

Press Release
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Europe and U.S. bear special responsibility for food crisis, new report finds

Key steps identified to shift course and create a just and sustainable global food system

Brussels/Minneapolis/Geneva – Policies enacted by the United States and the European Union, and aggressively pushed through global institutions during the last several decades, laid the ground for the ongoing food crisis, finds a new report by CIDSE, an international alliance of Catholic development agencies, and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP). Nearly 1 billion people are currently suffering from hunger around the world and the economic crisis is increasing this number, worsening the situation by the day.

The report identified the convergence of the food, economic and climate crises as indicators that call into question the viability of existing models of food production and consumption. The report highlights policy failures including neglected agriculture programs, ill-advised economic adjustment policies, commodity speculation and unjust trade rules that have led to a vulnerable global food system.

“The EU and U.S. need to work with developing country governments to empower small-holder farmers. A new generation of sustainable agriculture policies is needed to provide for an urgently needed balance between economic profitability and socio-ecological justice, preventing a scramble for natural resources. This is vital to ensure female and male small scale producers, women-led households and landless workers can attain a decent livelihood,” said Bernd Nilles, CIDSE Secretary General.

“The EU and U.S. need to contribute to, rather than block, the establishment of an entirely new global model for food and agriculture—one that is housed at the U.N. but includes non-state actors and mobilizes all forces to eradicate hunger,” said Alexandra Spielfoch, director of IATP’s Trade and Global Governance program and co-author of the report.

The paper makes a series of recommendations for U.S. and EU policymakers that could be implemented at a number of upcoming international meetings this year that address the food crisis.

Key recommendations include:

- An inclusive and binding global partnership for agriculture and food security that strengthens U.N. agencies, involves non-state actors and has a strong mandate;
- A substantial increase in aid for agriculture, delivered in line with the right to food;
- Respect for the multifunctionality of agriculture including ecological and social sustainability, access to land and water for small scale producers and greater use of local seed varieties;
- Measures to address price volatility, including food reserves and tight regulation on speculation; and

- A shift in trade policies away from the quest for market access for European and U.S. agribusiness firms.

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Notes to the editors:

- **CIDSE** is an international alliance of Catholic development agencies. Its members share a common strategy in their efforts to eradicate poverty and establish global justice. CIDSE's advocacy work covers global governance; resources for development; climate change; food, agriculture & sustainable trade; EU development policy and business & human rights. www.cidse.org.
- **The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)** works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. www.iatp.org.
- **Read the report: [Global Food Responsibility – The European Union and the United States Must Chart a New Path](#)**, a CIDSE-IATP policy paper, May 2009