

## UNEA 4: Major Groups and Stakeholders Position on Food Security

### Background

Industrial animal agriculture and monoculture production undermine food security and sustainability. The introduction of such systems detrimentally impacts the livelihoods and viability of small-scale, local producers and their communities, causing rural to urban migration, and migration.

Industrial animal agriculture also causes a wide array of problems impacting human and animal health and welfare, and the environment. As regards the environment, it is a major contributor to deforestation; climate change; water, soil and air pollution; and has high reliance on inputs like water, land, energy, pesticides and fertilizers.

Similarly, monoculture production removes vital nutrients from the land, and fertilizer application contributes to further land degradation over time.

Industrial animal agriculture and monoculture production also cause biodiversity loss (including vital pollinator species) and destroy the balance of nature, further threatening food security.

The expansion of palm oil plantations in several countries has caused similar severe problems, and destroyed rainforests and animal habitats.

Such production is often run by large corporations and export-orientated or for wealthier urban consumers, rather than meeting food security needs. Yet there is still policy support, financing/subsidies, and development support for such production.

The introduction of Genetically Modified (GM) seeds also has a devastating effect on traditional farmers and farming systems. Traditional farming systems develop an incredible diversity of seed varieties which are able to deal with local challenges, such as “pests”, diseases, soils and weather patterns, whereas GM seeds erode indigenous crop diversity, with a few varieties of seeds that need fertilisers and pesticides. This is not a solution to hunger and malnutrition, but ultimately threatens food security.

it is vital that we build sustainable food systems. We need to promote production systems using closed cycles (circularity, agroecology, organic agriculture, integrated crop-livestock systems), which treat animals ethically. To achieve food security, policy support and finance should be refocussed on support for small-scale local production, using agro-ecological methods, including traditional sustainable practices of indigenous people and local communities. Grabbing of productive land also adversely impacts food security, and policies are needed to prevent this.

### Key “Asks”

- Governments to promote and support small scale food producers and traditional sustainable agricultural practices of indigenous peoples and local communities,

instead of industrial agriculture, to maintain and develop this essential source of food security and livelihoods.

- Financial remedies to disincentivise unsustainable consumption and production, including the removal of any subsidies for resource depleting and environmentally-damaging products and practices; the polluter pays principle used for agricultural inputs and to restore damaged ecosystems (and social or health impacts); support and incentives for the transition towards agro-ecological agriculture.
- Food systems should be made resource-efficient, thereby encouraging the reduction of meat and dairy consumption, encouraging the consumption of sustainably produced plant-based foods, using organic fertilisers (e.g. manure, other by-products) and legumes which can fix atmospheric nitrogen in soils, using bio-based products such as biopesticides, and crop rotation to promote nitrogen and carbon cycles and restoring degraded soils.
- Environmentally damaging products and trade practices which cannot be made sustainable should be eliminated (such as livestock fed by imported soy or palm plantations replacing natural forests), and hazardous pesticides, excessive use of fertilizers and non-therapeutic or routine use of antibiotics banned.
- Countries to halt the expansion of cattle pastures and cropland (mainly used to produce animal feed crops) into forests and other important ecosystems as this leads to massive loss of wildlife habitats and biodiversity and the release of stored carbon into the atmosphere.
- In order to move to a sustainable agricultural model, patents on living organisms such as animals and seeds should be avoided. There should be a promotion of seed exchange among farmers and the revitalisation of traditional seeds by indigenous peoples and local communities. Governments should support the revival of seed-saving practices, to ensure that there is diversity in farmers' hands.
- To ensure safe reuse of wastewater, agricultural pollution of water sources to be halted at source, by fully closed cycles and transition to agro-ecological practices that exclude synthetic pesticides, fertilizers and routine antibiotics.
- Countries to establish independent training and extension services for farmers and processors on sustainable production methods.