Churches’ Food Week of Action
11-18 October 2015

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance is an ecumenical initiative of the World Council of Churches
Let us take action together to eradicate hunger, promote adequate nutrition, and strive towards just and sustainable food systems!

The global Churches Week of Action on Food (October 11-18) is an opportunity for Christians and others around the world to act together for food justice and food sovereignty. It is a special time to raise awareness about farming approaches that help individuals and communities develop resiliency and combat poverty. The Food for Life Campaign places a particular emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices and the situation of smallholder producers and their access to, and control over, natural resources such as land, water and seeds.

All of us can examine our food choices and call for policy changes that will ensure the right to food for everyone.

The global Food Week of Action includes World Food Day (October 16) as well as the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (13 October), International Day for Rural Women (October 15) and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17).

2015 is the International Year of Soils, and World Food Day 2015 focuses on Social Protection and Agriculture. These themes can help guide your actions for the week.
Healthy soils are the basis for healthy food.

Soils help to combat and adapt to climate change by playing a key role in the carbon cycle.

Soils support our planet’s biodiversity and they host a quarter of the total species.

Soils store and filter water, improving our resilience to floods and droughts.

Soil is a non-renewable resource; its preservation is essential for food security and our sustainable future.

Agroecological farming builds up the soil and increases the nutritional value of food grown in it. Farmers practicing the sustainable practices of agroecology should be getting greater assistance with research, agricultural extension and financial support. Instead they are pressured to adopt the seeds and practices of industrial agriculture and to grow for large or export markets. Smaller-scale farmers are being pushed off their lands by policies such as these and by land grabs around the world.

According to the FAO, nearly 90% of the estimated 570 million farms worldwide are family farms, 83% being small farms measuring 2 hectares or less.

Small- and medium-scale family farmers, who practice agroecology and own their land or have long-term tenancy, are the caretakers of the soil, the land and our ability to thrive. They serve as the primary preservers of traditional food and seeds, the land and ecosystems, and cultural heritage while contributing to local economies.

People of faith and their congregations have played a critical role in pushing for policies and developing programs to protect the rights and welfare of everyone, especially those pushed to the margins of society.

“Social protection exists when governments develop policies and programs to address economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty. Through cash transfers, vouchers, insurances and in-kind contributions, social protection programs enhance the income, status and capacities of poor and vulnerable people. Social protection improves people’s access to health care and other social services, enabling them to sustainably provide for themselves and their family members.

World Food Day is an occasion to focus the world’s attention on the crucial role played by social protection in eradicating hunger and poverty.”

- from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

For more information on World Food Day see: http://www.fao.org/world-food-day/home/en/
What can you do? Here are some action ideas:

Plan a church service on 11 or 18 October to focus on the importance of soils and food security. A liturgy developed by the World Council of Churches is available at http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/churches-week-of-action-on-food, and can be used in its entirety or adapted for your context.

Organize a “bring and share” meal at your church, with dishes prepared with produce from local gardens and farmers.

Celebrate local foods and knowledge: Organize a community fair that showcases local food producers and shares the stories of farmers and people involved in food justice.

Lobby policy makers and businesses to create a stable demand for local and seasonal produce through school meal programmes and hospitals (such as the Programa de Aquisicao de Alimentos (PAA), on page 36 of Nourishing the World Sustainably: Scaling up AgroEcology).

Organize a study and discussion session for your church or community group focusing on one of the films or resources suggested.

Talk to local media: Encourage your local TV and radio stations to promote local food producers during the week. Write to your local newspapers about the need to support local and sustainable food producers.

Get your hands in the dirt: Plan a trip to your nearest farm to meet (and help!) the farmer and learn more about the challenges and joys of food production. Consider joining or starting a community garden. How-to and other ideas here: https://www.pcusa.org/get/resources/resource/21223/

Share your food story with a captioned photo, video or written social media post (e.g. YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook), using the hashtag #myfoodstory via @e_alliance

Join the Zero Hunger Challenge
Individuals and groups can join ZHC, an initiative of the United Nations’ Secretary General to raise awareness and build a movement around eliminating hunger. http://blog.zerohungerchallenge.org/join-the-challenge/

Double Up a Meal for a Hunger Free World
World Vision is inviting supporters and churches worldwide to share their vision of a hunger-free world by celebrating food and donating the cost of their favourite meal on World Food Day to help end hunger. Proceeds will launch HungerFree, a new initiative investing in young people in Kenya and South Sudan. Learn more and find church resources, stories and videos at http://www.hungerfree.org

Celebrate the Winners of the Food Sovereignty Prize
See http://foodsovereigntyprize.org for the winners (announcement on August 26), and past winners. Like www.facebook.com/FoodSovereigntyPrize to get updates.
Resources

These and other worship, study and action resources are available and updated at http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/churches-week-of-action-on-food

Worship and Bible Study

2015 Food Week of Action Liturgy on Soils and Food Security

Bible Study Resources on Sustainable Food Systems for Food and Nutrition Security

World Food Day Prayer

Study and Discussion


Right to Food and Nutrition Watch – 2015 edition to be launched in advance of World Food Day: www.rtfn-watch.org

Nourishing the World Sustainable: Scaling up Agroecology (EAA, October 2012) This briefing paper documents the success of sustainable agricultural practices that support small-scale farmers and local communities and which also benefit the environment and natural resource base

Whose Alliance? The G8 and the Emergence of a Global Corporate Regime for Agriculture (EAA and CIDSE, May 2013). This paper outlines some of the major problems and risks with the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa, as well as key recommendations. Available in English, French and Spanish.

Agroecology: Putting Food Sovereignty Into Action, WhyHunger

Climate and Food Center Spread from the PHP Post (Presbyterian Hunger Program Justice Journal) Infographic on how climate change impacts hunger and poverty.

International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science, and Technology for Development: This major international scientific report, concludes that in order to feed 9 billion people in 2050, we urgently need to adopt the most effective and sustainable farming systems, and recommends a shift towards agro-ecology as a means of sustainably boosting food production and improving the situation of the poorest people and communities.

Talensi Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) Project, Ghana, Social Return on Investment Report, World Vision

The Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Initiative, World Vision

Action ideas and
Resources for your region
These and many other organizations support the Churches’ Food Week of Action!

Agricultural Missions, Inc.
Alianza es Alianza para el Buen Vivir, la Paz y la Sustentabilidad
Canadian Foodgrains Bank
Christian Council of Nigeria
Church of the Brethren Office of Public Witness
Churchwork
Come to the Table, RAIFI-USA
Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation of the National Council of Churches in India.
EcoC2S
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches In West Africa
Food, Faith, and Religious Leadership Initiative, Wake Forest University School of Divinity
Grassroots International
Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
National Farm Worker Ministry
Oikotree: Justice at the Heart of Faith
Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Seattle Tilth
The Abundant Table/Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries
United Church of Christ (UCC), Justice and Witness Ministries
US Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA)
World Vision International