



Submission by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance for the e-Consultation on Hunger, Food and Nutrition Security

Part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Framework

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Inspired by Christian ethics and human rights principles, members and partners of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA)ⁱ advocate for justice and dignity for all, and especially for the poorest and most marginalized who are often overlooked in policy-making and implementation. The EAA focuses its collective efforts by campaigning on two key issues per four-year cycle (currently Food, and HIV and AIDS).

Thus, through our global alliance representing tens of millions of Christians around the world, our work on food and agriculture especially focuses on support for small-scale farmers, whose production capacity is the foundation of food security in much of the developing world, but whose interests are frequently ignored in relevant policy and practice. Based on our members' long experience of working with farmers and agricultural communities around the world, and with governments at national and international levels, we welcome the opportunity to submit the following reflections.

Theme 1 – Key lessons, challenges and opportunities

The MDG process afforded us many important lessons which should be taken into consideration, including:

- **The importance of a framework for galvanizing political will:** In setting the MDGs, States expressed the political will to reach concrete outcomes. The international declaration coming out of a Summit of World Leaders provided the framework with the visibility and high-level support essential to ensuring at least some level of accountability and monitoring of the implementation of the MDGs. A new development framework would require a similarly high level of visibility and political support.
- **The importance of such a framework for boosting resources and drawing attention to the issues highlighted as priorities:** In a number of countries, some of the goals were incorporated in national development policies. The framework's emphasis on social sectors helped shift political attention somewhat away from an exclusive prioritization of macro-economic growth and towards the human face of development. Having hunger eradication as the first goal also provided an opportunity to leverage stronger attention to the issue. Nevertheless, the root causes of hunger and malnutrition were not thoroughly addressed, and hunger is still used as an excuse to advance discourses on the need to increase production which do not address issues of injustice in access and distribution, which are at the heart of food insecurity.

- **The importance of time bound commitments:** Although there are different opinions on this issue within our constituency, in general we believe that the fact that the MDGs were time-bound commitments made them a valuable instrument for civil society to monitor national and international progress in reaching them and to raise public awareness. In a framework with no linkages to formal accountability mechanisms, the goals along with their targets and indicators – imperfect as they were – and the 2015 deadline were important foundations for efforts to hold governments to account for their MDG commitments.
- **Failure to address interconnectedness of policies:** While the prominent articulation of the goal of halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger in the form of MDG1 Target 1C helped to generate progress in this direction, it remains limited. A general failure to address the interconnectedness of food and agricultural policies and other sectors that impact them, such as trade and fiscal policies related to speculation for instance, persists. And the salience of good nutrition at both the malnutrition and over-consumption ends of the spectrum was inadequately recognized, especially given the new data from the Global Burden of Disease 2012 study showing that obesity-related conditions have now overtaken malnutrition as the leading cause of morbidity and mortality. In addition, the impact of food and agricultural policies on other MDGs such as the health goals (MDGs 4, 5 and 6) were not clearly linked and therefore important synergies were overlooked.
- **Failure to ensure equal progress.** While advances towards achieving the MDGs are to be applauded, it is important to note that they have not all resulted in increased equal progress, and that indeed inequality both within and between countries has increased since 2000. It is therefore vital that the new framework includes specific indicators to measure equity and progress made in reaching vulnerable and marginalized populations. For such purposes, disaggregated data is crucial. In addition, it will also be important to find ways to incorporate qualitative measurements as well as quantitative data.

The main challenges and opportunities towards achieving food and nutrition security in the coming years include:

- Adopting a rights-based approach to food and agricultural policy and practice, integrating the principles and accountability framework of the right to food in relevant policy and practice, and ensuring a focus on the most vulnerable, marginalized and food-insecure people and communities as well as on broader societal needs.
- Addressing the interlinkages between agriculture, climate change and food security – both in terms of supporting agricultural adaptation to the effects of climate change (especially among vulnerable food-producing communities in the Global South) and mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the agricultural production sector, especially through scaling up sustainable agroecological food production methods.
- Minimizing food waste from the point of production (through investing in improved infrastructure for storage, processing and transportation) to the point of consumption (through addressing wasteful consumer behaviours and procurement and retail policies), so as to reduce radically the proportion of food losses (currently one-third, or 1.3 billion tonnes per annum).
- Securing food-producing communities' land tenure and access to productive resources – especially for women small-scale farmers – including by promoting implementation of the

Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and other Natural Resources, and preventing land grabbing.

- Increasing access to food through the scaling up of cash transfers in the context of rights-based social protection systems.
- Regulating financial speculation in food commodities, especially staple crops.
- Regulating the trade of agricultural commodities so that it does not harm the production of small-scale farming systems.
- Ensuring coherence in food and agricultural policies at the international level, through the instrument of the reformed Committee on World Food Security, and promoting broader recognition and implementation of the recommendations of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD).
- Focusing on nutritional quality and cultural appropriateness of food, rather than mere quantity.
- Highlighting and addressing the emergency and longer-term developmental consequences of infant and child malnutrition.
- Addressing the consequences of over-consumption of food globally (including rising consumption of meat), both in terms of distributional equity and – in light of the findings of the GBD 2012 study – the global public health consequences of obesity.
- Ensuring that trade policies do not create an environment where small-scale food producers have to compete with subsidized food imports from wealthier countries.
- Ensuring that food aid policy and practice avoids negative impacts on the livelihoods and sustainability of food-producing communities at local and national levels, and invests in the productive capacity of those food-producing communities for emergency needs as well as for sustainable longer-term food security.
- Bridging the gap between North and South: Development and underdevelopment are still concepts largely drawn in geographic terms – the South vs the North. Yet we are seeing in the context of growing inequalities in all countries that pockets of underdevelopment are increasingly evident even in the world's richest nations, and vice versa. Of course the magnitude cannot be compared but if the new framework is to be truly visionary it must account for the global trends we are witnessing, such as obesity and other nutritional issues that cut across North and South.

Theme 2 – What works best

- **A rights-based approach:** The human right to food, as outlined in the FAO's 2004 Voluntary Guidelines, is a necessary foundation for a life of dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition: "The obligation to *fulfil (facilitate)* means the State must pro-actively engage in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including food security. Finally, whenever an individual or group is unable, for reasons beyond their control, to enjoy the right to adequate food by the means at their disposal, States have the obligation to *fulfil (provide)* that right directly. This obligation also applies for persons who are victims of natural or other disasters." (UN General Comment on the right to food, no 12) International human rights law requires that governments not take actions that result in increasing levels of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. It also requires governments to protect people from the actions of powerful entities or practices that might violate the right to food. States must also, to the maximum of available resources, invest

in the eradication of hunger. This should include cash transfers in the context of social protection, as has been prescribed in the ILO Recommendation on Social Protection Floor. Though governments have agreed in principle to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food, their actions do not always put these principles into practice. Thus, people and communities continue to call on their governments to implement the right to food. Ensuring the right to food requires in many contexts access to land. The post-2015 Framework should ensure land rights for small-scale farmers, particularly for women. The Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and other Natural Resources can play a key role in this.

- **Coherent, linked-up policy-making on agriculture, food and nutrition at the international level:** When the MDGs were drafted, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) had not yet been reformed. Today it is the most inclusive and comprehensive international platform dealing with food and nutrition security. One of the challenges of eradicating hunger and malnutrition is in fact the fragmentation of policies that can at times contradict each other. For instance the strong focus on increasing production not only has serious ecological and social repercussions but does not account for the problem of access and distribution. As the most legitimate intergovernmental forum on food issues, the CFS aims to provide coherence and coordinate actions at the international level towards the realization of the right to food based on country's own priorities, and must be central to the future framework for promoting food and nutrition security.
- **Stronger accountability mechanisms:** Related to the above point, one of the deficiencies of the MDGs was the lack of accountability by States to see them through. It is through the human rights framework that States can be held accountable since the principles of transparency and accountability are at the core. The failure of the MDG framework to be centred on human rights meant that accountability was not fully integrated into them. This will remain a challenge for the new framework, but is one that is of vital importance to address. The voluntary nature of the MDGs (specifically the reporting mechanisms) did not offer a strong enough platform to deliver on the goals. Independent mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating reports should be considered with civil society playing an important role.
- **Focus on smallholder farmers (especially women):** Small-scale farmers produce the majority of the world's food, much of it for local consumption. Given that they are the foundation of food security, key investments must be made to support and empower them – and particularly to liberate the productive potential of women farmers – in order to build a stronger and more sustainable and resilient global food system. An important element of such investments will be support for farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange networks, and farmers' collectives for market access purposes. In order for smallholder farmers to further build their adaptive capacity, they must be enabled to practice farming systems that are resilient to climate change, that strengthen the ecosystems of which they are a part and that ensure food security for their families.
- **Scaling up agroecology:** An increasing body of empirical evidence demonstrates the utility of agroecology in food production, sustainability and resilience. Agroecology relies on natural cycling of nutrients, which minimizes the need for external inputs, and reduces waste from the agricultural systems. Through agroecological methods, small-scale farmers combine innovation with traditional knowledge to produce more food, and to boost their resilience to a changing climate. For millions of farmers in dozens of countries, agroecology is delivering economic, environmental and social benefits. This is in contrast to linear systems of production that rely

on external inputs for high levels of production. Such systems can have high environmental costs, and increase farmers' vulnerability to climate change.

In order for agroecology to be used on a wider scale, small-scale farmers need to have access to land, seeds, water, relevant extension services, financial tools and local markets, all of which depend on a supportive policy environment. There is also a need for much increased support for the establishment and expansion of farmer-to-farmer networks at local levels throughout the developing world to enable the sharing of information and to support the scaling up of these practices in food insecure areas.

For further information on what investments are required to scale up agroecology, we invite you to read the EAA's report "Nourishing the World Sustainably: Scaling up Agroecology" available at <http://tinyurl.com/EAAagroecology2012>. This report also presents numerous examples of the successful use of agroecological methods in increasing yields for farmers using locally-available natural resources while lowering or eliminating farmers' reliance on costly and polluting chemical fertilizers and pesticides around the world.

- **Social protection and the potential of cash transfers in increasing food security:** Many of the most vulnerable and poor people, such as those living with or particularly vulnerable to HIV, are excluded from interventions that seek to enhance their livelihoods. As a rule the "poorest of the poor" have no land and are therefore unable to participate in agriculture projects. Also, children, elderly, caregivers and people suffering from illnesses or physical or mental frailty, are often unable to participate in income generation projects.

It is often argued that hunger should be met by a twin track approach, frequently interpreted as immediate relief in kind or as cash, and long-term investments in agricultural productivity. But it has to be recognized that cash transfers, in the context of rights-based social protection systems, is a very important means of decreasing hunger also in the long term.

The importance of cash transfers and social protection in promoting health, education and development is increasingly recognized (see for instance the recent World Bank strategy on social protection and labour, and the ILO recommendation on social protection floors). CFS specifically discussed the potential of social protection in the fight against hunger (ref CFS report http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_Reports/HLPE-Report-4-Social_protection_for_food_security-June_2012.pdf).

The Post-2015 Development Framework must highlight the importance of increasing access to rights-based social protection, and incentivize the development of nationally-owned and context-sensitive social protection systems, including cash transfers.

- **The role of civil society organizations in promoting social protection:** The State has the main responsibility for providing social protection. This does not, however, mean that civil society is less important. Depending on the local and national context, civil society organizations can play several important roles, examples of which we can witness among EAA members:
 - Help people to claim their rights, for example, by informing disadvantaged people of the benefits to which they are entitled, helping them to obtain relevant documents, and strengthening people's capacity to demand their rights through rights-based work.
 - Advocate in favour of the development of social protection.
 - Monitor the implementation of social protection, draw attention to mistakes and blow the whistle when representatives of local authorities are corrupt.
 - Participate in the implementation of social protection. In many cases churches and other civil society organizations have a local presence and capacity that the authorities can make use of in the implementation of social protection.
 - Complement governmental social protection systems. When governmental social protection is non-existent or poorly developed, there are needs that non-state systems may be able to meet.

Synergies may arise if organizations play several of these different roles simultaneously, but so too conflicts may occur between goals and loyalties, and these are important to address.

- **The role of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF):** The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has earned respect as the key multilateral and intergovernmental arena for the governance of agriculture and food policies. The GSF adopted by the CFS in 2012 represents an important step towards harmonizing food and nutrition security policies and achieving a new paradigm on global food, agriculture and nutrition governance, enshrined on more democratic and coherent policies. Importantly, this new paradigm holds human rights, dignity and participation at its foundation. The new framework has the opportunity of aligning itself to the CFS's policy directions, ensuring coherence. It is imperative that the post-MDG framework builds on these good practices.

Ultimately, hunger is caused by poverty (one-third of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day) and inequality (lack of access to land, seeds, and more), rather than scarcity in food production. The current global structures and systems for producing, buying, selling and sharing food are unjust and must be transformed if we are to achieve food and nutrition security, justice and the right to food for all.

Theme 3 – Objectives, targets and indicators for the Post-2015 Global Development Framework

The Zero Hunger Challenge objectives articulate important aspirational goals in the context of global food and nutrition security challenges. However – and depending on whether post-2015 goals are time-bound or not – it is clear that in order to galvanize practical action, and to provide a workable framework for meaningful accountability, the post-2015 goals must be both aspirational AND practical, hopefully more practical than the MDGs.

The objectives should be **context specific**, bearing in mind that governance levels, resource endowments, and the effect of climate-change on agriculture differs from one region to another and political leverage at international forums vary across regions. One-size-fits-all objectives might easily become contentious if not nuanced by regional characteristics and priorities. In particular, it will be vital that middle-income countries are an essential component of the post-2015 framework, in order to ensure that poor and marginalized groups in these countries are reached.

The objectives should also set **clear priorities**: At the global level, a compromise should be sought to firmly privilege the most urgent actions over profit-making-led concerns. An ethically-grounded post-2015 global development agenda should prioritize those actions serving to *rehumanize social relations around food, advocate for the fulfillment of the Right to Food, promote critical research and philosophical thinking on sustainable agriculture, include explicit ways to reduce overconsumption, and leverage on-going efforts to fill the gap between the hungry and the overfed.*

Additional objectives to consider:

- a. Objective/s addressing the nutritional and equity challenges associated with over-consumption and increasing global obesity.
- b. Objectives concretizing targets for investment (international and domestic) in agricultural infrastructure in the developing world (to reduce post-harvest losses), to reduce food waste by retailers and consumers, and to change consumption patterns among populations at risk of obesity.
- c. Objectives related to increases in agroecological extension programs, farmer-to-farmer networks, and farmers' cooperatives.
- d. Objectives related to the access to social protection.

- e. Objectives related to the purpose of trade in agricultural commodities.
- f. Integrating recommendations from the IAASTD report as objectives/targets.
- g. Objectives related to the integration of the right to food in relevant policy frameworks at national levels, and national ratification of relevant instruments (including the ICESCR and its Optional Protocol).
- h. Objectives related to security of land and resource tenure for smallholder farmers, especially women farmers (based on the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and other Natural Resources)

ⁱ The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) is a global network of churches and related organizations covering the full spectrum of church families – Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Evangelical – committed to collaborating in advocacy for social justice and human dignity and rights. The EAA focuses its collective efforts, campaigning on two key issues per four-year cycle (currently HIV and AIDS, and Food), with a cross-cutting human rights based approach to the issues it is working on. A full list of EAA members is available at <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/about-us/members/>.