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IRISH FOOD SOVEREIGNTY PROCLAMATION

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WE ARE FARMERS, FOOD PROVIDERS AND CITIZENS who are active participants in our food systems. We are men and women from communities across Ireland - the urban, the rural and everything in between. We have come together with a common will for Food Sovereignty and to build a vision for a better food and agricultural system for Ireland and our world.

WE RECOGNISE THAT FOOD SOVEREIGNTY is about more than just local food - it is about rights – our rights to access land, resources, seeds and knowledge. It is also about the welfare of the planet, about low-input farming systems that feed our people while responding to the challenge of climate change. It is about democracy, about the voices of our people and about how we organize ourselves. It is about the rights of women. It is about our societies living at peace with each other and with our planet. It is about recognising our place in the generational flow that includes our ancestors and our descendants.

WE RECOGNISE THAT OUR CURRENT ECONOMIC SYSTEM IS A DESTRUCTIVE SYSTEM, and that private corporations are exerting more and more influence on our governance structures both in the EU and in Dublin, as well as in the global south. These corporations represent a threat to our democracies and our futures. We see the same corporations in every aspect of our agricultural systems – selling feeds, fertilisers and other inputs. They are active in every sphere and their influence is expanding and growing.

WE RECOGNISE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM which prioritises global economic development and endless growth, and requires increasing amounts of fossil fuels to function. We see that climate change is responsible for food shortages caused by drought, increasing disease and deaths, and displacement from vast areas of flooded and uninhabitable terrain as well as the cause of wars and conflict to gain control over fossil fuel energy sources.

WE RECOGNISE THAT OUR FOOD SYSTEMS must work to respond to the challenges of climate change and not further exacerbate it. We support the idea of ‘human security’ as defined by the UN whereby “each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her potential” and declare that Food Sovereignty can contribute to the attainment of such security and the creation of a peaceful world, responsive to the needs of the planet as well as its citizens.

WE RECOGNISE THAT AGRICULTURE IN IRELAND has moved from a polyculture of animals and crops to a monoculture of grass. That for the last forty years farmers have been pushed to produce quantity, not quality. We see how the livelihoods of farming communities have been dismantled, and how the modern agricultural systems work against and not with nature. We see how young people who want to feed their communities are locked out of access to land. We see how land is a privilege of the few, and denied to many.

WE RECOGNISE THAT FOR ALL THE FOOD IN SOCIETY, MANY CITIZENS STILL FACE HUNGER DAILY. We see communities struggle to access healthy food, an abundance of processed and “fast” foods dominating diets, and rising obesity. We see communities locked out of access to healthy and local food and a growing elitism in what constitutes eating “good” food. Our agriculture and food systems are failing to nourish our people.

WE SEE ALL OF THIS BECAUSE WE SHARE OUR STORIES WITH EACH OTHER. We are bringing new ideas to one another, planting seeds in each other’s minds and watching them grow. We know our interconnectedness is our strength. We are organized, and we are moving forward to build something better, learning as we go. We are sharing knowledge, seeds, food and skills. We are building our community and growing our communities’ capacities to feed themselves. Community Supported Agriculture projects are reconnecting people with their food and their farmers. We are building cooperation, resilience and the knowledge of how to organize our communities and ourselves. **WE ARE A MOVEMENT.**

SIGN THE PROCLAMATION: www.foodsovereigntyireland.org



PRODUCTION OF OUR FOOD AND THE USE OF OUR LAND

- ☞ We want to produce food equitably for all people and make locally produced food a reality for everyone on our island
- ☞ We want to minimize our reliance on inputs and shift our production to integrated systems based on low input farming and agroecology
- ☞ We want to transform our monocultures back to polycultures of animals and crops, with mixed species farms and agroforestry
- ☞ We want new regulations – health and safety, tax incentives and legal structures which promote instead of inhibit local and community food production, processing and distribution
- ☞ We want a new land commission to make unused land available to communities, groups, families and individuals who want to produce food and woodland materials sustainably for their local markets
- ☞ We want to build a support structure for new producers and our landless to ensure access to knowledge, exchange and mentoring as we build a new food system

THE DISTRIBUTION OF OUR FOOD

- ☞ We will support and promote local distribution infrastructure and organisation eg. Community Supported Agriculture, farmers markets, food hubs, coop shops, community gardens and woodlands and other initiatives
- ☞ We will work to raise awareness of the importance and advantages of supporting local distribution initiatives as opposed to industrial food production and distribution
- ☞ We will work for a shift from a financially-driven to a value-based distribution model, and reveal the real costs of cheap food
- ☞ We will strengthen networking, information-sharing and cooperation as opposed to competition between producers, between producers and consumers, and between consumer groups
- ☞ We will work to ensure all people recognise and embrace their responsibilities in food systems and land use as participants rather than just ‘consumers’

OUR COMMONS

- ☞ We will work to ensure open access to genetic resources such as seeds, genes etc. We are against the patenting of life
- ☞ We will work towards the reestablishment of community through collaboration and local enterprise through the development of cooperatives
- ☞ We want to encourage and promote a positive change of attitude towards Community Supported Agriculture and other systems which bring food providers and citizens closer together
- ☞ We want open and accessible appropriate technologies based in the public domain without copyright or patents
- ☞ We will promote an understanding of debt-based money and encourage and facilitate local currencies, social gifting and other alternative exchange systems

OUR PUBLIC POLICIES

- ☞ Globally, we will work towards policies which establish self-sustaining solidarity economies producing for the needs of the people
- ☞ On a European level we will work for a CAP in the framework of Food Sovereignty
- ☞ At a National level we demand coherence in policies concerning the agri-food sector, including agriculture, environment, forestry, biodiversity, health, land, tourism, jobs, welfare, education & training and trade policies amongst others
- ☞ At a National level we demand legislation to provide for robust civic participation & decision making in Trade, Investment, Development and other policies related to food and agriculture and increase democratic governance of food on all levels
- ☞ We will develop a National Food Sovereignty Strategy which will articulate a practical future for Food Sovereignty in Ireland, including the following:
 - o Establishment of Food Sovereignty Councils in cities and towns around the country
 - o Public Procurement: Ensure food in state establishments (e.g. schools and hospitals) is healthy and ethically/sustainably grown
 - o Tackle food poverty by making funding available for more Community Food Initiatives
 - o Ensure local councils make disused private and public land available for allotments, community gardens and community woodlands
 - o Ensure upskilling/education of the population in terms of food production and food consumption
 - o A national plan to minimise food waste
 - o Legislation to penalise companies producing junk food and subsidies for the production of healthy sustainable food, to include food available to eat outside the home

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