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Discussion Paper: The Right to Food and Food Sovereignty in South Africa: Challenges and Prospects

For Discussion at Inter-provincial Conference on the Right to Food, Johannesburg, 26-27 March 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This discussion paper draws together the main issues that were uncovered in a series of dialogues on the right to food that the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC) held in Gauteng, Limpopo and North-west Provinces. The dialogues were aimed at understanding what the main issues facing communities, workers, small farmers, faith groups and NGOs are in relation to food, land and agriculture, as well as understanding the role that the state is playing in the various provinces in terms of policies and their implementation. The dialogues also uncovered important initiatives that are happening in the provinces that could be brought together into a campaign platform for the right to food and food sovereignty. The dialogues are part of a national process happening in all 9 provinces, and form building blocks towards a national conference on the right to food. These dialogues and conference are important steps in the building of a right to food sovereignty campaign in South Africa.

The starting point of this paper is that we need food sovereignty in order to achieve the right to food. As is explained in more detail in the paper, food sovereignty is when farmers, citizens, villages, towns and cities control the food system democratically, rather than big corporations that see food only as something to make maximum profit from. Although the concept and practice of food sovereignty was developed by the world movement of small farmers, Via Campesina, an approach to building food sovereignty is also being developed in South Africa that is strongly linked to the solidarity economy alternative. A crucial aspect to the solidarity

economy is building institutions that help to create new patterns of production, consumption and living, that places human need at the centre. It therefore provides important institutions that help to build food sovereignty and social control over food, such as worker and producer cooperatives, cooperative grocers and community marketplaces, and so on.

When exploring state policies and their impacts, one finds that the state is not playing a role that helps to build food sovereignty. Although the state has a whole range of policies that deal with food security, land and agriculture, many aspects of these policies are problematic, and their implementation also faces significant challenges.

In this context, the paper then turns to the challenges faced by various constituencies in relation to the right to food. These challenges include:

- Hunger and malnutrition
- Rising food prices
- Challenges Experienced by Small Scale Farmers
- Access to and control over land
- Lack of and inappropriate state support
- Lack of markets for small farmers
- Access to Water
- Genetic Modification Technology and Control over Seeds
- Lack of Finance
- Climate Change
- Mining
- The Struggles of Informal Food Traders
- Education and Awareness
- Exploitation of workers who produce our food

What is clear, therefore, is that with this range of challenges experienced, a campaign that unites the struggles of farmers, communities, workers, faith groups and NGOs is necessary to advance a campaign for the right to food and food sovereignty, and that is able to tackle these issues based on seeing them as inter-connected. The paper therefore gives a brief overview of the important initiatives, projects and campaigns that are happening in Gauteng, Limpopo and North-west Provinces that could form an important part of how to achieve the right to food and food sovereignty.

The last section of the discussion paper then deals with some challenges that a campaign for the right to food and food sovereignty would need to address. These include:

- Uniting struggles
- Uniting and networking alternatives and organisations
- Education, Capacity, Knowledge Building and Sharing, and Awareness Raising
- The Difference Between Small Scale Farmers and Emerging Farmers
- Creation of alternative markets
- Building the food sovereignty alternative in practice
- Land and Agrarian Reform

- Challenging Capital/Corporations in the Food Sector
- Challenging the State
- The Legal Route and a Food Sovereignty Act

Finally, the paper ends with a proposal for how organisations and communities can go back and start building the campaign, leading up to the national conference. It proposes that organisations run a 3-day workshop with communities on the right to food and food sovereignty, using the activist tool that will be tested at the inter-provincial dialogue, from 25-27 April 2014, to coincide with South Africa's 20 years of democracy. It also proposes that on the last day of the workshop, a declaration is drafted of how they are going to advance food sovereignty in their communities.

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1. Introduction: The Right to Food in South Africa

This discussion paper emerges out of 3 provincial Right to Food Dialogues hosted by the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC) with the support of the Foundation for Human Rights (FHR). These were held as part of a broader process being carried out in each of South Africa's 9 provinces, with provincial dialogues on the right to food, leading to a national conference on the right to food later in 2014. This process is aimed at understanding the challenges and struggles faced by different constituencies – communities, small and emerging farmers, workers and faith groups. This included the experiences of state policies relating to food, land and agriculture, and also involved highlighting important initiatives and practices that point to achieving the right to food and food sovereignty in South Africa.

This discussion document aims to summarise the main themes emerging from the dialogues that COPAC has held in 3 provinces: Gauteng, Limpopo and North-west. The document is to be tabled and discussed at the inter-provincial dialogue on the Right to Food on 20-21 March. It briefly discusses the context of the Right to Food in South Africa, and then highlights the main challenges and struggles emerging from the 3 provincial dialogues, a brief mapping of state policies and the challenges thereof, the challenges for a Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Campaign, and suggestions for elements of a campaign to be tabled at the national conference on the Right to Food. This is a working document that forms a basis for discussion at the inter-provincial dialogue and will be re-worked, added to and revised based on the engagements at this dialogue.

According to the Constitution, “everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water ... the state must take reasonable legislative and other steps within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of the right.” In other words, the Constitution guarantees that everyone in South Africa has the right to food. This makes South Africa one of only 23 countries in the world with the right to food in its constitution. However, there is a deep contradiction between this right in the constitution and the actual situation, in that the right to food is simply not being met in South Africa:

- 12 million go to bed hungry in South Africa;
- nutrition levels are declining in poor households affecting the development of children, while obesity is also becoming a problem because of cheap ‘junk food’;
- high unemployment and precarious employment are creating food stress in households;
- monopoly food companies are constantly manipulating food prices upward;
- while food prices are going up, the value of wages is either stagnating or coming down;
- the lack of agrarian transformation is hampering land reform, small scale farmer development, sustainable water use and adaptation to climate change;
- government policy supporting subsistence and small scale commercial farming including school gardens, farming cooperatives and public works programs linked to food production is facing many challenges.

This means that we should be asking what the reasons are for this big gap between the right to food in the constitution and the actual experience in South Africa. The reason for this gap can largely be located in the idea of the agrarian crisis in South Africa. What do we mean by agrarian crisis? The agrarian crisis essentially means that our agriculture system is in crisis, which includes land and food systems. The agrarian system has changed in South Africa since 1994, but not in favour of communities, workers and small farmers. According to Mazibuko Jara,¹ we can identify four causes of this agrarian crisis:

- 1) The continued white monopoly ownership of most agricultural land, due largely to the failure of land reform;
- 2) A growing crisis in the agro-industrial sector (essentially, the food value chain)
- 3) The monopoly power of actors and corporations in the food value chain (inputs, storage, distribution, processing, manufacturing and retail) which enables them to manipulate the price of food. This has made South Africa attractive for transnational foodcorporations like Walmart;
- 4) De-regulated and liberalised agricultural policy. This means that South African farmers, large and small, are exposed to international competition and low prices. De-regulation means that many forms of state support for farmers no longer exist, like marketing boards, state credit, quality extensions services, guaranteed prices and markets, and price controls on basic food stuffs to ensure that consumers can access affordable food. Moreover, this means farmers must increase efficiencies and output for export, source finance on the stock exchange, or through loans from banks and essentially subject the food system to profit making.

Together, these factors interact to produce a food system that does not meet the right to food in South Africa and produce the impacts that were highlighted in the dialogues, and which will be discussed in Section 3 of this paper. But before engaging in these experiences and challenges, let us first turn to a brief overview of important government policies as they relate to land, agriculture and the right to food, and their impacts. In short, these policies have failed to shift our agrarian system and overcome its crisis.

It is important to understand what peoples' experiences of these challenges are, which the dialogues were aimed at understanding and which this discussion paper will briefly explore. Before doing so, we will turn to a brief overview of government policies that relate to land, agriculture and food and that impact on whether the right food is achieved in South Africa.

2. The Right to Food and Government Policy

It is not possible here to detail every policy that relates to food and agriculture in South Africa. Rather a broad sketch will be given of the key framework as it relates to the agrarian system and the right to food in South Africa. In short, state policies relating to food, land and agriculture appear to be failing to bring about agrarian transformation and to achieve the right to food.

The agricultural organisation of the United Nations (UN), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in 1996 held a World Food Summit, at which leaders from different countries attended.² This summit popularised the idea of 'food security' and resolved that it should become a key focus of all governments in the world. South African officials attended this summit and were motivated to develop a food security policy for South Africa. By

¹ Jara, M. 2014. 'The solidarity economy response to the agrarian crisis in South Africa', in *The Solidarity Economy Alternative: Emerging Theory and Practice*, edited by Vishwas Satgar. Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press.

² It was also at this summit that peasant and small scale farmers from around the globe, organised under La Via Campesina, developed the concept of 'food sovereignty' as an alternative to the idea of 'food security'.

2002 the Department of Agriculture published the Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa (IFSS), which laid out a vision and a strategy for overcoming food insecurity in South Africa. However, for a number of years this strategy was not translated into policy and was never implemented in a comprehensive way.

In 2009 under the leadership of President Jacob Zuma the issue of food security came to the fore once again in the ANC, and it formed one of the five priorities in the ANC's 2009 election manifesto. Once elected as president, Jacob Zuma spearheaded the development of the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme which had three pillars: agrarian transformation, rural development, and improved land reform programme.

In 2012 the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) published the draft Food Security Policy for South Africa. The Zero Hunger Programme was then drafted as a programme for strategic intervention by the DAFF to overcome food insecurity in South Africa, and was modelled after the highly successful Zero Hunger Programme in Brazil. According to those responsible for developing the programme, it aimed to “combat hunger by overcoming its structural causes.”³ However, this programme was never implemented, apparently due to lack of political support, and was instead replaced by Jacob Zuma's Masibambisane Rural Development Programme, which was then turned into an NGO and given R900 million of government money to implement the programme! However, after the outcry about this, the programme was scrapped. In its place, the government launched the Fetsa Tlala (meaning “End Hunger”) programme in October 2013, and has as its main aim putting under-used rural land into production. After it has reached a target of harvesting from one million hectares of land, the plan is then for the Department of Agriculture to provide support to small farmers to develop enterprises and value-adding activities like milling and packaging, and for government to procure from these farmers in order to create markets for them.

Land reform is potentially a key element in agrarian reform and achieving the right to food and food sovereignty, by giving land back to the majority of people in South Africa. Land reform has been conceptualised in South Africa along 3 lines: redistribution (making land available to Africans who wish to farm); restitution (giving redress to people who were historically dispossessed of their land); and tenure reform, which relates largely to farmworkers and is aimed at trying to ensure they have a secure dwelling and land to live on without fear of eviction). The policies that relate to land and specifically have been relevant to land reform in South Africa are:

- Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD)
 - Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS)
 - Recapitalisation and Development Programme Policy (RDPP)
 - State Leasehold and Disposal Policy
 - Extension of Security of Tenure Act
 - Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP)
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- Draft Agroecology Strategy: The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has also been working on an agroecology strategy for South Africa in order to advance agroecology as an important form of food production in South Africa that rests on social equality and environmental principles. However, the strategy is now in its 8th draft and it is not clear when it will be finalised. Furthermore, it also does not aim to change the agrarian structure of South Africa, but is aimed largely at poor and small scale farmers, while leaving the large commercial farming sector untouched.

³ Zero Hunger Provincial Implementation: Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Parliamentary Briefing, 2012.

Provincial Policies

These policies have also been translated into province-level policies. In Gauteng, Limpopo and North-west Province, these include:

Gauteng:

- Gauteng Agricultural Development Policy – aims to grow the agricultural sector in the province and its contribution to job creation and economic growth. It aims to make interventions in production, processing and distribution of food. It highlights forms of support that should be given to what it calls ‘second economy farmers’, including access to land, finance, inputs, and high-quality extension services.
- Household Food Security Programme – aims to increase household food security mainly by providing households with seeds and implements to establish a home garden. However, this programme is unevenly implemented, targets numbers rather than long-term sustainability, and does not seem to produce long term benefits.
- Gauteng Rural Development Strategy – this is an extension of the national Comprehensive Rural Development Strategy, and therefore similar criticisms can be made of it as above. City of Johannesburg, Food Resilience Programme: This programme was launched in 2013 and aims to deal with household food insecurity through various interventions in providing support for production and processing, and interventions targeted at households, such as food parcels and so on. Its progress should still be measured, but according to those in Ivory Park where it is being piloted and a representative of Khanya-AICDD, which was originally involved in developing the programme, it lacks human capacity, institutional backing and a clear strategy and framework to underpin the achievement of its objectives.
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Limpopo:

- Comprehensive Rural Development Programme

North-west:

- Comprehensive Rural Development Programme – Extension of national programme
- Mechanisation programme

It is not possible to give a full overview of all the policies in the country, nor of the development of policies over time in response to challenges and circumstances. However, some of the key challenges arising out of both land reform and agricultural policy over the last 20 years include:⁴

- Market-centred policy frameworks that resulted in established agricultural business becoming bigger as well as fewer in number;
- Slow transfer of land;
- Focus on de-racialising the commercial farming sector while remaining globally competitive, rather than extensive land redistribution and agrarian reform;
- Inadequate post-settlement support;

⁴ These challenges are drawn from: Cousins, B. 2013. ‘Land reform and agriculture uncoupled: the political economy of rural reform in post-apartheid South Africa’, in *In the Shadow of Policy: Everyday Practices in South African Land and Agrarian Reform*, edited by P. Hebinck and B. Cousins. Johannesburg: Wits University Press; and Powerpoint Presentation by Constance Mogale and Ben Cousins, ‘Recapitalisation, leasehold and land holding policies’.

- Low government spending on agriculture as a percentage of the budget and GDP;
- The new policies favour ‘emerging black commercial farmers’ rather than the rural poor, and will also benefit consultants and private sector ‘partners’
- Negative experiences of strategic partnerships and joint ventures not addressed
- Real problems in redistribution to date not addressed through these ‘solutions’ (e.g. lack of support/poor planning has been a huge problem, not ownership of land by beneficiaries)
- Government policy on food is developed by well-fed government officials ‘from above’ and so is disconnected from the experiences of those it is meant to benefit
- Land and agriculture policy have not been connected to each other. This results in people who are lucky enough to receive land through land reform do then not get proper support for production from the Department of Agriculture
- There are now two departments that deal with agriculture. The Department of Agriculture now largely works to with the (mostly white) commercial farming sector, and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform works with the rural poor, mostly in former homelands. This keeps the agricultural systems intact, rather than transforming the entire agricultural system
- Government policy sees the solution to hunger as to just increase production. But this ignores that South Africa already produces enough food to feed everyone. This food is either exported, sold to those with sufficient income to afford it or dumped. Government policy supports a food system that produces hunger.

So, one might say that at the policy level, the state is undermining the right to food by failing along the following lines:

- Effective land reform
- Agrarian reform – transforming the countryside
- Food policy that looks beyond only production
- Protecting local agriculture from global competition
- Challenging the agri-food complex built up under apartheid
- Lack of significant and comprehensive focus on the role of urban agriculture for the right to food

We will now turn to a discussion of how these challenges in government policy in part translate into challenges experienced by communities, small farmers, and workers in relation to the right to food. What it shows is that achieving the right to food cannot only be reduced to policy, but that realising the right to food requires transforming the structure of the agrarian and food system in South Africa. Government policy does of course have a role to play in this and, as has been discussed above, so far government policy has largely failed to contribute to the transformation of our agricultural and food system in South Africa.

3. Challenges for Achieving the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty in South Africa

Basically, the right to food in South Africa means that everyone should have sufficient and nutritious food to eat every single day, as a right. But this right is clearly not being achieved. One key reason for this is poverty and unemployment, which means that people cannot afford to buy enough nutritious food to feed their families. But the problem also goes deeper than this, to how our food system is structured, who controls the production and distribution of food, and who benefits from the production and distribution of food. We can see that in South Africa our food and agrarian system is not controlled by farmers and communities. We have no control over

prices, which keep rising; we do not benefit from the millions of rands that food companies make in profits every year; we have little control over government policy on food, land and agriculture; we lack access to water; we do not have markets that farmers control and can ensure they have somewhere to sell their produce, and that ensure that communities access affordable and nutritious food. That is, we need to ask whether we experience food sovereignty in South Africa, and see food sovereignty as a key condition for achieving the right to food in the long term. Food sovereignty has been defined as:

The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations (2007 Nyeleni Forum for Food Sovereignty).

Although the concept and practice of food sovereignty was developed by the world movement of small farmers, Via Campesina, an approach to building food sovereignty is also being developed in South Africa that promotes agroecology in opposition to GMOs and industrial agriculture; that aims to link urban and rural communities, workers, small farmers and so on in a food sovereignty campaign; and that places the solidarity economy alternative as a central way through which to build food sovereignty. A crucial aspect to the solidarity economy is building institutions that help to create new patterns of production, consumption and living, that places human need at the centre. It therefore provides important institutions that help to build food sovereignty and social control over food, such as worker and producer cooperatives, cooperative grocers and community marketplaces, and so on. However, serious challenges also exist in South Africa in achieving the right to food and creating food sovereignty. There are broad reasons for the existence of the challenges experienced by different constituencies in relation to food, land and hunger, which relate to the overall structure of South African society and that of the agrarian crisis. First we will turn to an overview of the challenges raised in the provincial workshops held in Gauteng, Limpopo and North-west on the right to food, and then we will turn to briefly linking these to these broad structures.

- **Hunger and malnutrition** – Most poor communities, poor and urban, are experiencing a crisis of hunger. There is also a challenge of getting nutritious food.
- **Rising food prices** – a key reason for hunger and malnutrition is simply that poor households cannot afford enough nutritious food because the price of food keeps rising.
- **Challenges Experienced by Small Scale Farmers** – The idea and practice of food sovereignty originated from small farmers themselves from all over the world, organised in the global movement called La Via Campesina (Movement of the Peasants). Because small farmers use resources more effectively, are more productive per unit of land, and produce food for people rather than profit, their interests are central to achieving food sovereignty and the right to food of all citizens. But according to the voices of small farmers in the dialogues, they face many challenges and barriers to becoming the main feeders of our country, which include some of the below.
- **Access to and control over land** – Many people who wish to access land to farm are not able to do so. Firstly, this is because land reform has been extremely slow and many people who wish to access land have not been able to do so. Secondly, even for those who do access land, post-settlement support is lacking and so land reform projects are often ‘failures’. In many areas people also feel that traditional authorities control land and so it can be difficult to access land for farming if you are not close to the chief.

The challenge of accessing land is not only a rural one, but small farmers also face the same challenge in urban areas. For example, the Gauteng Agricultural Development Strategy says it aims to support farmers in accessing land, but when it comes to practice, they are not able to help small farmers in urban townships to access land, which is often controlled by the councillor, or is extremely difficult to access through ‘formal processes’ with the municipality.

- **Lack of and inappropriate state support**

- The state gives very little support to small and emerging farmers. Where it does give, it is often of very poor quality.
- Instead of giving direct, good quality support to farmers who have received land, the government is often instead getting the old white farmer to ‘mentor’ the new black farmers, or is linking them to big agricultural business to help them. The model that new farmers are taught is therefore large scale commercial farming, but many new farmers prefer to farm on a smaller scale and with techniques like organic and agroecology.
- Government also gives the wrong type of support to small farmers. Many extension officers only know how to give support for conventional agriculture that uses chemicals, pesticides and so on. But many small farmers want to practice organic agriculture or agroecology, but extension officers do not know how to help them with this.
- The government also does not give good enough support to farmers, especially small scale and emerging farmers during disasters, such as the drought that recently happened in the North-west Province.

- **Lack of markets for small farmers**

- Small farmers do not have local market places where they can sell their produce to local villages and towns
- Farmers cannot access existing markets to supply shops like Pick n Pay, Spar, Checkers and so on, because well-established white farmers are favoured. However, given that these markets are tightly controlled by a small number of corporations who make big profits from selling food, farmers should rather look to how we can create different markets to connect what these farmers produce to those households who need affordable and nutritious food, such as local markets.

- **Access to Water** – Many small scale farmers struggle to access water for their farming because it is too expensive, or because they cannot get the rights to use water from the rivers and dams because they are still held by white commercial farmers.⁵ For rural farmers, the cost arises out of sinking a borehole, purchasing a pump, and the electricity to run the pump. This is a similar challenge for urban small farmers, who also face the cost having to pay for municipal water. This again points to the need for broader *agrarian* reform, which includes the need to enact reform beyond only land, to inputs and resources like water.

- **Genetic Modification Technology and Control over Seeds** – the government wants all farmers to use genetically modified seeds, but this removes control over seeds from farmers to the companies that produce the genetically modified seeds. Many small farmers want to be able to control their own seeds through seed saving and banking, and sharing between farmers. This is important to build food sovereignty.

- **Finance** – A key challenge for both emerging and small scale farmers is the lack of funding to pay for infrastructure and equipment for farming.

- **Climate Change** – Industrial agriculture is a very important contributor to climate change because it uses so much petrol, chemical fertilisers and so on. Agriculture and our ability to produce food is also heavily

⁵ Wesso, R. 2008. ‘Water For Farming: Who Gets It? Who Decides?’ Surplus Peoples Project.

impacted by climate change. It is evident in the drought experienced in North-west Province, as well as reduced rain overall, but increased intensity of rain when it occurs, and flooding.

- **Mining** – In the dialogues it became clear that many communities are fighting against mining companies. These companies are taking away communities' right to food because they are stealing land and water that was used for producing food.
- **The Struggles of Informal Food Traders** – many people and communities depend on informal traders to buy their food from. But in many cities and towns government is trying to suppress informal traders by removing them from where they work. A key challenge for informal street food traders is how to protect their rights for a livelihood, and how to build their power as actors in the food system to contribute significantly towards the right to food.
- **Education and Awareness**
 - Many people, especially youth, do not see agriculture as a dignified job. Education and awareness raising is therefore important to help people see how important it is
 - Existing and traditional knowledge on agriculture also needs to be protected and used in developing knowledge about agriculture
 - Many farmers think that using pesticides, fertilisers and chemicals is good, but they need to be educated to see that in the long term it damages the soil and contributes to climate change, and that alternative methods like agroecology are better for them.
- **Workers and the Right to Food** – The farmworker who produce most of our food are some of the most exploited workers in the country, are paid low wages and work and live in poor conditions. Many farmers are also being evicted from farms.

What these above challenges show is that the question of the right to food goes beyond only the ability of households to access enough food every day. It shows us that the reason we have a high level of hunger and malnutrition in South Africa (that is, households not accessing enough and nutritious food every day) is because of the problems throughout the agri-food system, which can be labelled as an agrarian crisis. What they show is that to realise the right to food in South Africa requires transforming whole aspects of the food system along the lines of the challenges discussed above, towards food sovereignty as a long-term solution to the crisis of hunger in South Africa and, indeed, the world.

4. Existing Initiatives and Alternatives for Achieving the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty

A key aim of the dialogues was to understand the key challenges and issues relating to the right to food in South Africa, as experienced by communities, workers and small farmers themselves. This generated a large amount of challenges experienced, which were closely linked to the existing problems and criticisms of the South African agri-food system, and the understandings of its crisis. Now that we have highlighted and understood the main challenges and problems with the food system, we also need to think about and point to how to overcome these challenges and build a food system that meets all humans' right to food. The situation is therefore not only gloomy. The global peasant organisation, Via Campesina, actively shows us that there is the alternative of food sovereignty to meet the right to food, where people and communities control their food systems, and that this alternative is not only possible, but is already happening. This is true as well of South Africa. An approach to food sovereignty is being evolved that places agroecology as a central way of producing food and that links the solidarity economy to the building of food sovereignty. When we investigate what is happening around the

country, we also see that there are numerous organisations, programmes, projects and initiatives taking place that can become part of this approach. They are actively building and showing ways of achieving the right to food and food sovereignty in practice, in ways that meet the needs of humans and nature. Key for us then is to highlight these issues, to learn from them, and to think how to bring them together in solidarity, with the aim of achieving the right to food and food sovereignty. Below is a brief scanning of some of these organisations, processes and programmes that we learned about in the dialogues.

Education, Training and Knowledge Building and Revival

- **Ukuvuna Urban Farming:** run by John Nzira, Ukuvuna is an agroecology training and knowledge-building initiative based on the outskirts of Johannesburg. Its base is a self-sufficient and integrated agroecology farm where the alternative is practiced and demonstrated, and where training takes place. Ukuvuna also does training throughout the country.
- **Siyakhana Initiative For Ecological Health and Food Security:** Siyakhana is an initiative supported by the Wits Health Consortium that aims to connect nutrition and public health. It does research work on food security issues, and has a large demonstration and training garden in Bezuidenhout Park just to the East of the Johannesburg city centre where practical training on permaculture is provided. Permaculture is similar but not entirely the same as agroecology, using principles of nature and the human living environment to create permanent agriculture, and is well suited to urban agriculture. The garden also supplies local crèches and care centres with nutritious, organic food. There is thus both research and practical knowledge housed in this initiative.
- **Ekhukanyeni Relief Project:** The project is based in two townships South of Johannesburg and works on sustainable community development, with a specific focus on sustainable food production and nutrition. It conducts intensive permaculture training and produces community-level, certified permaculture trainers. It has a strong focus on childhood nutrition, and so provides training to adults as well in garden design and nutrition at crèches in order to produce healthy and nutritious food for young children. It situates this work in a collaborative relationship with local government and communities in the pursuit of community development and empowerment.
- **Mupo Foundation** – Based in the Thohoyandou region of Limpopo Province, the Mupo Foundation works “to preserve and revive cultural diversity and food sovereignty in South Africa. Based in the Limpopo region, the organisation strengthens local communities in ecological governance by reviving indigenous seed, facilitating and encouraging intergenerational learning, and rebuilding confidence in the value of indigenous knowledge systems.”
- **LAMOSA Small Farmer Permaculture Training:** The Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA) is an organisation that works with communities with the aim of seeing land returned to the majority. It also organises 72-hour permaculture courses in the North-west Province for farmers, who stay at the farm where the training is being done for the 3 days. LAMOSA then also pays for the food for all the trainees, and purchases the seedlings and seeds for the training, which the farmer who hosted the training gets to keep afterwards. This builds solidarity and mutual benefit amongst these small scale farmers.
- **Capacity building for informal traders:** the Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation (ESSET) has been working with informal traders in Rustenburg and other areas on building their capacities to defend their rights and promote their interests in the face of the local state attempting to repress their trading activities.

Community-level Alternatives and Farmer Organising

- **Mopani Farmers Union Small Scale Farmer Development:** The Mopani Farmers Union encompasses district and village level farmers associations in the Mopani District of Limpopo, which have been organising into these structures and continue to expand the number of such structures. Their aim is to build the power and voice of small farmers in the Mopani District, increase cooperation and collective activity between them, learn from each other and so on.
- **MacHelen Farm, Dzumeri District:** A family farm in Dzumeri district in Limpopo, MacHelen has shifted to agroecological production. They used to practice conventional agriculture but a few years ago shifted to agroecology, in which they have seen their yields go up and their costs go down. They are over time attempting to make the farm as self-sufficient as possible, and have started seed saving so that they do not depend on outside (commercial) sources of seed.
- **East and Southern African Farmers Forum (ESAFF):** ESAFF is organising farmers in Limpopo (and is wanting to move to other provinces). It promotes only organic farming with its members, who have also been teaching each other how to save and produce their own seed. They also provide training to farmers on production, management, book keeping and so on. They are supported by the Centre for Rural Community Empowerment at the University of Limpopo.
- **Seed banking process in Limpopo:** In 2013 on World Food Day, Nkuzi Development Association in Limpopo held a traditional seed fair with small farmers in which it was agreed to start training on developing seed banks in Limpopo and so building control over seed systems by small farmers in the province.
- **Anglican Church-supported Food Gardens in Limpopo:** The Anglican Church in Limpopo is attempting to link food production on church ground to child care at each church. This involves the church growing food on its land, linked to water harvesting, that is then used to provide nutritious food to the children that churches look after in their day care centres. This is important in the context of the prevalence of child malnutrition in South Africa.
- **Ivory Park Cooperatives** – there are a few urban farming cooperatives in Ivory Park that are producing organic food at affordable prices. There is also a bakery cooperative that produces bread and other baked products – it sells its bread to the local community at R6 a loaf, compared to about R12 for the main bread brands. This bakery and farming cooperatives provide useful models institutions that help achieve the right to food and urban food sovereignty.
- **Land Occupations:** In the township of Tsakane on the East Rand of Johannesburg a agricultural cooperative called Hlanganani Agricultural Worker Cooperative in 2012 occupied a 4 hectare piece of land after being unable to access the land through bureaucratic processes. They have been producing since and are now in a position to negotiate with the local state for a lease to the land. It provides a potential model for securing access to land, especially in urban areas, for localised food production for achieving the right to food.
- **Klerksdorp Diocese Household Gardens:** the Catholic Klerksdorp Diocese has a community development arm that has experience in developing household food gardens. It has run a successful programme in which household gardeners were successfully producing for their households. This programme has now run into challenges, mainly due to lack of access to water (the local state also apparently refused to assist because it saw the programme as competition to itself). However, the capacity and experience from the programme could provide important impetus to a campaign process.
- **North-west Cooperatives Development:** This organisation works in communal areas in the Kenneth Kaunda District of North-west Province, and provides assistance mainly to women in developing cooperatives as a solution to overcoming poverty. Many of these cooperatives undertake agricultural

activities, and so linking the cooperative alternative to food producing initiatives can be an important step in realising the right to food.

Campaigns and Processes

- **The solidarity economy movement (SEM) and food sovereignty campaign:** This campaign was launched together with the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC) at the 2nd National Solidarity Economy Conference held in August 2013, and aims to bring a broad range of forces from within the solidarity economy movement and beyond that are actively working on food alternatives and food sovereignty into the campaign. It sees the solidarity economy as a central means to build food sovereignty because of the institutions that it provides and that help to build collective control and democracy over food, such as food producing worker cooperatives, producer cooperatives, consumer cooperative grocers and so on. The campaign also aims to build agroecology as an alternative methods of food production, build farmer control over seed, build food sovereignty in urban areas as well as rural, challenge the state to play a role that supports food sovereignty, and expose and challenge corporations in the food system that are undermining the right to food. This campaign can be an important bridge to connect the dialogues that have been taking place on a campaign platform to move forward.
- **Nkuzi Land Forum:** This forum was recently formed at Nkuzi Development Association's AGM in 2013. It aims to bring together communities that are fighting struggles around land and land reform. It has an elected steering committee of seasoned activists and aims to link with other structures to advance the cause of agrarian reform in Limpopo. This could be an important platform through which to link to communities and forces organised around land and agrarian issues and so to advance a food sovereignty campaign.
- **AFASA Cooperative:** As a response to the lack of markets, support and expensive inputs for emerging African farmers, the African Farmers Association of South Africa is working on developing a cooperative for its member farmers to affiliate to, and which is aimed at developing economies of scale for African emerging farmers to supply established markets and to assist in the purchasing of inputs. The cooperative form such as this has historically played central roles in agricultural development, of the white commercial sector in South Africa as well as the farming sector in other African countries. Such a model can provide valuable lessons for advancing the interests of small scale farmers as well.
- **LAMOSA Small Farmer Forums in North-west Province:** LAMOSA is working with small scale farmers in North-west province to establish small farmer forums to share information and problem solving, engage with and challenge government policies, work for funding, and so on.
- **Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) and National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) Campaign on Agrarian Transformation:** This campaign has been planned but not yet put into action. Its aim is to pressure the state to fast-track land reform and agrarian transformation, to change exploitative labour patterns in the agricultural and food sector and to de-concentrate ownership in the sector. The campaign is based on the principles of the Freedom Charter, which called for the distribution of land to those who work it.
- **Legal capacities:** The legal public interest organisation, Section-27, has actively begun to focus attention on the legal and advocacy work around the right to food. Section-27 has noted that the right to food is contained in the constitution, and it is a right that the state can be taken to court over. Furthermore, it has also noted that there is no framework law based on the right to food in South Africa. Hence there is possibly space for legal pressure as one aspect of a broader campaign and advocacy process on the right to food. We can also call for the state to implement an Act on the right to food and food sovereignty (see under challenges for a campaign below).

5. Challenges for a campaign to fight for the right to food and food sovereignty

What do we as small farmers, communities, workers and faith groups mean by food sovereignty and the right to food? Although the concept of food sovereignty was developed by the world peasant farmer movement, Via Campesina, we are also evolving our approach to food sovereignty in South Africa. The dialogues have been part of building our understandings of the right to food and food sovereignty. According to those who attended the dialogues, achieving the right to food and food sovereignty means people having consistent access to healthy and nutritious food and therefore no hunger; small farmers having access to and control over land, seeds, water and markets for their produce; using techniques of production that are not harmful to the earth and draw from traditional knowledge, namely agroecology; diversity in food systems; community self-reliance; promoting local production and consumption; building solidarity economy institutions like cooperatives in food production and distribution to help provide ways locally controlling production, distribution and consumption of food; removal of labour exploitation in food production; and reclaiming food as a human need and right rather than just something that is bought and sold on the market for a profit.

To realise the above, however, communities, farmers and workers also have certain needs, such as education and training; local market infrastructure; control over seed; supportive government policy on land and agriculture; the need to re-build the culture of pride in agriculture and food production; education for farmworkers; improved living conditions for farmworkers; secure tenure and access to land for farmworkers for food production; and so on.

However, to achieve the above is not going to just happen on its own. We need a campaign and advocacy plan that mobilise communities, to build food sovereignty in practice, to put pressure on the state to do the things we need it to, to achieve food sovereignty and the right to food, and to build pressure against the companies that are profiting of our food system and creating hunger. The following are some challenges for achieving the right to food that a campaign should address:

1. Uniting struggles

What was evident from the dialogues is that different constituencies are facing struggles that are interlinked, but many of them have not engaged with each other before. There was much enthusiasm at the dialogues at having been linked with other struggles, and so a key challenge for a campaign is to knit these struggles together on common platforms that are relevant for and unite such struggles.

2. Uniting and networking alternatives and organisations

What was also evident from the dialogues is that there are many alternatives and organisations working on these that show how the right to food can be achieved. The challenge, however, is to link these alternatives. A further challenge is also how to link these alternatives in ways that commonly advance on a national scale these alternatives.

3. Education, Capacity, Knowledge Building and Sharing, and Awareness Raising

As was raised in the dialogues, a key challenge in relation to land and agriculture is the attitudes, especially of the youth, towards agriculture. This means that an important challenge for advancing the right to food and food sovereignty in South Africa is how to not only build knowledge and capacities relevant to achieving the right to food and practicing agroecology, but also how to preserve and revive pride in food production on a nationwide scale. It also requires raising awareness more broadly in society of the need to shift our agri-food system towards food sovereignty and agroecology to meet the right to food of all South Africans.

4. The Difference Between Small Scale Farmers and Emerging Farmers

A difference that emerged in the dialogues based on the types of farmer organisations that attended was between small scale farmers and emerging African farmers. Small scale farmers usually operate on smaller land sizes and are thus seen as central to diversifying and democratising the food system because it allows for more people to be involved in food production, hence de-centralising food production. Furthermore, small scale farmers are seen as being able to produce in harmony in nature due to smaller production units and hence the ability to engage in labour intensive and more 'intricate' techniques of production. Emerging African farmers, on the other hand, typically do not question large scale industrial agriculture which uses high levels of pesticides, chemical fertilisers and so on. They are commercial farmers who want to operate in the existing market place which, as we have seen, works to create hunger and malnutrition and undermines small farmers. The challenge, therefore, is to link small scale farmers to social forces that are not benefitting from the food system, such as the 12 million hungry, communities, unions and workers, in a movement for food sovereignty.

5. Creation of alternative markets

A key challenge for small scale and emerging farmers is that they struggle to access existing markets, as well finding markets outside of established markets. Given that the established food value chain in South Africa is so concentrated and controlled by a small number of powerful players, a challenge for the campaign may be how to build new markets for connecting affordable food produce to households that need the food, so moving towards achieving the right to food. These can include building institutions such as producer cooperatives, cooperatively-controlled food markets and bakeries, people's restaurants, ethical marketing practices and so on.

6. Building the Food Sovereignty Alternative in Practice

It is not enough to only challenge existing processes and structures that undermine the right to food, we also need to build the food sovereignty alternative in practice. We need to show how communities can control their food systems and ensure everyone has sufficient and nutritious food outside of the corporate food system. We therefore need to build institutions, such as cooperative bakeries, community-controlled marketplaces, expand agroecology, develop seed banking in practice to build farmer control over seed, and so on. We need to link this therefore to the solidarity economy to build these alternative institutions and, indeed, an alternative vision of society.

7. Land and Agrarian Reform

A central reason that the food value chain in South Africa remains tightly controlled is and hence is difficult for small and emerging farmers to access is because of the lack of, not only land reform, but agrarian reform. A key challenge for the campaign is therefore to link with existing struggles, campaigns and initiatives for land and agrarian reform, and to itself advance the cause of such reform largely by targeting the state as well as capital.

8. Challenging Capital/Corporations in the Food Sector

Our food system is tightly controlled by a small number of corporations that largely control prices, prevent other actors from entering the food system, and undermine the right to food. These corporations are constantly pushing up the price of staples like bread and other food items thus making it hard for people to survive. They are major cause of food inflation which necessitates the need for workers to struggle for higher wages. It is important therefore that the campaign also focuses on how to build pressure on corporations in the food system, to expose their unfair practices, and to build social awareness about the impacts of corporate control on our food system. This also enables solidarity with trade unions to support food sovereignty alternatives to this system like trade

union linked cooperative food stores, linking small scale farmers to unions to provide alternative sources of food etc.

9. Challenging the State

Because the state plays such an important role in determining how the food system is structured through its policies and support roles, achieving the right to food also implies a role that we think the state should be playing to achieve the right to food and food sovereignty. For the participants in the dialogues, such demands included: supportive government policies and active roles for small holder farmers; provision of local market infrastructure; faster land restitution and redistribution; government support for agroecology; government procurement for all its food needs, such as in schools hospitals and prisons, from small holder farmers; policies and measures that protect local production from cheap imports and dumping; and to play a democratic role that is responsive to the needs of farmers and citizens, and therefore not imposing measures that undermine the right to food, like mining, GMOs and so on. It is important that the campaign for advancing the right to food and food sovereignty therefore pressures the state to play a role that is conducive to achieving the right to food. To help pressure the state to play this role, we may want to think about fighting for an Act of parliament on food sovereignty.

10. The Legal Route and a Food Sovereignty Act

But how do we force the state to undertake these actions that support the building of food sovereignty in South Africa? At the moment there is no legislation that specifically deals with the right to food and food sovereignty and that requires national, provincial and local governments to do the things mentioned above to support what we are doing to build food sovereignty. This raises two important issues. Firstly, we must be clear on what we want to see in the act. Secondly, we must be extremely careful that we do not hand over the initiative for food sovereignty to the state. That is, we must not say that it is the state that must build food sovereignty. Rather, we, as communities, activists, the landless, farmers, workers and faith groups want to be the central actors in food sovereignty. The state must just be forced to play a role that supports the building of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is ours, and we must not give it to the state! Essentially, the Act must not replace, but strengthen our efforts from below. In addition to requiring the state to undertake the actions mentioned under point number 8, some further elements of the Act could include:

- Support food sovereignty institution building (such as worker cooperatives, community markets etc, through funding, capacity building and so on);
- Criminalise certain actions, such as markets and supermarkets throwing away fresh food;
- Enforce standards on the consumption side, such as labelling, nutritional requirements, and so on of corporate controlled agriculture;
- Support the local promotion of food sovereignty produce, markets and linkages
- Support small farmers' rights to water;
- Support small farmers rights to seed, through promoting local seed saving, infrastructure for seed banking, government only supplying organic and locally saved seed to farmers, etc;
- Protect land from mining and other land grabbing;
- Deepen democracy at ward level, communal areas, towns and cities by defining roles for wards, municipalities, traditional authorities, provincial governments to support what we are doing to build food sovereignty.

6. The Way Forward: Building for the National Conference

Based on the dialogues and the campaign process we aim to build to struggle for food sovereignty, we would like to propose a few steps to begin to dynamise things on the ground around food sovereignty and the right to food, as a build up towards the national conference. We would like to propose for discussion at the inter-provincial dialogue that after the event we all commit to

- Go back to our organisations and communities, to report back on the dialogue process;
- Discuss and plan with your organisation the possibility of hosting a 3-day community workshop on the right to food, using the grassroots activist tool on the right to food and food sovereignty, to build awareness of the right to food and food sovereignty;
- Distribute a pamphlet widely inviting community members to this workshop;
- Hold the 3-day workshop, using the grassroots right to food and food sovereignty activist guide, from 25-27 April so that the workshop ends on the exact day of the 20-year anniversary of our democracy.
- On the last day of the workshop, draft a declaration that details how a local food sovereignty campaign will be built: such as establishing seed banks, a local market, raising awareness in the community on important issues relating to food sovereignty, establishing cooperatives and so on;
- Share this declaration with COPAC so we can start building a national food sovereignty directory of communities, community organisations, movements, trade unions, support organisations etc supporting food sovereignty;
- Report on and promote these activities in the national conference on the right to food in July.

As such, the following action plan can be proposed:

	Action	Deadline
1.	Interprovincial dialogue	26-27 March
2.	Report-back meeting to organisation and planning for community workshop	10 April
3.	Draft and distribute pamphlet to inform and invite community members to workshop	15 April
4.	Hold teleconference to report on preparations	20 April
5.	Hold workshop	25-27 April
6.	Draft declaration at workshop on local food sovereignty campaign	27 April
7.	First teleconference to report on declaration and campaign-building plans	6 May
8.	Second teleconference to report on campaign building and preparation for national conference	15 June
7.	Build local campaign to national conference	July