



## End hunger – protect ecosystems

*Hunger is the greatest scandal of our times. Dying of hunger means an agonizing slow death. Although there is enough food for all, 3 million children die every year of malnutrition. 870 million people suffer hunger while in the rich countries an increasing number of people have a problem of overweight. World hunger is in the first place a problem of unfair distribution, heavy harvest losses and the scandalous wastage of food. Other causes are wars and climate change, land grabbing and poverty, European agricultural and trade policies as well as speculation on food commodities and unsustainable extraction of resources. Surprisingly, the majority of malnourished persons live in rural areas. That is why an important Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) is to help subsistence farmers to improve their livelihood.*

### What does the SDG call for?

Food is a basic human right. The SDGs call not only for a reduction but for an end to poverty and hunger everywhere and in all its forms. Some of the means proposed to achieve this goal are:

- to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers and to assure them access to land, technical knowledge, financial services and markets
- to ensure sustainable food production systems; to strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change; to improve land and soil quality; to maintain the genetic diversity of seeds; to ensure sustainable use of ecosystems; to eliminate all forms of agricultural export subsidies
- to invest in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services

Hardly mentioned, but important would be: regulation on speculation in food commodities and trade policies which do harm to local producers in Africa.



### What can we do?

Religious working in Africa have from the beginning been engaged in the struggle against poverty and hunger. The Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN) has been campaigning for many years for the rights and promotion of small farmers, demanding the discontinuation of the EU bio-fuel targets which encourage land grabbing, pushing the implementation of the FAO guidelines on the responsible tenure of land and promoting the idea of food sovereignty.

We can have an impact on the problem of poverty and hunger in the world by a simple life-style and through our daily consumer choices if we buy preferably regionally and sustainably produced food stuffs, when possible fair trade products, if we diminish our consumption of meat, avoid wasting food, maybe even growing food ourselves and supporting food councils.

### Words to challenge us

- Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. (Mt 25:35.40)
- We know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and ‘whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor.’ (Laudato Si’ 50)
- It is painful to see that the fight against hunger and malnutrition is hindered by “market priorities” and the “primacy of profit”, which has reduced foodstuffs to a commodity like any other; subject to speculation that is also of a financial nature. And while we speak of new rights, the hungry are waiting at the street corner asking for the right to citizenship; asking for due consideration of their status to receive a healthy, basic diet. They ask for dignity, not for alms. There is food for everyone, but not everyone can eat, while waste, excessive consumption and the use of food for other purposes is visible before our very eyes. (Papst Franziskus, Rede vor der FAO)
- Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2269)