

# THE SASSARI CHARTER

*Sardinia, 20 September 2008*

## **Our Common Security in a Fragile and Divided World** **Biodiversity, food, water, climate and human rights in a planetary emergency**

*From Sardinia in the Mediterranean basin, we citizens, scientists and decision makers who met at the international meeting on Biodiversity, Desertification, Water, Food and Human Rights in Sassari, make a call to the G-8 and G-15 and to the concerned citizens of the world.*

The extinction of species, land degradation and desertification, the disintegration of landscapes and territories, biological invasions, the growing water and food shortages and the climate crisis are inextricably linked and interconnected aspects of a planetary emergency. However, most international agreements and negotiations as well as national policies treat these as separate and individual issues.

The interconnectedness of the ecological crises is also related to the growing economic inequality within and among nations, the rise in conflicts and violence and the threat to global peace and justice.

Only with the restoration and continued protection of biodiversity, water, food systems and the atmosphere as the commons can the economic divide be overcome. There is a common duty to conserve and protect, as well as to share the earth's bounties to assure basic human rights so that no one is deprived of water or food.

Ensuring the right to food and water is part of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, as common resources become monopolised, food prices increase due to speculation and diversion of food crops to biofuels as fossil fuels are depleted, and these goals become progressively less attainable by the international community.

Issues of poverty and economic exclusion cannot be addressed without addressing issues of equity in the context of natural resources and nature's gifts on which all production rests.

The ecological foundations of economic justice become even more vital in a period of climate chaos and climatic change. Without a massive expansion of renewable energy, climate security and justice are unattainable. Cultivating sun and wind energy needs to be seen as an agricultural activity. The misguided focus on nuclear energy and biofuels as clean energy needs to be re-evaluated in the context of large ecological and social costs. The human-induced destabilization of the climate leaves most vulnerable those communities that have done least to pollute the atmosphere creating waves of climate change refugees.

Industrial globalized agriculture is a major contributor of greenhouse gases and a transition to ecological local food systems can help mitigate and adapt to climate change while securing livelihoods and promoting public health. This vital link between food and climate must be addressed at the Kyoto 2 Copenhagen conference.

Diversity and resilience are vital aspects for mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Systems that increase indigenous diversity and resilience can also be systems that increase the access of the poor to the earth's resources and help overcome the economic divide while addressing the planetary

emergency. The intrinsic rights of plants, animals and ecosystems must be recognised in order to protect the commons.

Humanity can either allow the instability and divides to deepen, reducing the notion of security to a policy of exclusion, rendering our very future at risk. Or we can collectively build our common resilience and security, from the individual to the global community, on the basis of nature's commons as heritage of humanity and a shared vision for our common future.