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Statement by the Spokesperson for the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Consultation

1. My name is Gennady Schukin and I am from Russia, from Tamyr region, from Aborigen Forum.
2. We acknowledge that this is the first time CSOs speak in the opening ceremony in the FAO regional Conference. And this is the result of several years' of partnership and deep work between FAO and different CSO constituencies
3. I represent here, the Civil Society Organisations (small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fishers, Indigenous People, agricultural and food workers, consumers, women, youths and NGOs) from across regions. We, the rights holders and active members of the food system have met in Budapest on 26-27 April at the CSO Consultation.
4. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is fast approaching. Despite the fact that the SDGs are not as ambitious as we would like, and have a number of limitations, we are convinced that it will be impossible to achieve them without a drastic paradigm shift towards Food Sovereignty.
5. This paradigm shift starts with the implementation of existing human-rights based instruments that civil society organisations, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Adequate Food, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure (VGGT), the International Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines), the UN Convention on the Protection for Migrant workers and members of their families, as well as many of the policies approved by the Committee on World Food Security and Nutrition (CFS) have agreed upon. We are also optimistic that the Human Rights Council will vote for the United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.
6. **We need implementation and monitoring!!! And we need it now!**

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7. Agroecology, which many communities of small-scale food producers from across the world already practice has finally been recognised by the FAO and some States as the holistic approach necessary for nutritious food production and healthy food consumption. Our knowledge, territories (including both land and water), communities, organisations as well as our capacity to be increasingly less dependent on external inputs are the pillars of agroecology. Our agroecological practices in all food-producing sectors (pastoralism, fisheries, forestry and agriculture) constitute real and on-going innovation all over the world. We, the small-scale food producers, have the solutions to stop global warming and combat climate change. We are the guarantors for the future of our planet and humanity. We strongly believe that by adopting Agroecology we can ensure that the Commons are not commodified and that everyone has access to food and social justice. The Commons are key to the preservation of our environment and to providing opportunities for youth. Agroecology is also important to draw attention to women's rights and ensure respect for women.

8. We will not tolerate that the use agroecology for narrow, private interests or green and/ or blue washing.

9. New technologies present opportunities and challenges for all. E-agriculture is not an innovation per se, as agroecological systems already have appropriate scale technology across food systems. We are all experiencing the incredible concentration of power in the E/web economy. A handful of companies are monopolising the entire sector, controlling and commercialising data in a way that violates peoples' fundamental rights. Today e-agriculture is presented as the new green revolution. However, there are insufficient controls on the regulation and ownership of data, on the impacts of the concentration of the food sector and the consequences of the States' obligations to uphold their citizen's right to food.

10. Therefore, we will only use e-agriculture/digital technologies in the specific ways that we believe that they can support our model of production. We will not allow e-agriculture to become a new tool to privatise our knowledge, make us more dependent and redundant, and ultimately replaced by robots in the future!

11. To achieve a paradigm shift we also demand in this Region a special attention to:

- The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Living in Rural Areas that will strengthen and build on the existing rights of rural people and that will have recognition within the international human rights framework. We must end all public funding that supports extremely unhealthy processed food models that cause health issues, malnutrition and food injustice. Public funding, including *climate funding, needs to clearly prioritise agroecological small-scale food production*, equal access to adequate and nutritious food, which is a universal, basic human right . This implies ensuring justice in food systems through fair production, distribution and access to territorial markets, reducing conflicts and exploitation as well as recognising the structural factors that encourage injustice and malnutrition in the Region. *This is in line with SDG 12, Responsible Consumption and Production and SDG 2, End Hunger*
- The full implementation of Women's Rights. Women's rights are still under attack in this Region, and we call on States to clearly support and implement active policies to fully uphold these rights according to CEDAW guidelines. These guidelines support equality between men and women in their access to productive and economic resources and active participation in government and i decision-making process.
- The full implementation of Decent Work. SDG 8 aims to provide Decent Work for all. There is still a deficit in decent work in agriculture. Labour laws in the region are becoming increasingly weak, and exclude agricultural workers from labour laws and social protection schemes. Despite the existing international treaty that affirms migrant workers' rights, there is persistent trafficking and discrimination against migrant workers who are forced to work in hazardous and isolated conditions and who are often victims of forced labour.
- An end to the mass administration of antibiotics to livestock and poultry. Intensive animal production for food has resulted in the appearance of antibiotic resistant strains of many highly

dangerous bacteria. UN agencies have highlighted the serious threat that AMR poses to people across the world. If no action is taken, there is an increasing risk that millions of people will die due to antibiotic resistant bacteria by 2050.

- An end to unequal access to adequate and nutritious food (which is a universal, basic human right) through an inclusive process which works alongside agencies, agroecological producers, CSOs and other social justice actors, ensuring justice in food systems through fair production, distribution and marketing reducing conflict and exploitation and recognising the structural factors which encourage injustice and malnutrition in the Region.
- States consider the Decade of family farming and the Decade of nutrition as a unique opportunity for policy coherence and governments' commitment, based on their human rights obligations and not as a mere formality! This is and must be considered as a real opportunity to ensure policies and public investment to support small-scale producers and our family farms across the region. Small-scale food producers are the only means of ensuring agroecology is truly implemented, which guarantees the right to adequate and nutritious food.

12. We welcome and express our further engagement in FAO's decentralisation process. Small-scale food producer organisations and other CSOs must play a central role in this process. We declare our willingness to be the main actor in all the stages of implementation of the three regional initiatives.

13. We hope to continue improving our partnership with FAO in this region, increasing our political impact and strengthening our role in decision-making processes.

14. We call on the FAO to commit to stronger engagement based on its mandate to uphold the right to adequate food and nutrition.