

the Milan Charter

English Version

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“To safeguard the future of the planet and the right of future generations everywhere to live healthy and fulfilling lives. This is the great development challenge of the 21st century. Understanding the links between environmental sustainability and equity is critical if we are to expand human freedoms for current and future generations.”

Human Development Report
2011

*The English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Chinese versions of the Milan Charter had been done by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

We, women and men, citizens of this planet, endorse this document, entitled the Milan Charter. In so doing, we make clear commitments concerning the right to food, which we believe should be treated as a fundamental human right.

We consider a lack of access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, clean water and energy to be a violation of human dignity.

We believe that only our collective action as citizens, together with civil society, businesses and local, national and international institutions, will make it possible to overcome the major challenges related to food: combating undernutrition, malnutrition and waste, promoting equitable access to natural resources and ensuring sustainable management of production processes.

In signing the Milan Charter

- we affirm the responsibility of the present generation to take action and implement practices and choices that also guarantee the right to food for future generations;
- we commit to advocating political decisions that will enable achievement of the fundamental goal of equitable access to food for all.

We believe that

- everyone has the right to have access to a sufficient quantity of safe, healthy and nutritious food, that satisfies life-long personal nutritional requirements and enables them to lead an active life;
- food has a strong social and cultural value, and should never be used as an instrument of political or economic pressure;
- the planet's resources should be managed in an equitable, rational and efficient manner, so that they are not excessively exploited or used to benefit some people at the expense of others;
- access to sources of clean energy is a universal right, for present and future generations;
- investment in natural resources, particularly in land, should be regulated, so as to ensure and maintain access to these resources for local communities, as well as access to their sustainable use;
- sound management of water resources, namely management that takes account of the relationship between water, food and energy, is fundamental to ensure the right to food for all;
- agriculture is fundamental, not just for food production, but also for landscape design, environmental and territorial protection and conserving biodiversity.

We consider it unacceptable that

- there are unjustifiable inequalities in the possibilities, capabilities and opportunities of individuals and peoples;
- there is still no universal recognition for the fundamental role of women, especially in agricultural production and nutrition;
- some 800 million people suffer chronic hunger, more than two billion people are malnourished or suffer deficiencies in vitamins and minerals; nearly two billion people are overweight or suffer from obesity; 160 million children suffer from malnutrition and stunted growth;
- each year, 1.3 billion tonnes of food produced for human consumption is wasted or lost in the food supply chain;
- more than 5 million hectares of forest disappear each year, resulting in grave damage to biodiversity and local communities, and serious impact on the climate;
- marine resources are excessively exploited: more than 30% of what is commercially fished is exploited beyond any capacity for regeneration;
- natural resources, including land, are used with disregard to the needs and expectations of local communities;
- energy poverty continues, specifically in the form of lack of or inadequate access to efficient energy services and cooking facilities that are affordable, and that neither pollute nor damage health.

We are aware that

- one of the greatest challenges to humanity is that of feeding a constantly growing population without harming the environment, so as to preserve resources for future generations;
- food plays an important role in defining each person's identity and is a cultural component that describes and gives value to a territory and its inhabitants;
- farmers, livestock keepers and fishers all play a crucial role in nutrition; they have equal rights and duties in their work, whether they are small-scale enterprises or large-scale businesses;
- we are all inter-related and all responsible as guardians of the Earth, for protecting territory and its environmental value;

- it is possible to promote improved conditions of access to adequate healthy food in an urban setting, through inclusive and participatory processes that harness new technologies;
- correct dietary education from childhood is crucial for a healthy lifestyle and a better quality of life;
- knowledge and practical experience of both traditional and advanced production methods is critical to the efficiency of agricultural systems, from family farms to industrial farms;
- the seas play a fundamental role in ensuring the equilibrium of the planet and therefore require supranational policies; an integral, healthy marine ecosystem is crucial for collective well-being, not least because fisheries provide jobs for millions of people and for many, fish offers the only source of high quality nutrients ;
- scientific research is a critical instrument for developing and integrating innovation and tradition: its applications are valuable for progress, while respecting the planet's biodiversity and the environment;
- a sustainable strategy for addressing future food challenges must take a systemic approach, paying close attention to social, cultural, economic and environmental problems and involving all social and institutional actors.

Since we know we are responsible for leaving a healthier, fairer, more sustainable world to future generations,

as citizens, we commit to

- taking care with and being aware of the kind of food we eat, informing ourselves about its ingredients, their origin and about how and where it is produced, so that we can make responsible choices;
- only consuming the quantity of food necessary for our requirements, ensuring that food is consumed before it perishes, donating any food that is in excess and conserving it so that it does not spoil ;
- avoiding water wastage in all daily, domestic and productive activities;
- understanding and protecting the environment through responsible behaviour and sound practices, such as recycling, regenerating and reusing consumer goods;
- promoting dietary and environmental education in the family, so as to foster a responsible development for new generations;
- playing an active role in building a sustainable world, including through innovative solutions, developed by our work, creativity and skills.

As members of civil society, we commit to

- making our voices heard at all decision-making levels, so as to define projects for a more just and sustainable future;
- representing civil society bodies in debates and processes for shaping public policy;
- strengthening and supplementing the international network of projects, actions and initiatives that constitute a significant collective resource;
- identifying and reporting the critical issues in legislation governing the donation of unsold food, so that we can actively commit to salvaging and redistributing the surplus ;
- promoting instruments that defend and support the incomes of farmers, livestock keepers and fishers, strengthening tools for organization and cooperation, including those for small-scale producers;
- giving value to local small-scale producers as protagonists of an advanced form of development, and promoting direct relationships between producers, consumers and territories of origin.

As businesses, we commit to:

- applying environmental and social standards and international conventions and encouraging forms of work that contribute to the personal fulfilment of staff, both men and women;
- investing in research, promoting a wider sharing of the results and developing it for the collective good, without distinction between the public and the private sector;

- promoting the diversification of agricultural production and livestock keeping so as to safeguard biodiversity and animal welfare;
- improving production, conservation and logistics, so as to avoid (or eliminate) contamination and to minimize waste, including that of water, in all phases of the productive chain;
- producing and marketing healthy, safe food, informing consumers about the nutritional content, environmental impact and social implications of the product;
- promoting adequate packaging techniques, so as to reduce wastage and facilitate the disposal and recovery of used materials;
- promoting innovations that inform consumers of consumption times that are compatible with the nature, quality, and means of preservation of food;
- recognizing the positive contribution of cooperation and structural agreements in the sector, especially the food supply chain between farmers, producers and distributors, so as to allow more accurate forecasts of demand;
- contributing to the sustainable development goals, by using innovative processes, products and services, and by adopting and practising codes of social responsibility.

Therefore in signing this Milan Charter, we women and men, citizens of this planet, strongly urge governments, institutions and international organizations to commit to

- adopting regulations that guarantee the right to food and food sovereignty and make them effective;
- strengthening legislation to promote the safeguarding of agricultural land, so as to regulate investments in natural resources, thereby protecting local communities;
- promoting the theme of nutrition in international government forums, ensuring effective and concrete implementation of the undertakings at national level and coordination among specialized international organizations;
- developing a system of open international trade, based on shared rules that are not discriminatory, and which can remove the distortions that restrict the availability of food, thereby creating the conditions for improved global food security;
- considering food as a cultural patrimony, and as such, defending it from counterfeiting and fraud, protecting it from deceptive and improper business practices, highlighting the value of its origin and originality with transparent regulatory processes;
- formulating and implementing legal rules and regulations regarding food and environmental safety that are easy to understand and apply;
- combating and eliminating child and unregulated labour in the agrifood sector;
- working to build a supranational structure that gathers together the information activities of, and crime studies related to, the agrifood sector and which strengthens cooperation in countering criminal offences;
- identifying best practices in public policy and development aid that are in keeping with local requirements, rather than designed to address emergency situations, and which seek to foster the development of sustainable food systems;
- promoting international agreements for urban and rural food strategies for access to healthy and nutritious food, which involves both the planet's main metropolitan areas and the countryside;

- increasing resources for research and transferring its results, training, and communication;
- introducing or strengthening in schools and in school meal services, dietary, physical, and environmental education programmes as instruments of health and prevention and highlighting the value of knowledge and the exchange of different food cultures, starting with typical, local and organic products;
- developing national health service measures and policies that promote a healthy and sustainable diet and reduce unbalanced diets, paying particular attention to people with special nutritional requirements, and those needing proper hydration and hygiene, especially the elderly, pregnant women, babies, children and the sick;
- promoting equal access to food, land, credit, training, energy and technology, especially for women, small-scale producers and disadvantaged social groups;
- creating support tools for the weaker sectors of the population, including coordination between actors working to collect and organize free distribution of surplus food;
- including the problem of food and water loss and waste in the international and national agenda through public and private investment in more effective production systems;
- highlighting the value of biodiversity at local and global level, using strategies that include indicators which attest to both its biological and to its economic value;
- considering the link between energy, water, air and food in a comprehensive and dynamic way, underscoring their fundamental relationship, so as to be able to manage these resources with a strategic long-term approach that can combat climate change.

Given that we believe in the possibility of a world without hunger, and consider this a matter of human dignity, in the European Year for Development and on the occasion of Expo Milano 2015, we commit to adopting the principles and practices outlined in this Milan Charter, in line with the strategy that the member states of the United Nations have developed to eradicate the problem of hunger by 2030. By signing this Milan Charter, we declare our concrete and active support for the Sustainable Development Goals promoted by the United Nations.

A fair and sustainable future is our responsibility too.

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