

DECLARATION

of the 11th Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany

during its 6th Session

“There is enough for everyone” – World Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

In our one World, we are faced with the greatest scandal: According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 842 million people across the globe are classified as hungry today. If we add to this figure those who are able to satisfy their hunger, but who cannot supply themselves sufficiently with important nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and micronutrients for reasons of poverty, then we are dealing with more than two billion people who are chronically malnourished and suffering damage to their health. The right to food is the human right which is most frequently violated. Each day, hunger and malnutrition claim the lives of around 24,000 people.

We cannot accept this, since the suffering and death of these people is avoidable. The amount of food produced in the world today is easily enough to adequately feed all 7.2 billion people on this earth. It is a fact that there is enough for everyone. However, too much food ends up in the trough, the tank and the bin. Some live in superabundance, while others are starving to death or fleeing their country. This is the scandal in which we, too, are entangled.

If forceful countermeasures are not taken now, a further aggravation of the world food crisis is imminent. At present, we are chiefly concerned with problems of access and distribution. However, as a result of the so-far unchecked climate change, valuable arable land is continually being lost. Water resources are also becoming scarce. Depending on developments in population growth, land use conflicts and consumption habits, we could, in only a few decades time, be in a situation whereby -seen from a global perspective – the demand for food exceeds the supply.

As a responsibility before God and all people suffering from hunger – our sisters and brothers – as well as subsequent generations, the Synod of the EKD addresses policy-makers in Germany with this declaration. It calls them to recognize the signs of the times and to do everything in their power to secure nutrition for the world population and to completely eradicate hunger by 2030 at the latest - and sooner if possible. This proposal is not a utopian dream. It is an ambitious, yet realistic target. The prerequisite is that we act decisively now - not half-heartedly and not later. In order to achieve this, it is imperative that we instigate a global change towards human rights-based, sustainable development. Integral to this is a sustainable agricultural policy; one which is fit for the future, which contributes to the eradication of poverty and is primarily directed towards meeting the human right to adequate food.

All people shall be able to live in security and dignity. Nobody shall have to go hungry. The Synod of the EKD also makes this appeal to the regional churches, church agencies, church communities and church members. We need to consistently shape the way in which we conduct our economic activities and our consumer behaviour to meet the objective of sustaining global food security and preserving God's creation sustainably. An “ethics of sufficiency” / “ethics of enough” must become the standard for our actions.

What are the challenges we face?

- *Climate change:* Agriculture is substantially affected by climate change. While farming has a high storage potential for the greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, it is also a source of climate-damaging emissions which should not be underestimated. In many developing countries, once fertile areas have been lost for the production of food. If we do not manage to limit global warming to a maximum of two degrees, further dramatic crop failures are imminent.
- *Population development:* The world population is projected to rise from almost 7.2 billion people today, to 9.6 billion by the year 2050. While other prognoses are considerably lower, others are even higher. A particularly strong population growth is expected in the area of Africa, south of the Sahara – and it is here where, already today, the proportion of those living in hunger is the largest. An increasing migration into the cities will lead to the formation of ever larger slums in megacities.
- *Lack of support for small-scale farmers:* More than three quarters of hungry people live in the rural regions of developing and emerging nations. Although smallholder families grow food, they cannot adequately feed themselves. Two thirds of these families are particularly marginalised and, most commonly, exposed to external influences without protection. Often, they are not sufficiently supported by the governments of their home countries. International development assistance has, for a long time, overlooked smallholder families. Moreover, agronomic research, consultation, development and support programmes often focus on a small number of export products and neglect food farming and efforts to achieve food sovereignty.
- *Land use competition and “land grabbing”:* Across the globe, competition and conflicts for the resource land, which is becoming scarcer, are on the increase. About 30 % of arable land is already being used to grow feedstuffs – while more and more land is being used for the production of energy crops. In recent years, large-scale investors have bought vast acreage. In developing countries, this “land grabbing” is often accompanied by the eviction of the indigenous population and the loss of valuable areas for the cultivation of basic foodstuffs.
- *Food speculation:* The international financial and economic crisis has led to enormous fluctuations of agricultural prices; when the real estate bubble burst, many new investors and speculators fell back on the agricultural sector. This resulted in enormous price rises. For many people in poorer countries, who spend up to 80 % of their income on food, this means greater hunger and destitution.
- *Trade policy:* The EU imports large amounts of feedstuffs, much of it from countries where there are many hungry people, and, as a corollary, it produces considerably more meat and milk products than it needs. These surpluses are flooding the markets of developing nations at rock-bottom prices and are plunging indigenous producers into ruin. At the same time, international and bilateral trade agreements are denying the developing countries the right to adequately protect their markets against floods of dumped supplies.
- *Post-harvest losses and food waste:* About a third of global food production is lost on the way to the consumer. In developing countries, about 40 % of harvests are spoilt owing to inadequate storage facilities and infrastructure. In addition, the food waste in wealthy states is scandalous. In Germany, on average, 82 kg of food per year per head ends up in the bin.
- *Changing eating habits:* With the assimilation to Western consumption and eating habits – in particular in the emerging countries – the demand for animal products and therefore the

consumption of land and resources is growing. Simultaneously, illnesses caused by malnutrition and overweight are increasing across the globe.

What is sustaining us?

The Biblical scriptures and images which guide us in our faith, enable us also to perceive the true scandal of hunger. They liberate us to take action. At their core is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Christ shares bread and wine with those who are his. As God's gifts to us, bread and wine signify everything that is necessary and sufficient for our lives. In communion with God and with each other, we experience the overflowing joy of life. Sharing bread and wine leads us into a mindful, thankful and equitable approach to all that we have received from God's creation. As part of creation, we live in awe of our fellow creatures' lives. We oppose any abuse by living at the expense of the elementary needs of others.

Christ gives himself to us in bread and wine. He creates communion with God and with each other. It is in this communion that our oneness as the one Body of Christ is expressed. This communion is food for both body and soul. It grants us forgiveness and healing. The Lord's Supper is therefore the liturgical place, in which the communion of human beings as equals is established, in which those who have been liberated by God take on responsibility for all people. Likewise, communion with the incarnate Christ has significance for the design of our social and political community.

The Lord's Supper needs to be understood in the context of many Biblical meal stories. In the story of the feeding of the 5,000 (Mk 6), people follow Jesus' invitation and share with one another what they have at hand – and the spectacular occurs: Wherever people share equitably and communally with each other in the sense of God's kingdom, there is enough for everyone. Here, Jesus' statement given in the Sermon on the Mount becomes real, “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Mt 6, NRSV).

Do this in memory of me. In the Lord's Supper, we encounter Jesus Christ. His presence enables us to perceive suffering in its entirety and leads us to repentance and change. In this way, his love pervades our communion. As those who have witnessed his love, we work for a world in which all can be satisfied in body and soul.

Thus, the way out of the crisis of hunger and the way towards equitable participation for all is both a spiritual and a political pathway – an inner change and a political transformation. It is a pathway with God. It is a pathway with each other. It is the pathway of a pilgrim.

What are we asking?

Political Expectations

The Synod of the EKD calls on the players in the political arena to do everything in their power to meet the Millennium Development Goals established by the community of nations at global and national levels. This applies in particular to Goal 1, to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and extreme poverty by 2015. Above and beyond this, there must be another goal to overcome hunger completely by 2030 at the latest. In addition, it is also important to eradicate the “silent hunger”, i.e. the chronic underprovision of essential nutrients, which afflict women and children in particular. A policy for food security should, first and foremost, improve the conditions of agricultural production for small-scale producers. This includes meeting the farmers' need for assured access to land, water, seeds, fertiliser and credit, as well as a means of storage, marketing, consultation and education. In order to increase yields in a sustainable manner, they must be encouraged to produce in ways which

are suited to local conditions, resource-efficient and which integrate traditional knowledge. To this end, policies must be guided by the principles of a multifunctional, small farm agriculture.

The production of healthy food and access to clean drinking water must take priority in all world regions over and above other economic interests and the cultivation of feedstuffs or energy crops: "food first". The growth in global consumption of animal products must be actively opposed. The deprivation of arable land through "land grabbing" as well as speculation with food must be curbed.

States particularly affected by hunger have an obligation to direct their agricultural and nutritional policies towards meeting the human right to food. Agricultural programmes should give priority to the production of food for local markets. In this vein, sustainable agricultural models which do not cause farmers' dependency on the agricultural industry should be given preference. In line with the Maputo-Declaration of African states, at least 10 % of the national budgets of these countries should be made available for the funding of agricultural production suited to local conditions. States affected by hunger must be able to protect their own agriculture from the negative impact of trade policy favouring imports from industrial and emerging nations, so that agricultural programmes designed to support food sovereignty are not rendered ineffectual.

The European Union has a responsibility to design its own agricultural economy and trade policy in a way that poor countries' efforts to adopt policies promoting food sovereignty are not undermined. Above and beyond this, the EU must strongly support the efforts of states affected by a lack of food to eradicate hunger and poverty. The EU must distance itself from its strategy of expanding its own export-oriented agricultural production, since this is primarily made possible through the import of feedstuffs and soft commodities. The cultivation of such in developing and emerging countries leads to land conflicts, human rights violations and a loss of biodiversity.

Public funds such as direct payments should be tied to more sustainable production methods. Similarly, development policy of the EU and its member states should massively increase their support of small-scale producers to grow food in sustainable ways that will provide for the indigenous population. At least 10 % of the development budget of the EU and its member states should be made available for this purpose. Agricultural research must also be increasingly oriented towards the support of small-scale production. The dumping of agricultural products from the EU onto the markets of the poor must be stopped.

Since climate change has already had a serious impact on agricultural production, the EU must campaign consistently for climate protection. The EU should once again take on a pioneering role in global climate policy and reduce its own emissions of greenhouse gases by at least 55% before 2030. To this end, agriculture must also make a contribution. In Germany, ambitious climate change policy goals should be made obligatory within the framework of a climate change and energy transition law.

Expectations towards Church and Community

"Churches can do what is necessary in that they themselves repent and return to a lifestyle that upholds the core values of justice and sustainability". This statement, taken from the 2009 EKD-Memorandum "Turning to Life", has relevance with respect to the following:

- **The churches' educational ministry:** Churches are living places of learning where the common quest for the standards of a good life take place and where new, responsible lifestyles fit for the future are developed. The churches' educational ministry must do more to address issues of justice and the preservation of creation. It should encourage people's understanding of the responsibility they have in terms of practical action in this one world. The agricultural sector is an indispensable partner in this transfer of knowledge. In the spirit of appreciation, a continuation and intensification of the conversation between the Church and the agricultural sector is needed.

- **Acquisition and consumption of foodstuffs:** Church institutions are large-scale consumers with considerable market power. Using sustainable and fair methods of foodstuff acquisition, raising awareness of consumption and implementing strategies to avoid food waste in church institutions sends out a clear message to all those who visit these institutions or work in them. Christians can contribute to climate justice and food security by ecofair acquisition and sustainable consumption. An integral part of this is the choice of food items with the aim of reducing one's own "ecological footprint", whilst being mindful of animal welfare and supporting equitable working and trading conditions.
- **The churches' leased land:** In their award procedures for leased land, churches should be guided by the ethical guidelines for a sustainable agriculture ("Ethische Leitlinien für eine nachhaltige Landwirtschaft") as presented in the joint text "Neuorientierung für eine nachhaltige Landwirtschaft" (new orientation for a sustainable agriculture) produced by the Evangelical Church in Germany and the German Bishop's Conference in 2003. Alongside appropriate, environmentally compatible cultivation, the regionality of the leaseholders and the empowerment of the rural area should also be important criteria for consideration. Cultivation by local farmers should be given preference over and above supraregional corporations. Ecological and conventional enterprises with sustainable production should be given preference.
- **Investments by the churches:** Churches make a considerable amount of financial investments. They should continue to take criteria for an ethical investment more into account and not include agricultural commodities certificates in their investments.
- **Food security as a task in the ecumenical world:** The Church can contribute its experience of the ecumenical world. It must raise its voice when developments in society oppose the guiding principles of justice and sustainability. This is especially true when food security is endangered. For decades, the churches' development ministry has supported partners in churches and civil society in improving the nutritional situation. They contribute to the increase of yields, the generation of income, the adaptation to the effects of climate change, the sustainable use of land and the improved communication of the churches' viewpoints within society and politics. Population groups endangered by hunger and poverty are supported as they demand their rights from national governments. The Synod affirms the call going out from the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan: "God of life, lead us to justice and peace." It calls the churches to enhance their commitment to - and action for - ecumenical cooperation and development, and asks their congregations for active support and participation.

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10.10)

An "ethics of sufficiency" / "ethics of enough" is not primarily an ethics of sacrifice, but an ethics of the "good life", since it also advocates liberation from waste and materialism. It leads us freely towards a very different ethics; one of the right measure. It is rooted in the abundance that we celebrate and experience in Christ. It is inspired by the Biblical hope for God's kingdom, in which all people are promised freedom, justice and reconciliation. With this promise in sight, we step out onto the path of repentance and change today. Then, there will be enough for everyone!

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The Praeses of the Synod

of the Evangelical Church in Germany

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