

## PRESS RELEASE

World Food Day, the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010**Every time we decide what to eat we are also choosing to take care of or to destroy our planet**

«Connect yourself for Justice» reminds us of the importance of responsible and sustainable food in order to promote a less aggressive production model

*Madrid, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2010.*- The world's food is one of the greatest challenges for environmental conservation and the commitment to care for creation in line with Pope Francis in Laudato Si'. The celebration of World Food Day is an ideal occasion to focus on the increasingly close links among food, the protection of biodiversity and the defense of agriculture and livestock activities of the small family exploitations, which represent 80% of the total world.

On this day, the entities that promote the campaign "If you take care of the planet, you fight against poverty" and the initiative «Connect yourself for Justice» -Caritas, CEDIS, CONFER, Justice and Peace, Manos Unidas and REDES (Network of Entities for Solidarity Development)- warn of the threat posed to sustainability by the intensive use we make of natural resources for productive purposes, while they remember us that every time we decide what to eat we are also choosing to take care of or to destroy our planet.

**KEYS OF A GLOBAL PROBLEM**

To this end, «Connect yourself for Justice» has published the document entitled "FOOD. Every time you decide what to eat you are also choosing to take care or to destroy our planet" where an intensive review is made to the keys of this global problem. It is worth noting that human use directly affects more than 70% of the earth's free of ice surface and that agriculture and livestock activities, mainly related with food production, occupy 49% of the total of this surface (data from the report "Climate change and earth" published last August by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC).

The need to feed more than 7 billion people today, and more than 9 billion by 2050, according to UN projections, as well as the increased demand for meat, dairy and processed food products by increasingly prosperous countries such as China and India, are leading to a rapid change in the use of available land.

The spectacular growth on cereal and meat production over the last 50 years, have been based on two fundamental strategies: to expand the agricultural frontier by clearing forests and jungles, and to improve technology to produce more on each kilometer of disposable land. If these trends continue the growth of population as well as the increase in diets with higher animal protein consumption will force to duplicate the production by 2050.

This intensive and extensive use of land, apart from becoming one of the main factors contributing to climate change (the agriculture and livestock production produces the 30% of greenhouse gases), affects directly to the poorest people. According to the World Bank, the 85% of people suffering from extreme poverty live in rural areas.

Since the 1960s, with the beginning of the so-called "green revolution", a rapid process of change in land use and intensification of land use took place, with the aim of producing more food. Since then, cereal production has tripled (240 per cent), the volume of irrigation water has doubled (110 per cent) and the cow cattle population has increased by more than 60 per cent.

In parallel, the demand for food has steadily increased, while consumer food preferences have changed. Diets are changing globally for a growing population, with a significant increase in high-fat and high-calorie meat products and processed foods. In addition to the enormous environmental impact of these facts, the diet change has led to a health problem and it has contributed to nearly 2 billion people suffering overweight or obese.

There are data that help to understand the dimension of this problem, such as the fact that only 10 companies control 75% of the seed market, that 75% of crop diversity has disappeared, that agriculture uses 70% of the available fresh water and that producing 1 kg of beef is equivalent to producing 16 kg of cereals.

As denounce by «Connect yourself for Justice», according to the latest FAO report (SOFI 2018) there are 821 million of people suffering from chronic malnutrition over the world. Also it is known that exist enough food for the current population to the light of the data and reports. Therefore the conclusion is that the persistency of hunger in the world is not a problem of food production but of food access. It is a problem of distribution. It is a problem of justice. This is what St. John Paul II called 'paradox of abundance': "There is enough food for everyone but not everyone can eat, while waste, discard, over-consumption and the use of food for other purposes, are in front of our eyes".

## AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND FAMILY FISHING

In this context, «Connect yourself for Justice» highlights the fundamental role that small-scale agriculture plays, both in food production and in the sustenance of the poorest people. These are small single-family farms, which basically use their own workforce, and which obtain a considerable, and variable, part of their income from this work. It includes farming, animal husbandry, forestry and artisanal fishing.

According to the FAO, more than 80% of all farms in the world are less than two hectares. These are family farms that occupy between 70% and 80% of agricultural land. It is estimated that there are 500 million small farms in developing countries, supporting almost 2 billion people. These small farms produce about 80% of the food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, around 500 million pastoralists depend on livestock for surviving, and 90 per cent of fishers are small-scale fishers, reaching half of capture fisheries production.

## FINDINGS OF OUR FOOD MODEL

After analyzing our production and consumption of food system, «Connect yourself for Justice» states:

Our diets are environmentally unsustainable, as they damage the land and its resources in a growing and irreversible way. A radical change in our food system is urgently needed.



Our way of producing and consuming food produces an overabundance of food and at the same time hunger and malnutrition that especially affect the poorest people.

Our consumption habits are part of the global food system and, therefore, every time we decide what to eat, we are also choosing to take care of our planet or not; we are also choosing to take care of the most vulnerable people or not.

We are committed to guarantee future generations a fertile and sustainable land to be capable of satisfying food needs among others. This requires a transformation of our global food system.

«Connect yourself for Justice» documents two paradigmatic cases of bad practices in this model of agricultural and livestock production. One is the violation of the right to Peasant Identity and Food Sovereignty and Autonomy in Vereda Chaparrito, Colombia, documented by REPAM (Pan-Amazon Network of the catholic Church); and the other is the threats to India's dairy sector by new trade agreements.

### JUDGE AND ACT

In the framework of World Food Day, «Connect yourself for Justice» invites you to analyze these challenges from point 4 of the "Green Decalogue", launched within the campaign "If you care for the planet, you fight against poverty", which invites you to appreciate the diversity of our world as well as that "whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor" (LS 50)

In addition, it proposes participating in a commitment to responsible and sustainable eating with personal gestures such as, among others, eating more fruit and vegetables and less meat and dairy products; wasting less food; opting for fair trade products and seasonal and local food; joining consumer groups; or finding out the origin of the food we consume.

**#ConnectFoodPoverty**

More information: [www.enlazateporlajusticia.org/en](http://www.enlazateporlajusticia.org/en)