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Collective Action for Ending a Collective Problem: A Multi-stakeholder Project on Global Food Security

Brief Summary Report[1]
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[1] The full report, including a number of specialised annexes, is available on the website of Dublin City University.

Abstract

The goal of this multi-stakeholder project was to respond to our growing shared awareness of food insecurity by coming together as a group of colleagues to reflect on possible policy responses. A sense of the sacred and a commitment to human rights converged in support of an overall vision: *a values-led approach to politics and security in the perspective of 2030 or 2050 should give an over-riding priority to sharing the primary goods of life while also accepting a longer-term responsibility to promote the ecological and climatic conditions on which life depends.* The present report seeks to integrate insights in a number of different fields including the delivery of multiple public goods through the optimal use of our land, agricultural, and marine resources; the financing of IFAD and other relevant international institutions and a greater sense of proportionality in the allocation of resources; the 'hyper-problem' of polarisation and the need to address its root causes; and the need for innovative, long-term multi-stakeholder frameworks of engagement to complement day-to-day diplomacy. The pursuit of resilience in food systems will have a multiplying effect;[2] it may help us to see beyond disagreements and to begin resolving conflicts. The growing convergence of food systems diplomacy and climate diplomacy should prompt us to overcome other 'silo' approaches in multilateral diplomacy and to re-commit to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as representing, in embryo, a common medium-term plan for humanity.

[2] The term 'multiplying effect' is taken from IFAD's presentation to our group on 5th July.

I. Principal Recommendations

A. High-level values

I. Effective climate action and reimagined food systems will entail the establishment of clear goals and the sustained coordination of actors across multiple domains. A values-led approach to politics and security in the perspective of 2030 or 2050 *should give an over-riding priority to sharing the primary goods of life while also accepting a longer-term responsibility to promote the ecological and climatic conditions on which life depends.*

II. We put forward for consideration the following definition of democracy: *Democracy will be fully implemented only when individuals and all peoples have access to the primary goods of life, food, water, shelter, health care, education, work, and certainty of their rights, through an ordering of internal and international relations that guarantees everyone a chance to participate.*

III. Because change cannot happen all at once, *we need to reappraise policy frameworks and in particular to develop new long-term multi-stakeholder frameworks of engagement in support of the UN SDGs.* The goal is to enable governments and peoples to deliberate on our shared medium-term future, making room for new ideas, while continuing to support day-to-day negotiations on specific subjects.

B. Examples of practical steps

i. The change needed in food systems can be expressed in terms of a *transition to deliver multiple public goods*.

ii. The transition to deliver multiple public goods will require new forms of multi-stakeholder engagement and public investment. For several reasons, we urge the inclusion in multi-stakeholder processes of the representatives or nominees of churches and faith communities.

iii. The European Union should use its considerable influence to promote systemic shifts at the global level (as anticipated by the European Commission in March 2022), strengthening localisation and bringing a stronger policy coherence to the negotiating frameworks in which there is scope to promote change.

iv. The European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency should continue to promote a holistic understanding of human rights obligations, including the right to food, and to encourage cooperation and mutual literacy between human rights advocates and religious actors.

v. The Commission, EU Member States, and the EIB, which together constitute a major source of IFAD's funding, should significantly strengthen that support in the course of the IFAD 13 Replenishment, whose pledging session will take place in late 2023.

vi. In the light of the comparisons set out in this report, all States should bring a renewed sense of perspective and proportionality to the allocation of budgetary resources.

vii. The Special Rapporteur on the right to food should be encouraged to evaluate the relationship between such

concepts as the right to food, food security, resilient food systems and food sovereignty.

viii. The land rights of indigenous peoples, peasants, and other groups which depend on access to land for the realisation of their right to food must be protected by law.

ix. In regulating the cross-border activities of corporations, States should take into account the long-term impact of today's actions and decisions, balancing commercial values such as predictability against the obligation of public authorities to protect ecosystems and livelihoods.

x. Governments should use market-based tools, labelling, and regulation to discourage the use of ultra-processed food and beverages and ban their targeted advertising to young people and other vulnerable groups.

xi. Following the example of the WHO's framework convention on tobacco control, States should enact provisions to guard against the risks associated with lobbying on food-related issues.

xii. Renewed attention is needed to the implications of sanctions/economic measures for the right to food.

xiii. Academics and practitioners should develop new fields of study focussing on polarisation, de-polarisation, and the progressive realisation of democratic values.

xiv. Similarly, academics and practitioners should acknowledge that any dichotomy between profit-based activities and non-profit activities does not do full justice to reality, or offer adequate practical direction for the future; this should lead to new research agendas and also to the continued development of

environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics with a focus on reducing inequality.

II. Introduction

The goal of this multi-stakeholder project was to respond to our growing shared awareness of food insecurity by coming together as a group of colleagues to reflect on possible policy responses. The participants are listed in an annex below.

The project has involved meetings in Prague in October 2022, in Dublin in April 2023, and in Rome in early July 2023. Five working groups were set up to examine, respectively: (1) food and the sacred; (2) food and human rights; (3) cross-cutting global issues in the sphere of food systems; (4) politics and polarization; and (5) the future of agriculture and farming.

"Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."[3]

Over the last quarter century or more, climate change, the loss of biodiversity, and new insights in the sphere of nutrition and malnutrition are reshaping the debate on food.[4] In the aftermath of the food-and-fuel crises of 2007–2008, governments recognized the need to better prioritize their food and nutrition policies. The year 2015 saw the adoption, separately, of two hugely important policy frameworks—the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement. The first United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) was held in 2021. Over the past year and more, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has served to further highlight the vulnerability of our food systems. Energy- and fertilizer-price increases have had a major impact on global food production in 2022 and 2023 and contributed to the rise in the number of hungry people in the world,

[3] FAO report, 'The state of food insecurity in the world 2021'
[4] Gordon Conway's *The Doubly Green Revolution* (1997) was a landmark publication.

particularly in Africa and the Middle East.

Unfortunately, neither the SDGs nor the climate negotiations are on track to meet their targets, and the core challenge remains: to achieve food security for an estimated global population of 10 billion in 2050 while respecting the 1.5 °C target set by the Paris Agreement of 2015.

As of July 2023, the FAO calculates that the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet is more than 3 billion.[5] In parallel, the number of people facing acute hunger and undernourishment has risen to 9.2 per cent of the global population; around 735 million people.[6] The 2023 report notes that acute food insecurity is more pronounced in some regions than others, with Africa being the worst affected (with 20 per cent of the population facing hunger), followed by Asia (8.5 per cent) and the Caribbean (16.3 per cent)[7] and Latin America. However, it should be noted that almost all States and regions have seen a growth in the number of people facing food insecurity, including in high-income countries.[8] According to a conservative estimate, the number of people *dying* of hunger is around 8 million per year, many of whom are children.[9]

For reasons explored in our report, it seems unlikely that the rising rates of food insecurity are primarily a reflection of absolute (i.e., global) availability of food. Our principal recommendations reflect a clear understanding that several inter-related factors stand in the way of effective political action to meet immediate food needs and promote the resilience of global food systems. There is no avoiding a 'holistic' or 'systems' approach which in turn requires a long-term strategy and openness to new thinking. Discussions within each of our five main workstreams are summarized below. I– as

[5] https://www.fao.org/publications/home/fao-flagship-publications/the-state-of-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-world/en
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid, xvi. FAO figures are supported by other surveys including the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), and World Food Programme (WFP) figures based on countries where the WFP has an operational presence.
[8] The Trussell Trust/Glen Bramley et al., 'State of Hunger: Building the Evidence on Poverty, Destitution, and Food Insecurity in the UK, Year Two Main Report' (May 2021), 11.
[9] Open Letter from 238 NGOs to the UN General Assembly in September, 2022.

III. Working Groups

III. A Food and the sacred

As part of our consideration of food and the sacred, we posed three questions to the representatives of several different faith communities represented in the Dublin City Inter-Faith Forum:

- What role do food and fasting play in your religious tradition?
- What are the values and principles that underlie the practices of your community in relation to food?
- What lessons can we learn from the festivals and occasions where food plays a role?

A central conclusion is that religious traditions associate food with concepts and values such as sharing, celebration, community, and solidarity. In *Deus Caritas Est* Pope Benedict XVI writes about the Eucharist as follows: 'Eucharistic communion includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn. A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.'[10] Here is Maimonides: "To eat and drink on a festival in the company of your family without providing for the poor and distressed is not 'the joy of the commandment' but the joy of your stomach. It is a disgrace." According to Gandhi, "To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and the promise of food as wages".[11] Sikhs welcome guests for free meals in their houses of worship.

In Islam during Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, and in many other religions, food is paired naturally with fasting. The abstinence from certain types or all food and drink can further patience, introspection, discipline, appreciation, detachment and compassion. Many religions, including Hinduism, teach that wasting food is intrinsically wrong because food is a gift that requires gratitude. In many traditions, eating is

[10] https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html
[11] Quoted by Rajmohan Gandhi (grandson) in Gandhi, R. (2006). *Mohandas: A True Story of a Man, His People, and an Empire*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, p. 257.

preceded by prayer. To accept that the earth and the food it yields are in some sense 'given', or sacred, has ethical implications going beyond food security. The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has stated: 'The pursuit of short-term financial gains through aggressive land use and wanton resource extraction has wrought immeasurable costs to life and all creation and will impose a heavy burden on our children for millennia, imperiling their very future. As Christians we believe that life-in-creation is a sacred gift from God.'[12]

In the battle to ensure food security for all, it is increasingly recognized that political processes need to be complemented by *multi-stakeholder forms of cooperation* at many levels. In the light of the values described here, we urge the inclusion in multi-stakeholder processes of the representatives or nominees of churches and faith communities, for several practical reasons.

First, faith communities are open to a dialogue drawing on deep cultural sources, such as respect for nature and a holistic understanding of what it means to be human. Religious perspectives thus offer a distinct order of priorities which can bring a useful catalyst to the wider public debate. As the century progresses, faith communities are learning to work together and to devote increasing attention to the contribution they can bring to advocacy and multi-stakeholder engagement.

Second, religious actors and the narratives of religious traditions can often reach and engage people who cannot be reached by secular narratives and appeals. In particular, they can reach the marginalised and under-represented.

Third, faith-inspired organizations operate on the local, regional, national and global levels. They are well-placed to nurture friendships across institutional and national divides.

[12] https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-general-secretary-rev-prof-dr-jerry-pillay-on-the-6th-assessment-report-of-the-intergovernmental-panel-on-climate-change

Fourth, behavioral shifts will have to take place to improve food security under conditions of climate change, ecological degradation, shrinking resources, and a growing world population. Faith communities can help promote the changes of lifestyle that are needed for a 'just transition.'

Fifth, faith communities have long practical experience in alleviating hunger and malnourishment, not least in areas affected by instability and conflict.

Sixth, and finally, faith communities are often exemplary role models for 'action in hope'. Hope is an inner resource implying a readiness to engage with our circumstances and act positively and rationally, even in the face of uncertainty and steep odds.[13] Planetary ecology and the need for a just transition in the organisation of the economy depend on numerous individual decisions linked together by a common criterion of evaluation. This common criterion cannot be the standard of mere self-interest, which pushes us in different directions. How then can we picture ourselves as co-workers in a shared project? From a religious perspective, actions that conform with hope will be in harmony with other similar actions, including other people's actions. There is an 'in–built' consistency, compatibility, and coherence. When we act in hope, the fruits of action are in some sense 'given'. We do not see ourselves as complete masters of cause and effect. The overall design may not yet have taken shape. In this way, the 'standard of hope' becomes a way of understanding how separate actors, often invisible to one another, work together towards an unseen future. Hope, if restored to a fuller meaning in our culture, can help to bridge the gap between the familiar and the unknown – between today and a future that is perhaps not even imaginable.

[13] Vaclav Havel on hope: … a state of mind, not a state of the world ... an orientation of the spirit, of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons ... It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

III. B Food and human rights

The human right to food is guaranteed by several international instruments. It was first recognised in 1948 as a component of an 'adequate standard of living' in Article 25(1) of the UDHR. This right was also included in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)[14] and as an aspect of the right to life in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).[15] Moreover, the right to food can be found in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 24(2)(c) and 27(3)), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Articles 25(f) and 28(1)), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (where Article 20 guarantees the right 'to be secure in the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence'), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Article 12(2). The right to food, too, is proclaimed in several regional human rights instruments, as well as in domestic constitutions. Finally, the right to food is implied in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which mainly addresses food security.

The fundamental human right to food is both a self-standing guarantee protected under conventional and customary international law, and an integral part of an indivisible fabric of rights relating to the right of the individual to an adequate standard of living (inter alia, the rights to food, housing, sanitation, water, and health); the rights of workers, peasants, and smallholders (inter alia, rights to land, to seeds, to safety at work, to fair wages, and to organise); and the rights of communities and indigenous peoples (indigenous rights to land and traditional means of subsistence; rights to social security; food sovereignty).

The body of regulation pertaining to the right to food offers several advantages. States are under a legal

[14] with its specific components clarified by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its General Comment No. 12
[15] in accordance with General Comment No. 36 of the Human Rights Committee

obligation: the right to food promotes the transformation of social benefits that individuals or households receive under government food security programmes into legal entitlements. The primary objective of the right to food is to ensure that everyone, individually or as a member of a group, has permanent and secure access to healthy food that is produced in a sustainable and culturally acceptable manner.[16] This access can be provided through three channels that often work in combination: (a) self-production, (b) access to income-generating activities and (c) social protection, either informally through community support or through State-administered mechanisms.[17] The State is under immediately applicable obligations not to interfere with the enjoyment of the right to food, for example by depriving individuals or communities of food or the ability to produce food. Finally, aspects of the right to food which cannot be implemented immediately and in full are subject to an obligation of progressive realisation, and States must adopt national strategies to work towards full compliance with the right.[18] The *obligation of progressive realisation* is often overlooked, though some countries have introduced comprehensive social protection systems that reference the right to food.[19]

The above brief mapping of the state of the field does strongly indicate the potential of a human-rights-centred approach, in consort with and in support of food sovereignty movements and others, to increase the priority given at the international level to realising the right to food.

III. C Selected global issues relating to food security

'Realism,' as a value in foreign policy and international relations, should refer in the first instance to *contact*

[16] Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action, 1996.
[17] Olivier De Schutter, Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, 2013, para. 6.
[18] See Olivier De Schutter, Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, 2013, para. 8. For the origin of the 'respect, protect, fulfill framework in the work of another Special Rapporteur on the right to food, see Asbjørn Eide, The New International Economic Order and the Promotion of Human Rights: Report on the Right to Adequate Food as a Human Right Submitted by Mr. Asbjørn Eide, Special Rapporteur, 1987.
[19] FAO, WFP, UNECE, UNICEF, WHO, WMO, *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia 2020: Affordable healthy diets to address all forms of malnutrition for better health*, 2021, https://doi.org/10.4060/cb3849en

with reality. We need to clarify the structural factors that are changing the nature of international relations and to identify the main global phenomena that deserve urgent attention.

Regarding climate change, much of the discussion focusses on the risk of temperatures rising by 1.5 degrees centigrade above the pre-industrial average. Unfortunately, there is a risk of an even higher rise in temperature. We do not know precisely when certain 'tipping points' will be reached that will unleash dramatic changes in ice sheets, forests, and other critical influences on climate. Such tipping points are the largest threat to our long-term food security.

The agri-business sector is consolidating 'vertically' as well as 'horizontally'. That is, as well as 'horizontal' mergers and acquisitions, we are seeing the same companies involved in seed, fertiliser, processing, packing, distribution, and retail. This is hard to reconcile with an antitrust policy oriented towards the distribution of power in the economy and the welfare of citizens broadly understood. For example, when companies control the storage of food, as they often do, there are obvious conflicts of interest surrounding the price of stocks released to the market.

Discussion of the international financial architecture should start from the UN Secretary General's recent wide-ranging policy brief,[20] which describes the international financial architecture, crafted in 1945 after the Second World War, as 'entirely unfit for purpose.'

Globally, financial assets are four times the size of the real economy.[21] The change that is needed is partly about perspective and proportionality in relation to the scale and allocation of resources and what this may tell us about our values. Global military spending amounts to more than $2,000 billion and is increasing. By way of comparison, the latest International Fund for Agricultural Development replenishment (IFAD

[20] https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21824.doc.htm
[21] Rana Faroohar, 2022. *Homecoming.* New York. Crown, p. 43.

12, covering the years 2021 – 2023) had raised approximately $1.2 billion by the end of 2022. In a news briefing in July 2023, the Chief Economist of the World Food Programme (WFP) stated that his agency has received 29% less in funding this year than at the same point in 2022.[22]

Overdependence on agricultural and food imports leaves countries extremely vulnerable to external shocks. For example, while a high percentage of the world's uncultivated arable land is in Africa,[23] only a third of cereals consumed in Africa is produced on the continent.[24] From 2016 to 2018, Africa had an annual food import bill of $35 billion, which is forecast to reach $110 billion by 2025.[25]

The problem of rising inequality arose in all five working groups and was a special concern of our working group on polarisation. We recommend that environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing/reporting metrics should focus on reducing inequality – all the more so as private business depends on publicly provided goods (education, infrastructure, public order).

Conflict, like inequality, is a topic that arose in each of our working groups. Addressing food insecurity caused by non-State actors in armed conflicts or by failed States requires a multifaceted approach, including both sanctions and in some circumstances greater engagement. At the same time, the use of sanctions, such as asset freezes, is also a major contributor to food insecurity. Sanctions imposed on Iraq in the 1990s cost hundreds of thousands of lives and permanently damaged the country's social and economic fabric.[26] Most of the food insecure countries in the world are also sanctioned states.

Fisheries and marine ecology have an essential part to play in the

[22] https://www.unmultimedia.org/avlibrary/asset/3069/3069487/
[23] https://www.dw.com/en/with-vast-arable-lands-why-does-africa-need-to-import-grain/a-62288483#
[24] Cf. FAO Food Outlook (2022), https://www.fao.org/3/cb9427en/cb9427en.pdf; see also UNEP, Our work in Africa, https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa
[25] Cf.https://unctad.org/news/covid-19-threat-food-security-africa
[26] Nicholas Mulder. 2022. *The Economic Weapon/The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War.* Yale University Press, p. 293

transformation of global food systems. Work should continue on 'an evolving and positive vision for fisheries and aquaculture in the twenty-first century, where the sector is fully recognized for its contribution to fighting poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.'[27] Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) harm fish populations, ocean health, and people.

The global dietary project promoted by the Lancet[28] suggests that improving nutrition, especially early childhood nutrition, in the poorest populations can converge with a much-needed transition in richer countries towards healthier eating.

The European Union is well placed to play a key role in contributing to resilience in global food systems. We recommend strengthening localisation as the first pillar of EU leadership.[29] The European Union should also bring a stronger policy coherence (overcoming silo approaches) to the many international contexts in which there is scope to reduce poorer countries' external dependencies.[30]

The European Union should significantly increase direct humanitarian and development funding to local grassroots civil society organisations, including faith-based and religious organisations.

The Commission, EU Member States, and the EIB, which together constitute a major source of IFAD's funding, should significantly strengthen that support in the course of the IFAD 13 Replenishment, whose pledging session will take place in late 2023.

Our group spent some time considering the spaces for promoting our recommendations, including the

[27] The 2022 edition of The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture – Towards Blue Transformation.
[28] https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/

[29] European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2022 on addressing food security in developing countries, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0287_EN.html

[30] The EU Joint Research Centre aims to 'contribute to the adoption of an integrated approach to the external dimension of EU policies to maximise their positive impact.' JRC portfolio 24, 'International cooperation, sustainable and trusted connections/Science for the Global Gateway and the International Green Deal,' accessible at: https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-science-and-knowledge-activities/international-cooperation-sustainable-and-trusted-connections_en.

Food Systems Summit 'Stocktaking Moment,' the SDG summit, the World Food Forum 2023 flagship event, the next meeting of the Committee on World Food Security of the FAO (CFS), and COP 28.[31] It is relevant that the COP 28 host country, UAE, is strongly committed to the 2019 Document on 'Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.'[32]

From the perspective of stakeholders in the present project, particular importance attaches to Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which provides for 'an open, transparent and regular dialogue' with churches, faith communities, and philosophical organisations.

The UN 'Summit of the Future' in September 2024 is intended to build upon the SDG Summit in 2023 and breathe new life into the multilateral system.

Our group held its first meeting at the OSCE Documentation Centre in Prague in October 2022. The OSCE has been developing a food security agenda over many years. In 2022 and 2023, Russia and Ukraine have signed and renewed agreements on the export of grain (though under the auspices of the UN, not the OSCE). The European Union and others have taken concomitant measures. These understandings demonstrate that constructive relationships need not wholly vanish even in the middle of a crisis.[33]

Stepping back from existing regional and global agendas, we posed a 'structural' question. Do we have frameworks of engagement that focus effectively on vision and values in a long-term global perspective? We would argue that there is important work to be done, involving multiple stakeholders, to *create the consensus, the constituency and the civilisation* that will enable the SDGs and the forthcoming Summit of the Future to fulfil their intended purpose. The additional diplomacy and

[31] the 28th United Nations Climate Change conference (Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC)
[32] https://www.azhar.eg/walangpdf/en.pdf
[33] As of 17 July 2023, the grain deal has been ended by Russia, leaving its future and the role of Ukrainian grain in global food systems open to uncertainty.

dialogue we advocate reflects a 'theory of change' in harmony with the SDGs but resting ultimately on an evolving cultural pattern. We seek a transformation at the level of habits and assumptions, a greater historical self-awareness, and an enhanced capacity to work *systemically*, as our global situation requires.

III. D Food security and polarisation

According to the Summit for Democracy, [34]democracy is 'an ever-evolving process' in which we 'strive towards the better adoption and implementation of democratic principles.' As one definition proposes,[35] 'Democracy will be fully implemented only when individuals and all peoples have access to the primary goods of life, food, water, health care, education, work, and certainty of their rights, through an ordering of internal and international relations that guarantees everyone a chance to participate.'

In this broad field, we focussed on the ongoing work under the auspices of the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT) aimed at achieving a baseline understanding of the concept of polarisation and developing solutions. Polarization can be understood as a 'hyper-problem' which stops us addressing any other problem effectively. Even in its mildest forms, it can result in paralysis that can hinder any major social change. By accurately defining what polarization is and what it is not, it becomes possible to identify and address the root causes. IFIT's provisional definition of polarization is as follows:

Polarisation: a prominent division or conflict that forms between major groups in a society or political system and that is marked by the clustering and radicalisation of views and beliefs at two distant and antagonistic poles.

This working definition is informed by eight hallmarks which can be studied in detail in a recent IFIT discussion

[34] Declaration of the Summit for Democracy, March 29, 2023
[35] Benedict XVI, "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Members of the 'Centesimus Annus' Foundation" (Clementine Hall, Vatican City, May 19, 2006).

paper.[36] We drew on IFIT's field work to begin envisaging solutions. Progress toward resilience in global food systems can be understood as an antidote to polarisation that will have a multiplying effect.[37] A step-change in common efforts to actualize the right to food can help us find a bigger language through which to communicate across 'physical, ideological, and emotional distances.[38]

In this perspective, we considered the relevance of *participatory-based approaches* and *community-based approaches.* As discussed in our working group on food and the sacred, churches and faith communities are well-suited to approaches of this kind. By providing food assistance, raising awareness, fostering community building, building connections across lines of division, and providing education and skills training, they can help create a more just and equitable society.

III. E The future of agriculture and farming

Our working group on agriculture and farming identified as a core challenge the need to explore and integrate different perspectives. First, any policy perspective needs to connect with the perspective of individual farmers and farming businesses, who in many cases look to the long-term trends with anxiety. Second, there are multiple farmer realities. A dialogue is needed involving the proponents of both 'conventional' agriculture and 'organic' or 'regenerative' agriculture. Third, we need to pursue unifying approaches, or unity in diversity, across continents. In principle, the national pathways developed within the UN food systems security dialogue should point to significant and growing commonalities between regional programmes such as those of the European Union and the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Policy (CAADP).[39] In integrating different perspectives, gradualness is a key value. The

[36] https://ifit-transitions.org/publications/first-principles-the-need-for-greater-consensus-on-the-fundamentals-of-polarisation/
[37] The term 'multiplying effect' is taken from IFAD's presentation to our group on 5th July.
[38] IFIT, Ibid. p. 6
[39] initiated in 2003 to develop the continent's agri-foods sector and rural economies.

'obligation of progressive realization,' discussed in the human rights working group, is clearly relevant.

The European Union's 'green transitions' agenda represents the world's most ambitious policy framework to shape the future of agriculture in the light of wider goals.[40] Approved in 2020, the European Green Deal aims to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% in 2030 (compared to 1990 levels) on the European continent and to achieve 'climate neutrality' by 2050.[41] This project has far-reaching consequences for all parts of society and interfaces with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the related Farm to Fork Strategy, energy policies, and many other regulatory activities. For example, the drastic reduction of Russian natural gas imports has necessitated increased LNG imports, especially from the United States,[42] which may have a lasting impact on the prices of fertilizers and food and the financial stability of farms.

There is evidence that a significant part of the farmer population within the European Union genuinely struggles to identify with the process of transition. There were farmers' protests throughout Europe in the summer of 2022. Moreover, for the majority of farmers the long-term trends in terms of rural livelihoods are far from encouraging.[43] We need a clearer involvement of farmers and farmer unions in political discussions that especially concern them and their future.

The FAO has identified Ireland, Costa Rica, and Rwanda[44] as countries which are developing credible national processes of climate-related transition. The Irish approach has taken a significant step forward (July 2023) with the publication by the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) of the report

[40] https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/jrc-science-and-knowledge-activities/green-transitions_en
[41] European Commission (2019), The European Green Deal, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and- policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en
[42] IEA (2022), Gas Market Report, Q4-2022, https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/5c108dc3-f19f-46c7- a157-f46f4172b75e/GasMarketReportQ42022.pdf
[43] For a range of statistics, see the full version of this report.
[44] Guijt J, Wigboldus S, Brouwer H, Roosendaal L, Kelly S and Garcia-Campos P. *National Processes Shaping Efforts to Transform Food Systems: Lessons from Costa Rica, Ireland and Rwanda*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; 2021. Available from: https://doi.org/10.4060/cb6149en.

'Exploring a Just Transition in Agriculture and Land Use.'[45] The transition advocated by NESC starts from 'vision and values.' A sense of where we are trying to go risks being lost sight of if we aim merely at a series of technical changes in separate sectors – carbon commitments, agriculture, land use, soil and water quality, biodiversity, employment, housing, transport infrastructure, taxation, EU policy, international policy, and so on. What is needed is an overarching vision that will inspire individual farmers and farming communities to embark on a journey of positive change. NESC asserts that there is no question of a 'transition out of agriculture;' the goal is a transition into making optimal use of our land and agricultural resources for environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

John Gilliland, Professor of Practice at Queen's University Belfast,[46] has led a seven-farm project in Northern Ireland aiming at a 'transition to deliver multiple public goods,' an approach that anticipates the methodology of transition advocated by NESC based on **research –** a multifaceted/ multi-method inquiry into different forms of evidence; **dialogue** - respectful, deep listening to experts, those impacted by policy, those at the 'front-line', decision-makers, and social thinkers; and **advice** – a commitment to continuous learning and the scaling up of advisory services. Research, dialogue, and advice form a nexus or system: lessons or insights in any one space create ripples and real change in others.

We conclude that the vision of *accounting for nature* in order to enable a *transition to deliver multiple public goods* is the way of the future. This calls for innovative ways of engaging with stakeholders, a point that also emerged strongly several other working groups. The emphasis should shift from the further commercialising of agriculture towards agroecology and regenerative approaches. There will be a role for local government in enabling multi-stakeholder

[45] https://www.nesc.ie/publications/exploring-a-just-transition-in-agriculture-and-land-use/
[46] Dr. Gilliland is the former Chair of DEFRA's Rural Climate Change Forum (London).

cooperation and promoting compliance with the emerging strategies. New forms of public investment will be needed, building on the extensive systems of public support that are already in place in the agricultural sector.

There is scope to include social metrics or indicators as part of a holistic approach to measurement. These indicators would draw on the ethos that is in any case widely shared among farmers by measuring the impact of the transition on local livelihoods and communities and by promoting the sharing of knowledge and experience. There are lessons to be learned from the introduction of new technologies and reporting requirements into medical practice. This was initially seen as burdensome by some practitioners. But it has contributed to multiple public goods, including better healthcare overall, the development of new professional qualifications, cost reductions, and immense research benefits.

Ultimately, *a transition to deliver multiple public goods* is a political question. To avoid a conflictual, crisis-centred approach, and gain traction for the changes that are required, we need to find spaces in which to deliberate on the wider context - including issues around food and diet, global food security, EU policies and legislation, and local democracy. This means *bringing a communal dimension back into the centre of our thinking and action*, not only in relation to the optimal use of our land, agricultural and marine resources.

List of participants in our in-person and on-line discussions

S. No	Organisation/background	Name
1.	Philip McDonagh	Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations, Dublin City University
2.	Sister Helen Alford	Angelicum, Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, Rome
3.	Damian Jackson	Irish Council of Churches, Ireland
4.	Adrian Cristea	Dublin City Interfaith Forum, Ireland
5.	Bishop Andrew Forster	Irish Council of Churches, Ireland
6.	Bruno Petrusic	Angelicum, Rome (CREATE programme)
7.	Dana Habib	Institute for Integrated Transitions, Barcelona
8.	Don Lucey	Misean Cara, Ireland
9.	Gerard Scullion	Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations, Dublin City University
10.	Gertrude Cotter	University College Cork, Ireland
11.	Giancarlo Anello	University of Parma, Italy
12.	Giuseppe Zampaglione	ex-World Bank, advisor to the Governments of Togo and Djibouti
13.	Ida Manton	PACE Global Strategies
14.	Jocelyn C. Zuckerman	Author; based in New York
15.	Johannes Moravitz	Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), Brussels
16.	John Moffett	Misean Cara, Ireland
17.	John Neary	Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations, Dublin City University
18.	Luca Brocca	Just Access, Heidelberg
19.	Lucia Scaffardi	University of Parma, Italy
20.	Marek Misak	Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), Brussels
21.	Maria Virginia Solis	Economy of Francesco, Argentina
22.	Mark Somos	Just Access, Heidelberg
23.	Mateusz Ciasnocha	European Carbon Farmers and Economy of Francesco
24.	Melanie Barbato	University of Münster/ the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies
25.	Nick van Praag	Ground Truth Solutions, Vienna
26.	Rachna Shanbog	Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations, Dublin City University
27.	Sahithi Baru	University College Cork, Ireland
28.	Seamus Collins	Misean Cara, Ireland
29.	Stephen Thornhill	University College Cork, Ireland
30.	Tom Arnold	Ireland's special representative on food security
31.	Dalia Stanciene	CREATE Expert Council (Lithuania)
32.	Fr. Arkadiusz Wuwer	CREATE Expert Council (Poland)
33.	Roland Szlias	CREATE Expert Council (Hungary)

34.	Silvija Migles	CREATE Expert Council (Croatia)
35.	Vojtech Masek	CREATE Expert Council (Czech Republic)

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1. Aisling Rogerson, the Fumbally
2. Rev. John Godfrey, Rector, Aughrim
3. Larry O'Connell, Director, NESC
4. Prof. John Gilliland, QUB

Rome meeting, July 2023

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