security a strong focus on providing the basic necessities of life for all, and upholding the value claim that this goal must not be subordinated to concerns for profit or the logic of the market. Religious perspectives thus offer a distinct order of priorities which can bring a useful catalyst to the wider public debate.

Second, religious actors and the narratives of religious traditions can often reach and engage people who cannot be reached by secular narratives and appeals. In particular, they can reach the marginalised and under-represented.

Third, faith-inspired organizations operate on the local, regional, national and global levels. They are well-placed to nurture friendships across institutional and national divides.

Fourth, behavioral shifts will have to take place to improve food security under conditions of climate change, ecological degradation, shrinking resources, and a growing world population. Notably, we need a shift away from patterns of overconsumption—particularly when it comes to meat and dairy among wealthier populations—and towards a more deliberative relationship with nature and the land. Faith communities can help promote the changes of lifestyle that are needed for a ‘just transition.’

Fifth, faith communities have long practical experience in alleviating hunger and malnourishment, not least in areas affected by instability and conflict. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many religious actors extended their existing initiatives to focus on food insecurity. Faith-inspired organizations are supported in their efforts by the funds raised among believers and supporters. In some contexts, religious actors may be judged especially trustworthy and altruistic by donors and recipients.

Sixth, and finally, faith communities are often exemplary role models for 'action in hope'. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was sometimes imagined that individuals maximising their personal consumption could unintentionally serve the public good by creating a demand for products and services. Therefore, the liberal principle of pursuing self-interest as long as it did not (seemingly) harm others was not necessarily a restraint on consumption or the accumulation of wealth:

[ …] probably all the great seas fisheries are inexhaustible; that is to say that nothing we do seriously affects the number of fish.’ (T.H Huxley, speech at the International Fisheries exhibition, 1883)[[44]](#footnote-44)

‘Negligibility’, as an economic term, implies that ‘as an individual, much of what I do is irrelevant to social outcomes.’[[45]](#footnote-45) In the 21st century, the liberal reliance on self-interest becomes less plausible the more clearly we see that the destruction of the environment and the impairment of social services through structural inequalities are not ‘negligible’ as consequences of our personal economic choices. The ‘do no harm’ principle can only be interpreted today in the light of an over-arching responsibility to build society together. Economic choices made by businesses and other actors give rise to social and environmental externalities. It is increasingly understood that we should put an economic value on those externalities, as in the case of carbon taxes. However, taxes are not enough.[[46]](#footnote-46) A broad vision is needed of the interrelationship between the profit motive and not-for-profit motivations in all economic activity.

Action in accordance with responsibility can be described as *action in hope*. Hope is an inner resource implying a readiness to engage with our circumstances and act positively and rationally, even in the face of uncertainty and steep odds.[[47]](#footnote-47) Planetary ecology and the need for a just transition in the organisation of the economy depend on numerous individual decisions linked together by a common criterion of evaluation. This common criterion cannot be the standard of mere self-interest, which pushes us in different directions. How then can we picture ourselves as co-workers in a shared project?

From a religious perspective, actions that conform with hope will be in harmony with other similar actions, including other people’s actions. There is an ‘in–built’ consistency, compatibility, and coherence. This is not just about shaping coalitions; the point is deeper. When we act in hope, the fruits of action are in some sense ‘given’. We do not see ourselves as complete masters of cause and effect. The overall design may not yet have taken shape. In this way, the ‘standard of hope’ becomes a way of understanding how separate actors, often invisible to one another, work together towards an unseen future. We suggest that any common criterion of evaluation at the local or global level will resemble such a standard. Hope, if restored to a fuller meaning in our culture, can help to bridge the gap between the familiar and the unknown – between today and a future that is perhaps not even imaginable. To paraphrase Voltaire, *si l’espérance n’existait pas, il aurait fallu l’inventer –* ‘if there were no such thing as hope, we would need to invent it.’

II. B – Food and human rights

We cite above the definition of *food security* agreed in the FAO in 2001.[[48]](#footnote-48) The international peasants’ movement, La Vía Campesina, in 1996 proposed an alternative concept, *food sovereignty*, which has been defined as the ‘right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through socially just, ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their collective right to define their own policies, strategies and systems for food production, distribution and consumption.’[[49]](#footnote-49)

The human right to food is guaranteed by several international instruments. It was first recognised in 1948 as a component of an ‘adequate standard of living’ in Article 25(1) of the UDHR. This right was also included in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)[[50]](#footnote-50), and as an aspect of the right to life in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)[[51]](#footnote-51). Moreover, the right to food can be found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 24(2)(c) and 27(3)), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Articles 25(f) and 28(1)), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (where Article 20 guarantees the right ‘to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence’), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Article 12(2). The right to food, too, is proclaimed in several regional human rights instruments, as well as in domestic constitutions. Finally, the right to food is implied in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which mainly addresses food security.[[52]](#footnote-52)

The fundamental human right to food is both a self-standing guarantee protected under conventional and customary international law and an integral part of an indivisible fabric of rights relating to the right of the individual to an adequate standard of living (inter alia, the rights to food, housing, sanitation, water, and health); the rights of workers, peasants, and smallholders (inter alia, rights to land, to seeds, to safety at work, to fair wages, and to organise); and the rights of communities and indigenous peoples (indigenous rights to land and traditional means of subsistence; rights to social security; food sovereignty).

The body of regulation pertaining to the right to food offers several advantages. States are under a legal obligation: the right to food promotes the transformation of social benefits that individuals or households receive under government food security programmes into legal entitlements. The primary objective of the right to food is to ensure that everyone, individually or as a member of a group, has permanent and secure access to healthy food that is produced in a sustainable and culturally acceptable manner.[[53]](#footnote-53) This access can be provided through three channels that often work in combination: (a) self-production, (b) access to income-generating activities and (c) social protection, either informally through community support or through State-administered mechanisms.[[54]](#footnote-54) The State is under immediately applicable obligations not to interfere with the enjoyment of the right to food, for example by depriving individuals or communities of food or the ability to produce food. Finally, aspects of the right to food which cannot be implemented immediately and in full are subject to an obligation of progressive realisation, and States must adopt national strategies to work towards full compliance with the right.[[55]](#footnote-55) The *obligation of progressive realisation* is often overlooked, though some countries have introduced comprehensive social protection systems that reference the right to food.[[56]](#footnote-56)

At present there is no effective multilateral, human rights-based, globally coordinated response to the hunger crisis that would prioritise the voices of the most affected countries and peoples.[[57]](#footnote-57) However, the above brief mapping of the state of the field does strongly indicate the potential of a human-rights-centred approach, in consort with and in support of food sovereignty movements and others, to increase the priority given at the international level to realising the right to food. A human-rights centred approach to the right to food will flourish best within a strong overall human rights culture focussed on the dignity[[58]](#footnote-58) of every person and on positive action to create the social and physical environment in which human dignity is respected and rights can be enjoyed. We discuss these challenges further below under the heading ‘spaces for dialogue and negotiation.’

A human-rights-centred approach further suggests a wide range of specific recommendations:

1. Given our conclusion that a sense of the sacred and a commitment to human rights converge in support of an overall vision, the European Union’s Fundamental Rights Agency, building on its conferences in 2018 and 2021, should continue to promote a holistic understanding of human rights obligations, including the right to food, and to encourage cooperation and mutual literacy between human rights advocates and religious actors
2. The land rights of indigenous peoples, peasants, and other groups which depend on access to land for the realisation of their right to food must be protected by law.
3. Ethical principles, such as the non-wastage principle, should be interpreted more strictly, to include resources needed for food production such as land and water distribution.[[59]](#footnote-59)
4. States are under an obligation to protect individuals’ enjoyment of the right to food against violations by third parties, including by establishing an adequate regulatory framework for cross-border activities of corporations. Commercial values such as predictability should be weighed against the obligation of public authorities to protect ecosystems and livelihoods.
5. The manufacture and export for use elsewhere of agrochemicals banned for domestic use should be prohibited.
6. Crop diversification should be encouraged, and mandated on massive monoculture plantations.[[60]](#footnote-60)
7. Governments should use market-based tools, labelling, and regulation to discourage the use of ultra-processed junk food and beverages, ban their targeted advertising to young people and other vulnerable groups, and implement and support campaigns that aim to regulate the advertising of unhealthy products.[[61]](#footnote-61) Funds raised through junk food taxes should be used to subsidise the cost of producing and consuming high-quality, healthy foods.
8. Centring human rights obligations and in particular the right to food, States should urgently consider restructuring or relief from unsustainable debt, and where appropriate, the need for new or dedicated financing mechanisms.
9. Following the example of the WHO’s framework convention on tobacco control, States should enact provisions to guard against the risk that international organisations will be unduly influenced by agri-food corporations, including the major operators in high-risk sectors such as agrochemical, fast food, beverage, tobacco, and fossil fuel industries.[[62]](#footnote-62)
10. Food-related international organisations should promote transparency frameworks and the disclosure of financial donations by private actors.
11. States should fully implement the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, and in particular the provisions of that treaty on farmers’ rights.[[63]](#footnote-63)
12. States, international organisations, and other agencies and actors should adopt a gender-sensitive and intersectional approach to their work on food security.
13. Civil society organisations should support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food[[64]](#footnote-64) by submitting relevant complaints and by asking him to evaluate the relationship between the right to food, food security, resilient food systems and food sovereignty.
14. The progressive development of international law can be envisaged in other areas, in relation, for example, to the jurisprudence of ecocide and the responsibilities of non-State actors in the sphere of human rights.

II. C – Selected global issues relating to food security

“Realism,” as a value in foreign policy and international relations, should refer in the first instance to *contact with reality*. We need to clarify the structural factors that are changing the nature of international relations and to identify the main global phenomena that deserve urgent attention. Broadly speaking, these trends are to be found in nature (climate, biodiversity, genetics), the virtual world (devices connected to the Internet, AI), and the political sphere (polarization and the hollowing out of dialogue). The premise of our project is that food insecurity is a useful lens through which to view environmental, technological, and social challenges – and thereby to bring the many dangerous trends within the scope of a workable philosophy. We offer some further thoughts here on the climate and biodiversity emergencies; the international financial architecture and the ‘financialization’ of trade and investment; the almost complete disconnect between the disarmament and development agendas, though in the real world they are closely linked; trade policies; inequality and food insecurity; conflict and food insecurity; the question of sanctions; and the potential role of the European Union in a global transition.

**The climate and biodiversity emergencies**

Much of the discussion around climate focusses on the risk of temperatures rising by 1.5 degrees centigrade above the pre-industrial average. Unfortunately, there is a risk of an even higher rise in temperature. We do not know precisely when certain ‘tipping points’ will be reached that will unleash dramatic changes in ice sheets, forests, and other critical influences on climate. Such tipping points are the largest threat to our long-term food security. Our current global heating level (the average for 2022) is 1.2 degrees centigrade above the pre-industrial average. In March 2023, the temperature was 1.48 degrees centigrade above (though that statistic refers only to one month). The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) recently estimated that there is a 66 per cent chance that at least one year in the period 2023 to 2027 will see an average global temperature of more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. We are already exposed to increased heatwaves, droughts, floods, fires and other extreme weather events which endanger global food production and distribution. For example, parts of Europe have experienced an unprecedented heatwave in summer 2023. Pakistan saw one third of its land area flooded last year. The Horn of Africa has suffered consecutive droughts with successive crops failing and livestock dying. Both the yields and nutrient contents of many crops are damaged by high temperatures. The tropics are being pushed toward the limits of human habitability.

Synthetic fertilisers and pesticides cause damage to our ecosystems and biodiversity, including nitrate pollution to waterways.[[65]](#footnote-65) The current rate of species loss is far greater than was seen in the previous five mass extinctions (that we know of).[[66]](#footnote-66) We require regulations to discourage the over-use of synthetic fertiliser and pesticides and to encourage a greater production of organic fertiliser; and measures to prevent further wildlife destruction both to save the ecosystem from collapsing and to avoid potential new pandemics.

**Food systems and climate**

Food systems account for an estimated 30 to 34 per centof global greenhouse gas emissions, with around 71 per cent of this originating from agriculture and land use-related activities.This means that increases in food production under the status quo would cripple the chance of meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change. We need to envisage an overhaul of food and agriculture policy with a focus on net zero; as well as a dietary transition.

**Financialization and the international financial architecture**

Globally, financial assets are four times the size of the real economy.[[67]](#footnote-67) The argument that futures exchanges buffer markets against risk is increasingly tenuous. According to one study, ‘every year between 65 and 215 times as much wheat is traded in the US as harvested.’[[68]](#footnote-68) Speculation is rife; including by tens of thousands of ‘teenagers with trading apps.’[[69]](#footnote-69) Financiers are buying land. According to Land Matrix,[[70]](#footnote-70) over 70 per cent of the world’s farmland is owned or controlled by 1 per cent of its farmers. In many geographies, the organisation of markets favours ‘productivity’ and profit at the expense of biodiversity, the protection of habitats, dietary health, avoiding pollution, meeting climate change commitments, and equitable international trade – not to mention resilience in food systems. The agri-business sector is consolidating ‘vertically’ as well as ‘horizontally’. That is, as well as ‘horizontal’ mergers and acquisitions, we are seeing the same companies involved in seed, fertiliser, processing, packing, distribution, and retail.

Traditionally, antitrust policy in the US was oriented towards the distribution of power in the economy and the welfare of citizens broadly understood. Since the 1980s, partly because of globalisation and its perceived imperatives, there has been a shift towards an antitrust policy based on the single idea of lowering prices for consumers. But ‘cheap’ food in the US raises the price tag of diet-related diseases, which according to one study costs $3.7 trillion per year to treat.[[71]](#footnote-71) When companies control the storage of food, as they often do, there are obvious conflicts of interest surrounding the price of stocks released to the market. Crisis planning is undermined if the size and nature of food reserves are invisible to public authorities.[[72]](#footnote-72)

As of June 2023, any discussion of the international financial architecture needs to address the UN Secretary General’s new, wide-ranging policy brief.[[73]](#footnote-73) The purpose of the Secretary General’s new study is worth quoting in part:

The international financial architecture, crafted in 1945 after the Second World War, is undergoing a stress test of historic proportions – and it is failing the test … [it] already had structural deficiencies at the time of its conception … [it] is entirely unfit for purpose in a world characterized by unrelenting climate change, increasing systemic risks, extreme inequality, entrenched gender bias, highly integrated financial markets vulnerable to cross-border contagion, and dramatic demographic, technological, economic and geopolitical changes …The existing architecture has been unable to support the mobilization of stable and long-term financing at scale for investments needed to combat the climate crisis and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals …

The change that is now needed is partly about perspective and proportionality in relation to the scale and allocation of resources and what this may tell us about our values. In 2021, global financial assets held by financial corporations were estimated at $510 trillion. In 2019, subsidies for fossil fuels added up to $468 billion worldwide, more than double all aid to poor countries.[[74]](#footnote-74) In 2022, western oil companies doubled their profits to $219 billion[[75]](#footnote-75) and paid $110 billion in dividends. The US Administration’s proposed military budget for 2024 is of the order of $840 billion. Global military spending amounts to more than $2000 billion and is increasing. These sums can be compared with the $100 billion per year, not yet delivered, that developed countries committed to mobilize collectively to support developing countries throughout the world in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. In the IMF, the continent of Africa, home to 1.4 billion people and more than 60% of the world’s extreme poor, received only 5.2 per cent of the latest issuance of special drawing rights (SDRs).[[76]](#footnote-76) A report published by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) at the end of June 2022 highlighted that there had been an increase in the need for humanitarian assistance that year by 29%, compared to mid-2021. Further, the report notes that there is a shortage of $36.9 billion to meet these requirements.[[77]](#footnote-77) In a news briefing in July 2023, the Chief Economist of the World Food Programme (WFP) stated that his agency has received 29% less in funding this year than at the same point in 2022.[[78]](#footnote-78) Donor contributions are the basis on which IFAD mobilises further funding through borrowing and co-financing. The latest IFAD replenishment (IFAD 12, covering the years 2021 – 2023) had raised approximately $1.2 billion by the end of 2022. Few countries have met the agreed 0.7% target for ODA.

**Disarmament and development**

Article 26 of the UN Charter recognizes the need to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security ‘with the least diversion of the world’s economic and human resources to arms.’ The legally binding commitments of the Charter and the politically binding commitments of the Helsinki Final Act remain unfulfilled. There is scope to link the implementation of disarmament objectives with the Sustainable Development Goals in a decisive way, in order to bring the historical relationship between disarmament and development back to the forefront of international consciousness. This is partly a matter of political culture. A decade ago, climate experts and food systems experts, and climate diplomacy and food systems diplomacy, were largely separate spheres. As we discuss below, COP 28 is an opportunity to bring those ‘two cultures’ into dialogue. In a similar way, we need to reconnect development diplomacy and disarmament diplomacy. This connection was in any case always implicit in the committee structure of the UN General Assembly and the parallel ‘baskets’ of the Helsinki process.

We recommend:

1. Reconnecting the disarmament and development agendas on the model of the growing interaction between climate experts and food systems experts
2. Supporting proposals for a fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly on disarmament (‘SSOD IV’)

**Trade policies**

Overdependence on agricultural and food imports leaves countries extremely vulnerable to external shocks. For example, while 65% of the world’s arable land is in Africa, only a third of cereals consumed in Africa is produced on the continent.[[79]](#footnote-79) From 2016 to 2018, Africa imported about 85% of its food from outside the continent, leading to an annual food import bill of $35 billion, which is forecast to reach $110 billion by 2025.[[80]](#footnote-80) That African countries are net food importers, with farmers producing below their potential, is partially due to the effects of certain trade policies and practices.

Smallholders produce 70% of the food consumed in low- and middle-income countries. 80% of the people in extreme poverty live in rural areas. Against this background, it is estimated that small-scale farmers receive about $0.06 for every $1 of food they produce.[[81]](#footnote-81) Linking small producers to markets is a vital aspect of food systems transformation.

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**Inequality**

The problem of rising inequality arose in all five working groups under our project and was a special concern of the working group on polarisation. In this domain, domestic and international policies intersect. We recommend:

1. Better provision of social safety nets, cash and food transfers, and access to health services for those experiencing food insecurity
2. A greater political say for women, youth, small-scale farmers, and indigenous communities
3. Increased financial transfers from the ‘developed’ to the ‘least developed’ world, including as compensation for the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions which have largely emanated from the developed world
4. A reconsideration of debt repayments and the role and use of SDRs
5. A reconsideration of the influence of ‘informal’ groupings within the financial system
6. Progressive taxation
7. Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing/ reporting metrics to focus on reducing inequality
8. ESG criteria to acknowledge companies’ dependence on social goods (education, infrastructure, public order) and a review in the light of social values[[83]](#footnote-83) of remuneration packages for executives and profit-taking by shareholders

**Conflict**

Conflict, like inequality, is a topic that arose in each of our working groups. In conflict situations acute hunger and malnutrition can spread quickly through a breakdown of food systems. This can lead to forced migration.[[84]](#footnote-84) Food supply chains can also break down; particularly where opposing forces control different areas of the food supply chain. Other potential impacts include a rise in energy costs and food production costs. The impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the continuing war is felt in many third countries which import basic cereal staples. We recommend a continuing strong commitment by faith communities and others to creative peace-making.

**Sanctions**

Addressing food insecurity caused by non-State actors in armed conflicts or by failed States requires a multifaceted approach, including both sanctions and in some circumstances greater engagement.

At the same time, the use of sanctions, such as asset freezes, is also a major contributor to food insecurity. Sanctions imposed on Iraq in the 1990s cost hundreds of thousands of lives and permanently damaged the country’s social and economic fabric.[[85]](#footnote-85) Most of the food insecure countries in the world are also sanctioned states. For instance, according to the Global Hunger Index, countries such as Burundi, Eritrea, Yemen, Afghanistan, Chad, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and North Korea are the most food insecure countries, and at the same time these countries have also suffered long periods of international sanctions. At the country level, when such sanctions are imposed, governments frequently either do not or cannot provide the resources that are needed to produce food or/and control food distribution. A study by a Venezuelan economist shows that US sanctions (though not on food imports) had a huge impact on securing food, and left millions hungry.[[86]](#footnote-86)

We recommend:

1. Upholding UN resolution 2417 (concerning the use of starvation as a weapon of war) so that the recent events in Tigray, Ethiopia, will not be replicated (only 15% of food aid needs were allowed into Tigray by the Ethiopian government[[87]](#footnote-87)) and in some circumstances promoting greater engagement with non-State actors.
2. Paying closer attention to the implications of economic measures for the right to food.

**Fisheries**

Fisheries and marine ecology have an essential part to play in the transformation of global food systems. The Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, unanimously endorsed in 2021 by the 34th Session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, is now a benchmark. Work should continue on ‘an evolving and positive vision for fisheries and aquaculture in the twenty-first century, where the sector is fully recognized for its contribution to fighting poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.’[[88]](#footnote-88) Similarly, the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (June 2022) should be fully supported. This agreement sets out measures for transparency and accountability in how governments support their fishing sectors.

**Towards a global dietary project**

Unhealthy diets are responsible for millions of deaths every year, as well as adding to pressures on public health and welfare systems. We quote above the study suggesting that ‘cheap’ food in the US contributes to diet-related diseases costing $3.7 trillion per year to treat. The global dietary project promoted by the Lancet[[89]](#footnote-89) suggests that improving nutrition, especially early childhood nutrition, in the poorest populations can converge with a much-needed transition in richer countries towards healthier eating. In this area, the choices made by individuals cumulatively shape overall developments. Faith communities can help promote the changes of lifestyle that are needed, in particular a shift away from patterns of overconsumption among wealthier populations.

**The role of the European Union**

The European Union is a unique actor. It has a broad range of policy areas and instruments at its disposal, ranging from agricultural, trade, development and climate policies to diplomacy, human rights promotion and peacebuilding. The EU together with its 27 Member States continues to be the world’s largest aid donor, its voice is represented in important global and multilateral fora, and it is a major contributor to global trade through both imports and exports. The EU is thus well placed to play a key role in contributing to resilience in global food systems. Building on its many humanitarian initiatives, the European Union should favour systemic shifts in support of the transition towards more just, resilient and sustainable food systems, as stipulated in the March 2022 Communication of the European Commission on ‘*Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of*  *food systems*’[[90]](#footnote-90) and reaffirmed by the EU Council in its June 2022 conclusions on ‘*Team Europe response to global insecurity.’*

We recommend:

1. Strengthening localisation as the first pillar of EU leadership. This points to the importance of agroecology[[91]](#footnote-91) as an approach based on science and traditional wisdom, and strongly rooted in ecological principles, food sovereignty and the right to adequate food.
2. The European Union should foresee adequate spaces for consultation with local communities, smallholder farmers and civil society within pertinent policy frameworks and mechanisms (trade agreements, the EU Global Gateway investment initiative).
3. Consultations with stakeholders should continue through time (an ‘iterative approach’) allowing for course corrections and adaptation (a ‘sense-making approach’).
4. As the second pillar of EU leadership, the European Union should bring a stronger policy coherence (overcoming silo approaches) to the many international contexts in which there is scope to reduce poorer countries’ external dependencies. We note that the EU Joint Research Centre aims to ‘contribute to the adoption of an integrated approach to the external dimension of EU policies to maximise their positive impact.’[[92]](#footnote-92)
5. The EU should consider adopting a food sovereignty lens on international trade, and in particular to privilege domestic and local-scale production of diverse, culturally appropriate crops over export-led agriculture.
6. Following-up on the current EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020- 2024), the European Union should step up action on the promotion of the right to adequate food in bilateral, regional, and international fora.
7. The EU should reinforce the integrated approach to external conflicts and crises by strengthening its civilian peacebuilding policies and by setting up an EU Human Security & Peace Index with people-centred benchmarks (including on access to adequate food)
8. The European Union should fulfil its commitments on climate finance,[[93]](#footnote-93) should take the lead in the operationalisation of a Loss and Damage Finance Facility, as agreed at COP, and uphold and step up its commitments to the implementation of international agreements on climate, deforestation, biodiversity, access to water, and governance of the oceans
9. The European Union should provide greater transparency on the destination of food exports in the EU Solidarity Lanes[[94]](#footnote-94) and ensure that these exports reach ‘hunger hotspots’ in sufficient quantity
10. The European Union should embed short-term emergency humanitarian measures in a broader long-term framework to make them consistent with the objective of transforming global food systems.
11. The European Union should significantly increase direct humanitarian and development funding to local grassroots civil society organisations, including faith-based and religious organisations who can be important allies in the effort to enhance food and nutrition security.
12. The Commission, EU Member States, and the EIB, which together constitute IFAD’s most important source of funding, should significantly strengthen that support in the course of the IFAD 13 Replenishment beginning in late 2023.

**Spaces for dialogue and negotiation**

Our working group on global issues and other working groups spent time considering the spaces for promoting our recommendations. A significant parameter is that international cooperation will increasingly depend on a better understanding of the articulation between local, regional, international, and transnational governance. A second parameter is the potential shift from traditional forms of party-political organisation to social mobilisation and activism as a means for influencing change. The principle is easily stated: States, acting within the framework of appropriate multilateral mechanisms, should conduct an end-to-end review of structural issues and opportunities at the international level which impede, or which could assist, all public authorities and actors in civil society to fulfil international human rights obligations on the right to food. Such a review should take place in an open and transparent way, and with full participation by civil society, food sovereignty advocates, peasants organisations, and indigenous peoples.

At the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in 2021, 110 countries committed to embark on ‘national pathways for food-systems transformation,’ policies consistent with both the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. The Food Systems Summit ‘Stocktaking Moment’ will take place in Rome in the last week of July 2023. The UNFSS meeting in Rome is evidently an important occasion for reviewing the implementation of our commitments and looking to the future.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, provide for Summits at four-yearly intervals. The first SDG Summit since 2019 will be held in New York in September 2023. SDG 2, ‘zero hunger,’ is centrally important for present purposes. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the action plan based on the SDGs, encourages member states to ‘conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels.’ These voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are not a box-ticking exercise; they require continuous learning.[[95]](#footnote-95) VNRs are for the consideration of the UN membership as a whole. As the year 2030 approaches, the relevant UN bodies face the task of evaluating the SDGs in the light of the progress made between their adoption in 2015 and the target year 2030. It can be expected that UN member states will maintain the commitments already made beyond 2030. However, they may also need to develop additional themes and to improve working methods.

The World Food Forum 2023 flagship event will take place on 16 – 20 October in Rome,hosted at the FAO headquarters. The next meeting of the Committee on World Food Security of the FAO (CFS) is scheduled for 23 – 27 October 2023. This meeting will be in a position to consider a new document prepared by FAO, UNEP, and UNDP as a joint project: ‘Rethinking our food systems/A guide for multi-stakeholder collaboration.’ For the reasons stated above, we believe that multi-stakeholder processes should include the representatives or nominees of churches and faith communities.

COP 28, the 28th United Nations Climate Change conference (Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC) will be held from 30 November to 12 December 2023, at the Expo City, Dubai, UAE. The Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, established in 2017 under the UNFCCC, recognizes the role that agriculture must play in tackling climate change. In the present context, it is relevant that the host country, UAE, is strongly committed to the 2019 Document on ‘Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together’ as a source of political guidance.[[96]](#footnote-96)

Other significant dates in the international calendar include meetings in the UNCTAD and WTO frameworks, meetings of the G20 (New Delhi, September 2023) and G7, and the next Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G) (Paris, summer 2024). The right to food is supported by an international institutional system in which the central actors include the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The wider institutional framework relating to the right to food also includes the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and numerous other bodies and agencies the mandates of which relate to food and food security in various ways. Within this constellation, IFAD is notable for its exclusive focus on transforming rural economies and food systems.

The many different spaces in which it is possible for civil society to engage in a policy dialogue with the institutions of the European Union require careful consideration. The European Parliament adopted a resolution on 6 July 2022 on addressing food security in developing countries[[97]](#footnote-97) and a resolution on 23 June 2022 on the future of EU-Africa trade relations.[[98]](#footnote-98) From the perspective of stakeholders in the present project, particular importance is attached to Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in force since 2009, which provides for ‘an open, transparent and regular dialogue’ with churches, faith communities, and philosophical organisations. There is scope for a renewal of the Article 17 dialogue, taking a fresh look at the underlying vision, working methods, and policy priorities. In this context, resilience in global food systems could be an important topic. It can be noted as well that the Economic and Social Committee has a workstream on Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment.

The UN Secretary-General’s document *Our Common Agenda*, released in September 2021, offers a vision of the future of global cooperation. In the light of this document, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution in 2022 to hold a Summit on 22 – 23 September 2024. The ‘Summit of the Future’ is intended to build upon the SDG Summit in 2023 and breathe new life into the multilateral system. The UN Secretary-General’s *New Agenda for Peace*[[99]](#footnote-99) was published on 20 July 2023.

Our group held its first meeting at the OSCE Documentation Centre in Prague in October 2022. The OSCE, one of the world’s largest regional organizations, has been developing a food security agenda over many years. In a Ministerial decision in Vilnius in 2009, the OSCE participating States stated:

… the issue of food security must become a top priority on the OSCE agenda, embracing attention and commitment to all three areas traditionally falling within the remit of the Organisation (conflict prevention, economic environmental co-operation and human rights), since the right to food must be considered intrinsic to other fundamental human rights, including political rights … conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of protracted conflicts on the basis of the appropriate principles of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act through dialogue between peoples and governments are also essential to ensure food security

At approximately the same time, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly adopted a ‘Resolution on Food Security, Limited Water Resources and Stability in the OSCE Area.’

In 2022 and 2023, Russia and Ukraine have signed and renewed agreements on the export of grain (though under the auspices of the UN, not the OSCE). The European Union and others have taken concomitant measures. These understandings demonstrate that constructive relationships need not wholly vanish even in the middle of a crisis.[[100]](#footnote-100) All sides recognise that the present conflict affecting the production and export of Ukrainian grain is accentuating severe food insecurity in Africa and in some locations real famine.[[101]](#footnote-101) The OSCE’s Mediterranean conferences with Partners for Cooperation in North Africa and Middle East illustrate the potential for region-to-region dialogue in the sphere of food security.

It is important, even in a situation of deep conflict, not to lose sight of the OSCE comprehensive model of security, its regional scope, and its methodology. We understand that new forms of academic support for the OSCE are under consideration, in the perspective of the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025. Several members of our group are ready to associate their future work with such a community of reflection under OSCE auspices. In the light of circumstances, this research could support far-seeing ‘talks about talks’ with a view to a new, multi-layered, pan-European process to begin on or after the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act in 2025.

In the end, a global roadmap, including effective climate action and reimagined agricultural systems, will entail the establishment of clear goals and the sustained coordination of actors across multiple domains. It is our hope that European and other policymakers will advocate for change in all the upcoming international fora described above.

**The room behind the shop**

At the centre of our thinking are the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As argued above, they embody, in embryo, a vision of the global citizenship of nation States and a common medium-term plan for humanity. Other global strategies are easily combined with the SDGs – we think in particular of disarmament and a renewal of the global financial architecture. At the same time, it seems appropriate to step for a moment into the ‘room behind the shop’ (Michel de Montaigne) to ask ourselves whether some new ingredient is needed to make multilateralism fit for purpose. Do we have frameworks of engagement that focus effectively on vision and values? Where we can think twenty or thirty years ahead, in a global perspective, in the light of our deepest cultural sources? Is there scope to improve existing frameworks or support them through new forms of mobilisation?

There is always an inevitable distinction between a specific decision or agreement and an underlying ethos or sense of direction.[[102]](#footnote-102) In the long run, it is only the presence of an underlying sense of direction or ‘standard of hope’ that will enable the international community to interpret, question, and reform the granular details of the SDGs in a consistent way and to respond to new circumstances. However, the search for agreed criteria for action across political and cultural boundaries is very difficult given the complexity of the subject matter, the need to engage business and civic society, the breaking down of knowledge into specialised fields, new ways of manipulating public debate, and at least to some degree, a loss of trust in our shared future. All these factors are exacerbated by polarisation and conflict, which of their nature metastasise into new threats. We are experiencing the continuing formation of a global space in which decisions resonate across borders without there being an equivalent development in the realm of conscience and mutual understanding. There is important work to be done, involving multiple stakeholders, to *create the consensus, the constituency* *and the* *civilisation* that will enable the SDGs and the forthcoming Summit of the Future to fulfil their intended purpose.

In many cases, the structuring of dialogue implies in itself the broad outcome; so much so, that ‘talks about talks’ are often the most fruitful stage of any process. Mediation is essential: someone ‘holds the pen.’ As a delegate, a diplomat represents his or her government’s point of view. As a chair, coordinator, facilitator, or rapporteur, he or she is expected to act impartially in the role. We suggest that any ‘civilizational’ encounter or process of the kind we envisage should have a long timeline, a comprehensive agenda, and a role for mediation, and should carry in its ‘DNA’ potential outcomes at three levels:

1. the gradual definition of new criteria or points of agreement (a ‘matrix of principles’) in the sphere of international relations with food security for all and (more generally) sharing the primary goods of lifeas a core value
2. in parallel, the progressive adoption of confidence-and security-building measures with ‘demonstration value’ in the larger picture
3. a paradigm change (over time) in our understanding of governance and of the economy

The diplomatic work we advocate reflects a ‘theory of change’ in harmony with the SDGs but resting ultimately on an evolving cultural pattern. We seek a transformation at the level of habits and assumptions, a greater historical self-awareness, and an enhanced capacity to work *systemically*, as our global situation requires. Time-lines will depend in part on how we read the climate crisis. In the sphere of climate adaptation, some policy responses are already urgent if we are to prevent catastrophic conditions and respond coherently to the inevitable movement of people from areas under threat.

II. D – Food security and polarisation

Our group arrived at a common understanding that food insecurity is not caused by a lack of available resources, but rather by systemic failure. Thus, politics and democracy are essential topics when we address food insecurity. We asked ourselves such questions as the following:

* Is it credible for citizens to reason together about a shared future without being concerned for one another’s economic, social, and environmental wellbeing and security?
* Can freedom be understood as mere ‘choice’ or should it be exercised in friendship and with responsibility?
* Are we accountable for the impact of our economic choices on others, including external stakeholders?
* Is democracy a given, or is it ‘an ever-evolving process’ in which we ‘strive towards the better adoption and implementation of democratic principles’?[[103]](#footnote-103)

As one definition proposes[[104]](#footnote-104), ‘Democracy will be fully implemented only when individuals and all peoples have access to the primary goods of life, food, water, health care, education, work, and certainty of their rights, through an ordering of internal and international relations that guarantees everyone a chance to participate.’

In this very broad field, we focussed on the ongoing work under the auspices of the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT) aimed at achieving a baseline understanding of the concept of polarisation. We are fortunate that IFIT was represented in our group. Polarization – where differences between two opposing groups (poles) become extreme – can be understood as a ‘hyper-problem’ which stops us addressing any other problem effectively. Even in its mildest forms, it can result in paralysis that can hinder any major social change. It is important to recognize that not all differences in opinion or disagreements between groups amount to polarization. By accurately defining what polarization is and what it is not, it becomes possible to identify and address the root causes. This, in turn, can help to promote a more inclusive and collaborative environment that fosters constructive dialogue and collective action towards a common goal, such as addressing the issue of food insecurity.

IFIT’s provisional definition of polarization is as follows:

Polarisation: a prominent division or conflict that forms between major groups in a society or political system and that is marked by the clustering and radicalisation of views and beliefs at two distant and antagonistic poles.

This working definition is informed by eight hallmarks which can be studied in detail in the discussion paper ‘First Principles: The Need for Greater Consensus on the Fundamentals of Polarisation.’[[105]](#footnote-105) To give just one example, here is part of the definition of the ‘othering’ hallmark:

In a state of polarisation, affect is the norm. Viewpoints radicalise, complexity declines, allegiance trumps ideas, and a combination of in-group romanticisation and out-group demonisation prevails.

As well as standing in the way of public reasoning, polarization has a direct impact on food security in a variety of ways. Increased polarization can lead to political instability, economic inequality, and inaction on climate change. Political instability can disrupt food supply chains and make it challenging to distribute aid to those in need, leading to food shortages and famine in extreme cases. Greater economic inequality resulting from polarization can mean that those who are less well-off struggle to afford adequate nutrition. Climate change, which is exacerbated by inaction on the issue, can cause droughts, floods, and storms that destroy crops, disrupt food supply chains, and lead to food shortages and price spikes.

It is essential to address the root causes of polarization as part of any effort to promote a more equitable and sustainable food system. In fact, progress toward resilience in global food systems can be understood as a project that in itself is an antidote to polarisation. We drew on IFIT’s field work to begin to envisage an indicative solutions spectrum. A clear picture emerges in IFIT’s work. The vast majority of attempted strategies and solutions fall into three overlapping categories, as in a Venn diagram: outreach and dialogue efforts, fact and narrative interventions, and structural reforms.

When there is a conflict between major groups that is marked by the clustering of views and beliefs at antagonistic poles, dialogue is an understandable antidote. When there is ‘othering’ at scale, it is logical that factual clarification and narrative change are understood as necessary parts of the solution (described by IFIT as the ‘truth and reconciliation reflex’). The third solutions category has to do with changes to the ecosystem in which polarisation thrives or recedes: ‘structural reforms’ involving a re-ordering of incentives and disincentives. Changes in the social ‘variables’ will produce shifts in behaviour, even if not at once. This multi-faceted theory of change implies a need for well-designed interventions involving analysis, coalition building, and the identification of measures having demonstration value in the larger picture. No one initiative is a solution in its own right.

In this perspective, our group considered the relevance to polarization of *participatory-based approaches* and *community-based approaches*in the field of food security. Participatory decision-making processes and effective outreach and dialogue efforts can be used to ensure that all stakeholders, including those most affected by food insecurity and polarization, have a voice in shaping policies and programs related to food security. Engaging parties at opposing ends of views and beliefs, especially actors at the local level, who have too often been excluded from the conversation, can provide a valuable perspective and contribute to policy formation and implementation. By involving farmers and consumers in the process, international agreements, codes of conduct, and food security policies can be more informed and better shaped to meet the needs of local communities. Dialogue based on a people’s perspective offers a simple yet powerful measure that can help depolarize society and overcome some of the complexities surrounding the food security challenge. It can also help to build trust and increase transparency and accountability.

Community-based approaches can be used to address both food insecurity and polarization by engaging community members in the process of identifying and addressing local food-related challenges. Bringing together diverse groups of people to work towards a common goal can help build trust and promote social cohesion. As discussed above, churches and faith communities are well-suited to community-based approaches. By providing food assistance, raising awareness, fostering community building, and providing education and skills training, to name a few examples, they can help create a more just and equitable society. As the century progresses, faith communities are learning to work together and to devote increasing attention to the contribution they can bring to advocacy in support of multilateral responses to the major challenges facing the whole of humanity.

Right to food and food sovereignty movements worldwide have launched effective campaigns to highlight the need for a greater focus on the social factors underpinning, and dependent on, well-functioning food systems. In particular, these movements have highlighted the roles women play in building and maintaining robust food systems as part of communities, a factor which has only recently begun to be captured in international processes, as well as the ways in which gender and other forms of discrimination compound vulnerabilities in food systems.[[106]](#footnote-106)

The moral orientation and practical methodology that helps us to counter global food insecurity can help to bring about a more salubrious global political environment. Today, international society is showing symptoms of ‘othering’, as described above. A step-change in common efforts to actualize the right to food can help us find a bigger language through which to communicate across ‘physical, ideological, and emotional distances.’[[107]](#footnote-107)

II. E – The future of agriculture and farming

Our working group on agriculture and farming identified as a core challenge the need to explore and integrate different perspectives. First, any policy perspective – such as a commitment to a complex transition in food systems - needs to connect with the perspective of individual farmers and farming businesses, who in many cases look to the long-term trends with anxiety. Second, there are multiple farmer realities: different types of farming are present simultaneously in any one geographical area at any point in time. A dialogue is needed between the proponents of ‘conventional’ agriculture, on the one hand, and ‘organic’ and/or ‘regenerative’ agriculture, on the other. Broadly speaking, ‘conventional’ agriculture and its high productivity is defended by COPA-COGECA, the largest agriculture-related lobbying organization in the EU; and La Via Campesina, the global farmers’ movement, advocates on behalf of regenerative agriculture. Third, we need to pursue unifying approaches, or unity in diversity, across continents. In principle, the national pathways developed within the UN food systems security dialogue should point to significant and growing commonalities between regional programmes such as those of the European Union and the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Policy (CAADP).[[108]](#footnote-108) The case study on palm oil undertaken as part of our project (annex 4 to this report) further illuminates the many inter-related issues at stake in the transformation of agriculture, including the frequent non-alignment of business interests with easily recognizable public goods.

In connection with the need for a multi-dimensional dialogue on the future of farming and agriculture, we found it useful to refer to the ‘obligation of progressive realization’ as defined in the human rights working group. Where aspects of the right to food cannot be implemented immediately, States have a human rights obligation to adopt long-term strategies to work towards full compliance with that right. In relation to food systems transformation, working to ensure that time is on our side is a key value. ‘Gradualness’ becomes a principle of benign change. Often there are steps valid in themselves – intrinsically valid – whose precise consequences cannot be measured or foreseen.

The European Union’s ‘green transitions’ agenda represents the world’s most ambitious policy framework to shape the future of agriculture in the light of wider goals.[[109]](#footnote-109) The goal is to ‘identify what needs to be done to deliver a truly green and regenerative economy, that gives back to the planet more than it takes, remaining within planetary boundaries, in a socially inclusive, fair and just manner.’[[110]](#footnote-110)

Approved in 2020, the European Green Deal aims to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% in 2030 (compared to 1990 levels) on the European continent and to achieve ‘climate neutrality’ by 2050.[[111]](#footnote-111) This is by far the most ambitious project of the European Union and it has far-reaching consequences for almost all parts of society. One of the sectors affected the most by the Green Deal is agriculture. The EU aims to ‘lead a global transition towards competitive sustainability from farm to fork.’[[112]](#footnote-112) The main instruments to achieve this are the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the related Farm to Fork Strategy.[[113]](#footnote-113)

One of the most important objects of the CAP is to support income of farmers through direct payments. Approximately 6.3 million farms in the EU benefit from it – nearly half of farmers’ income comes from the CAP budget. In 2018 this amounted to €41.74 billion. To adapt the CAP budget to the goals of the Green Deal, an agreement on reform of the CAP (for the period 2023-2027) was reached in June 2021. This reform gives member states more flexibility to adopt their own farm support plans from a toolbox of policies. National plans were approved by the end of 2022. The new CAP came into being on 1 January 2023.

The Farm to Fork Strategy, lying ‘at the heart of the European Green Deal,’[[114]](#footnote-114) has as its main objective the accelerated transition to a sustainable food system within the EU, addressing, inter alia, the impact on the environment and climate of our current food system; the loss of biodiversity; food security; and the affordability of food. The Farm to Fork Strategy includes a range of very specific targets, such as having 25% of total farmland under organic farming by 2030.

Not to forget are the effects the energy policies of the EU can have on the agricultural sector. The decoupling from cheap Russian natural gas following the Russian invasion of Ukraine has accelerated the employment of renewable energy systems. But as these alone are not capable of completely replacing imports of Russian gas, the drastic reduction of Russian natural gas imports has also necessitated increased LNG imports, especially from the United States.[[115]](#footnote-115) These imports come at a much higher financial price. This may have a lasting impact on the prices of fertilizers and food but also on the financial stability of farms.

Following a dramatic increase in prices, the EU Commission addressed the availability and affordability of fertilizers on 9 November 2022 and proposed a set of solutions, which were heavily criticized by COPA-COGECA.[[116]](#footnote-116) While acknowledging the value of the proposed medium and long-term strategies, the association criticized the lack of short-term solutions, and they warned of the consequences of a fertilizer shortage that would affect the 2023 harvest, affecting yields, crop quality and rotations, consumer prices and the competitiveness of European farms. In response to the criticism of EU’s fertilizer strategy, the EU has eased some of the sanctions through derogation to facilitate Russia’s export of fertilizers and agricultural goods.[[117]](#footnote-117)

Owing to high energy prices and inflation, European farmers face growing financial instability. Record inflation in the Eurozone has in effect led to a devaluation of the CAP budget. The EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, announced in his exchange with the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament on 9 January 2023 that he will support an increased budget.[[118]](#footnote-118)

We acknowledge the enormous achievement of the European Union in agreeing on the interconnected policy frameworks represented by the Green Deal, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies, and the EU Soil Health Mission funded by the Horizon Europe budget. Nevertheless, there is evidence that a significant part of the farmer population within the European Union genuinely struggles to identify with the process of transition. Examples of this reality include farmers fearing to invite other stakeholders – school students, chefs, policymakers, etc. – to their farms; farmers lacking belief that they can sell directly to consumers; and farmers believing they have to produce food in a conventional way, as they lack independent and high-quality agronomic advice on transitioning to regenerative ways of producing food. One potential difficulty lies in the complexity of the criteria with which farmers are working.[[119]](#footnote-119) The real and perceived struggles of farmers and the differences in perspective described above may translate into forms of polarisation as discussed in our working group on that subject. There were farmers’ protests throughout Europe in the summer of 2022 that will likely continue in the future. In the Netherlands, for instance, the governments’ plan to reduce the country’s nitrogen emissions and to shut down up to 3,000 farms has led to the establishment of a pro-farmer party, the BoerBurgerBeweging (BBB), which enjoyed major success in the Dutch provincial elections on 15 March 2023.

Moreover, for the majority of farmers the long-term trends in terms of rural livelihoods are far from encouraging. In 2020 there were 9,1 million farms in the EU. Of these more than 30% were located in Romania, while Poland, Italy and Spain had each a share of more than 10%. The vast majority of EU farms (63.8%) are small farms, less than 5 hectares in size. Only 3.6% belong to the largest category with at least 100 hectares. At the same time, these larger farms had 52.5% of the total area used for agricultural production in the EU. In 2020, as compared to 2005, there were far fewer farms in the EU – a loss of approximately 5 million. The only category increasing in numbers was that of the 100-hectare plus farm. In 2020, more than half of all EU farm managers were at least 55 years of age (around one third at least 65 years of age), and only 11.9% were young farmer managers (defined as those under the age of 40). The number of farm managers had fallen 11.2% in comparison to 2016. Agriculture’s share of employment in the EU had also fallen, from 6.4% in 2005 to 4.2% in 2020. Finally, in almost every EU Member State people employed in the agricultural sector have far more working hours per week on average than the rest of the work force.

European farmers are confronted with an enormous set of challenges – ambitious EU legislation, increased conditionality for financial support, and various crises - at the same time as they are engaging with what we describe below as a ‘transition to deliver multiple public goods.’ We need a clearer involvement of farmers and farmer unions in political discussions that especially concern them and their future. Instead of portraying farmers as ‘peak polluters’[[120]](#footnote-120) who stand in the way of a sustainable future, it seems necessary to listen to farmers and understand their reasons for frustration. This might also help to understand why the number of small and medium farms as well as farm managers is sharply decreasing with dramatic consequences not only for their personal lives but for the many rural areas throughout Europe they are leaving behind. We also need to understand the attachment many farmers feel to their farms, often held for generations, and farming communities’ social and cultural needs. Only then political solutions might be found that can truly contribute to a sustainable future of our food systems and food security while ‘leaving no one behind.’

The FAO has identified Ireland, Costa Rica, and Rwanda[[121]](#footnote-121) as countries which are developing credible national processes of climate-related transition. We note that in Costa Rica, since the 1980s, forest cover has increased from 24.4% to 57% (close to the optimum). This transition has been enabled by financial incentives and creative ideas such as loan guarantees, a debt-for-nature swap with Netherlands, a special tax on fossil fuels of 3.5%, and the promotion of ecotourism. The change in Costa Rica has included a cultural change: the promotion of *la pura vida* (‘the simple life’) and the renunciation of military expenditure.

The Irish approach has taken a step forward in recent days (July 2023) with the publication by the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) of the report ‘Exploring a Just Transition in Agriculture and Land Use.’[[122]](#footnote-122) NESC is a body with a broad remit that reports to the office of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister). Dr. Larry O’Connell, Director of NESC, spoke to our group on 27 April. On the same day, we had the benefit of a detailed presentation by Dr. John Gilliland, Professor of Practice at Queen’s University Belfast.[[123]](#footnote-123) Dr. Gilliland has led a seven-farm project in Northern Ireland aiming at a ‘transition to deliver multiple public goods.’ In the paragraphs that follow we try to draw some practical lessons from NESC and from the work of Dr. Gilliland.

The transition advocated by NESC starts from ‘vision and values.’ A sense of where we are trying to go and what we want to achieve risks being lost sight of if we aim merely at a series of technical changes in separate sectors – carbon commitments, agriculture, land use, soil and water quality, biodiversity, employment, housing, transport infrastructure, taxation, EU policy, international policy, and so on. Nor is it enough to aim at a single formula such as ‘creating a functioning market for ecosystem services’ (to quote from some recent commentary). What is needed is an overarching vision that will inspire individual farmers and farming communities to embark on a journey of positive change. NESC asserts that justice and fairness are essential and underlines that there is no question of a ‘transition out of agriculture;’ the goal is a transition into making optimal use of our land and agricultural resources for environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

*A transition to deliver multiple public goods* requires us to map the soil at finer resolution, to understand varied ecologies, and to grow food in new ways. We cannot rely on commercial agendas to deliver this change. Public authorities should be directly involved, developing new forms of public investment and new career paths for qualified advisors. For example, we need public investment in the technologies that enable a precise ‘accounting for nature.’ We need increased financial incentives to farmers to protect and enhance the ecosystem and to deliver the other public goods referred to above. Because inevitably there are some relative losers in a ‘just transition,’ targeted financial supports should be in place for the most vulnerable or negatively impacted groups.

*A just transition* or *transition to deliver multiple public goods* should be understood in broad terms and should not focus only on the managers of farming businesses. For example, more research is needed on the implications of transition for workers in the supply chains and downstream activity associated with agriculture and land use. The questions of housing and transport infrastructure are integral to the social transformation that is required. While some initiatives will be local and context-specific, action at local levels should be congruent with policies at the national, European, and international levels. The methodology of transition advocated by NESC is based on **research – a** multifaceted/ multi-method inquiry into different forms of evidence; **dialogue** - respectful, deep listening to experts, those impacted by policy, those at the 'front-line', decision-makers, and social thinkers; and **advice** – a commitment to continuous learning and the scaling up of advisory services. Research, dialogue, and advice form a nexus or system: lessons or insights in any one space create ripples and real change in others.

NESC recommends that work on ‘accounting for nature’ should be accelerated. Dr. Gilliland’s seven-farms project in Northern Ireland empowers farmers by enabling a regular, holistic assessment of progress by each farming business in the light of a range of public goods – reducing carbon emissions, sequestering carbon, changing the pattern of energy consumption, improving the nutritional quality of food, restoring water and soil quality, protecting animal welfare, and enabling biodiversity. The farm-by-farm approach to accurate measurement points to the use of new technologies for soil sampling and of aerial surveys to assess topography and above-ground biomass. This holistic, yet individualized and accurate, approach to measurement reaches beyond the IPCC ‘source and sink’ categories in which the statistics are aggregated in broad silos (energy, agriculture, waste).

We conclude that the vision of *accounting for nature* in order to enable a *transition to deliver multiple public goods* is the way of the future. The many factors and actors involved call for innovative ways of engaging with stakeholders, a point that also emerged strongly several other working groups. The focus should shift from the further commercialising of agriculture towards agroecology and regenerative approaches that do not use synthetic pesticides.[[124]](#footnote-124) There will be a role for local government in enabling multi-stakeholder approaches and promoting compliance with the emerging strategies. New forms of public investment can build on the extensive systems of public support that are already in place in the agricultural sector.

There is scope to include social metrics or indicators as part of a holistic approach to measurement. These indicators would draw on the ethos that is in any case widely shared among farmers by measuring the impact of the transition on local livelihoods and communities and by promoting the sharing of knowledge and experience. There are lessons to be learned from the introduction of new technologies and reporting requirements into medical practice. This was initially seen as burdensome by some practitioners. But it has contributed to multiple public goods, including better healthcare overall, income streams for medical practices, the development of new professional qualifications, cost reductions, and immense research benefits.

Ultimately, *a transition to deliver multiple public goods* is a political question. To avoid a conflictual, crisis-centred approach, and gain traction for the changes that are required, we need to find spaces in which to deliberate on the wider context - including issues around food and diet, global food security, EU policies and legislation, and local democracy.

Our recommendations from the working group on agriculture and farming can be summarised as follows:

1. *A transition to deliver multiple public goods* requires us to account for nature in new ways. We cannot rely on commercial agendas to deliver this change. Public authorities should promote a localized approach involving a regular, holistic assessment of progress by each farming business in the light of a range of public goods.

1. *New forms of public investment* and *social protection* are needed to support this transition – for example, financial incentives for relevant actions by farmers and local communities, investments in precision measuring technologies, and targeted financial supports for the most vulnerable or negatively impacted groups.
2. We should *accompany the new metrics with new ways of engaging with stakeholders and new social indicators* tracking the impact of the transition on local livelihoods and communities and ensuring that lessons or insights in any one space create ripples and real change in others.
3. In order to take root, the social vision underpinning *a transition to deliver multiple public goods* through the optimal use of our land and agricultural resources (and marine resources) will need to embrace society as a whole and ultimately international society. At stake are (i) the distinction between the profit motive and not-for-profit motivations in companies and administrative entities and (ii) a better articulation of the levels at which decisions are taken and of the need to factor in the long-term foreseeable impact of business decisions.

**III. Conclusion: Interim Recommendations**

III. A High-level values

1. Effective climate action and reimagined agricultural systems will entail the establishment of clear goals and the sustained coordination of actors across multiple domains. A values-led approach to politics and security in the perspective of 2030 or 2050 *should give an over-riding priority to sharing the primary goods of life while also accepting a longer-term responsibility to promote the ecological and climatic conditions on which life depends.*
2. *In relation to food security, we need ‘holistic’ or ‘systems thinking,’ taking into account cultural, economic, ecological, nutritional, financial, technological and other factors*.[[125]](#footnote-125) Polarisation, inequality, conflict, and preparation for conflict are an integral part of our political and economic systems and represent key variables.
3. We put forward for consideration the following definition of democracy: *Democracy will be fully implemented only when individuals and all peoples have access to the primary goods of life, food, water, shelter, health care, education, work, and certainty of their rights, through an ordering of internal and international relations that guarantees everyone a chance to participate.*
4. *A dichotomy between profit-based activities and non-profit activities does not do full justice to reality, or offer adequate practical direction for the future*. To recognise that our political and economic thought is ‘incomplete’ is to invite a practical response. More conceptual work is needed and also the continued development of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing and reporting metrics with a focus on reducing inequality. It is key that we renounce part of the economic advantage we might otherwise enjoy as individuals or associations of individuals for the sake of a life lived in common.
5. Because change cannot happen all at once, *we need to reappraise policy frameworks and in particular to develop new long-term multi-stakeholder frameworks of engagement in support of the UN SDGs.*  The goal is to enable governments and peoples to deliberate on our shared medium-term future, making room for new ideas, while remaining committed to the day-to-day negotiations taking place elsewhere.
6. Due diligence to ensure that the relevant stakeholders are included in multi-stakeholder dialogue processes should lead to the involvement of the representatives or nominees of churches and faith communities.

Without offering simple or immediate solutions, we suggest that global politics needs a *bigger language*. The concept of hope, if restored to a fuller meaning in our culture, can help to bridge the gap between the familiar and the unknown – between today and a future that is perhaps not even imaginable.[[126]](#footnote-126)

III. B Examples of practical steps

1. We can give expression to the change needed in food systems in terms of *a transition to deliver multiple public goods*. New forms of public investment and social protection should support this transition. We should accompany the new metrics with new ways of engaging with stakeholders and new social indicators.
2. The social vision underpinning a transition to deliver multiple public goods through the optimal use of our land, agricultural, and marine resources will need to embrace other parts of society and promote social cohesion. We should ensure that lessons or insights in any one space create ripples and real change in others.
3. Food-related international organisations should consider commissioning a report on the concepts, organisational principles, and medium-term objectives that can encourage a mutually beneficial engagement by political leaders and other stakeholders with religious actors.
4. The European Union’s Fundamental Rights Agency, building on its conferences in 2018 and 2021, should continue to promote a holistic understanding of human rights obligations, including the right to food, and to encourage cooperation and mutual literacy between human rights advocates and religious actors.
5. Governments should implement taxes and warning labels to discourage the use of ultra-processed junk food and beverages, ban their targeted advertising to young people and other vulnerable groups, and implement and support campaigns that aim to regulate the advertising of unhealthy products.[[127]](#footnote-127) Funds raised through junk food taxes should be used to subsidise the cost of producing and consuming high-quality, healthy foods.
6. We should start promoting a dietary transition at the global level with a focus on nutrition, beginning in early childhood, as well as sustainable production (reducing meat and dairy consumption).
7. As recommended by the FAO, work should continue on ‘an evolving and positive vision for fisheries and aquaculture in the twenty-first century, where the sector is fully recognized for its contribution to fighting poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.’
8. The European Union, as a unique actor on the world stage with a broad range of policy areas and instruments at its disposal, should promote systemic shifts at the global level (as anticipated by the European Commission in March 2022), by strengthening localisation and promoting agroecology and by bringing a stronger policy coherence, overcoming silo approaches, to the many international contexts in which there is scope to reduce poorer countries’ external dependencies.
9. The Commission, EU Member States, and the EIB, which together constitute IFAD’s most important source of funding, should significantly strengthen that support in the course of the IFAD 13 Replenishment beginning in late 2023.
10. In the light of the comparisons set out in this report, all States should bring a renewed sense of perspective and proportionality to the allocation of budgetary resources.
11. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should remain at the centre of global diplomacy. In this perspective, key international meetings such as the UNFSS Stocktaking and COP 28 should continue to develop ‘systems thinking,’ beginning with the progressive alignment of food systems diplomacy and climate diplomacy. UN member States should reconnect the disarmament and development agendas and should examine in a far-seeing manner the UN Secretary General’s policy brief on options for reforming the international financial architecture.
12. As a step in the direction of policy coherence, regional organisations should seek synergies between their existing programmes and the national pathways developed within the UN food systems security dialogue.
13. Civil society organisations should support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food by submitting relevant complaints and by asking him to evaluate the relationship between the right to food, food security, resilient food systems and food sovereignty.

1. The land rights of indigenous peoples, peasants, and other groups which depend on access to land for the realisation of their right to food must be protected by law.
2. The progressive development of international law can be envisaged in several areas, in relation, for example, to the jurisprudence of ecocide and the responsibilities of non-State actors in the sphere of human rights.
3. In regulating the cross-border activities of corporations, States should take into account the long-term impact of today’s actions and decisions. They should balance commercial values such as predictability against the obligation of public authorities to protect ecosystems and livelihoods, with a focus on issues such as concentrations of power (horizontal and vertical integration), the manufacture and export for use elsewhere of agrochemicals banned for domestic use, and the impact of massive monoculture plantations on food systems security.
4. Following the example of the WHO’s framework convention on tobacco control, States should enact provisions to guard against the risks associated with lobbying on food-related issues.
5. Renewed attention is needed to the implications of sanctions/economic measures for the right to food.
6. Academics and practitioners should develop a new field of study focussing on polarisation and de-polarisation, as recommended by the Institute for Integrated Transitions.
7. Similarly, academics and practitioners should acknowledge that any dichotomy between profit-based activities and non-profit activities does not do full justice to reality, or offer adequate practical direction for the future; this should lead to new research agendas and also to the continued development of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics with a focus on reducing inequality.[[128]](#footnote-128)

**IV. Annexes**

Annex 1: Initial research paper on food security (September 2022)

Annex 2: EU’s role in global agricultural and food systems

Annex 3: Food insecurity and human rights

Annex 4: Case study: palm oil

Annex 5: Case study: fisheries

Annex 6: List of participants in our meetings

1. ## FAO report, “The state of food insecurity in the world 2001”

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Chris Otter, *Feast and Famine: The Global Food Crisis,* March 2010, https://origins.osu.edu/article/feast-and- famine-global-food-crisis?language\_content\_entity=en [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Gordon Conway’s *The Doubly Green Revolution* (1997) was a landmark publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Sustainable Development Goal 2. In absolute terms, the highest number of undernourished people is in Asia. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Christopher Wells, Pope: *Overcoming hunger is one of humanity’s great challenges*, October 2021, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-10/pope-overcoming-hunger-is-one-of-humanity-s-great- challenges.html [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. R.H. Tawney: “Poverty is a symptom and consequence of social disorder” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.fao.org/publications/home/fao-flagship-publications/the-state-of-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-world/en> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid, xvi. FAO figures are supported by other surveys including the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), and World Food Programme (WFP) figures based on countries where the WFP has an operational presence. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The Trussell Trust/Glen Bramley et al., ‘State of Hunger: Building the Evidence on Poverty, Destitution, and Food Insecurity in the UK, Year Two Main Report’ (May 2021), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Cf. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/food-security-and-affordability/. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Cf. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220919-1 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Cf. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/wdn-20230125-1 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. In 1961 when the series started, global food availability was just 2,161 kcal on average per capita per day. Of course, there was less inequality in the 1960s and 1970s than nowadays. See https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#home [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See e.g., Hans Konrad Biesalski, ‘Hidden Hunger in the Developed World’ in Manfred Eggersdorfer, et al. (eds), *The Road to Good Nutrition* (Basel: Karger 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Michael Fakhri, Interim report of the Special Rapporteur in the right to food, 2021, para. 26, and further paras. 17-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. FAO, Food Insecurity and Violent Conflict: Causes, Consequences, and Addressing the Challenges, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. World Economic Forum 2022, *How to avert a global food crisis?* May 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYa8ffbwwFE [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See https://www.wfp.org/publications/hunger-hotspots-fao-wfp-early-warnings-acute-food-insecurity-june-november-2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The former WFP Executive Director David Beasley points out that ‘with every one percent increase in hunger, there is a two percent increase in migration.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. FIAN, The Problem with the Industrial Food System and how to fix it, July 2022, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Hans-Otto Pörtner et al, ‘IPCC WGII: Summary for Policymakers’ in Rita Adrian et al (eds), *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability: Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge University Press 2022), paras. B.4.3, C.2.2, C.4.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Joanna Bourke-Martignoni, The right to food, 2020, p. 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Cristian Timmermann, Food security as a global public good, 2018, pp. 88 et seq. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Rana Faroohar, 2022. *Homecoming.* New York. Crown, p. XVI [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 11; FAO, Crop Prospects and Food Situation Quarterly Global Report, 2022 #1 (March 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Joanna Bourke-Martignoni et al., Agricultural commercialization, gender equality and the right to food, p. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Presentation by IFAD to our group, 5th July 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. “The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022,” Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Pew CharitableTrusts, November 3, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The 2022 edition of The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture – Towards Blue Transformation. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. FIAN, The Problem with the Industrial Food System and how to fix it, July 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See, e.g., Adam Drenowski, ‘Food Insecurity has Economic Root Causes’, (2022) 3 *Nature Food* 555-556. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. FIAN, Corporate Capture of FAO, p. 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Open Letter from 238 NGOs to the UN General Assembly in September, 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. The term “multiplying effect” is taken from IFAD’s presentation to our group on 5th July. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. For this argument see the food systems ‘portfolio’ of the EU Joint Research Centre, accessible at https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-science-and-knowledge-activities/sustainable-food-systems\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Sr. Helen Alford, O.P. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\_ben-xvi\_enc\_20051225\_deus-caritas-est.html [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Quoted by Rajmohan Gandhi (grandson) in Gandhi, R. (2006). *Mohandas: A True Story of a Man, His People, and an Empire*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, p. 257.  [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-general-secretary-rev-prof-dr-jerry-pillay-on-the-6th-assessment-report-of-the-intergovernmental-panel-on-climate-change [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. “Rethinking our food systems/A guide for multistakeholder cooperation.” UNEP/FAO/UNDP, 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Melissa Lane. 2012. *Eco-Republic*. Princeton University Press, p. 52 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid., p. 51 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Taxes may be ineffective in any case due to inelastic demand (for energy, etc) [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Vaclav Havel on hope: … a state of mind, not a state of the world ... an orientation of the spirit, of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons ... It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Cf. Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action, 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Declaration of Nyéléni (27 February 2007), available via <https://nyeleni.org/IMG/pdf/DeclNyeleni-en.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. with its specific components clarified by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its General Comment No. 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. in accordance with General Comment No. 36 of the Human Rights Committee [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. the right to food was already recognised in the UN Declaration on the Right to Development of 1986 (UN General Assembly resolution 41/128) which was a key step towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the SDGs. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action, 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Olivier De Schutter, Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, 2013, para. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See Olivier De Schutter, Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, 2013, para. 8. For the origin of the ‘respect, protect, fulfill framework in the work of another Special Rapporteur on the right to food, see Asbjørn Eide, The New International Economic Order and the Promotion of Human Rights: Report on the Right to Adequate Food as a Human Right Submitted by Mr. Asbjørn Eide, Special Rapporteur, 1987. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. FAO, WFP, UNECE, UNICEF, WHO, WMO, *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia 2020: Affordable healthy diets to address all forms of malnutrition for better health*, 2021, https://doi.org/10.4060/cb3849en [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. FIAN, Food Crisis Response Entrenches Corporate Influence, October 2022, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *Dignitates* in Latin are ‘persons of rank.’ Later, ‘dignity’ is understood as belonging to every person, irrespective of their personal profile, their position, and the conventions of society. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Cristian Timmermann, Food security as a global public good, 2018, p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. FIAN, The Problem with the Industrial Food System and how to fix it, July 2022, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. FIAN, The Problem with the Industrial Food System and how to fix it, July 2022, p. 7. For definitions, and State obligations and the responsibilities of the food and beverage industry, see Unhealthy foods, non-communicable diseases and the right to health, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Anand Grover, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. FIAN, Corporate Capture of FAO, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Voices in civil society argue that the UPOV Convention is preventing farmers using farm-saved seed in many countries. The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) is an intergovernmental organization with headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-food [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. as well as greenhouse gas emissions when fossil fuels are involved in their production. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. The last ‘Great Dying’ occurred 252 million years ago. Global heating from volcanic activity wiped out 95% of species at that time. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Rana Faroohar, 2022. *Homecoming.* New York. Crown, p. 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. George Monbiot. 2022. *Regenesis.* Allen Lane, p. 38 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Ibid., pp. 42 - 46 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. htpps://landmatrix.orgover 70 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Mark Hyman, *Food Fix*, quoted by Faroohar, op.cit., p. 39 [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. In some jurisdictions, it would seem appropriate to have larger public stocks of food for release onto the market at times of higher prices. Such interventions could be targeted at those less well off. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21824.doc.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Neil McCulloch, 2023. *Ending Fossil Fuel Subsidies: the Politics of Saving the Planet*. Practical Action Publishing. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/big-oil-doubles-profits-blockbuster-2022-2023-02-08/ [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-international-finance-architecture-en.pdf>, p.3 [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. 60 Relief Web, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022, Mid-Year Update*, 2022, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2022-mid-year-update-snapshot-21-june-2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. https://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/asset/3069/3069487/ [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Cf. FAO Food Outlook (2022), <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9427en/cb9427en.pdf>. See also UNEP, Our work in Africa, https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Cf. https://unctad.org/news/covid-19-threat-food-security- Africa. The percentage quoted appears to refer to ‘value’ rather than ‘volume’ – many imports are processed goods. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Presentation at IFAD, 5th July [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Presentation at IFAD, 5th July [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Cf. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-international-finance-architecture-en.pdf>, p.26 [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The number of refugees has doubled in the past 20 years and many displaced people (80%?) are categorised as acutely food insecure. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Nicholas Mulder. 2022. *The Economic Weapon/The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War.* Yale University Press, p. 293 [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Luis Oliveros, *The Impact of Financial and Oil Sanctions on the Venezuelan Economy*, WOLA, October 2020, https://www.wola.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Oliveros-report-summary-ENG.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. At one stage in early 2022 it was reported that less than 10% of food aid needs were being met. See Guardian report at - https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/23/trying-to-survive-millions-in-tigray-face-hunger-as-they-wait-in-vain-for-aid [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. The 2022 edition of The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture – Towards Blue Transformation. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/ [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-03/safeguarding-food-security-reinforcing-resilience- food-systems\_0.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2022 on addressing food security in developing countries, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0287\_EN.html [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. JRC portfolio 24, ‘International cooperation, sustainable and trusted connections/Science for the Global Gateway and the International Green Deal,’ accessible at: https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-science-and-knowledge-activities/international-cooperation-sustainable-and-trusted-connections\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Cf. UNFCC (2021), COP26 Outcomes: Finance for Climate Adaptation, https://unfccc.int/process-and- meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-glasgow-climate-pact/cop26-outcomes-finance-for-climate- adaptation#:~:text=COP26%20urged%20developed%20nations%20to,balance%20between%20adaptation%20a nd%20mitigation. . [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Cf. https://transport.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-establish-solidarity-lanes-help-ukraine- export-agricultural-goods-2022-05-12\_en . [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Some states have not yet undertaken VNRs [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. https://www.azhar.eg/walangpdf/en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0287_EN.html> . [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0267_EN.html> . [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. https://dppa.un.org/en/new-agenda-for-peace [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. However, at the time of writing the prospects for renewing these arrangements are uncertain. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Cf. the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Cf. the submission of Ruth Bader Ginsburg to the US Court of Appeals as portrayed in the recent biopic (2018): ‘We’re not asking you to change the country. That’s already happened without any court’s permission. We’re asking you to protect the right of the country to change.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Declaration of the Summit for Democracy, March 29, 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Benedict XVI, “Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Members of the ‘Centesimus Annus’ Foundation” (Clementine Hall, Vatican City, May 19, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. https://ifit-transitions.org/publications/first-principles-the-need-for-greater-consensus-on-the-fundamentals-of-polarisation/ [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Joanna Bourke-Martignoni et al., Agricultural commercialization, gender equality and the right to food, pp. 1-2, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. IFIT, Ibid. p. 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. initiated in 2003 to develop the continent’s agri-foods sector and rural economies. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-science-and-knowledge-activities/green-transitions\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. European Commission (2019), The European Green Deal, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and- policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Cf. European Commission (2020), Agriculture and the Green Deal. A healthy food system for people and planet, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green- deal/agriculture-and-green-deal\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. European Commission (2020), Farm to Fork Strategy, https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-fork- strategy\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. IEA (2022), Gas Market Report, Q4-2022

     https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/5c108dc3-f19f-46c7-a157-f46f4172b75e/GasMarketReportQ42022.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Euractiv (2022), EU farmers slam Commission’s ’empty’ fertilisers plan, [https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/eu-farmers-slam-commissions-empty-fertilisers- plan/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/eu-farmers-slam-commissions-empty-fertilisers-%20plan/) European Commission (2022), Food security: the Commission addresses the availability and affordability of fertilisers in the EU and globally, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\_22\_6564 [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Cf. European Council (2022), Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine: EU adopts 9th package of economic and individual sanctions, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/16/russia-s-war- of-aggression-against-ukraine-eu-adopts-9th-package-of-economic-and-individual-sanctions/ [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Cf. European Commission (2023), Mr Janusz Wojciechowski in the European Parliament, Brussels; contribution to exchange of views with the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development about the consequences of inflation on the CAP budge, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH\_23\_144 [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. For example, under the CAP:

     * 40% of the CAP budget has to be climate-relevant;
     * at least 35% of funds for rural development have to be allocated to measures supporting climate, biodiversity, environment and animal welfare;
     * there are higher green ambitions and the obligation to contribute to the Green Deal targets;
     * at least 25% of the budget for direct payments has to be allocated to eco-schemes, providing stronger incentives for climate-and environment-friendly farming practices and approaches as well as animal welfare improvements;
     * enhanced conditionality: beneficiaries of the CAP have to have their payments linked to a stronger set of mandatory requirements.

     [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. The Guardian (2022), https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/30/peak-polluters-last-chance- close-dutch-government [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Guijt J, Wigboldus S, Brouwer H, Roosendaal L, Kelly S and Garcia-Campos P. *National Processes Shaping Efforts to Transform Food Systems: Lessons from Costa Rica, Ireland and Rwanda*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; 2021. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb6149en>. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. https://www.nesc.ie/publications/exploring-a-just-transition-in-agriculture-and-land-use/ [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Dr. Gilliland is the former Chair of DEFRA’s Rural Climate Change Forum (London). [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Seeds, right to life and farmers’ rights, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri, 2022, para. 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. In his message on World Food Day 2021, Pope Francis said that ‘we must encourage active participation in change at all levels and reorganize food systems as a whole.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. We note the following formulation: *earth care – people care – fair shares.* This ethic forms the foundation for permaculture design and is also found in most traditional societies: https://permacultureprinciples.com [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. FIAN, The Problem with the Industrial Food System and how to fix it, July 2022, p. 7. For definitions, and State obligations and the responsibilities of the food and beverage industry, see Unhealthy foods, non-communicable diseases and the right to health, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Anand Grover, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. In calling for new metrics, we do not to ignore the ‘greenwashing’ and ‘seaspiracy’ risks to which civil society organisations frequently draw attention (see https://www.seaspiracy.org/facts) [↑](#footnote-ref-128)