

# Towards a Sustainable Food System

A Statement of the Bahá'í International Community  
Brussels Office

Bahá'í  
International  
Community

Brussels Office

Among the many consequences of the current war in Europe is the exacerbation of food insecurity in many parts of the world. The immediate challenge is, however, just one striking symptom of an ailing global food order. The limitations of the broader political and economic structures underpinning the food system have, in recent years, been amply demonstrated by the struggles of the international community to respond to threats as diverse as infectious disease and climate change. While attention is rightly being given to the pressing need to ensure sufficient food production and distribution in the short term, the current discussions around food security provide a timely opportunity for the discourse to rise above concern for immediate causes and address systemic challenges in the global food order. Absent such a conversation, policymaking will be fated to lurch from crisis to crisis, able only to identify temporary and partial solutions.

While advancements in global agricultural output have been made in recent decades, the world is in need of a food system that is sustainable, non-exploitative, and provides for the entirety of the global population. This will require not simply the application of new technology, but attention to the principles and assumptions underlying agricultural practice and policy from the local to the international level.

Foremost among the principles that should govern the operation of the food system is the oneness of humanity. Every individual, community, nation or region of the world is part of one unified entity, the well-being of whose parts are inseparable from the well-being of the whole. Given the impact of the European Union's policies on other continents, initiatives such as the Common Agricultural Policy should be designed and assessed with consideration of their impact on farmers, rural communities, and economies beyond Europe's borders.

Progress towards a food system that advances the global common good will rely to a significant degree on the manner and extent to which different perspectives are taken into account. Efforts to reform the global food system must begin with the recognition that no single set of actors and no individual continent possesses all the insights necessary to place global food security on a firm foundation. A collective process of inquiry is required, with innovative mechanisms and structures to connect diverse stakeholders from all regions of the world, from farmers to researchers, with spaces in which consequential decisions are made. Further, widening participation must be understood not merely as negotiation aimed at producing a tolerable consensus, but as a collective investigation into what sustainable food systems entail, in which all meaningfully engage and to which all contribute.

The current and historical influence of the European continent places on it both the opportunity and the responsibility to strive towards the development of a just global food order. While the scale of the challenge will undoubtedly require long-term commitment and a constant re-evaluation of methods and approaches, a focus on building consensus among an ever-widening circle of stakeholders will help to ensure that a global process of inquiry into the basis of a sustainable food system bears fruit.