

Global Network on the Right to Food and Nutrition

Historical Background

The Global Network on the Right to Food and Nutrition is one of the outcomes of a long journey of peoples, social movements, civil society organisations (CSOs), human rights defenders, experts, academics, and research institutions struggling for the full realization of the human right to adequate food and nutrition (RtAFN) in the context of the indivisibility of human rights and people's sovereignty.

This journey can be traced back to the:

- preparation of the civil society parallel forum to the World Food Summit (Rome, 1996), in which a strong cooperation was already present between the young food sovereignty social movement, human rights organisations and NGOs, and the elaboration of the Code of Conduct on the Right to Food (1997), which received the adhesion of more than 800 CSOs and social movements;
- process of constituting the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (2002), in which the Network took the form of a Right to Food Working Group with a central role in facilitating civil society participation in the elaboration of the FAO Right to Food Guidelines (FAO, 2004);
- civil society contribution to the 2009 reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which – due to strong civil society advocacy and political commitment of like-minded countries – grounded the mission of the CFS in the human rights framework; as well as engagement in other lines of work of the CFS, such as the Global Strategic Framework and the Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries.

Why the Network

The decision to create a new network was the result of a broad consultative process that took into account:

- The aggravation of the chronic world food crisis, which has unleashed massive land grabbing processes that are leading to the eviction and threat of eviction of millions of small-scale food producers, majority of them women. At the same time, unemployment,

low wages, slave-like working conditions, and forced migration continue to plague urban and rural dwellers in most countries, while women continue to be submitted to structural violence, including discrimination, child marriage, unpaid work, etc.

- The persistence of gross violations of the RtAFN at the global level and almost absolute impunity of perpetrators, which is unacceptable and has to be overcome.
- The recognition that no single social movement or organization can tackle all these challenges alone, and that there is a need to join forces among all organizations and movements committed to the human rights approach so that they are heard at the international level and to finally change the policies, identify accountability gaps, and demand these to be closed.

The Network was launched in June 2013, in Vienna, after two years of broad consultations¹.

Who we are and what we want

The Network is an initiative of public interest CSOs and social movements (peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists, landless people, consumers, urban people living in poverty, agricultural and food workers, women, youth, and indigenous peoples) that recognize the need to act jointly for the realization of the RtAFN.

The Network:

- opens a space for dialogue and mobilization of its members to hold States accountable with regard to their territorial and extraterritorial obligations to realize this right;
- supports the struggles of social movements and groups fighting against violations of this right;
- supports and does its best to protect human rights defenders against repression, violence and criminalization;
- moves to end the impunity of state-condoned violations and of non-state human rights abusers; and
- promotes the holistic interpretation of the human right to adequate food and nutrition, including the full realization of women's human rights, within the food sovereignty framework.

Membership

¹ For more information see: <http://www.fian.org/en/library/multimedia/launch-of-global-network-for-the-right-to-food-and-nutrition/>

Membership is open for public interest civil society organizations and social movements which meet the Networks criteria and subscribe to its charter². Individuals can be accepted as resource people, if they meet the set criteria.

How we work

The Network has a very light governance and operational structure composed of (1) general meetings (annually if possible); (2) a coordinating committee (half social movements, half civil society organizations) and (3) a secretariat, presently hosted by FIAN International.

The Network structures and members do not speak on behalf of the Network. Rather, the Network provides a platform for members to act and express themselves on shared concerns. Each member has its own focus area of work; in being members of the Network they agree to work together to advance issues of common interest deemed of great relevance for the furthering of the RtAFN.

All members are expected to contribute to the functioning and the implementation of the commonly agreed work plan, within the limits of their capacity. They engage in debates, fact-finding-missions, advocacy campaigns and/or action days to demand redress of violations and abuses, as well as in alerting other network members and the general public to specific themes in need of attention. Furthermore, members also make policy recommendations and monitor their implementation. The publishing of the *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch* every year is an additional key contribution.

Secretariat

The network is hosted by FIAN International. For more information, contact secretariat@GNRTFN.org.

² To read the founding documents please go to; http://www.fian.org/en/news/article/detail/global_network_for_the_right_to_food_and_nutrition_charter_and_all_to_action/