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## Seeding Justice: A New Value System for Food and Agriculture

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Food is a primary building block of human life; it provides sustenance, has deep cultural meaning and is a source of livelihood for people around the world. Its value is immeasurable yet our current global economic system has reduced it to one more commodity to be bought and sold in the pursuit of profit. Food and agriculture systems are a troubling reflection of the wider global economic model dominated by neoliberal economic principles.

Under the neoliberal model, all goods and services are relegated to the status of mere commodities to be bought, sold or traded in a global marketplace. Efficiency and appropriate allocation of goods and services are thought to be best achieved through privatization, deregulation, specialization and competition. Growth, wealth accumulation and profit maximization become the markers of success, with winners and losers determined by an open free market.

But the existence of winners and losers sets up a fundamental conflict between those engaged in the accumulation of wealth and those merely attempting to meet basic human needs. This conflict manifests itself even in the production and distribution of food, where what is at stake is not only the existence of enough safe, healthy and adequate food for all people, but their safeguarded access to it.

The current food price crisis clearly demonstrates this fundamental conflict. Industrial agribusiness corporations have reported record profits, while the number of those who are food insecure has surpassed one billion.<sup>1,2</sup> The extremes of wealth accumulation amidst deepening impoverishment make clear the need for re-structuring of the global economic system, starting with the replacement of the current industrial agricultural model with an agricultural system rooted in human needs and the global common good.

### The Industrial Agriculture Model

Modern industrial agriculture practice developed in tandem in Europe and the United States following World War II. The model institutionalized the neoliberal theories of comparative advantage and free market primacy. In the U.S., price supports and supply management practices instituted under the New Deal in the wake of the

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, according to GRAIN, for fiscal year 2008, Cargill, the world's largest grain trader, reported an increase in profits of nearly 70% over 2007, and of 157% since 2006. See: GRAIN. "Corporations are *still* making a killing from hunger." April 2009.

<sup>2</sup> UN Food and Agriculture Organization. "1.02 Billion People Hungry: One Sixth of Humanity Undernourished – More Than Ever Before." June 19, 2009. <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/20568/icode/>

Great Depression came under attack in the 1950's.<sup>3</sup> Proponents of the industrial model argued that resources could be used more efficiently in a monocrop production scheme, concentrating on the intense production of a single crop. In this way, they postulated, productivity could be maximized while costs would be minimized.

By measuring productivity by yield, the production per unit of a single crop, rather than total output of a plot of land, small and medium sized farms, which would produce a variety of crops, became increasingly viewed as inefficient and uncompetitive.<sup>4</sup> Instead, advocates of the industrial model insisted that consolidating land into massive, intensely-farmed holdings would be more efficient and productive in terms of monocrop output. Yet this has also led to the increasing homogenization of food production: of the more than 7000 plants that have been cultivated for food throughout time, a mere 30 provide approximately 90% of global caloric intake today, while only three (maize, rice and wheat) comprise over half.<sup>5</sup>

The scale of production envisioned by industrial agricultural proponents also necessitated increasingly mechanized production models, relying heavily on machinery, irrigation systems, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides to increase yields. The identification of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium as critical factors in plant growth led to the manufacture of synthetic fertilizers, making possible more intensive types of agriculture. Successful application of dichlorodiphenyl trichloroethane (DDT) to suppress disease-bearing insect populations in World War II paved the way for widespread usage of synthetic organic compounds in agricultural pest control.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, irrigated water allowed for expanded and more intensive cultivation – irrigated land currently accounts for 40% of the world's food on only 17% of its land.<sup>7</sup> The combination of these factors led initially to significant jumps in productivity.

Such yield-increasing practices were complemented by reductions in input costs, specifically the use of farm labor. As New Deal supports for smaller farms were removed, the price of commodity crops quickly fell below production costs. While hailed as beneficial to consumers, in the absence of price guarantees and other supports, small and medium sized farms were pushed out of business, and land was increasingly consolidated into large industrial scale operations.<sup>8</sup> Subsidies were instituted ostensibly to support the income of remaining farmers, but as they were based on level of production, they benefited large industrial producers far more than small and family producers. In fact, a 2007 study from the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that subsidy payments served to accelerate structural change in the agricultural sector, with a strong correlation between subsidy payments and cropland concentration.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, at large-scale levels of production, labor costs cut

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Ritchie and Kevin Ristau "Crisis by Design: A Brief Review of U.S. Farm Policy." 1987 League of Rural Voters Education Project.

<sup>4</sup> Peter M. Rosset. "The Multiple Functions and Benefits of Small Farm Agriculture in the Context of Global Trade Negotiations." Food First/The Institute for Food and Development Policy. September 1999.

<sup>5</sup> UN Food & Agriculture Organization. "The State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture." 1997. <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/Faoinfo/Agricult/AGP/AGPS/pgafa/pdf/swrfull.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Commission on Life Sciences, National Research Council. The Future Role of Pesticides in U.S. Agriculture. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000. pp 24.

<sup>7</sup> UN Food and Agriculture Organization. "Crops and Drops: Making the Best Use of Water for Agriculture." 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Ritchie and Kevin Ristau "Crisis by Design: A Brief Review of U.S. Farm Policy." 1987 League of Rural Voters Education Project.

<sup>9</sup> Nigel Key and Michael J. Roberts. "Commodity Payments, Farm Business Survival, and Farm Size Growth." Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, November 2007.

into profit margins, making mechanization the default choice. Farmers were pushed not only off their land, but out of the agricultural sector altogether.

### **Exporting the Model**

Hailed as a success for significant increases in production, agribusiness corporations in the U.S. and EU soon exhausted the ability of domestic markets to absorb the goods they produced.<sup>10</sup> Seeking to expand corporate opportunities in developing country markets, policy-makers argued that U.S. companies were best positioned to supply staple crops at a low cost to help achieve global food security. In the words of former U.S. Agriculture Secretary John Block, "The idea that developing countries should feed themselves is an anachronism from a bygone era. They could better ensure their food security by relying on U.S. agricultural products, which are available in most cases at lower cost."<sup>11</sup>

In opening developing country markets, agribusiness corporations were able to not only export their products, but also their model of production. This opening was accomplished through two main channels: Stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) implemented by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in the 1980s and early 1990s, and trade liberalization under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and free trade agreements beginning in the mid 1990's.

SAPs, a set of policy prescriptions aimed at restructuring developing country economies towards export oriented growth, were adopted by developing countries as conditions to loans secured from the World Bank and IMF during the 1980s debt and credit crises.<sup>12</sup> Integral to these policies was a reduction in public spending, including in the agricultural arena the elimination of extension and education programs, public grain reserves and subsidies for fertilizer and seeds.<sup>13</sup> While this elimination of support mechanisms for small scale producers mirrored the policies implemented in the U.S., for many developing countries this led to an almost complete divestment in agriculture for domestic consumption.<sup>14</sup> Instead countries began to embrace the industrial, export-oriented model of agricultural production in order to generate cash to service their debts.<sup>15</sup>

Accompanying these policies was also an aggressive push towards market liberalization, institutionalized through the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO sought to eliminate tariffs, quotas, subsidies and other trade regulating measures used by governments to support domestic industries.<sup>16</sup> In agriculture, the elimination of these government regulations would expose all producers to the global free markets where the market would once again determine winners and losers. However, Northern countries, who dominate the negotiations, ensured that they would be able to maintain their domestic subsidies and other trade regulating measures, while rejecting the demands of developing countries that the developed countries adopt the same policies at

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<sup>10</sup> Walden Bello "Manufacturing a Food Crisis". 2008 <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20080602/bello>

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Walden Bello "Manufacturing a Food Crisis". 2008 <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20080602/bello>

<sup>12</sup> Daniel G. De la Torre Ugarte and Sophia Murphy "The Global Food Crisis: Creating an Opportunity for Fairer and More Sustainable Food and Agriculture Systems Worldwide" 2008. EcoFair Trade Dialogue

<sup>13</sup> Mariama Williams "The Global Food Crisis and women: Making the Best of Everything" 2008. Presented at the Integrated Policy Research Institute Annual General Meeting

<sup>14</sup> Walden Bello "Destroying African Agriculture." 2008 Foreign Policy in Focus

<sup>15</sup> Daniel G. De la Torre Ugarte and Sophia Murphy "The Global Food Crisis: Creating an Opportunity for Fairer and More Sustainable Food and Agriculture Systems Worldwide" 2008. EcoFair Trade Dialogue

<sup>16</sup> Zoraida Garcia "Agriculture, Trade Negotiations and Gender." 2006. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

home that they pursued globally.<sup>17</sup> Subsequent bilateral and multilateral agreements, negotiated under even more unfavorable power imbalances for developing countries, have deepened trade liberalization and exacerbated the impacts of these policies.

Similar to the model developed in the U.S., the increasingly integrated and liberalized global economy favored large-scale producers, mostly from developed countries.<sup>18</sup> The global trading system and remaining subsidy programs in developed countries gave their agricultural corporations an advantage in the global market, essentially pricing out small-scale producers in developing countries, as they had in the developed.<sup>19</sup> This was not an unintended consequence as reflected in the statement of former Agriculture Secretary Block, yet differing circumstances in the developing countries failed to be taken into consideration.

The industrial agriculture model assumed an elastic labor pool that could easily be absorbed into other sectors, and an unlimited base of natural resources, such as land and water. However, developing countries not only had much higher percentages of their populations dependent on agricultural production for their livelihoods, but also very few industries to absorb the displaced agricultural labor.<sup>20, 21</sup> Many who were displaced from the agricultural sector migrated to nearby cities in search of paid work, forming a new urban poor.<sup>22</sup> And while proponents of this model suggested that the export agricultural industry would provide alternative livelihoods for some of these displaced workers, the large-scale model in fact provided few jobs as farms became increasingly mechanized.<sup>23</sup>

Family farmers who remained faced the double challenge of competing with underpriced imports and securing food for household consumption, as the cost of inputs made even production for household consumption increasingly prohibitive.<sup>24</sup> They were pushed onto ever more marginal lands, and alienated from other essential productive resources, such as water supplies and seed stocks.<sup>25</sup> Among these small producers, women were the most impacted as they bore the primary responsibility for meeting household needs, all the while losing access to the marginal lands that had previously supplied them with the means to do so.<sup>26, 27</sup> Further, by bringing these

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Carin Smaller "Planting the Rights Seed: A Human Rights Perspective on Agriculture Trade and the WTO" 2005. Trade Human Rights and the Economy Action Update

<sup>19</sup> Frederic Mousseau and Anuradha Mittal "Inequity in International Agricultural Trade: The Marginalization of Developing Countries and Their Small Farmers" 2005. The Oakland Institute

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Eric Holtz-Gimenez "Displaced Peasants, Higher Food Prices" 2007 [Le Monde Diplomatique](http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/212/45389.html)  
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/212/45389.html>

<sup>22</sup> Mark Ritchie and Kevin Ristau "Crisis by Design: A Brief Review of U.S. Farm Policy." 1987 League of Rural Voters Education Project

<sup>23</sup> Mamerto Pérez, Sergio Schlesinger, and Timothy A. Wise "The Promise and the Perils of Agricultural Trade Liberalization: Lessons from Latin America" 2008 Latin American Working Group  
<http://ase.tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/rp/AgricWGReportJuly08.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Karel Mayrand "Integrated assessment of trade-related policies: agricultural trade liberalisation and the Convention to Combat Desertification" 2006. [Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal](#)

<sup>26</sup> Ama Achiaa Amankwah "Ghana: Women Lose Their Farms to Biofuel Production" 2009 ActionAid  
[http://www.actionaidusa.org/news/related/food\\_rights/women\\_lose\\_farms\\_to\\_biofuel\\_production/](http://www.actionaidusa.org/news/related/food_rights/women_lose_farms_to_biofuel_production/)

<sup>27</sup> Karen Hansen-Kuhn "FOOD, FARMERS AND FUEL: Balancing Global Grain and Energy Policies with Sustainable Land Use" 2008 ActionAid

marginal lands under regular cultivation, land was increasingly degraded and its productive capability reduced, feeding a cycle of expansion and environmental destruction.

The adoption of the industrial model of agriculture has not only undermined small-scale production, but the system has left many developing countries dependent on the global market to ensure domestic food security. Countries that were once net food exporters are now net food importers,<sup>28</sup> as domestic production has shifted to cash-generating export crops. When the model was initially implemented, many believed that developing countries didn't need to produce their own food and instead could rely on imports, but shortages, speculation and price volatility on the international market weren't factored into the equation.

### **Crises Emerge**

While the world has witnessed several food shortages and crises over the past decades, the exponential increase in food prices in 2007 sparked a global food crisis that brought to light the existing high levels of global food insecurity. Speculation, conversion of land to agrofuel production, and drought in key agricultural producing regions were among the immediate causes of the price spike. However the vulnerability to such outside stresses was created long before through the policies elaborated above. Structural Adjustment Policies and trade liberalization under the WTO led to divestment from agriculture for local food consumption in developing countries, while eliminating safeguard mechanisms against price volatility in the international market. Many developing countries are now neither able to afford food produced on the international market, nor have the capacity to produce enough food to meet needs domestically.<sup>29</sup>

The most impacted are small-scale producers, who now comprise 80% of the hungry globally,<sup>30</sup> and the urban poor, displaced from agricultural production under the above policies. Dependence on imported food endangers poor urban consumers who have not only been forced out of food production, but whose access to food is determined by external market prices.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, unequal distribution of power and benefits along the chain of production guarantees that even as the prices of agricultural products rise, small-scale producers see little or no benefit. Lack of bargaining power among agriculturalists ensures that traders and middlemen set the prices of products, so that rather than the fair market prices of their products, producers receive only meager income.<sup>32</sup> Small-scale producers also spend a higher percentage of their income on food than other groups, leaving them particularly vulnerable to price hikes as their small increases in income rarely match the increased

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<sup>28</sup> Kanaga Raja "Trade: Doha Round Will Not Solve Global Food Crisis, say NGO's" 2008 Third World Network <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/wto.info/twninfo20080612.htm>

<sup>29</sup> Teresa Caverio and Carlos Galian "Double-Edged Prices: Lessons from the Food Price Crisis: 10 Actions Developing Countries Should Take" 2008. Oxfam International

<sup>30</sup> Olivier de Schutter. "Statement by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food to the Interactive Thematic Dialogue of the UN General Assembly on The Global Food Crisis and the Right to Food." 6 April 2009.

<sup>31</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization "Food Prices Remain High in Developing Countries" 2009 <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/12660/icode/>

<sup>32</sup> Chakravarthi Raghavan "More losers than winners from WTO's 'free trade'." 2001. Third World Network and Shepard Daniel "Latin America Food Prices Brief: Framing an New Policy Approach." 2008. Oakland Institute

price of food.<sup>33</sup> All the while, agricultural corporations such as ADM and Cargill have been reaping record profits off the food price crisis.<sup>34</sup>

The injustices and inequalities in the chains of production and distribution are compounded by gender inequalities for a majority of agriculturalists. It is estimated that 60-80% of agricultural producers are women, and that women are among the poorest of small-scale producers.<sup>35</sup> In many instances women are responsible for the production of food for local consumption, while men produce crops for earned income, or migrate to urban areas in search of paid work. Additionally, their gendered roles as care givers ensure that women are responsible for supplementing the family's needs, among them the need for food, when earned income is insufficient. Yet, land tenure systems not only favor large owners, but also customary laws limit women's access to land by privileging ownership by men.<sup>36</sup> Women are often invisible in the design and implementation of government and Northern donor agricultural projects alike; this means that women agriculturalists have even less access than their male counterparts to the few extension and subsidy programs available to small-scale producers.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile girls are usually the first to be pulled out of school in times of crisis,<sup>38</sup> and women often provide for their families before themselves, even opting to eat less or not at all.<sup>39</sup> These factors have left women particularly vulnerable among already disadvantaged small-scale agricultural producers.

### **An Ecological Food Crisis**

As evolving ecological crises compound, it is clear that the food crisis is not only one of immediate hunger, but also one of long-term global food security. Predicated on the assumption that natural resources are limitless, the input-intensive industrial agricultural model has significantly damaged the underlying ecological foundation of food production. Initial jumps in productivity are now tapering or even falling, yet the ecological costs remain. The dominant method of agricultural production is using arable land, water and fossil fuel at a rate much quicker than these resources can be regenerated, though industrial agriculture depends on them for its long-term viability. The combination of water scarcity, soil degradation, biodiversity loss, land-use changes and evolving climate change could lead to a total global food shortfall of up to 25% of demand by 2050.<sup>40</sup>

Up to 50,000 km<sup>2</sup> of agricultural land is lost each year to land degradation, depleted to the point where it is no longer productive, and cannot regenerate naturally.<sup>41</sup> Intense over-cultivation of land in the industrial

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<sup>33</sup> Teresa Caverio and Carlos Galian "Double-Edged Prices: Lessons from the Food Price Crisis: 10 Actions Developing Countries Should Take" 2008. Oxfam International

<sup>34</sup> GRAIN. "Corporations are *still* making a killing from hunger." April 2009

<sup>35</sup> Alexandra Spiello "A Row to Hoe: The Gender Impact of Trade Liberalization on our Food System, Agricultural Markets, and Women's Human Rights." 2007

<sup>36</sup> Teresa Caverio and Carlos Galian "Double-Edged Prices: Lessons from the Food Price Crisis: 10 Actions Developing Countries Should Take" 2008. Oxfam International

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> World Bank "The Global Financial Crisis: Assessing Vulnerability of Women and Children." 2009  
<http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/financialcrisis/pdf/Women-Children-Vulnerability-March09.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Kevin Sullivan "Food Crisis Hits African Women Hard." 2008. Green Change  
<http://www.greenchange.org/article.php?id=3003>

<sup>40</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. "The Environmental Food Crisis: Environment's role in averting future food crises." February 2009.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. "The Environmental Food Crisis: Environment's role in averting future food crises." February 2009.

agriculture model leads to salinization of soil, nutrient depletion and soil erosion. Heavy machinery breaks down soil structure, while chemical fertilizers reduce the ability of soil to absorb and retain water. Over-cultivation is one of the key factors contributing to desertification, a phenomenon affecting almost one third of land worldwide (4 billion hectares).<sup>42</sup>

Seventy percent of global freshwater usage can be accounted for by irrigated agriculture.<sup>43</sup> However, the bulk of this water is originally sourced from non-renewable resources or from glaciers, particularly from the Himalayas, which are rapidly dwindling due to climate change. Many irrigation systems, on which industrial agriculture relies to maintain high yields, are decidedly inefficient, with a global average of less than 40% of water flow absorbed by crops.<sup>44</sup> Deep drilling for water has allowed expansion of industrial agriculture into water-stressed areas, but most often at the expense of the water needs of local households and small producers, who find that their shallower wells have run dry or been contaminated by salt water seepage.<sup>45</sup> Water scarcity affects approximately 1.2 billion people, or about one fifth of global population.

Biodiversity provides key environmental services to agriculture, including climate regulation, pollination and pest control; yet agriculture is one of the main drivers of genetic erosion and species extinction. Over 4000 assessed plant and animal species are threatened by agricultural intensification.<sup>46</sup> While a significant loss in and of itself, the loss of genetic diversity within cultivated crops is of particular concern in the face of increasing ecological stressors on agricultural production. Traditional varieties and wild relatives of cultivated crops provide critical genetic diversity supporting climatic resilience and disease resistance, yet this gene pool is being rapidly eroded in favor of increasing homogenization across industrial agricultural production globally.

Projected changes in growing conditions due to climate change, including average temperature and precipitation, will have serious negative repercussions for food production. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that yields from rain-fed agriculture will fall by up to fifty percent by 2020 in Africa, and up to thirty percent in Central and South Asia by 2050.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, agriculture contributes more than 30% of the global greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change and destabilizing weather patterns - more than any other single sector, including transportation.<sup>48</sup> Livestock, land-use changes (deforestation to make way for expanding agriculture) and soil degradation are the main contributing emissions drivers in the agricultural sector.

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<sup>42</sup> UN Convention to Combat Desertification. <http://www.unccd.int/knowledge/faq.php>.

<sup>43</sup> World Water Assessment Programme. "Water for People, Water for Life: The United Nations World Water Development Report." 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Shiny Varghese. "Integrated Solutions to the Water, Agriculture and Climate Crises." Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. March 2009.

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. "The Environmental Food Crisis: Environment's role in averting future food crises." February 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. "Contribution from Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report: Summary for Policymakers." April 2007.

<sup>48</sup> Helena Paul et al. "Agriculture and Climate Change: Real Problems, False Solutions." Preliminary report by Grupo de Reflexion Rural, Biofuelwatch, EcoNexus and NOAH – Friends of the Earth Denmark. June 2009.

## A new model

As emerging crises expose the fault lines running through the global economy, it is clear that what is needed is not a tweaking of the existing model, but a re-articulation of its foundational principles and justification, starting with the production and distribution of food. While they acknowledge the inadequacies of the current system, the major international financial and multilateral institutions advocate solutions that further entrench the neoliberal model, systematically undermining the viability of small-holder agriculture and compounding ecological harm.

By focusing on further deregulation of international trade and unproven techno-fixes, their proposed remedies are likely to create incentives for additional consolidation and intensification of the industrial agricultural model. Small-scale farmers do not have the means to access the global market or the financial capital necessary to implement more technical measures, nor are these measures effective at resource-management for long-term sustainability. Recent studies have shown the potential of organic and sustainable agriculture models to meet human needs while fitting within ecological limitations, yet so far little serious attention has been given on the official level to these methods.<sup>49</sup>

If the global community is serious about addressing the inadequacies of the global food system, a restructuring of the system must begin with its core values, and not just the policies proscribed. Catholic social tradition, feminist political economic theory and human rights frameworks can provide a set of guideposts in fashioning a new value framework that upholds sustainable livelihoods, food security, gender equity and ecological integrity as primary goods around the provision of which economic systems should be organized.

- **Human Well-Being:** All people have the right to an adequate and continuously improving standard of living.<sup>50</sup> Derived from the Greek *oikonomia*, meaning management of the household, the foundational principle of an economy is to provide for human well-being, rather than the modern focus on wealth creation. Economic success is then defined not only by aggregate numbers but also by how individual members of society fare in seeking their own fulfillment, incorporating social, cultural, political, gender and spiritual dimensions.<sup>51</sup>

Policy considerations in support of human well-being:

- Ratify, implement and enforce the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, particularly the human right to food and water.
- Prioritize small-scale and family operations, over large- and industrial-scale production, in domestic agricultural planning and policy-making, in both the North and the South, assuring that trade, aid, investment and finance policies enhance the abilities of small-scale producers to

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<sup>49</sup> For example: Nadia El-Hage Scialabba. "Organic Agriculture and Food Security." UN Food and Agriculture Organization. May 2007; Catherine Badgley et al. "Organic agriculture and the global food supply." *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*. 2007; J. N. Pretty et al. "Resource-Conserving Agriculture Increases Yields in Developing Countries." *Environmental Science and Technology*. 2006.

<sup>50</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Article 11.1.

<sup>51</sup> Marilyn Power. "Social Provisioning as a Starting Point for Feminist Economics." in *Feminist Economics*; November 2004. pps 3-19.

maintain an adequate standard of living, achieve their own food security and preserve the integrity of local ecosystems.

- Prioritize food for domestic consumption over cash crops for export in domestic economic planning, and ensure that trade policies do not undermine the human right to food.
  - Reform land tenure and resource management regimes to ensure full and equal access to the means necessary to support sustainable livelihoods for agriculturalists, especially women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.
  - Restore and ensure sufficient funding for social protection programs which support livelihoods, education, and nutrition as a means to maintaining a minimum standard of living that would enhance the right to food.
  - Restore and ensure sufficient funding for appropriate agricultural and rural development programs targeted to small- and medium-scale producers and processors, including government subsidies for agricultural inputs and extension services.
  - Utilize social indicators, such as distribution of wealth, elimination of poverty, and access to food, education, healthcare and productive resources, to assess the economic health of a country, rather than aggregate measurements of productivity and growth.
- **Subsidiarity:** All people have the right to determine their own most appropriate food, agricultural and economic systems, outside of international market forces. A model based on economic subsidiarity would give precedence to small-scale producers to provision local and regional consumers and markets with appropriate goods and services.

Policy consideration in support of subsidiarity:

- Endorse local decision-making and control over resources, inclusive with the participation of marginalized groups, particularly women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. As a first step, governments must ratify, implement and enforce Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization.<sup>52</sup>
- Ensure that intellectual property protections do not violate local control over resources, knowledge and tradition, nor impede knowledge-sharing or collaborative efforts to address local, regional or global challenges.
- Uphold food sovereignty, recognizing the right of national governments to determine, through participatory processes, the most appropriate food and agricultural systems. Trade, aid, investment and finance policies must enhance the abilities of governments to do so, rather than detract from them.

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<sup>52</sup> International Labor Organization. "Convention (No. 169) Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries." <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/62.htm>

- Require state and federal entities to procure food and agricultural products from local producers, as possible, in order to bolster small-scale local production and support local livelihoods.
- **Participation:** Participation is not only a political and social right, but also an economic right. Indeed, all peoples have the right “to become the principal architects of their own economic and social development.”<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, recognizing human agency as a key starting point, all people have the right to partake in economic decision-making that affects their lives.<sup>54</sup>

Policy considerations in support of participation:

- Ratify, implement and enforce the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination as initial steps in bringing all stakeholders to the decision-making table.
- Consult all stakeholders, including women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, in domestic and multilateral decision-making and review of economic and agricultural policies to ensure that the experiences of all sectors are taken into consideration.
- Mandate inclusive, open and transparent decision-making processes in international and multilateral forums, ensuring that all nations have an equal voice, civil society is represented and decisions are not made by elite committees.
- **Solidarity:** Solidarity is “not a feeling of vague compassion,” but rather “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual.”<sup>55</sup> By emphasizing the interconnected and interdependent nature of the one human family, the principle of solidarity embraces a collaborative, rather than competitive, worldview.

Policy considerations in support of solidarity:

- Ensure legislation promotes labor as more than an input of production, but as having intrinsic value through providing dignity to the worker, strengthening communities and distributing wealth. At minimum governments must ratify, implement and enforce the International Labor Organization’s core labor standards.
- Protect and enforce the full labor rights of farmers and farm-workers, including the right to freely choose an agricultural vocation, receive just compensation for agricultural labor and freedom of association.
- Reintroduce price supports, to provide for both affordable goods for consumers and adequate livelihoods for small-scale producers.

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<sup>53</sup> World Synod of Catholic Bishops. *Justitia in Mundo*, 71.

<sup>54</sup> Marilyn Power. “*Social Provisioning as a Starting Point for Feminist Economics.*” in *Feminist Economics*; November 2004. pps 3-19.

<sup>55</sup> Pope John Paul II. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38.

- Give precedence to small-scale producers, particularly women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, as recipients of assistance, extension programs, and other support mechanisms.
- **Ecological Integrity:** “There is an order in the universe which must be respected, and the human person, endowed with the capability of choosing freely, has a grave responsibility to preserve this order.”<sup>56</sup> The planet’s diverse ecosystems and natural processes form not only the delicately balanced foundation of human habitat, economy and food production, but also its finite limitations which cannot be violated with impunity.

Policy considerations in support of ecological integrity:

- Prioritize in domestic agricultural planning and policy-making, and allocate sufficient public funding for appropriate research, development and implementation of multifunctional organic, sustainable and biodiverse agricultural practices and technologies, built on local knowledge and realities, and applicable to the needs of small- and medium-scale producers.
- Enshrine the precautionary principle in multilateral agreements and domestic policy.
- Provide incentives to farmers for maintaining and enhancing the integrity of local ecosystems.
- Support the efforts of communities to create innovative and locally-appropriate adaptations to climate change and resource scarcity.
- Include contributions to ecosystem services and multicrop output in measurements of farm productivity, rather than focus on annual yield of a single crop, thereby incentivizing more sustainable practices in place of pressure to over-cultivate and exhaust the local resource base.

## CONCLUSION

These values and recommendations contribute to construction of a framework supporting the global common good, the sum of conditions of social living through which each and every person can most readily achieve their own fulfillment. The end goal should not only be to ensure basic food security, but should also be to uplift the greater good of the whole human family, and the wider web of life. Growth in gross domestic product (GDP) does not gauge how individual members of society fare, nor does yield represent optimal agricultural productivity. The crises faced by the global community reiterate that authentic human development cannot be captured by aggregate numbers. Rather, they instead oblige us to build a new foundation for global accord based on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and sustaining all life.

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<sup>56</sup> Pope John Paul II. *World Day of Peace Message 1990*, 15.