



A REPORT ON THE ICN2 ROME NOV 2014

Background

The second international conference on Nutrition (ICN2) jointly organized by FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) and WHO (World Health Organization) was held at FAO head quarters from 19th to 21st November 2014. Prior to the ICN2 there were pre-conference events for non states actors (NSAs) from 16th to 17th November 2014.

The conference brought together senior national policy makers from agriculture, health and other relevant ministries, UN agencies, inter governmental organizations, civil society organizations, researchers, private sectors and consumers.

In a nutshell, the grassroots social movement's representatives were very disappointed that they travelled across the world to be spectators and their role reduced to mere evaluation instead of playing a key role in providing inputs or interventions to the ICN2 process and outcome.

Social Movements Pre-Conference Event

The WFFP team who went to the ICN2 comprised of Jorge Varela Marquez (Honduras), Muhammad Ali Shah (Pakistan) and Christiana Saiti Louwa (Kenya). These members of the WFFP coordinating committee worked very hard and tirelessly during the grassroots Social Movements (SMs) event (16th Nov 2014), the civil society forum 17th to 18th Nov. 2014 and the actual conference from 19th to 21st Nov. 2014 to bring fisheries and ocean grabbing to the table and put nutrition and food security discussions on the agenda. This was especially highlighted during the social movements and civil society forum meeting prior to, and during the conference.

Despite fish being a high source of protein and important source of nutrition and food security for millions of people, fisheries were largely ignored while the main focus was placed on the importance of agriculture. The WFFP made it abundantly clear that for small scale fishers a high priority needs to be placed on ocean/lake and land grabbing. We stressed that this needs to be effectively addressed in order for food security to be achieved globally for all people.

Secondly, for any serious transition towards achieving world nutrition and an ecological and just food regime, privatization (grabbing) of ocean, lakes etc must be stopped and fishing policies that put small scale fisheries and communities in the heart of governance and caring for oceans, lakes, rivers be put in place have to be implemented. This came out very clearly during the social movement and CSO forum and is reflected in the [social movement's statement](#).

For the creation of this statement there were different inputs by representatives of peasants, fishers, farmers, mobile pastoralists, farm workers, Indigenous Peoples, youth, women, representatives of faith

based organizations and others. Christiana from the WFFP was a member of the social movements drafting team. We also ensured that the FAO voluntary guidelines for small scale fisheries 2014 were included among the references to international agreements used and used in the processes and discussions.

Civil Society Forum

The Civil Society Organizations event (17th – 18th Nov.2014) brought together representatives of both the grassroots Social Movements and Civil Society Organizations dealing with nutrition and food security, health and other relevant issues. The main focus was to discuss and agree on a statement to be read at plenary (during the conference) and also to discuss mechanisms to follow up on ICN2 decisions and to contribute to its accountability.

Both groups agreed on some facts and key messages they want delivered to governments/UN member states. These are as follows:

- That the governments to be responsible and take the lead on matters related to nutrition and food security and not give organizations and institutions such as the multinationals, UN agencies (which are competing for funds from private sector) to take the lead on such matters.
- That nutrition should not be separated from food.
- Malnutrition must not be a business.
- There are more malnourished people than hungry people and therefore the business of malnutrition is more powerful than the business of hunger.
- Social Movements and CSOs to be at the centre of nutrition discussions (this being the first time, SMs are participating).
- The political framework behind what/why a conference on nutrition is pushed by multinationals from both North and South.
- The private sector/multinationals have realized that market power they control is not enough thus they need to legitimize through public policy and especially through this conference by forming alliances with governments, institutions, and parliaments to maintain control and push for a new space.

The biggest and most difficult challenge during the CSOs event was harmonizing and merging statements from the two groups. The CSOs which have engaged in this process longer than the SMs (who are attending for the first time) came with an already prepared statement titled “public interest civil society organizations vision statement on nutrition” which they needed the SMs to approve and own as a document for both groups. This statement was based on four pillars:

- Human rights and rights based approach to food and nutrition security.
- A coherent and coordinated management of nutrition throughout the life cycle and at all levels.
- Sovereign local food and agricultural system based on agro-biodiversity.
- Democratic governance of food and nutrition and global regulatory framework.

There was a general disagreement between the fishers, mobile pastoralists, indigenous people, youth and others who felt the groups they represented were left out in the document as it was.

The WFFP team and other fisher folk representatives disagreed with the content of the document and were concerned that small scale fishers were totally left out. The focus was mainly on agriculture and issues to do with fisheries and ocean grabbing had to still be incorporated to create an inclusive document. Although a drafting team worked to integrate issues from the social movement statement and the CSO document, the final outcome was still not satisfactory to the SMs representatives. The Final document was thus titled “[Public Interest Civil Society Organizations and Social Movements Forum Declaration to the Second International Conference on Nutrition \(ICN2\) Rome, 21 November 2014](#)”. Both groups were persuaded to form a united front and own the statement as our statement. Finally we had a consensus and the statement was read at the plenary.

ICN2

The actual conference commenced on Wednesday the 19th November 2014 with an inaugural ceremony followed by opening of the conference. The opening of the conference involved the election of chair and vice-chairs, adaption of agenda and timetable, election of the chair of the round tables, adaption of the conference outcome documents and the general debate with statements by heads of government delegations and other special guests.

The SMs and CSOs met every day (19 – 21 Nov 2014) in Room Austria at 8.00 am to deliberate on the day's program and to choose topics each will follow up on either in plenary, the round tables and the side events. We also met at lunch breaks and at 6.00pm to give feedback and touch base.

On Thursday, at the plenary apart from the usual statements from the government's delegation, the pick of the day was a special segment which was the address by His Holiness the Pope. This was well received by all but especially by the SMs who relate more by the sentiments expressed in the Pope's speech.

Apart from the usual diplomatic jargon of thanking the host, recognizing and appreciating one another, countries mainly reported on how they have made progress in increasing food production, reducing poverty and child mortality, increased calories intake and how they are committed to the framework of action locally, regionally and internationally.

The conference (ICN2) came to a close on Friday the 21st Nov 2014 at 12.30 pm Rome time.

Please for more information and statements for the ICN2 please go to the [FAO website](#).

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