

DEVELOPMENT AND

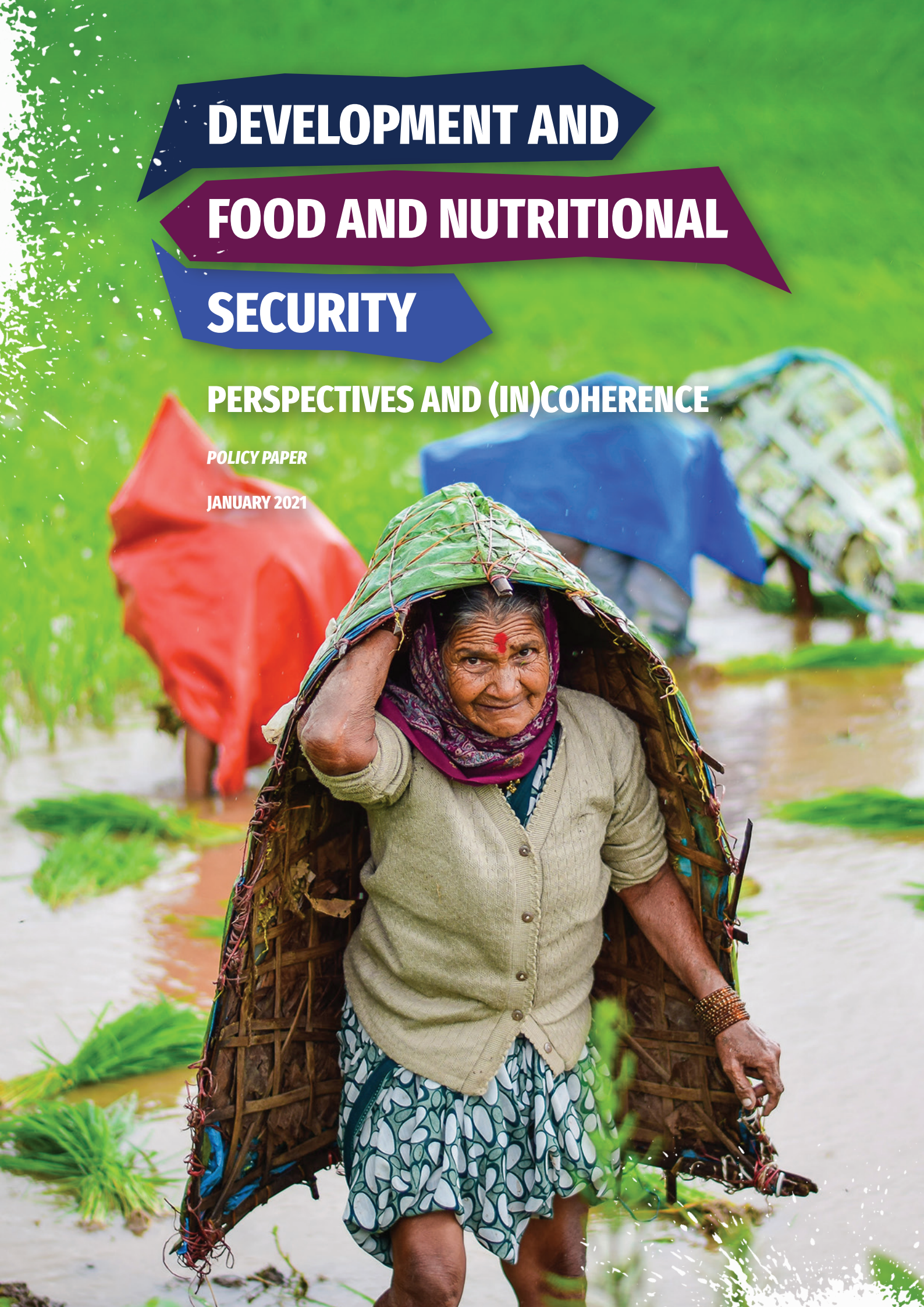
FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL

SECURITY

PERSPECTIVES AND (IN)COHERENCE

POLICY PAPER

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DISCLAIMER

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The project #CoerênciaNaPresidência promotes critical thinking about global interdependencies and reinforces the value of policy coherence for development as the central axis of the development policies themselves.

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of a fairer, more sustainable and inclusive global development implies that the various sectoral policies – such as agricultural and food policies – do not undermine the goals and efforts to eradicate poverty, but rather actively contribute to the promotion of development at global, European, national and local level. It also requires that the policies implemented by the most developed regions and countries take into account external impacts, particularly in the poorest countries, namely social, environmental, economic and human rights impacts. These interconnections and impacts must be known and monitored, feeding a more informed political decision and contributing to (re)formulate policies and to implement them in the most coherent and integrated way.

Since the concept of development is increasingly linked to improving the well-being and living conditions of current and future generations (which includes protecting our Common Home), the focus is not only on eliminating inconsistencies, but also on more comprehensive and integrated approaches that have a transformative effect, that respond to people's aspirations for a dignified life and that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is exactly what Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) advocates, assumed as an

essential condition for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)¹. PCD has also been a political commitment and a legal obligation in the European Union and its Member States since 1992, reinforced in the Lisbon Treaty (Article 208)² and reiterated in strategic documents such as the European Consensus for Development (2017)³.

As we enter the last decade for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, it is important to strengthen efforts to increase the positive impact of public policies and the effectiveness of development processes. However, to what extent are integrated and intersectoral approaches implemented in order to ensure a balance between the various dimensions of sustainable development - social, environmental, economic, governance? Are the costs of inconsistencies taken into account, or is there a prioritisation of other issues and measures, considered more urgent or relevant, to the detriment of development policies? Are there adequate political will, mechanisms and means to implement policies more in line with global development?

¹ PCD is included in the Agenda as the fundamental systemic issue to revitalise the global partnership for development (SDG 17), with a specific target dedicated to it (target 17.14).

² Maastricht Treaty, 1992, Article 130u; Lisbon Treaty, 2009, Article 208 (on Development Cooperation), paragraph 2: "Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty. The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries".

³ "The New European Consensus on Development: Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future", 2017, chapter 1.2., items 10 to 12, and chapter 4.2, items 108 to 112. Available at <https://bit.ly/328k7Tz>

Food and nutritional insecurity is simultaneously a cause and effect of poverty, and it is linked to multiple dimensions of development. Access to safe, healthy and nutritious food at affordable prices is a challenge for a large part of the world population, even more so considering population growth and power imbalances in the agri-food system, which have contributed to an increase in food insecurity in the world. This is aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population, aggravated factors of inequality and clearly left many behind. In this context, the response to the phenomenon of hunger becomes a moral, political, economic and social imperative for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the construction of fairer and more sustainable agri-food systems is crucial for this purpose.

1. CHALLENGES, INCONSISTENCIES AND SYNERGIES

The transformation of agri-food systems must make them more equitable, inclusive and sustainable, both from the perspective of producers and other workers in the sector, and of consumers, in order to have coherent impacts on the promotion of food and nutritional security, from the local to the global level. This requires changes and improvements in public policies, in the support and financial resources invested, in institutions, infrastructures, regulations and markets. European Union's agricultural policies continue to have harmful impacts on the poorest countries, jeopardising their contribution to the eradication of poverty globally. At global level, the demand for food raw materials and the pressure on natural resources favour land occupation, deforestation, drilling and/or intensive land cultivation, and the regulatory frameworks and legal guarantees do not ensure respect for environmental rules and the protection of human rights. Only with practices that contribute more sustainably to the environment and simultaneously respond to the needs of the poorest and vulnerable in the agri-food system will it be possible to contribute coherently to global development.

1.1. THE EXTERNAL IMPACTS OF EU AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

The European Union is the **largest importer and exporter of agri-food products**, so its practices have a significant impact on international agricultural markets and food systems outside Europe, including in developing countries⁴. On average, European countries have one of the world's worst ecological footprints per capita, with unsustainable production and consumption patterns for the planet, which are largely supported by the export of the European environmental liabilities and externalisation of environmental and social costs to other parts of the world. Policy coherence for development would require that the social and environmental impacts, externalities and side effects of production and consumption policies and patterns in the European Union were taken into

⁴ EU's foreign trade in agri-food products reached a new peak in 2019, with total exports increasing by 10% and imports by 2.5%, which meant a record annual profit of 31.9 billion euros (representing an increase of 52% compared to 2018). Pork meat and wheat were the products that grew most in exports. In the first half of 2020, the positive balance continued to grow, reaching 27.4 billion euros in the first half of 2020. More information at <https://bit.ly/2LbSio6>

account and measures were defined to minimise them, although the assessment and reporting of key sectoral policies – including agricultural and food policies – do not include these external effects.

Since its creation, the **Common Agricultural Policy** (CAP) has always had a prominent place on the EU's political agenda and a considerable budgetary burden on the EU budget⁵. The CAP reform currently under discussion aims to simplify and modernise this policy, adapting support to new economic and social perspectives of agriculture and rural areas, reinforcing its contribution to combating climate change and protecting the environment, and taking advantage of new opportunities in the areas of health, trade, bio-economy, circular economy and digital economy (EC, 2018). However, the logic of this policy remains focused almost exclusively on sustaining the incomes of farmers and European production.

Although it has a domestic focus⁶, CAP has generated, over decades, important impacts on developing countries, which are little analysed or taken into account. Despite several reports from civil society and the European Parliament itself in this regard, this aspect was not detailed in the legislative package implemented in the 2014-2020 period and the current reform proposal – for CAP 2021-2027 – includes only a **general reference to EU's commitment to PCD**, not translated into concrete legislation or specific indicators that specify the responsibility of the EU and its Member States for development issues (CONCORD, 2018). None of the nine objectives of the new CAP is linked to the effects of this policy outside the European space. There is no alignment with the European Consensus for Development (2017), the guiding document for development policy, nor with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

⁵ For the period 2014-2020, 408.3 billion euros were budgeted for the CAP, representing 38% of the EU budget; the European Commission's proposal for the 2021-2027 budget, presented in June 2018, is 365 billion euros, which will represent 28% to 31% of the budget.

⁶ Several analyses highlight the unfair and inconsistent effects of the CAP in promoting food and nutritional security in the EU itself and their environmental and social impacts in Europe, such as the fact that it benefits mainly large agri-food companies (which receive 80% of the funds); it favours an intensive, industrialised and polluting agriculture; it is not in line with the other policies and instruments that promote the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems; or it is not part of a more comprehensive and integrated rural development programme. See, for example, Friends of the Earth Europe (2019).



Over the years, the granting of **direct payments and export subsidies** to agricultural products in Europe has had negative effects on food security and the agricultural sectors of developing countries. Although only about 6% of the European population is dependent on agriculture, European farmers receive financial support that is about three times the development aid provided by EU institutions abroad (Mitchell and Baker, 2019). FAO and OECD have warned that these subsidies continue to be widely used, with effects on the distortion of production, trade and markets (OECD, 2020a). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development itself includes a goal to correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including by the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect.

The EU has taken important steps in this specific area, as the new CAP proposal removes export subsidies, but continues to focus heavily on direct payments to European producers⁷ and to encourage an export-oriented production model, and the link between the model promoted by European agricultural policies and the local markets of the poorest coun-

⁷ In 2020, around 70% of the CAP budget was intended to support farmers' incomes. Direct payments to European farmers continue to represent up to 50% of the total income from agricultural activity in the EU (Kornher and von Braun, 2020). Member States also freely allocate subsidies to sectors in difficulty (the so-called associated payments), creating distortions in the domestic and international markets.

tries is not analysed or assessed. The European Parliament's Development Committee recommended, in 2018, that specific indicators be introduced on (i) the impact of intensive agriculture and overproduction on the agricultural sector and on environmental and climate objectives, (ii) the import of proteins from third countries, where soy production has harmful environmental and social impacts, (iii) the impact of EU agricultural product exports on local markets in developing countries and (iv) the externalities of intensified European agriculture (real costs, global ecological footprint, etc.)⁸. In this regard, the SDG targets could provide some useful indicators to integrate into the CAP.

The European Commission expresses the position that the promotion of European exports of agri-food products is consistent with the development goals and promotes global food security (EC, 2019c). However, the interaction between trade and agricultural policy is where the effects in lower income countries have been felt most significantly. By **encouraging export and surplus production** of some products – particularly meat, cereals and dairy products – there has been unfair competition, with the invasion of the markets of some poorer countries, and with detrimental effects on the production and local agri-food systems. Various CAP instruments have also had an influence on global food prices, contributing to volatility that affects disproportionately and is more problematic for producers, traders and governments of countries with great vulnerability and little capacity to respond to these external risks.

An obvious example concerns **dairy products in West Africa**, with unfair competition from products subsidised by CAP, as powdered milk produced in Europe is marketed at much lower prices⁹. The elimination of some mechanisms to regulate the European agricultural market, such as the abolition of milk quotas, in 2015, also contributed to an increase in the produc-

tion and export of this product to the region, meaning an authentic practice of dumping. This decreases demand for locally produced milk, undermines employment and local income generation and discourages efforts to develop this sector in these countries, increasing the structural dependence of West African countries on EU powdered milk, in a region where pastoralism is an important economic activity and many small-scale producers depend on milk production and marketing (EPA Monitoring, 2018).

In order to avoid harmful exports, the EU should improve the monitoring of trade of agri-food products that are sensitive for the development of the poorest countries. In this case, additional information should be provided on: the dumping margins of dairy exports to especially sensitive areas, the production and export of powdered milk, and trade with subsidiary companies of European dairy companies in developing countries (because many do not use local milk but powdered milk imported from Europe)¹⁰. To avoid unfair competition, African countries should be able to apply temporary quantitative restrictions, set import taxes, reinforce regulations on imports of these products and enforce the classification of products that can be labelled as local or “originating products” (namely with minimum local content requirements for value-added products) (CONCORD, 2018). However, this is not allowed under the Economic Partnership Agreements entered into between various African regions and the European Commission.


Among other effects to be highlighted, the increase in **soy imports from Latin American countries** for animal feed corresponds to the needs of the intensive model of agriculture in Europe¹¹. Soy imports have grown due to their low cost, to the detriment of the use of forages with a lower concentration of energy and protein (such as pasture systems), encouraging both models of agricultural exploitation with less environmental sustainability in Europe and the expansion of a model of soy production in several countries in Latin America, which is responsible for mass

⁸ Opinion of the Development Committee – DEVE 2018/2037 (INI), 14 March 2018, European Parliament.

⁹ There are several well-substantiated analyses of these impacts in West Africa. See, for example, “Local or imported: what is the most sustainable option for milk in the Sahel?”, CIRAD, December 2020 (study presented at the European Parliament) and the study by the European Committee of the Regions, “Evaluation of the impact of the current CAP on the agriculture of developing countries”, 2019. The milk sector is mentioned here as an example, but there is also evidence on the cereals (wheat) and meat (avian production) sectors.

¹⁰ Skimmed milk powder with added vegetable fat, especially palm oil, has a huge growth in exports compared to other similar products, because it is much cheaper (for example, 1 kg of powdered milk is converted into more than 11 litres of milk), but is not monitored by the EU Milk Market Observatory.

¹¹ Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay currently represent more than 50% of the world's soy production.



deforestation, loss of biodiversity and environmental contamination. Rural populations in these countries are also victims of this expansion, suffering not only from the impact of the widespread use of pesticides, but also from the expropriation of their lands and loss of livelihoods, in favour of large agribusiness companies (Coordination SUD, 2019) (see item 2.2.).

This also alerts to the impact that agricultural policies pursued in Europe in the last decades have had **at environmental level**, intensifying the development of a high carbon footprint agri-food system in Europe and outside the European space (Friends of the Earth Europe, 2019; EEB, Birdlife, Greenpeace, WWF, 2018). Subsidies granted under the CAP are based on the area and not on the type of production, that is, they do not take into account the objective of contributing to agroecological transition of the agricultural sector. Direct payments are subject to few environmental requirements, which resulted in an incentive to intensive agricultural production in terms of inputs (fertilisers, pesticides, water/irrigation) and forages that require a large amount of energy (cereal for animal feed).

It is necessary that the new CAP be compatible with environmental objectives of preserving biodiversity and the ecosystems incorporated in the European Green Deal, approved by the European Union in 2019, and consistent with the objective of total decarbonisation of economies and with the climate goals established by the European Union. However, the articulation of CAP with some European strategies more comprehensive and consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals, such as the “Farm to Fork” Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy un-

til 2030 (both approved in May 2020), is still weak¹². According to environmental parties and groups, this will require an architecture of CAP instruments and funding that is different from the reform proposed in 2018, namely, greater transparency in the criteria for the use of pesticides and agrochemicals, concrete environmental conditions in support for farmers, greater coherence of trade agreements with an impact on agri-food systems, as well as greater support for the conversion of environmentally harmful agricultural practices and incentives for agroecological practices¹³. Furthermore, climate and environmental goals in Europe cannot be achieved at the expense of an outsourcing of costs and impacts to other countries, particularly to the poorest and most vulnerable countries, although this issue is largely absent from the discussion¹⁴. In this sense, efforts to make sustainability criteria more demanding in the EU food system – such as the “Farm to Fork” strategy - must be accompanied by policies that help raise standards globally, otherwise the outsourcing and export of unsustainable practices will increase (EC, 2020b).

Finally, CAP and agricultural policies are not responsible in isolation for many of the negative effects on agricultural and agri-food systems in poorer and more vulnerable countries, but these are enhanced by the **combination of CAP with other policies** of the European Union and of Member States, which contribute to the current trends in agricultural and food systems in Europe and, consequently, in small farming in developing countries. This includes policies on trade, energy, environment, food, transportation, competition laws, among others.

¹² Other commitments of these strategies include dedicating 25% of agricultural land to organic farming, reducing the use of chemical pesticides by 50%, or direct 10% of agricultural areas to preserve biodiversity by 2030.

¹³ In the new CAP, the so-called “ecological regimes” will only be additional bonuses to voluntary direct payments, decided by each Member State. See for example “The Environment in the new CAP”, EUROACTIV Special Report, July 2019. On the relevance of agroecology in promoting the environment and social justice globally, see “CONCORD Policy Brief: Agro-ecology to strengthen resilience”, CONCORD, September 2017.

¹⁴ See paper “Development and Climate Change”, December 2020, available at www.coerencia.pt

1.2. LAND GRABBING AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

In a global context in which more than half of habitable land is used for agriculture¹⁵ and there is increasing pressure from various industries and the global agri-food system on **natural resources and the demand for agricultural raw materials**¹⁶, access to resources such as land, water and energy is becoming increasingly strategic and important in investments, financing, trade and economic growth.

The increase in meat production and the production of biofuels/agrofuels from agricultural crops contributed to this new pressure on the world food system, as they compete for these resources and are an important source of deforestation, loss of soil diversity and pollution¹⁷. In particular, EU demand for products such as palm oil, meat, soy, cocoa, wood, rubber and other processed products or services is a major driver of deforestation, forest degradation, destruction of ecosystems and even, indirectly, of human rights violations (EP, 2020b; Kay, 2019). In the world, 80% of the destruction of tropical forests caused by agriculture is caused by only three products: **beef, palm oil and soy**. Despite the EU's commitment to eliminate its contribution to global deforestation by 2020, European demand for these agricultural commodities and raw materials is responsible for around 10% of global deforestation and the "consumption footprint" of the European Union has a considerable impact on issues related to soil and land use (EP, 2020b)¹⁸.

Large-scale land expansion, grabbing, expropriation, acquisition and transfer in developing countries, whether carried out legally or improperly, have

effects on families, communities and the environment. In many cases, it has compromised sustainable development and contributed to food insecurity and poverty, as it particularly affects vulnerable groups such as small local farmers or indigenous peoples in several of the poorest countries, by depriving them of housing, work and livelihoods (Mills, 2017). It is impossible to quantify how many people, in developing countries, have lost access to land and resources due to large-scale agreement and contracts with companies from developed countries, and particularly from European countries. However, there seems to be consensus that the phenomenon of land grabbing¹⁹ has increased over recent years, with numerous reports and news about land grabbing based on the concession for agribusiness, mining and oil exploration.

This is facilitated by the fact that many of these countries have **inadequate administrative frameworks and legal guarantees** to ensure full protection of natural resources and the security of land ownership rights by local communities. In addition, the pressure from agroindustry and agribusiness relies on the complicity of some governments, taking advantage of the fact that these rights are not properly protected, documented and recognised, and that environmental standards are more flexible, non-existent or not applied in practice. In this context, several actors from developed and developing countries work in collaboration to implement **projects and investments that imply land occupation, deforestation, drilling and/or intensive land cultivation**²⁰.

This is the case in Brazil, where the granting of licences for logging, agribusiness, cattle raising and industrial

¹⁵ Approximately half of these land are in Asia and Africa, providing 60% of the world's agricultural production (World Bank data).

¹⁶ This pressure ranges from the beauty and cleaning products industry (where palm oil plays an important role, for example) to animal feed in the context of an increasingly intensive and polluting farming industry.

¹⁷ In particular, it is estimated that, in 2017, the amount of land converted to the cultivation of palm oil for the production of biofuel and animal feed would represent 27 million hectares worldwide, mostly in Southeast Asia, but also in Africa and in Latin America. With the adoption of tighter rules for the incorporation of palm oil into products by the European Union, the expansion of land worldwide with greater growth is now soy, in the vast majority also for animal feed – with China and the European Union being the major global importers.

¹⁸ See <https://together4forests.eu/>

¹⁹ The International Land Coalition (international coalition of civil society and intergovernmental organisations), describes land grabbing as: "acquisitions or concessions that are one or more of the following: (i) in violation of human rights, particularly the equal rights of women; (ii) not based on free, prior and informed consent of the affected land-users; (iii) not based on a thorough assessment, or are in disregard of social, economic and environmental impacts, including the way they are gendered; (iv) not based on transparent contracts that specify clear and binding commitments about activities, employment and benefits sharing, and; (v) not based on effective democratic planning, independent oversight and meaningful participation" (Tirana Declaration, 2011). FAO also addresses the concept at <http://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1010775/>. In 2016, the documentary *Landgrabbing* exposed the worldwide impacts of this phenomenon.

²⁰ Land offered on more favourable terms, sold or leased to large companies is growing rapidly in developing countries, particularly for agribusiness (see the platforms <https://landmatrix.org/> and www.farmlandgrab.org).

agriculture has expanded to environmentally sensitive areas and protected indigenous areas²¹. Demand from China and the European Union plays an important role in this context, with the increase in trade for meat and soja produced in Brazil²². Particularly relevant in the European context is the growth in the use of biofuels and, consequently, in imports of raw materials to reach the European renewable energy targets, ignoring the negative impacts of large areas of bioenergy production on soils that could produce food or conserve biodiversity – in several countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Another significant area is the import of agricultural raw material for animal feed, and the satisfaction of European demand would require about 20 million hectares of land outside Europe (Ulmer, 2019). The European Parliament has called on the European Commission, since 2016, to take concrete measures and develop an action plan to combat land grabbing and ensure an effective application of FAO Guidelines on this matter (EP, 2016).

Various land exploitation contracts for agribusiness have given rise to significant **human rights violations**. Projects with harmful effects for local communities are imposed without their consent and without real prior consultation. In many cases, land is confiscated or occupied, and local and indigenous communities lose access to collective and customary land, traditionally not used for permanent settlement or agriculture, or cultural or religious sacred territories, also losing access to vital livelihoods (e.g. forests, rivers, etc.). In addition to the forced displacements, there is also a lack of respect for decent work standards in these farms, as well as violence against activists who defend the rights of local communities and/or the protection of the environment. Many documented cases of violence oppose the State, the military and/or businesses on one side and rural communities on the other, with intimidation and harassment of advocates of land and environmental rights on the rise, particularly in Asian and Latin American countries (Global Witness, 2020). In countries like Brazil,

the Philippines or Colombia, deforestation and agribusiness are the main motivation for these persecutions. In general, the value chains of the extractive and agri-food sectors are the more susceptible to human rights, economic and social abuses.

These phenomena are reinforced when States are unable to respond effectively to the causes of these violations, and companies or investors do not respect human rights in their global operations, as required by international standards and rules.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the **weakness of the mechanisms to effectively apply these standards and rules**. Several international documents and instruments have for some time established concrete guidelines on land investment and governance, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (FAO, 2012), or the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (FAO, 2014)²³. The first was the main international normative document on land issues to be agreed by all United Nations member countries, including guidelines on legal recognition and allocation of rights and duties in relation to land tenure, on transfers and other changes in rights and duties in this area, on land administration and management. In particular, it establishes the principle of “**free, prior and informed consent**”, that is, the need to consult *à priori* and seek the support of those who, having legitimate ownership rights, may be affected by decisions (e.g. investment, land use, etc.). The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, adopted in December 2018²⁴, reinforced in a binding way the principles of respect for the rights of rural communities, namely in access to and use of natural resources, participation in management and sharing of benefits. In relation to responsible business

²¹ On this matter, see the APIB/Amazon Watch report (2020): *Complicity in Destruction III: How global corporations enable violations of Indigenous peoples' rights in the Brazilian Amazon*, October 2020.

²² On how deforestation in the Amazon may have spurred the discussion on tighter rules in the European Union, see “The European Parliament’s rule that can increase pressure against deforestation in Brazil” (in Portuguese), BBC News Brasil, 03.12.2020.

²³ These and other Policy Milestones are detailed in the Annex. In general, the 2030 Agenda also includes goals on equal access to land and other productive resources, as well as the necessary attention to the rights of women, indigenous people, subsistence farmers, pastoralists and fishermen.

²⁴ Declaration available at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1650694>. The approval by the United Nations General Assembly particularly depended on the votes of African, Asian and Latin American countries, with major global powers voting against (United States, Australia, United Kingdom) and the majority of European countries abstaining (Portugal and Luxembourg were the only two EU Member States that voted favourably).

conduct in matters of human rights and respect for the environment, which is independent from state action or inaction, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights²⁵ (2011) are the most comprehensive framework globally. The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises also provide guidance for environmental and social responsibility and respect for human rights by companies, in their investments and international activity.

However, all of these guidelines must be transposed in a concrete and operational way into the legislative and policy frameworks of countries and regions²⁶. Even at the European Union, where the rules on this matter are generally tighter than in other highly developed regions and countries (such as the United States), it is hard to monitor the impact of their business deci-

sions on other actors in the global value chain and to **prevent human rights abuses or environmental damage caused or associated with business, investment and trade** - particularly in operations, value chains and commercial relations with third countries, where legal and legislative frameworks are non-existent or less likely to be applied. This is because there are different EU requirements in terms of sustainability and due diligence²⁷, in addition to heterogeneous national legislation in Member States, both in content and scope of application (mandatory or optional) (Action Aid *et al.*, 2020, EP, 2020c).

In agri-food systems, respect for human rights and environmental duties of care and diligence in all economic chains, supply chains and value chains is espe-

²⁵ Resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council, June 2011.

²⁶ In December 2020, almost ten years later, 15 EU Member States had adopted their national action plan on business and human rights, following the call launched by the Commission in 2011.

²⁷ The duty of care consists of the means by which companies can identify, prevent, avoid, mitigate, monitor and be accountable for the negative impacts of their activities or the activities of those with whom there is a business connection (subsidiaries, subcontractors, suppliers). The OECD uses the term in the context of responsible business conduct and the United Nations primarily from a Human Rights perspective (notably in Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011).



cially important to avoid hampering the development efforts of the poorest countries and contributing to global food security. Thus, on the one hand, it would be important that current discussion on this matter in the EU could result in the adoption of a **unique and binding legislation, applicable to the sustainable action and governance of business actors in an intersectoral way** (including companies that supply products and services to the EU, financial institutions and investment funds), both in Europe and abroad, and in line with international commitments assumed (Council of the EU, 2020). This implies, namely, due diligence obligations along the global value and supply chains, so that, as European consumers, we can be sure that the products consumed did not involve environmental damage, such as deforestation, or the violation of human rights, including social and labour rights (EP, 2020b and PE, 2020c). On the other hand, it is necessary to ensure that **trade agreements**, particularly those covering agri-food products, services and value chains, include ambitious provisions on sustainability, solid social and labour rights and firm provisions on responsible management of supply chains, in line with the global principles and objectives of sustainable development²⁸.

Finally, it is necessary to highlight that EU legislation recognises the obligations of respect for human rights outside the European space, both within the framework of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and by the European Court of Human Rights, which determined that the obligation to protect and provide access to an effective resource must apply to extraterritorial activities and domestic activities (in the European space) with extraterritorial impact. It would be useful to **reinforce the means of redress and accountability** for non-compliance in concrete instruments, namely, to include clear and simple mechanisms for complaints and claims in European bodies by actors who feel harmed by cooperation, commercial and investment agreements in developing countries, thus allowing local communities to have more information and instruments to access justice and to protect their rights.

²⁸ These issues are addressed in the paper “Development, Trade and Finance”, March 2021 (www.coerencia.pt).

1.3. IMBALANCES AND INCONSISTENCIES IN SUPPORT AND FINANCING

In financial terms, it is estimated that the eradication of hunger in the world, according to one of the targets of SDG 2, will involve, by 2030, only an additional USD 11 billion in annual public expenditure. Such a public investment is expected to generate an additional USD 5 billion in private investment annually²⁹. This is not a difficult amount to mobilise, as other urgent priorities have already shown, but the major difficulty lies in addressing the asymmetries in the global agri-food system, and in redirecting current support models.

Currently, in the short term, the mobilisation of funds and resources is unable to match the huge increase in needs. Funding needs for food security in the context of humanitarian appeals have increased from USD 5 billion in 2015 to 9 billion in 2020 (OCHA, 2020). The United Nations World Food Programme operated, in 2020, the largest humanitarian response in its history, due to the cumulative effects of the pandemic, conflicts, climate change and socio-economic shocks in the increase of food insecurity³⁰. At the European Union, the weight of humanitarian aid in development assistance provided by the European institutions is increasing and, within humanitarian aid, about ¼ of the budget is targeted to emergency food assistance.

Whether in the form of food aid, money transfers or vouchers, this aid is focused on the short-term emergency, responding to the immediate consequences of the pandemic on the poorest and most vulnerable. In the **medium and long term, however, stable and sustained funding is needed** to increase the resilience and empowerment of communities, support governments in implementing social protection systems and strengthening regulatory capacities, improving access of small farmers to global value chains, investing

²⁹ Data from the study carried out by the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the International Food Policy Research Institute, in 2016: *Ending Hunger: What would it cost?*, available at <http://www.iisd.org/library/ending-hunger-what-would-it-cost>

³⁰ In June 2020, the WFP launched an appeal of 4.9 billion USD for the following six months. See “World Food Programme to assist largest number of hungry people ever, as coronavirus devastates poor nations”, WFP News, 29.06.2020.

in rural development and helping to reinforce more inclusive and sustainable local agri-food systems.

However, domestic policies and external support in developing countries have given greater priority to the export of agricultural raw materials, marketing and investments by large companies in monocultures and larger agribusiness, direct subsidies to large producers and measures that distort markets³¹.

In particular, more and more **financial institutions (including development financial institutions) and State pension funds** are investing heavily in agricultural land, financing large agricultural investments with few rules of transparency and accountability on human rights and social responsibility criteria. In the case of Europe, European banks, pension funds and insurance companies have directly or indirectly financed the acquisition of land and land grabbing in the poorest countries, as well as investing in financial products based on basic food products that contribute to increase price volatility.

The European Commission has reinforced transparency rules in recent years, but the omissions and grey areas of the legislation, as well as the weak independent assessment or scrutiny of **investment portfolios of development financial institutions** in Member States, continues to allow these entities to get involved, mainly indirectly, in food speculation and investments with a potentially harmful impact on deforestation, land grabbing or the sustainability of local food systems (Curtis, 2017)³². An investigation into the financing of dozens of large agribusiness companies for which accusations of deforestation and land grabbing are pending against local communities, between 2010 and 2015, concluded that Asian (mainly in Japan and China) and European (mostly France and the United Kingdom) contributed sub-

³¹ In high-income countries, the OECD specifically highlights inconsistencies in support for their agricultural sectors, with a large share of direct transfers to producers (many linked to the production of specific products), most of them directed at large producers and with unfair and discriminatory trade measures, which also distort markets, create price volatility and negatively affect producers in other countries (OECD, 2020b), in addition to the few public funds available for research and development in the sector.

³² The many examples possibly linked to deforestation and land grabbing include the financing for the Socapalm project in Cameroon, the Agripalma project in São Tomé and Príncipe, and for New Forests Company and Green Resources projects in East Africa.

stantially to finance the activities of these companies in developing countries (Gregory, 2016). There is several evidence on the participation of Europe's Development Financial Institutions in investment networks that play a role in land grabbing and violations of social and economic rights, particularly in Africa (Mills, 2017). For example, in 2019, Human Rights Watch highlighted the responsibility of four development banks (from Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom) in financing companies and activities in the agricultural sector that do not respect the rights of communities and the environment in the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo³³. Globally, the World Bank's International Financial Corporation (IFC) - whose goal is to reduce poverty through private sector development in developing countries - has divested in direct project and investment financing, increasing the transfer to private equity funds and commercial banks, which in turn finance projects in the agricultural sector with negative social and environmental impacts in the poorest countries, especially in African countries (IDI *et al*, 2017).

On the contrary, public and private funds to support locally controlled agri-food systems, local companies and small producers and small-scale agriculture in developing countries are increasingly small. **Development aid** would have an important role to play here,

³³ "A dirty investment: European Development Banks' Link to Abuses in the Democratic Republic of Congo's Palm Oil Industry", Human Rights Watch, November 2019.





but rural development has lost priority in the face of social sectors and Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds in this area has declined in recent decades: if, in the mid-1980s, 20% of ODA was destined to the agricultural sector, in 2018 only 5% of the total ODA was assigned to agriculture and rural development (UN, 2020)³⁴. On the other hand, although mention is often made of the need for agri-food systems to be environmentally more sustainable and climate resilient, only 1.7% of **climate finance** worldwide is directed to small scale producers in developing countries, despite their extreme vulnerability to climate chain, with impacts on poverty and food security (CPI and IFAD, 2020).

Development aid to the agricultural and food sector also suffers from problems common to all sectors of cooperation, such as lack of coordination and fragmentation of programmes, which multiply by donors, sometimes without complementarity or use of synergies with each other; the fact that many international and larger programmes, aimed at a continent or region, are applied without taking into account the specificities of countries and even local specificities; and also the fact that many programmes are evaluate only for their immediate results in increasing outputs, without analysing the impact on improving the food and nutritional security of local popula-

tions (outcomes). In addition, in quantitative terms, most of the financing for development is especially directed to industrial and export crops, and focuses on some countries of strategic interest, to the detriment of small producers in countries with the greatest needs (OECD, 2020b).

In the European Union's development aid focus on this sector, there is still a disconnection between rhetoric and practical implementation, since at the level of development, namely in strategic documents such as the European Consensus for Development (2017), the commitment is clear to support long-term, environmentally sustainable solutions, focused on the empowerment of small farmers and women, the analysis of the funding provided reveals that only a small part of agricultural development aid is focused on these vulnerable groups (Oxfam 2017). As the EU is one of the main funders of international institutions dedicated to food security, it is also important to analyse the content of contributions to projects of the United Nations multilateral agencies in the agriculture and food sector (FAO, IFAD and PAM)³⁵, in which it is concluded that the vast majority is focused on increasing efficiency and production, without any focus on the transition to agroecological practices and on the need to transform agri-food systems, which does not correspond to the urgency of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (CIDSE, 2020b).

Even in the lowest-income countries, public investment in the agricultural sector has been declining in the present century, despite its effects on improving productivity, attracting private investment, creating jobs or reducing poverty and hunger (UN, 2020a). In Africa, recognition of the sector's strategic centrality for development had led to the setting, at the continent level, of a target for annual public financing – 10% of the total State budget -, to reinforce the growth of the agricultural economy³⁶. However, most African countries do not achieve this goal (most do not reach 5%) and public investment in agriculture and rural development is far below the contribution

³⁴ These data refer to the set of donors of the Development Assistance Committee - DAC-OECD. If we consider only the European Union, the percentage is 8.1% in 2018 (EC, 2020a).

³⁵ The EU as a whole (EU institutions + Member States) is the largest contributor to the FAO budget.

³⁶ Target set in the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security, by the African Union countries in 2003, and successively reaffirmed in the strategic priorities for the continent.

of the agricultural sector to the GDP of these countries.

In the context of pandemics, many of the most effective responses to inequalities in the food crisis worsened by COVID-19 have come from local and community efforts, namely, to ensure economic security and preserve livelihoods, protect workers (such as seasonal and migrant workers), challenge forced displacements and land grabbing (CIDSE, 2020a). Overall, however, despite the recognition that small-scale producers and local agri-food systems provide 70 to 80% of food in the world, most financial support and economic stimulus packages in response to the pandemic continue to favour the interests of large agro-industrial producers, and being focused on intensive and environmentally unsustainable production (CIDSE, 2020a). This stems from the wrong assumption that the increase in production and trade is sufficient to solve the problems of hunger and food insecurity when the causes of these problems are linked to the growing asymmetries and imbalances in the global agri-food system.

In view of the current challenges, it is not possible to expect different results with the same policies. Changing the focus of policies to support the agri-food system - placing **agroecology, support for local and family farming, the needs of the most vulnerable, food sovereignty, social justice and human rights at the core of these policies** - it is essential to be able to take advantage of synergies between policies and respond more effectively and simultaneously to both the challenges of poverty and food and nutritional security in the world.



RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the analysis carried out, we propose that Portugal uses the possible means and decision forums in which it participates to defend, in a consistent and systematic way:

1. **The definition and implementation of European Union agricultural policies consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which implies:**
 - 1.1. Incorporating regular and systematic monitoring of the external impacts of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) on food and nutritional security, particularly in developing countries, including with implementation indicators and concrete criteria for the allocation of funds;
 - 1.2. Replacing current payments with incentives for the conversion of agri-food activities with a great impact on the environment (agriculture and cattle raising, intensive agriculture, etc.) and for the incorporation of more sustainable agroecological practices that are consistent with the objectives of environmental and climate policy, namely in line with the European Green Deal, the “Farm to Fork” Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
 - 1.3. Taking measures to minimise the local impacts of overproduction and exports of agricultural products from the EU to the markets of developing countries, particularly in African countries and low-income countries;
 - 1.4. Pursuing an intersectoral approach to CAP, promoting balance and coherence with other integrated rural development policies, trade policy, energy policy, social policies and development policy.
2. **The protection of human rights and the promotion of global social justice, eliminating practices that are contrary to them and ensuring greater accountability in this context, by:**
 - 2.1. Avoiding outsourcing costs and impacts to countries with lower development rates, namely by tightly regulating the use of biofuels and other agricultural and food products with effects on the use, acquisition, appropriation and possession of land in those countries;
 - 2.2. Adopting binding, unique and robust legislation on due diligence along value chains in social, environmental and governance terms, in order to force companies to prove that agri-food products sold in Europe do not violate Human Rights nowhere in that chain (direct or indirect business relationships, investment chains, etc.);
 - 2.3. Ensuring greater clarity and transparency in the scrutiny of transfers of funds and financing promoted by public investment entities and development banks, for the agricultural and agri-food sector, in order to guarantee coherence with the development goals and respect for Human Rights;
 - 2.4. Ensuring, in all EU-funded projects and programmes, adequate consultation and informed participation by the affected communities, respect for collective and customary land rights, and the right of communities to prior, free and informed consent on the use of land and natural resources in all phases of projects, namely in line with the provisions of the “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas” (2018);

2.5. Ensuring that there are simple and adequate mechanisms in development cooperation programmes and contracts, investment and trade agreements, to report non-compliance, complaints and access to solutions by affected social groups and communities.

2.6. Contributing systematically to the strengthening of international/multilateral mechanisms and instruments that advocate coherent, fair and inclusive global approach to agri-food systems and associated policies, including better monitoring of the commitments assumed at the United Nations in this matter, and also support to the efforts for a binding Treaty on Multinational Enterprises.

3. Reformulate and redirect public support provided by EU institutions and their Member States, within and outside the European space, in order to:

3.1. Ensure that economic stimulus measures in the (post)pandemic context contribute to the transformation of agri-food systems globally, incorporate an integrated vision that covers all pillars of food and nutritional security - availability, access, use and stability - and pay special attention to the impact on the poorest and most vulnerable;

3.2. Cut support (financial, diplomatic and other) to actions with harmful impact on the environment, eliminating financing for practices of high carbon intensity that imply loss of biodiversity, deforestation and accentuated soil degradation and supporting, on the contrary, agroecological practices of diversification and strengthening resilience to shocks, based on an integrated vision of territories;

3.3. Ensure that the supported projects translate into effective capacity building and transfer of technology and knowledge to development partner countries;

3.4. Increase the commitments and funds for the empowerment of small local producers and for family farming, while simultaneously promoting food security and poverty eradication;

3.5. Reinforce the focus of cooperation policies on the elimination of factors of discrimination and inequality and development aid for groups that suffer the greatest cumulative effects of these inequalities (particularly women), integrating their needs and perspectives in the formulation, implementation and assessment of cooperation actions.



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LINKS

UNITED NATIONS |

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>

FAO – United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation | www.fao.org

Committee on World Food Security (United Nations) | www.fao.org/cfs/en/

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food | www.righttofood.org/

WFP – World Food Programme (United Nations) | www.wfp.org

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) | www.ifad.org/

OECD, Global Food System | <https://www.oecd.org/agriculture/understanding-the-global-food-system/>

European Union | Agricultural and Food Policies https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies_pt

European Union | Food 2030 (Research and Innovation) https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/food-systems/food-2030_en

Food Security Information Network (FSIN) | www.fsinplatform.org/

Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition | <http://www.righttofoodandnutrition.org/>

International Land Coalition | <http://www.landcoalition.org/>

Via Campesina (International Peasant Movement) <https://viacampesina.org/en/>

CONCORD Europe | <https://concordeurope.org/>

CIDSE: Together for Global Justice | www.cidse.org

Land Rights Now: The Global Call to Action on Indigenous and Community Land Rights | <http://www.landrightsnow.org/>

Rede da Sociedade Civil para a Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional na CPLP (Civil Society Network for Food and Nutritional Security of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries) | <http://www.redsan-cplp.org/>

Rede Portuguesa pela Soberania e Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (Portuguese network for food and nutritional sovereignty and security) | www.realimentar.org/



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