

FAIR TRADE ORGANIZATIONS ENCOURAGE FOOD SOVEREIGNTY TO FACE THE CURRENT CRISIS

Today, the planet has fewer healthy ecosystems than needed to support our growing population. We are facing a climate crisis that aggravates events such as floods, droughts, as well as the proliferation of pests and diseases that threaten our survival. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected all areas of our society: health, economy, politics, and the environment.

Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most affected regions by the health crisis and will also be severely impacted by the economic and food crises in the coming months. Additionally, these crises derived from the COVID-19 pandemic **mainly affect the most vulnerable populations**, who have very limited resources to face them.

WE EAT BUT WE ARE NOT NOURISHED

In 2019, 24% of the region's population (105 million people) suffered from obesity. Meanwhile, hunger - the other side of malnutrition - affected 11% of Latin Americans (48 million people) by mid-2020, a figure that the UN predicts will increase because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Malnutrition makes us more vulnerable to COVID-19 and other diseases. Moreover, there is overwhelming evidence on how people with pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, and hypertension, or with malnutrition are more vulnerable to this virus. Bad eating habits, derived from the adoption of a diet high in saturated fats, sugars, and refined carbohydrates, as well as malnutrition related to poverty, cause us to eat, without nourishing enough.

THE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM IS IN CRISIS

Enough food is produced globally for all of humanity, but **large companies control global food production, promoting monocultures, and the adoption of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)**. In addition, there is a high concentration of food distribution and a few large companies have control over prices, thus hunger and malnutrition persist..

This global context affects the autonomy and capacity of small-scale farmers in Latin America and the Caribbean to grow their own food. Facing these structural challenges aggravated by the COVID-19 crisis (low prices for their products, increased production costs, investments in biosafety protocols, among others), small-scale farmers have maintained food production for global supply chains. Paradoxically, they are





simultaneously facing shortages and rising food prices, a situation that makes them even more vulnerable to the pandemic. In other words, **those who produce the food are also those that cannot eat properly.**



IT IS TIME FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

In this context, the Latin American and Caribbean Network for Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC) considers it **extremely important that farming families have food reserves to reduce their vulnerability to the current pandemic and future events**, through the promotion of initiatives, programs and projects in favor of food sovereignty in the region.

For CLAC, Food Sovereignty is the right of farmers to produce their own food in harmony with nature, revaluing their territories, defending their water access, protecting native seeds and preserving their cultural heritage, as well as getting proper economical recognition for their valuable efforts.

In 2016, CLAC published the position paper: *“Food sovereignty, productive diversification and local Fair Trade: necessary bets for the construction of more sustainable and resilient food systems”*, in which a special call was made to public and private actors, civil society and the solidarity economic sector to take concrete measures to defend the Food Sovereignty - a key workstream for CLAC.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IS THE RIGHT OF FARMERS TO PRODUCE THEIR OWN FOOD IN HARMONY WITH NATURE



FAIR TRADE AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Fair Trade is an alternative model that **promotes a closer relationship between producers and consumers.** Fair Trade promotes decent and sustainable livelihoods for families of producers and workers, guaranteeing access to healthy and sustainable food.

Food Sovereignty and Fair Trade foster agricultural prices linked to production costs, which means that the price paid for products is fair so that the families of producers and agricultural workers have a decent income and sustainable livelihoods.

In addition, both support and better **enable the work of women farmers, who produce more crops for family consumption** and, therefore, have a fundamental role in the conservation of biodiversity and health preservation

Food Sovereignty is also the right of consumers to decide what they want to consume, have access to healthy foods and learn where it comes from and how it was grown. Today, consumers find more value in a healthy diet and are increasingly aware of how important it is to make more responsible consumption choices, making Food Sovereignty a relevant ally for Fair Trade.

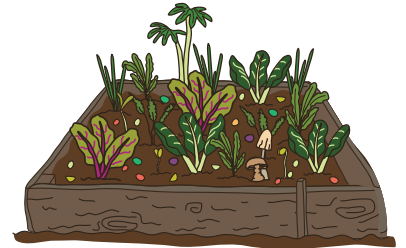


**FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IS
KEY FOR IMPROVING
HEALTH OUTCOMES
AND PROMOTING
ECONOMIC AUTONOMY**

RECOVERING WITH FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Food Sovereignty is key for improving health outcomes and promoting economic autonomy of Fairtrade small-scale farmers and workers in Latin America and the Caribbean. CLAC considers that it should be included as part of the initiatives and policies to achieve a Recovery with Justice in the region. That is why, CLAC, through the Economic Recovery Fund, will support Fairtrade certified organizations to develop Food Sovereignty projects.

However, it is necessary that **all social and economic actors get involved** to face these diverse but deeply intertwined crises. Thus, CLAC urges:



- A— **Governments:** to guarantee the right to healthy, nutritious, and inclusive food; promoting more sustainable production models and preserving biodiversity, protecting family farming and the knowledge of traditional cultures.
- B— **Civil society and consumers:** to think about their eating habits, adopt a healthier diet, to value local production, and support small-scale farmers.
- C— **Supply chain actors:** to commit to Fairtrade principles and standards, as well as promoting more equitable commercial relations, guaranteeing Food Sovereignty for both producers and consumers.
- D— **Producers:** to support other productive models, such as agro-ecology, in order to guarantee access to healthy, diverse, and locally produced foods; while fortifying health and the economic situation in the countryside, as well as living in harmony with the environment.



“Small-scale producers have sustained food production, but they face serious difficulties in guaranteeing the livelihood of their families and are increasingly vulnerable to diseases due to malnutrition. For this reason, CLAC encourages food sovereignty as a measure to face the crisis generated by this pandemic and to guarantee a sustainable future for farmers and farm workers”.

Miguel Ángel Munguía / Presidente de CLAC



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