REGISTER OF COMMITMENTS

At the Expert Meeting on the Implementation of the Right to Food in Eastern and Southern Africa, held from 4 to 5 April 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya, over 45 food experts, parliamentarians, policy-makers and representatives from food producer organizations, NGOs and national human rights institutions met to discuss progress on the implementation of the right to food at the national level in the region and ways to move towards the full realization of the right to food.

These representatives from Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as from regional bodies, NGOs and international organizations including the FAO, WFP, OHCHR and UNDP concluded the Expert Meeting by making commitments to one another on steps to take to promote and institutionalize the right to food in their respective countries and institutions and to ensure that Governments meet their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food.

The Right to Food Approach:

The right to food provides an important tool for combating hunger and malnutrition. Rather than understanding accessible, available and adequate food as a form of charity or handout, the right to food recognizes food as a legal entitlement. Legal entitlements protect the rights of people to live with dignity and ensure that all have either the resources required to produce enough food for themselves or a purchasing power sufficient to procure food from the market. They place obligations on the state to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food, and provide individuals and communities recourse mechanisms when these obligations are not met. The right to food requires us to take seriously our duties towards the most marginalized and vulnerable, and directs our attention in policy and strategy making towards them. It ensures that this policy making is participatory, inclusive, empowering, transparent and non-discriminatory. The right to food can help reduce hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity because it holds Governments accountable, prohibiting them from remaining passive or engaging in activities that harm the ability of the population to procure or purchase food, and because it provides a means for action to those whose rights are violated.

The Register of Commitments:

1. Hon. Agnes Qikani (Member of Parliament, South Africa) and Hon. Vitus Dzoole Mwale (Member of Parliament, Malawi) commit to work together to develop a regional network of parliamentarians working on the right to food.

2. The South African Caucus commits to:
   a) Encourage the Minister of Agriculture to invite the Special Rapporteur back to South Africa to follow-up on his 2011 mission;
   b) Launch a national conversation on the right to food; and
   c) Take leadership in the region.

The South African Caucus includes: Hon. Agnes Qikani, (Member of Parliament, South Africa), Dr. Gladstone Sandi Baai (South Africa Human Rights Commission), Cameron Jacobs (South Africa Human Rights Commission), Gaynor Paradza (Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies), Deshni Pillay (Select Committee on Land and Environmental Affairs, Parliament of South Africa) and Fatima Shabodien (Women on Farms Project).
3. **Henry Kimera**, for the Consumer Education Trust of Uganda (CONSENT), commits to work with other civil society organizations in the Eastern and Southern Africa region to do a mapping of the actors engaged on food issues; and commits to ensure that the right to food is mainstreamed in its work.

4. The National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), represented by John Kapito from Malawi, Dr. Gladstone Sandi Baai and Cameron Jacobs from South Africa and Wilfred Muganga Ashimwe from Uganda, and the Farmers’ Organizations, represented by Steve Muchiri (East African Farmers Federation), Moses Shaha (Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers Forum), Elisabeth Mpofo (La Via Campesina), and Fatima Shabodien (Women on Farms Project), in recognition of a lack of understanding of the role of national human rights institutions amongst farmers’ organizations and a lack of partnership in the past, commit to:
   a) Mainstream human rights-based approaches in the work of farmers’ organizations;
   b) Support each other’s efforts, including by the mutual exchange of information, in promoting the right to food within their respective activities;
   c) Include farmers’ organizations in the discussions of thematic committees of NHRIs to ensure that the right to food is understood amongst all stakeholders and that the concerns of farmers are taken into account in shaping the implementation of the right to food;
   d) Develop a network of national farmers’ institutions and NHRIs on the right to food to raise awareness of the right to food within the population;
   e) Ensure that the regional African network for NHRIs has a component on the right to food in its programme and that it supports each NHRI in promoting the right to food in its respective country; and
   f) Share experiences to enhance the protection of the right to food of the population.

5. **Ian Mashingaidze** from the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) commits to promote food security as a rights issue in FANRPAN’s annual policy dialogues, and invites the Special Rapporteur and Barbara Ekwall (FAO Right to Food Team) to speak at the upcoming policy dialogue (in Tanzania, September 2012).

6. The African Network on the Right to Food (RAPDA) - Kenya, represented by Edwyn Odhiambo, commits to mobilize civil society to examine the Kenyan National Food and Nutrition Security Policy to ensure that it fully complies with and advances the right to food; to consolidate efforts across Kenyan civil society to build the capacity of Government to implement the right to food; and to ensure the mainstreaming of the right to food in development activities.

7. **Wilfred Muganga Asiimwe**, from the Uganda Human Rights Commission and Andrew Musoke, from the Uganda Ministry of Local Government, commit to work to fast track the Uganda right to food bill to ensure it is passed into legislation; to mainstream right to food in sub-national strategies and local plans and budgets; and to strengthen alliances to support this.

8. **Isabella Rae**, from the Gorta-the Freedom from Hunger Council of Ireland, and Barbara Ekwall, Serena Pepino and Cecilia Luna, from the FAO Right to Food Team, commit to providing support in determining “ad-hoc” right to food messages relevant to different sectors in their efforts to promote the right to food.

9. **Michael Ojiambo**, from the Kenya Freedom From Hunger Council, commits to work with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Nairobi and/or Addis) to reach out to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to mainstream the right to food.

10. The **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) - Regional Office for Eastern Africa** commits to:
   a) Mandate the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights focal point to work on the right to food;
   b) Include the right to food within the programme of the Regional Office for Eastern Africa;
   c) Add the right to food to the agenda of the 2012 meeting of OHCHR Heads of Field Presences in Eastern Africa;
d) Disseminate the outcomes of the Nairobi Expert Meeting to the meetings of United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in Eastern Africa; and
e) Respond to the requests for assistance expressed by participants of the Nairobi Summit.

11. The Food Security Working Group and Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (a regional coordination mechanism that includes the FAO and WFP, among others) commits to disseminating information on the right to food and to mainstream the right to food in the work of these working groups.

12. Doris Musonda, from the African Network on the Right to Food (RAPDA) – Zambia, commits to conduct a needs assessment among right to food actors on existing information gaps, then tailor information packages to fill these gaps, and raise awareness starting with non-State actors and then State actors.

13. Hon. Agnes Qikani (Member of Parliament, South Africa) commits to host an inter-ministerial meeting with relevant ministers to discuss the linkages between the right to food and the Human Rights Commission. A report will be tabled of this meeting.

14. The Farmers’ Organisations, represented by Steve Muchiri (East African Farmers Federation), Moses Shaha (Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers Forum), Elisabeth Mpofu (La Via Campesina), and Fatima Shabodien (Women on Farms Project) commit to continuing their efforts at public awareness-raising, including of politicians, and to popularize the agroecological model of agriculture among small-holder farmers and Governments.

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