

Food systems and human rights

1. What are the most salient challenges facing the food systems in your country/region? Please explain why.

Globally: Rising hunger and malnutrition, rising health problems associated with food systems, rising inequalities, discrimination, rising climate change, biodiversity loss, degradation and poisoning of ecosystems, rising dependency from global value chains, rising power of corporations, rising privatization of resources, loss of the public sphere,...

2. What are the examples of ways in which the challenges facing the global food system are having adverse impacts on human rights broadly and the right to food specifically?

- The use of pesticides as inherent to the global food system destroys productive resources, like soil, that are necessary to produce food, while contaminating the environment and causing harm to the health of people, animals, and the planet and thus negative affect food production also in the long run.
- Dependency from global value chains decreases resilience in times of crisis due to lack of local food production
- Financialization of nature, Concentration of land by agribusiness and displacement of populations withdraws productive resources for food production, and often disrupts the traditional modes of food production and consumption, including the social fabric.
- Continued shift of diets towards ultra-processed edible products which are responsible for the pandemic of obesity and other non-communicable diseases

3. Are there specific challenges that your country has faced in attempting to employ a rights-based approach to transforming food systems without leaving anyone behind?

In a global perspective, one of the major challenges to a rights based approach are the increasing "multistakeholder" governance models which allow for undue corporate influence in public decision making which favour corporate friendly solutions and reduce the possibility for governments and business to be held accountable for their actions.

Authoritarian governments are closing down spaces to exercise the right to determine which food and agricultural systems people want to put in place.

Austerity and neoliberal policies continue posing severe restrictions in terms of the necessary budget resources.

4. To what extent has the UN Food System Summit considered those challenges in its deliberations? Please explain.

The UN Food Systems Summit is a clear attempt to impose such a multistakeholder model on food systems governance globally. In this regard, it is a clear threat to a rights based approach to transforming food systems. The summit uses the perspective of finding solutions while "bringing everyone at the same table". In doing so, it creates the illusion that all actors have the same goal and that there were no power imbalances between them, while in reality it allows the most powerful corporations and countries to impose their interests.

This way, the UN Food systems summit is looking at some of the challenges but without addressing the structural determinants of today`s dominant global food system, namely issues of power, trade, investment, etc. The "solutions" as proposed in the summit, clearly go in the direction of further strengthening the dominant model, namely increasingly industrial food systems, global value chains and market-based solutions, including the fast-tracking of digitalization, high-input agriculture and (false) technology-driven solutions to sustainability.

5. What are the specific obligations of States and responsibilities of businesses in terms of preventing and addressing adverse impacts caused by the unsustainable production or consumption of food?

The obligation to respect entails that the State must refrain from actions or measures which can impact on human rights, for instance forced evictions and other forms of destroying existing access to land, rivers, fisheries and forests. The obligation to protect requires States to protect individuals from the infringement of their human rights from others, for instance they need to protect water bodies and soils from toxic pesticides so that people can fulfil their right to life, water and sanitation, food, health and others. Another example can be that states must regulate advertising and marketing in a way that consumers are informed about the risks of certain products, for instance ultra-processed foods and beverages. The obligation to fulfil entails that the state must facilitate and provide human rights, for instance, by redistributing land and other productive resources, and by strengthening public and communal institutions for the local availability of agroecological production.

The extraterritorial state obligations are especially important in this context.

6. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, what are specific examples of rights-based initiatives and good practices (including policy, standards and programmes) that have successfully improved people's access to adequate food in a sustainable and systemic way?
 - Good practices are Community supported agriculture or bodies that allow for direct participation like Food Policy Councils
 - Programmes/Policies to strengthen local markets and agroecology
 - Public school meal programs sources from peasant agroecology
 - Policies to redistribute land

Participation and access to information during the Food Systems Summit

7. To what extent was the information on the Summit accessible, clear and practical for you and your community and partners?

The information of the summit is not transparent. It is unclear how decisions are being taken, for instance, who decided about the action tracks, or how the outcomes from the dialogues will feed into the overall summit outcomes. The summit, instead, is hiding core elements of its internal structure and possible outcomes.

8. In what ways have you participated in the Summit (events, dialogues, submission of inputs etc.)? Please describe the nature and content of your participation, if applicable.

FIAN International has not engaged inside the summit due to its lack of human rights grounding, lack of transparency, strong corporate bias and obvious attempt to sideline democratic and human rights based multilateral organizations like the CFS, while strongly pushing for multistakeholderism.

Instead, FIAN International is actively engaged in the autonomous counter process to overcome corporate food systems, which has been initiated by the peoples and organizations participating in the CSM. As part of the liaison group of this process, FIAN has engaged in dialogues with Mrs. Agnes Kalibata and Mrs. Amina Mohammed which were facilitated by the CFS Chair in response to a [letter from the CSM](#). Both meetings have shown that the summit is not changing substantially its direction¹.

9. To what extent would you consider your participation in the FSS as active and meaningful? Please explain.

As explained above, FIAN has decided not to engage in FSS. We regard our engagement outside and in protest to the summit as meaningful because it has resonated among many other civil society organizations beyond food and agricultural circles; it has mobilized support among academics and researchers; it has encouraged actors engaged in FSS to become more critical and vocal. Even the UN Deputy Secretary General acknowledges the credibility and legitimacy of our critique.

Outcomes of the Food Systems Summit

10. What are your expectations from the Summit's outcomes following its conclusion in October 2021? How would these outcomes contribute to the full realization of the right to food for all?

The expectation is that the outcomes might be very dangerous for achievements made so far in global food governance and human rights broadly. They will most likely be contrary to the full realization of the right to food, as the outcome will most likely be a document, which will confuse mandatory and voluntary instruments as well as further promote multi stakeholder governance. Furthermore, the Summit will further amplify the dominant paradigm of food systems which tries to enforce the status quo of the industrial, globalized, corporate controlled food production and distribution model, sidelining human rights and impeding real transformative pathways. Finally, FSS may not formally change the existing global food governance but may de facto overcrowd, sideline and suffocate existing institutions such as CFS with a myriad of informal initiatives (coalitions of action, the potential consolidation of national multistakeholder platforms emerging from the national dialogues).

11. What would be the most optimal implementation process of the Summit's outcomes? Which international and regional frameworks or forums could serve as a useful platform? Please explain.

Democratic multilateral and rights based institutions such as the CFS or the ILO should be the ones tackling issues related to food systems transformation. Any implementation process of the summit needs to be based on the full understanding that the summit will not have any negotiated outcome and that any process that is initiated based on its outcome must follow strictly already existing instruments.

12. How do you envisage your role in the implementation of the Summit's outcomes?

Not participating in the implementation but monitoring and challenging when necessary its implementation.

¹ See a note on the meeting with Agnes Kalibata [here](#) and with Amina Mohammed [here](#)