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Who controls access to food – central question of new report

Geneva, 12 October 2009. Failure by national governments and international institutions to ensure the right to food has led to rising numbers of malnourished and starving people, as documented in the *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch 2009*. The report is being launched today in Geneva by a consortium of human rights organisations, faith-based organisations, social movements and development agencies including the World Organisation against Torture (OMCT), FIAN Switzerland, Bread for All (Pain pour la prochain) and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA).

The 2009 report focuses on “Who controls the governance of the world food system” through contributions from Olivier De Schutter, United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food; David Nabarro, Coordinator of the UN High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis; and Flavio Valente, FIAN International General Secretary, and others.

Reports are included on the state of the implementation of the right to food and nutrition in nine countries: Benin, Brazil, Cambodia, India, Guatemala, Kenya, Nicaragua, Uganda and Zambia. The country reports highlight how the right to food and nutrition is connected to such issues as agro-fuel production, poverty or the right to land.

In analysing the failures of the current system, in which over 1 billion people are malnourished, the report stresses that critical changes related to international bodies and the implementation of national policies are needed.

As an annual evidence-providing monitoring tool, the Watch aims to put public pressure on policy makers at the national and international level to take the right to food seriously, and to provide a systematic compilation of best practices for the realisation of the right to food, while documenting where violations take place.

As Ester Wolf, Policy Advisor on the Right to Food for Bread for All and member of the EAA Board of Directors states, “Right to food violations and chronic hunger are closely linked. Most victims of hunger and malnutrition are also victims of discrimination and exclusion, with no voice to be heard. The Watch is an important tool to make this silent hunger visible and to challenge decision makers to assume their responsibilities.”

Notes for journalists:

Published by Brot für die Welt, ICCO, FIAN International. Available in English, Spanish, French, 72 pages, at: <http://www.fian.org/resources/documents/rtn-watch/right-to-food-and-nutrition-watch-2009>.

The launch takes place in the context of the Churches Week of Action on Food (<http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/food/churches-week-of-action-on-food/>) and the upcoming World Food Day, 16 October.

The Watch is a joint effort of a consortium of human rights organisations, social movements and development agencies. The Consortium for the Watch 2009 is composed of Brot für die Welt, the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) and FIAN International as publishers, and World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), People's

Health Movement (PHM), Habitat International Coalition (HIC), World Organisation against Torture (OMCT), DanChurchAid, Rights and Democracy, Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD), and African Right to Food Network as partners. The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance joined the consortium in October 2009.

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