



CALL FOR ACTION

WORLD FOOD DAY 2013

"Healthy people depend on Healthy food systems

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**Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security
and Nutrition"**

This year world food day will be celebrated on 16th October with the main theme "Healthy people depend on Healthy food systems - Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition".

The importance of 'food systems'

A food system is made up of the environment, people, institutions and processes by which agricultural products are produced, processed and brought to consumers. Every aspect of the food system has an effect on the final availability and accessibility of diverse, nutritious foods – and therefore on consumers' ability to choose healthy diets. Of course, there are other factors, too: household income, prices, and consumer knowledge, for example. Medical interventions cannot substitute in the long term for the broader nutritional benefits offered by healthy, balanced diets from a well-functioning sustainable food system

Malnutrition today imposes high costs on society, and comes in many different forms:

One out of every four children in the world under the age of five is stunted. This means 165 million children who are so malnourished. They will never reach their full physical and cognitive potential.

About 2 billion people in the world lack vitamins and minerals that are essential for good health.

Some 1.4 billion people are overweight. Of these, about one-third are obese and at risk of coronary heart disease, diabetes or other health problems

Malnourished women are more likely to give birth to smaller babies, who start life with a higher risk of physical and cognitive impairment. In fact, maternal malnutrition is one of the main ways that poverty is transmitted from generation to generation. At the same time, obese parents may suffer from vitamin deficiencies themselves and their children may be stunted because of low birth weight and poor care and feeding practices. Stunted children may even have a greater risk of developing obesity and related diseases in adulthood.

Malnutrition could account for as much as 5 percent of global income. If the global community invested US\$1.2 billion per year for five years on reducing micro nutrient deficiencies, for example, the results would be better health, fewer child deaths and increased future earnings. It would generate annual gains worth US\$15.3 billion – a benefit-to-cost ratio of almost 13 to 1.

The immediate causes of malnutrition are complex. They include:

- inadequate availability of (and access to) safe, diverse, nutritious food;
- lack of access to clean water, sanitation and health care; and
- inappropriate child feeding and adult dietary choices.

Addressing malnutrition, therefore, requires integrated action and complementary interventions in agriculture and the food system, in natural resource management, in public health and education, and in broader policy domains.

Healthy diets are balanced in quality and quantity

All over the world, the first recommendation of nutritionists is "eat a variety of foods". A diverse diet containing balanced amounts and combinations of fresh fruits and vegetables, cereals, fats and oils, legumes, and animal-source foods, is likely to provide the full range of nutrients needed by most people to lead healthy and active lives. The amount of food and its energy content needs to be enough, but not too much

Sustainable food systems are efficient

By definition, sustainable food systems produce nutritious diets for all people today while also protecting the capacity of future generations to feed themselves. Sustainable food systems use resources efficiently at every stage along the way from farm to fork. Getting the most food from every drop of water, plot of land, speck of fertilizer and minute of labour saves resources for the future and makes systems more sustainable. Turning waste products like manure and food scraps into valuable fertilizer or energy can improve sustainability. Pests and diseases damage crops and animals, and reduce the quantity and quality of food available for humans. Using safe and effective methods to control these losses in production, processing and storage helps make food systems more sustainable. Consumers can do their part by choosing balanced diets and minimizing food waste.

Producing more food: Good, But not enough

Higher productivity in agriculture contributes to better nutrition by raising incomes – especially in countries where agriculture accounts for a large share of the economy and employment – and by reducing the cost of food for all consumers. It is important to realize, though, that the impact of agricultural growth is slow and may not be enough to bring about a rapid reduction in malnutrition.

Healthy diets are more than staple foods. They are diverse, containing a balanced and adequate combination of energy and nutrients. For these reasons, the priorities for agricultural research and development must become more nutrition-sensitive. Greater efforts must be directed towards interventions that diversify what small-scale farmers produce – with integrated farming systems, for example.

Consumer choice and Behaviour change

Making systems more nutrition-enhancing so that food is available, accessible, diverse and nutritious is key, but so is the need to help consumers make healthy dietary choices. Promoting behaviour change through nutrition education and information campaigns – while also addressing household sanitation and ensuring appropriate foods for all ages and life stages. Behaviour change can also reduce waste and contribute to the sustainable use of resources.

Healthy diets require healthy food systems – along with education, health, sanitation and other factors.

Healthy food systems are made possible by appropriate policies, incentives and governance

Good nutrition depends on healthy diets.

FIMARC has been already working on the topic of sustainable food systems for a long time. FIMARC in India organise farmer led production systems to promote the traditional knowledge and practices based on food sovereignty. Many members of FIMARC promote sustainable agricultural practices based on agro ecology ,organic farming ,integrated farming etc . Right to food including the access to culturally adapted and healthy food is the key demand that we raise in every policy forums.

More over I am very happy to mention about some of the practical actions that FIMARC carried out during our campaign on WFD 2012 and to thank all the movements that were involed in various actions last year

- KOETI Paraguay is organising various farmers cooperatives. They invited students to discuss about hunger and food and organised research on hunger factors.Organised a website game to provide one meal to the children. Demonstrations organised in order to raise awareness in collaboration with World Food Programme
- RRF Bangladesh organised a Rally and a seminar on the topic.
- CCFM Korea organised a training programme on Cooperatives; CCFM worked with Cooperative research institute and as result law on cooperatives and social enterprises has been changed positively. They are planning the exchange with other cooperative systems in Italy, Canada etc
- El Salvador worked on seeds issue and farmers autonomy
- INAG Tamil Nadu worked with women on land and livelihood rights. Organised tree planting and school children program on the world food day
- CARAM Uganda strengthened the work of 2 cooperatives in central region.

Run up to the World Food day 2013, I would like to call upon all our member movements around the world to take up concrete actions in your movements in relation to the theme of the year.

Some proposal of actions are mentioned below but each movement can organise activities based on their own reality.

- Organise sessions on sustainable food systems for food sovereignty or good diet for a better health
- organise meetings with politicians and local self government to seek the support for local sustainable food systems.
- Share and upscale the best practices and experience on sustainable agricultural practices
- Make any solidarity action like fasting to collect money to support the needy or to provide one nutritious meal to the hunger
- Organise local food fair or cooking competition in relation with balanced diet
- Organise demonstration sessions to give awareness on agroecological practices
- Organise one day volunteer work to save money and to support hunger eradication projects in your own places or send to the FIMARC World Food Day fund to support other people who are in need around the world
- Organise Corner meetings ,press conference , press release or demonstrations on the topic to raise the awareness of the society

During this world food day of 2013, FIMARC requests all its member movements to have deep reflection on consumer choice, our behavioural change, food habits and production patterns etc and urge all the members to organise a common action day and send us the news about your activities.

Wish you all the best for your world food day actions of 2013



George Dixon Fernandez
Secretary General
Assesse, 16/09/2013