

FSN FORUM - DISCUSSION TOPIC NO. 46
FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS
FROM 21 OCTOBER TO 16 NOVEMBER 2009

Dear Forum Members,

We are members of the steering committee of the upcoming Civil Society Forum (CSF), which will be hosted on 13-17 November 2009 by the City of Rome. The Forum will have the support or participation from FAO, IFAD and WFP and will run on occasion of the World Summit on Food Security (Rome, 16-18 November 2009). One of the principal outcomes of the Forum will be a joint statement to be presented to the Plenary of the Summit.

On behalf of the small group of Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations involved in the organization of the CSF we would like to propose to the FSN Forum Members the following discussion. The results will feed into the discussions being prepared by our group in charge of the preparation of the meeting.

Food security and agricultural governance systems

The global food crisis is also a crisis of food governance.

Decades of globalization with respective deregulation, concentration, lack of investment and inadequate food and agricultural policies and respective models of production have led to massive problems in order to implement the right to food.

It is widely accepted that most of food is produced by women, farm workers and by small-scale food producers. And yet they are dramatically losing access to, and control over, food producing resources such as land, water, seeds, livestock breeds, fishing grounds, etc. Anticipated profits from the agro-export business, the increase in agro fuels and rising food prices, have triggered a strong demand for land and water to expand monocultures and industrial agriculture. This development, together with other factors such as armed conflicts, extractive industries, tourism, industrial and infrastructure projects and accelerated urbanization have led to dispossession of rural communities and widespread land grabbing. They also lead to changes in land use, destruction of forests and watersheds, degradation of soils and depletion of water supply and fishing-grounds.

Having in mind these previous trends, it is increasingly accepted that several actors should be involved in the new food and agriculture governance systems.

However, the range of actors involved is often a matter of discussion with governments. At the same time, while some actors such as the private sector are increasingly coordinated, others sometimes lack the capacity to make their voices heard at different levels.

This discussion will tackle the need to examine and change current norms and regimes governing food issues, reflecting on the models of production that should be promoted, the problems around access to natural resources and the major actors that will need to be involved.

Question 1 - How is food produced and what kind of production models should be promoted?

- Which models of agricultural, fishing and livestock production, along with related policies (e.g. investment) are the best options to cool down the planet and to reduce people's vulnerability to climatic variations?

Question 2 - Who controls food producing resources and how to develop new governance structures that can better regulate access to natural resources?

- How to design more effective governance systems to regulate the access, control and use of natural resources and the major actors to be involved?

Question 3- Who needs to be involved and at what level?

- Which are the most important actors to be involved at local, national and international levels and the possible alternatives to link its participation at local, national and international levels?

Cheers,

Chris Leather (Oxfam), Antonio Onorati (IPC), Francisco Sarmiento (ActionAid)