

A MULTISTAKEHOLDER CONVENING ON RIGHT TO FOOD IN KENYA

“Regional Dialogue on the Right to Food: Taking progressive steps towards Zero Hunger by 2030” 19th April 2024.

Joint Communiqué

We, The Institute of Social Accountability (TISA), Rural Outreach Africa (ROA) Welthungerhilfe (WHH), the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), the Lake Region Food Systems Network (LRFSN), and the Right to Food Coalition, on 19th April 2024, held a multi-stakeholder convening in Kisumu, on the Right to Food in Kenya, under the theme: ***Regional Dialogue on the Right to Food: Taking Progressive Steps Towards Zero Hunger by 2030***, at the Grand Royal Swiss Hotel, Kisumu.

This people-driven initiative brought together 137 participants (76 female (55%) and 61 (45%) male) from Kakamega, Nandi, Homabay, Kisii, Bungoma, Migori, Busia and Vihiga counties in Kenya. The chief guest was the Governor of Vihiga County, H.E. Dr. Wilber Otichillo, who was accompanied by 4 members of the County Executive, and 5 Department Directors from Vihiga County Government. The county assembly of Vihiga was represented by the Deputy Speaker, who was accompanied by the Senior Clerk to the Assembly. The dialogue also attracted 156 online viewers through the live streaming of the event and was covered by local and national media houses. Participants were drawn from civil society organizations, government, private sector, , farmer and consumer organizations, research and academia, and social justice centers from Kakamega, Vihiga and Kisumu counties.

The dialogue aimed to catalyze collaboration and action among stakeholders, including state and non-state actors, e for effective implementation of the right to food in Kenya. Additionally, we aimed to mobilize support for right to food legislation, identify mechanisms for accountability and redress, and raise awareness about the importance of addressing food insecurity through a rights-based approach.

We therefore call for overall, a rights-based approach to the right to food not just a matter of charity or goodwill, but a legally enforceable entitlement rooted in human dignity and social justice through;

- Acknowledgment of the Right to Food: Participants affirmed the intrinsic value and importance of the right to food as a fundamental human right essential for the dignity and well-being of all individuals through the enactment of legislation to provide a legal framework for the realization of the right to food, with accountability and enforcement mechanisms.
- Strengthening Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms: There was consensus on the need to strengthen monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track progress towards the realization of the right to food, including the establishment of clear indicators and

benchmarks. Adoption of good governance practices such as grievance redress mechanisms and meaningful public participation at the county level to enhance service delivery and citizen participation on key programs related to right to food.

- **Empowerment and Capacity Building:** It was emphasized that empowering individuals and communities through education, skills development, and access to resources is essential for sustainable food security and the realization of the right to food in the lake region.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Participants resolved to advocate for the formulation and implementation of policies and programs that prioritize the right to food, promote sustainable agriculture i.e. agroecology practices, ensure equitable access to resources i.e. land tenure rights for vulnerable populations and address the root causes of food insecurity in the region.
- **Full devolvement of Agriculture functions and resources.** The National Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, develop frameworks to allow County Governments to control procurement and distribution of critical agricultural inputs such as fertilizers.
- **Investment in infrastructure** such as roads, irrigation systems, and storage facilities can significantly enhance the efficiency of food distribution and reduce post-harvest losses, ultimately benefiting producers and consumers.
- **Fostering innovation and technology adoption** in agriculture can unlock new opportunities for growth and resilience. This includes promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, leveraging digital platforms for market access, and supporting agribusiness ventures through incubation and mentorship programs.
- **Commitment to Collaboration:** Recognizing the multi-faceted nature of food security and the need for coordinated efforts, there is need to enhancing collaboration and partnership among all stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and communities.

In conclusion, we acknowledge the efforts of Right to Food Ambassadors who have done excellent work in championing the right to food by embracing sustainable practices such as agroecology, facilitating dialogue between the community and duty bearers as well as documenting and reporting violations of the right to food. We further reaffirm our commitment to collaborative action towards achieving Zero Hunger by 2030, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals. We recognize the importance of collective action, political will, and sustained stakeholder engagement in realizing the right to food for all Kenyans.

