

States have become aware of the importance of adopting coherent, cross-cutting action on a multilateral basis to ensure sustainable food security and realize the right to adequate food.

A proposal for an International Convention on Agricultural and Food Diversity and Sustainability



- States adopted declarations on food security (1996, 2002, 2009) and nutrition (1992, 2014).
- In 2015, they adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, in which they committed to eliminating hunger and malnutrition, ensuring food security for all, and establishing sustainable food production systems.
- In 2021, at the UN Food Systems Summit, they took a stance to accelerate the transition of food systems towards greater sustainability and equity.

CHALLENGES TO REACH SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

- **Hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.** Hundreds of millions of people around the world suffer from hunger, billions face food insecurity and are unable to access safe and nutritious food. This alarmingly increases cases of undernutrition, overweight, obesity and diet-related non-transmissible diseases, with serious consequences for human health and well-being.
- **Environmental degradation, climate change and erosion of biodiversity.** Food systems are responsible for over a third of greenhouse gases, have caused the degradation of 30% of land and a significant proportion of other natural resources, whilst contributing to the erosion of biodiversity.
- **Social and economic inequalities.** Food systems are characterized by serious inequalities throughout the food supply chain, with widespread insecurity amongst consumers and uneven distribution of the value created by companies.

WHAT DOES AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD DIVERSITY MEAN?

Agricultural and food diversity refers to the diversity of ecosystems and activities, knowledge, expressions and products from groups, communities and societies in relation to agriculture and food.

It is an essential condition that simultaneously address these challenges and :

- establishing sustainable, resilient, equitable and economically efficient food systems.
- guaranteeing sufficient, healthy, nutritious, diversified and culturally appropriate food for all.
- contributing to the sustainable development of territories.

A proposal for a Convention to ensure the protection and enhancement of agricultural and food diversity

FILLING THE GAPS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

There is no general, binding and universal international agreement on food security. International public law addresses this issue in a fragmented and incomplete manner. As a result, commercial considerations within existing texts predominate, promoting a globalized food system based on intensive and unsustainable production and processing methods. The Convention proposal aims to :

- Define a general, binding and universal international legal framework dedicated to food security, protecting and enhancing agricultural and food diversity.
- Establish a balance between commercial and non-commercial considerations associated with food security.
- Take into account the diversity of food systems and local contexts to better articulate the "global" and "local" dimensions of food.

MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

- Elevating agricultural and food diversity and sustainability to the status of essential solutions to global challenges.
- Creating political and legislative momentum in favor of agricultural and food diversity and sustainability.
- Recognizing new principles in international law for sustainable food security.
- Reaffirming the sovereignty, rights and obligations of states regarding food security.
- Recognizing the rights of farmers, herders, pastoralists and fishermen.
- Supporting the transition to sustainable and equitable food systems.
- Establishing inclusive and participatory food governance at different scales.

16 PRINCIPLES

1. Peace and Security / 2. Protecting and Enhancing Agricultural and Food Diversity / 3. Respect for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms / 4. Sovereignty / 5. Food Autonomy / 6. Specificity of Agriculture and Food / 7. Recognition of the Diversity of Forms of Agriculture and Food Systems / 8. Respect for Culturally Adapted Nutrition / 9. Participation / 10. Principle of Integration / 11. Sustainable Development / 12. Equity and Equality Between Men and Women / 13. Protecting Agricultural Land and Activities / 14. Responsible Investments / 15. International and Regional Solidarity and Cooperation / 16. Inclusive and Participatory Governance

Non-commercial considerations related to food security

The Convention proposal gives significant importance to social, cultural and environmental considerations in international law, without excluding economic considerations. It provides an obligation for states to include the objectives and principles of the Convention when making international commitments. In the event of conflict with the provisions of another international agreement, including trade agreements, the Convention shall prevail.

A PROPOSAL RESULTING FROM THE LEGAL RESEARCH CHAIR IN FOOD DIVERSITY AND SECURITY (DDSA) WITH SEVERAL POSITIVE SPIN-OFFS.

- **An incentive for international negotiations on food security.** It confers governments and diplomats with inspirational and informative tools to initiate discussions toward the adoption of an international treaty on food security.
- **A research tool for researchers, lawyers and students.** Based on the analysis of over 700 international agreements and legal texts closely or remotely related to food security, the proposal is an important research tool for those interested in food law and food security.
- **A relevant tool for decision-makers.** It shall strengthen the capacity of governments at all levels (national, regional, provincial, local, indigenous) to adopt coherent measures in favor of sustainable food security.
- **A practical, concrete tool for civil society and the private sector.** It can be used to develop advocacy for sustainable food security actions and to adopt practices in favor of agricultural and food diversity.

TO FIND OUT MORE, PLEASE VISIT THE [DDSA CHAIR WEBSITE](#)

To ensure sustainable global food security, it is crucial to examine the legal instruments for the promotion and protection of agricultural and food diversity.



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