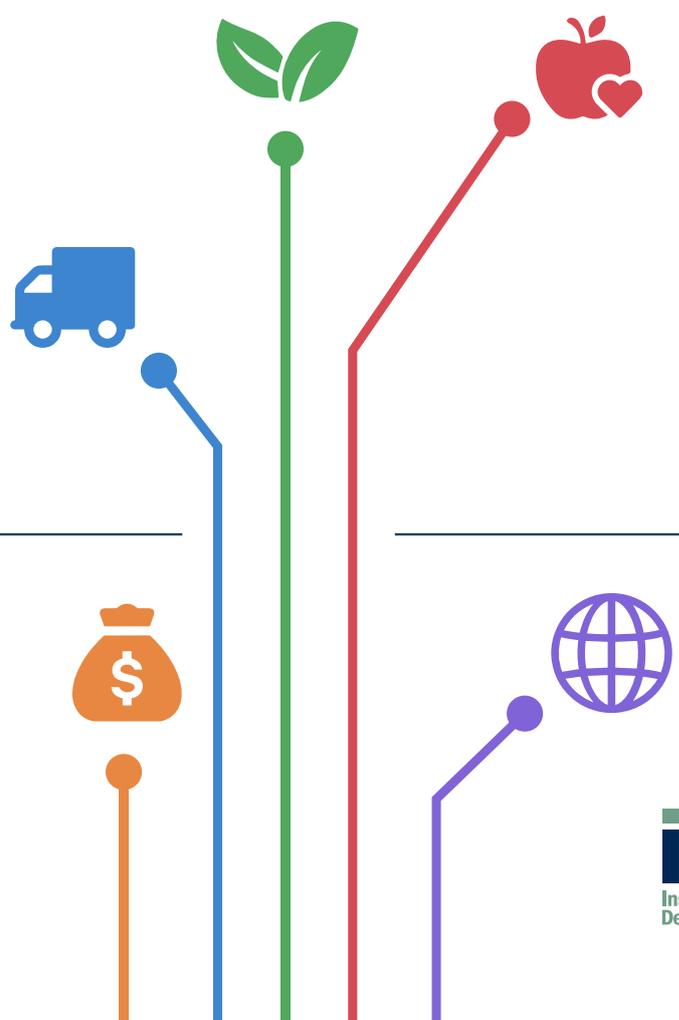


# Agenda for Action:

TRANSITION TO HEALTHY  
AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD  
SYSTEMS IN BRAZIL



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## LETTER TO THE READER

### Dear Reader,

You are in possession of an **Agenda for Action** for the transition of food systems. These are recommendations that point to paths of necessary changes - and how to achieve them - in order to transform the way food is produced, distributed, offered and consumed. The hegemonic way these processes have been conducted in the past decades is leading to a sickened population and environment, accelerating the impacts of climate change and putting at risk the basic right to adequate and healthy food.

Current challenges, combined with the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, make it clear that the need for food systems that promote health and contribute to environmental preservation has become urgent. In this period, social inequalities and injustices have become even more evident all over the planet. Food insecurity has reached unthinkab-

le levels, with approximately 811 million<sup>1</sup> people starving in the world.

Sadly, 267 million<sup>2</sup> people in Latin America face some form of food insecurity. The region is also one of the most affected by obesity and other non-communicable chronic illnesses, in large part due to inadequate eating.

The Brazilian Institute of Consumer Protection (Idec) is a non-profit consumer association without ties to private companies, parties or governments. For more than thirty years we have been working to ensure the population access to healthy food that respects the limits of natural resources. Idec fights for the rights of consumer-citizens. It is in our mission to effect, monitor and defend policies that safeguard the viewpoint of production and consumption of healthy food from sustainable sources.

Enjoy your reading,

**Carlota Aquino**

Idec Executive Director

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1. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. In: [www.fao.org/3/cb4474en/cb4474en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/cb4474en/cb4474en.pdf)

2. América Latina y el Caribe - Panorama regional de la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional 2021 [Latin America and the Caribbean - Regional Overview of food and nutrition security 2021]. In: [www.fao.org/3/cb7497es/](http://www.fao.org/3/cb7497es/)

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## THE SYNDEMIC OF MALNUTRITION,

## OBESITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2020, during the ongoing economic crisis aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, almost 20 million Brazilian citizens were in a severe degree of hunger, and more than half the population suffered some level of food insecurity<sup>3</sup>. The current situation is certainly even more alarming. Unemployment and inflation worsen hunger among Brazilians, leaving them in extreme vulnerability and in an undignified situation.

In addition to food insecurity, Brazil also faces high and growing rates of obesity, with around 21% of women and 19% of men in this situation<sup>4</sup>. This phenomenon is also associated to a high rate of non-communicable chronic diseases, which are related to many risk factors, among which inadequate and unhealthy dietary patterns.

The current situation of food insecurity began in 2016, with the discontinuation of Food and Nutrition Security policies, budget reductions, elimination of programs and closure of spaces for social participation. The disman-

tling and discontinuation of Food and Nutrition Security policies, as well as the undermining of other social policies have deepened the impact and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the main effects are: reduction of families' purchasing power, high rates of unemployment, inflation of food prices, depreciation of the Real against the Dollar and the decline of family agriculture as a leading agent in the production of food in Brazil. With this void in public policies, it is important to remember initiatives undertaken by different civil society organizations in support of emergency food supply to the most vulnerable groups, as well as in support of family agriculture.

The effects of hegemonic food systems have become more evident during the pandemic, driven by agribusiness and mechanisms that broadened inequality, deepened tensions for survival and increased food and nutrition insecurity. Furthermore, they are responsible for aggravating the climate crisis, loss

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3. Inquérito Nacional sobre Insegurança Alimentar no contexto da pandemia da covid-19 no Brasil [National inquiry on Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil]. Available at: <https://pesquisassan.net.br/>.

4. Vigilância de Fatores de Risco e Proteção para Doenças Crônicas por Inquérito Telefônico [Surveillance of Risk Factors and Protection against Chronic Illnesses via Phone Inquiry]. Available at: [https://bvsmms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/vigitel\\_brasil\\_2019\\_vigilancia\\_fatores\\_risco.pdf](https://bvsmms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/vigitel_brasil_2019_vigilancia_fatores_risco.pdf)

of biodiversity, loss of soil fertility and other social and environmental impacts.

Climate change is also a health crisis with deep consequences for the health of populations and the planet. The fight for environmental preservation and for the right to healthy and sustainable food is inextricably linked to the fight against poverty and for a less unequal and more just world.

None of these phenomena are isolated from or run parallel to each other.

On the contrary, all of these factors converge, since the shift of government action has supported and expanded the hegemonic food system in the country. Malnutrition, obesity and climate change are concurring phenomena that feed off each other, constituting a **Global Syndemic**. Comprehending the corporate interests and the operation of these mechanisms are keys to unravel the factors contributing to bolster the hegemonic food system.

## AGENDA FOR ACTION FOR A HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION



The **Agenda for Action** was elaborated based on the study *“The five dimensions of Food Systems in Brazil: A Literature Review”*<sup>5</sup>, developed by

Idec and based on the publications of Prof. Boyd Swinburn and his team<sup>6</sup>. The agenda also received inputs from interviews with key stakeholders<sup>7</sup>.

5. The five dimensions of Food Systems in Brazil: A Literature Review”. The document examines more than 100 scientific publications on the connection between the obesity, malnutrition and climate change pandemics, pointing to the hegemonic food system as a major cause - as well as part of the solution to - such problems.

6. The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Malnutrition and Climate Change. Report by the Lancet Commission. Available at: <https://alimentandopoliticas.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Relat%C3%B3rio-Completo-The-Lancet.pdf>.

7. 18 semi-structured interviews were held with key players, from government, academia and civil society organizations with experience in the field of food and nutrition. One member from each sector was chosen to discuss the five dimensions for the healthy and sustainable transition of food systems. Furthermore, five interviews were held with academics and civil society experts on priority issues in which literature reviews showed fragile results or were in initial stages. They are: gender, food security, climate change and food systems; COVID-19 and food security in Brazil.

Based on these results and previous knowledge on the subject, Idec presents the main conclusions, arranged into five dimensions: business, supply and demand, ecology, health and governance. In each dimension, we lay out the main problems and consequences of hegemonic food systems in Brazil. We follow with a list of **recommendations for transition**, pointing out the priorities and the paths of action, with suggestions on how to effect the recommended change.

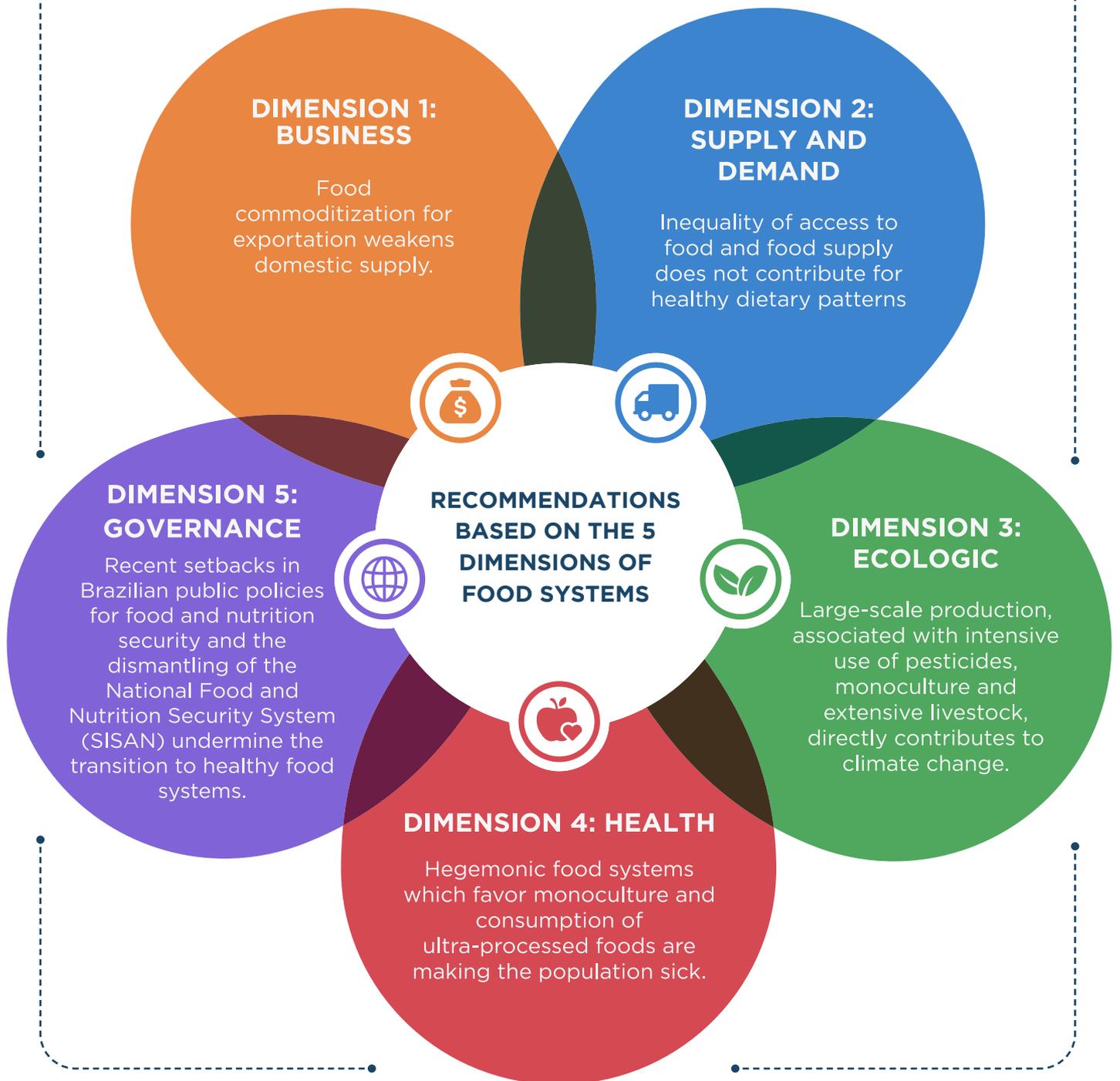
The goal of the **Agenda for Action** is to present decision-makers, activists and others interested actors with real and possible paths for the transition of food systems. The proposals were outlined based on feasible solutions and scientific evidence that can strengthen, broaden and sustain public policies that promote the right to food and the health of people and our planet. It must be pointed out that most of the references in this document are in *“The five dimensions of Food Systems in Brazil: A Literature Review”*.

The defense of policies that ensure the production and consumption of adequate and healthy food from sustainable sources is part of Idec’s mission. It is also from this standpoint that we present **“Idec in Action”**. These are initiatives developed by Idec which strive to respond to each of the five dimensions of the agenda for action for the transition of food systems.

Given the complexity of the subject matter, and also the methodology we adopted, the content is arranged in different scopes and levels of intervention. These are structuring proposals to attain and ensure fundamental rights and other more specific and functional recommendations, all equally important to achieve food and nutrition security.

This document is one starting point to build an integrated **Agenda for Action**, which requires continuous assessment of governance and consultation processes, as well as the involvement of different sectors, rights holders and other key players.

# 5 DIMENSIONS OF FOOD SYSTEMS





## DIMENSION 1: BUSINESS

Prioritizing the supply needs of the domestic market with legislative measures that face the monopoly and promote family agriculture.

Incentivizing product diversification and strengthening the role of the state as a regulator of food markets, as well as supporting short supply chains and agroecology.



## DIMENSION 4: HEALTH

Promoting and protecting breastfeeding and supplementary feeding.

Policies and actions to disincentivize consumption of ultra-processed food products.

Actions of food and nutrition education arising mainly from the public sphere, regarding issues from production to consumption, in the many food environments.

Policies and actions promoting healthy food environments through regulatory measures such as restriction of abusive and misleading advertising, especially for children; improvement of food labelling regulation; taxes for sugary drinks; regulation of sales and advertising of ultra-processed foods in schools; and broaden supply network of healthy, *in natura* or minimally processed foods.



## DIMENSION 2: SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Formulating and implementing a national food supply policy.

Responsibility of the State to ensure the right to food.

Strengthening of the regulatory role of the State, including attention to price formation, setting public health criteria for tax policies and food inflation.



## DIMENSÃO 5: GOVERNANÇA

Structuring decentralizing mechanisms of food and nutrition security with the installation of bipartite and tripartite forums to help states and municipalities transition to healthy and sustainable food systems.

Defining a code of conduct and processes that prevent conflicts of interest and private interference in decisions of public interests, such as multi-stakeholder spaces.

Defending a Brazilian legal framework that is in sync with a multiscale and multisector assurance of food and nutrition security and the Human Right to Adequate Food, resuming the original foundations of legitimate and inclusive governance, as well as principles that allow society's control of the state with the possibility of rights holders to exercise democracy.



## DIMENSION 3: ECOLOGIC

Valuing all forms of socio-biodiversity in Brazil, fostering the sustainable use of national resources and biome preservation.

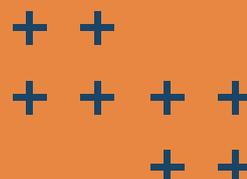
Resuming and strengthening of public policies on climate change mitigation.

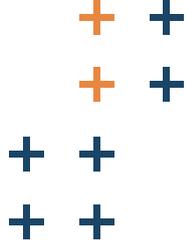
Fomenting low environmental impact agricultural practices, such as: product diversification, incentive to agroecology, measures to control and reduce the use of pesticides.



DIMENSION 1:  
**BUSINESS**

Food commoditization  
for exportation weakens  
domestic supply





According to our literature review<sup>8</sup>, there is consensus that the main problem in this dimension is the fact that the Brazilian agricultural food system is overwhelmingly targeted at the production of agricultural commodities sold in the international market in long supply chains. This process is structured around value chains that integrate food as a commodity, structuring its flow from production to final distribution.

This is a system anchored on the values of profit, productivity and technification of agriculture which generates agricultural products or food with low nutritional value, high environmental impact and a sharp increase in social inequality due to the worsening conditions of life in rural areas.

Brazil is a large food producer, capable of providing its domestic market with a large variety of items. Nevertheless, the hegemonic agricultural logic is largely incentivized by public policies directed at the production of commodities, prioritizing large-scale agricultural producers and intensifying an economic model that leads to the concentration of wealth and generates inequalities.

In the past 20 years, export-oriented agriculture, such as soy and corn, has grown exponentially, while the production of staple Brazilian foods, such as rice and beans, have lost considerable area of cultivation. According to the National Supply Company - CONAB (2021<sup>9</sup>), soy cultivation went from 13.9 million hectares to 36.9 million hectares in 20 years, a growth of 165%, which puts it in the top of the commodities list. On the other end, beans, also a basic item in the Brazilian diet, lost 76.5% of its cultivation area during the same period.

The case of rice is more complex, as it is both a basic item in Brazilian diet and a commodity. In terms of production, it has been losing space to soy, since in the past 20 years its cultivation area went from 3.2 to 1.6 million hectares. There are two complicated aspects that must be pointed out. The first is that the decrease in production impacts rice availability as a basic food for the general population. The second is that, as it is considered a commodity, its price is set by the international market, making it susceptible to Dollar fluctuations, which may raise the price of the final product to the Brazilian consumer, as it happened at the end of

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8. *The five dimensions of Food Systems in Brazil: A Literature Review*. Available at: <https://alimentandopoliticas.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/af-IDEDEC-Revisao-de-Literatura-ptbr-digital.pdf>.

9. National Supply Company - CONAB. **Following the Brazilian Harvest**. 2021. Available at: <https://www.conab.gov.br/info-agro/safras>. Access on: December 17, 2021.

2020. When food is considered a commodity like any other, a system is created that disregards the needs of the general population for quality food at affordable prices, fostering a highly concentrated agricultural food market instead.

For producers, a situation unfolds in which conditions of production and support from the state (credit, technical assistance, input availability, etc.) make the production of commodities highly

attractive, even if there is little autonomy in the market, especially for small - and medium - scale farmers. Those who chose to produce basic items, in sustainable and diversified processes, in connection with territories and regional cultures, find little support and many challenges, whether to increase production, to access markets and to lead a dignified life with agriculture.

## PATHS FOR THE TRANSITION

## TO HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE

## FOOD SYSTEMS



**T**he key is creating new business models with distributive and socially inclusive economic development as the main principles, with actions to protect and promote people's health and environmental sustainability. It is therefore necessary to make the productive and commercial logic of value chains more in sync with processes of local and territorial supply that are anchored on social needs, with fair and economically viable conditions for farmers and consumers.

## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR THE TRANSITION



### WHAT MUST BE DONE

- Prioritizing the supply needs of the domestic market with legislative measures that face the monopoly and promote family agriculture.
- Incentivizing product diversification and strengthening the role of the state as a regulator of food markets, as well as supporting short supply chains and agroecology.

## PATHS FOR ACTION



### HOW IT CAN BE DONE

- Fostering the creation of “good intermediaries”: organizations that are not focused on production, but that can help structure a distribution system with input, logistics and delivery services, so as to provide scale of production for family agriculture with equality, as well as fair and sustainable relations.
- Fostering territorialized supply dynamics, so as to value small - and medium - scale production in family agriculture.
- Technical and financial support to strengthen productive chains of national socio-biodiversity.
- Creating health legislation that includes extractive production and family agriculture.
- Technical, financial and logistical support to agroecological family farmers.

- Supporting scientific research on agriculture and climate change in collaboration with farmers, so that scientific and empirical knowledge can help find solutions.
- Resuming the national minimum price policy to control inflation in food prices.



## IDEC IN ACTION

Idec has been leading the debate on tax reform in its fight to protect consumer-citizen rights. We are connected to the “SHS Tax Reform” (Solidary, Healthy and Sustainable) movement. We advocate for an efficient tax system capable of levying resources in order to finance public policies that secure rights and reduce inequality. This includes formulating tax incentive policies promoting access to healthier and more sustainable products.

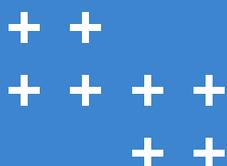
Idec advocates for agroecology and organic family agriculture, both paramount to ensure real food on the table of the Brazilian people. That is why we propose adopting tax expenditure policies (tax exemption and tax relief) on organic products, so as to supplement direct spending public policies (governmental purchases, for example). This set of measures may boost production and consumption of organic products with a positive feedback loop for health and the environment<sup>10</sup>. Access this document here “[Taxes, Consumption and Rights](https://idec.org.br/reforma-tributaria)” (in Portuguese) with all of Idec’s proposals for Tax Reform.

10. Taxes, Consumption and Rights. Brazilian Institute of Consumer Protection, 2021. Available at: <https://idec.org.br/reforma-tributaria>.



## DIMENSION 2: **SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

Inequality of access to food and  
food supply does not contribute  
for healthy dietary patterns



In this dimension, we call your attention to how the food industry exploits biological, psychological, social and economic vulnerabilities of the individual, creating food environments highly conducive to unhealthy and unsustainable choices.

Furthermore, there is a debate in the literature on the increasing prices of healthy food, which makes healthy dietary patterns, such as *in natura*, minimally processed and culturally referenced food, a privilege of the few. This elitist targeting of adequate and healthy food is precisely the opposite of what we should strive for in our society, since this is a universal human right<sup>11</sup>.

In this context where institutions committed to the Human Right to Adequate Food in the country are being undermined, and the political agenda is set on dismantling food and nutrition security, family agriculture and social policies, the most vulnerable populations are adrift. Historical challenges faced by the majority of Brazilian families to maintain basic minimum conditions of life have become much larger.

Some of the measures taken by the federal government since 2016 that im-

pact food security are: the closure of the Ministry of Agrarian Development, the National Council on Food and Nutrition Security and the National Council for Rural Sustainable Development, initiatives to alter the legal framework, financial and institutional dismantling of key public policies to promote supply and access, for example the Food Purchase Program in the Brazilian National School Feeding Program, under the National Supply Company.

There were already asymmetries of supply, regarding emphasis on commodity production, good quality of foods and regularity of supply, and regarding the quantity of food traded in the final links of the chain. Now, the situation has just become worse, making the country much more vulnerable. On the one hand, there are family farmers suffering from serious food insecurity<sup>12</sup>, with difficulty to distribute their products on the market and, on the other, urban and rural populations with difficulty accessing healthy eating and on the edge of hunger. Considering this scenario, the answers to this problem demand public policies and actions that connect both sides of this equation.

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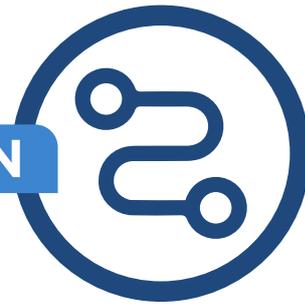
11. The five dimensions of Food Systems in Brazil: A Literature Review. Available at: <https://alimentandopoliticas.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/af-IDEC-Revisao-de-Literatura-ptbr-digital.pdf>.

12. Data from the National Inquiry on Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil, conducted by The Brazilian Network of Research on Sovereignty and Food Security shows that 12% of rural households, whether farmers, quilombolas, indigenous or riparian dwellers, are facing hunger.

## PATHS FOR THE TRANSITION

## TO HEALTHY AND

## SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



**T**he path for transition in this dimension includes the need for policies that influence food standards. They involve an array of interlinked elements, such as socio-economic idiosyncrasies like purchase power, education, culture, ways of life and physical, legal or political constraints which either foster

or restrict access to food. Furthermore, regulatory measures that influence food demand are key for the transition, since food choices are also determined by market efficiency and interest in satisfying and creating desires among the population through food advertisement, often abusive and misleading.

## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR THE TRANSITION



### WHAT MUST BE DONE

- Responsibility of the State to ensure the right to adequate food.
- Strengthening of the regulatory role of the State, including attention to price formation, setting public health criteria when defining tax policies and food inflation.
- Formulating and implementing a national food supply policy.



### HOW IT CAN BE DONE

- Guarantee of the State of access to and supply of healthy and adequate food, prioritizing populations in situation of social vulnerability and taking actions to improve their life conditions. In a context of humanitarian crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of access must be dealt with as an emergency situation.
- Tax reliefs for basic and in natura food production and commercialization.
- Elaborating and implementing a national food supply policy in sync with state and municipal policies that ensure the connection between family agriculture and consumers, with strategies to build a supply network from the main supply hubs through local markets, local establishments and markets on wheels.
- Strengthening the regulatory and inspection roles of the state in food markets, establishing for example a priority agenda to supply markets, farmers markets and other local trade mechanisms.
- Reviving the Public Supply Centers (CEASA) as a public policy strategy for food supply, prioritizing products from family agriculture. Public Supply Centers connected to public policies as a welcoming environment for family agriculture, fostering trade and distribution of in natura and minimally processed food.
- Fostering short supply chains and agroecology.
- Restoring the strategic supply policy for basic food staples in order to ensure availability and price control.
- State policies to control the monopolies in food retail (especially large supermarket chains).

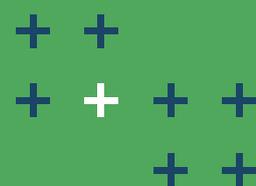


## IDEC IN ACTION

**T**he **Map of Organic Farmers Markets** is a search engine conceived by Idec to foster healthy eating in Brazil and show that organic and agroecological products can be accessible to consumers.

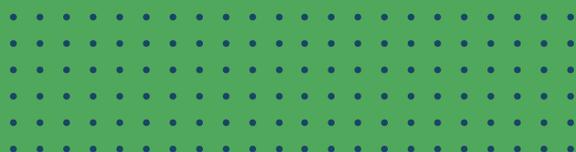
The Map shows:

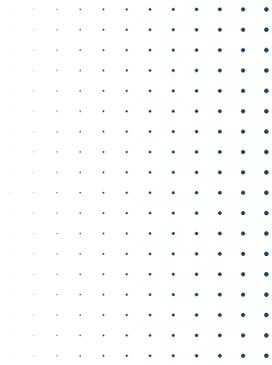
- **Organic or Agroecological Farmers Markets:** Great alternative to buy directly from the producer; they cut the middle-man (and prices as a result), fostering the producer's autonomy and valuing local food production.
- **Groups of Responsible Consumption:** An initiative by organized consumers who approach producers and propose to buy products together, unlike traditional markets, since they take into considerations concerns on social, environmental and health issues, from production all the way to consumption. The goal is to foster consumption straight from the producer, whether by buying food baskets or financing producers.
- **Commercial Establishments Partnering with Organic Producers:** initiatives that connect consumers and farmers directly, or with only one intermediary. This relationship must be transparent and fair, with prices that cover operating expenses.



## DIMENSION 3: **ECOLOGIC**

Large-scale production, associated with intensive use of pesticides, monoculture and extensive livestock directly contributes to climate change.





**T**here is robust evidence of the environmental damage the hegemonic food system imposes on ecosystems. Intensive agriculture, dependency on fossil fuels inputs and the logistics for large-scale international distribution are some of the examples of how predatory use of natural resources and the high levels of pollution generated have turned the current food system into a root-cause of climate change.

The extension and intensity with which resources like soil and water have been exploited and degraded by chemical pollution are among the main causes of greenhouse gas emission and loss of biodiversity, including edible species. Deforestation of native forests and ecological unbalances of the main Brazilian biomes were largely caused by the expansion of food commodity production.

Paradoxically, the sector most affected by climate change is agriculture, which, in recent years has suffered pressure from phenomena like the rising Earth temperature, change in rain patterns and the intensification of extreme weather events. The effects on human health cannot be overlooked either, since quality of life has been decreasing due to pollution, especially in the cities, but also growing in rural areas.

In this regard, more integrated systems, such as agroecology, besides optimizing interaction between plants, animals, human beings and the environment, also take into consideration social aspects that must be addressed in healthy and sustainable food systems, i.e., systems that contribute to social justice, food sovereignty, as well as gender, ethnic and racial equality.

## PATHS FOR THE TRANSITION

## TO HEALTHY AND

## SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



In order to address the huge challenges posed by the ecologic dimension of food systems, it is necessary to make the transition into ecological systems of production that ensure good quality foods and allow the regeneration

of natural resources, focusing on practices of low environmental and health impact that foster local production as a means to value species diversity, as well as contribute to food security and climate change mitigation.

## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR THE TRANSITION



### WHAT MUST BE DONE

- Fomenting low environmental impact agricultural practices, such as: product diversification, incentive to agroecology, measures to control and reduce the use of pesticides.
- Valuing all forms of socio-biodiversity in Brazil, fostering the sustainable use of national resources and biome preservation.
- Resuming and strengthening of public climate change mitigation policies.

## PATHS FOR ACTION



### HOW IT CAN BE DONE

- Incentivizing ecological farming practices that combine food production with environmental preservation and climate change mitigation.
- Promoting seed banks and the free use of agrobiodiversity with actions like the non-application of cultivar patent laws on seeds these farmers handle, and resuming the National Register of Creole Cultivars<sup>13</sup>, so as to foster conservation of these cultivars and support their guardians.
- Creating reward mechanisms (price-prizes, tax reduction, easy access to credit, logistics and government purchases, etc.) to organizations and communities that sponsor biodiversity and environmental conservation and sustainable production.
- Fostering, structuring and consolidating productive chains of socio-biodiversity.
- Fostering documentation, research and dissemination of socio-biodiversity practices and environmental conservation.
- Supporting and recognizing female agroecological family farmers, since they are the seed guardians and the leading figures of the agroecological transition.
- Supporting programs and policies targeted at women's organizations, promoting empowerment, continuing education and autonomy.

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13. The National Register of Local, Traditional and Creole Cultivars was created to support the use, handling and conservation of local, traditional and creole cultivars as a policy to democratize access to seeds, agro-biodiversity preservation and agroecological practices. The Register was established in the Family Agriculture Secretariat in 2007 by Ordinance MDA 51/2007, and it is available at <http://cnc.mda.gov.br>.

- Promoting a strategy of ecology knowledges that brings together academic, popular and traditional expertise so as to broaden the scope of possible solutions to face the climate crisis and produce healthy and sustainable food.
- Approving and implementing a national pesticide use policy.

## IT'S PLANT-BASED, BUT IT'S ULTRA-PROCESSED



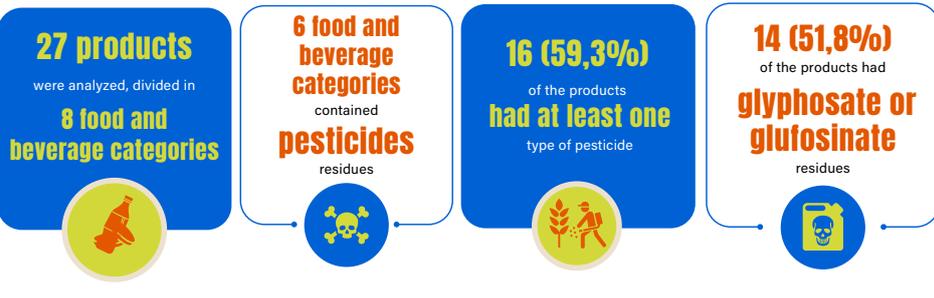
**T**here are more and more market initiatives involving so-called plant-based or “meat of the future” products that are presented as sustainable options for consumers who wish to make choices with less impact on the environment. Although tempting, these initiatives to resolve the environmental problem without changing eating habits upkeep the same structure and logic of hegemonic food systems, as they are solely based on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, without taking into consideration other impact indicators of life conditions in rural areas, health and the environment. Usually, these plant-based products are considered ultra-processed because they contain a variety of ingredients like protein isolates and fats extracted from soy beans and peas, as well as flavoring agents and other additives. Their raw materials come from intensive production, with pesticides and few food matrices, and much of it is produced by large transnational conglomerates, which therefore does not contribute to the health, biodiversity and valuing of local and family production. (Lappe, 2021<sup>14</sup>)

14. Anna Lappe. The FoodPrint of fake meat. Report 2021. Available at: [https://foodprint.org/reports/the-foodprint-of-fake-meat/?utm\\_medium=email&\\_hsmi=186992419&\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8IGQpPkUhZ-RFCfgld\\_Mrzbtg-mxc\\_qth7AiCtmul9URZjTdGpBAP3iXmYCDobv\\_2wg4wvzKM1UJqXOJB9nUFWghNcY9Khbnhtn7sPgmV\\_FNQ09y-So&utm\\_content=186992419&utm\\_source=hs\\_email#section\\_9](https://foodprint.org/reports/the-foodprint-of-fake-meat/?utm_medium=email&_hsmi=186992419&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8IGQpPkUhZ-RFCfgld_Mrzbtg-mxc_qth7AiCtmul9URZjTdGpBAP3iXmYCDobv_2wg4wvzKM1UJqXOJB9nUFWghNcY9Khbnhtn7sPgmV_FNQ09y-So&utm_content=186992419&utm_source=hs_email#section_9)



## IDEC IN ACTION

An exclusive **research** conducted by Idec in 2021 shows that many ultra-processed products consumed in Brazil contain pesticides. This discovery only reinforces the need for change in our hegemonic food system, which aims to meet the great demand for international commodities like soy, corn, wheat and sugar, and heavily relies on pesticides, which makes it unsustainable in a social, ecological and health viewpoint.



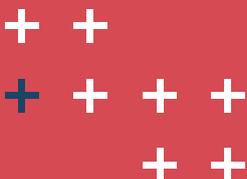
The study shows crucial information in the fight for better public policies and reinforces the need for consumers to follow the recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population and to eat in natura and minimally processed food, preferably organic and from agroecological sources.



## DIMENSION 4:

# HEALTH

Hegemonic food systems which favor monoculture and consumption of ultra-processed foods are making the population sick



**E**ating is much more than a biological action. It involves feeling and sensations. It is closely related to people's culture, the history of their families, communities and ethnicities. Food choices also depend on food environments, such as physical environment (availability), economic environment (costs), political environment (public policies) and socio-cultural environments of which the individual is part. Although the right to adequate and healthy food has been provided in the Brazilian Constitution since 2010<sup>15</sup>, not all citizens have access to food that protects and promotes health.

Food advertisements most of the times are abusive or misleading and promote consumption of products that are unhealthy to people and the planet - i.e. ultra-processed food products<sup>16</sup>. Advertising promotes these products for all, including infants, who should be protected from commercial contents and messages. The early years of life are crucial for growth and development, for the creation of habits and the maintenance of health.

The nutritional transition we have seen in the past decades, with the reduction of undernutrition and considerable increase in obesity rates has decelerated and has now come to alarming levels. The return of hunger in Brazil, as well as worsening food quality indicators, show that the country is witnessing an upsurge of malnutrition in all its forms.

This situation is even more urgent and relevant if taken into account the overwhelming evidence showing the negative impact of ultra-processed products on human health. According to a study conducted in different contexts and populations, consumption of ultra-processed products leads to weight gain, obesity, diabetes, hypertension and other cardiovascular diseases, depression, cancers in general, breast cancer, childhood asthma, kidney dysfunction and premature death. These products have intrinsic qualities in their composition, processing, consumption and commercialization that explain their negative effect on health, including high energy density, more free sugars, saturated and trans fats, as well as less fibers, proteins, micronutrients and bioactive compounds<sup>14</sup>.

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15. Constitutional Amendment N° 64 embeds eating among social rights listed in Article 6 of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution.

16. Dialogue on ultra-processed food: Solutions for healthy and sustainable food systems. Nupens/USP, 2021. Available at [https://www.fsp.usp.br/nupens/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Documento-Dia%CC%81logo-Ultraprocessados\\_PT.pdf](https://www.fsp.usp.br/nupens/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Documento-Dia%CC%81logo-Ultraprocessados_PT.pdf).

## PATHS FOR THE TRANSITION

## TO HEALTHY AND

## SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



**D**espite some advances in the agenda proposed in the National Food and Nutrition Policy and the publication of the Food Guidelines for the Brazilian Population, it is necessary to strengthen regulatory measures in order to contain the persuasive strategies of access, advertising and price employed by large transnational ultra-processed conglomerates, who take up ever more space in food markets, advertising and others. These products are offered even for emergency actions against hunger, which is a highly contradictory situation, as the consumption of unhealthy products can increase vulnerability of

the population already facing food insecurity.

The Human Right to Adequate Food must be ensured taking food environments into account, whether by supplying healthy food in institutional spaces (schools, hospitals, retirement homes, shelters, etc.) or by acting on challenges posed by the physical and financial access to healthy food. In order to restrict the consumption of ultra-processed products, it is necessary to take actions to control production, improve labelling, restrict their commercialization in public spaces and approve taxing mechanisms.

## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR THE TRANSITION



### WHAT MUST BE DONE

- Promoting and protecting breastfeeding and supplementary feeding.
- Policies and actions promoting healthy food environments through regulatory measures such as restriction of abusive and misleading advertising, especially for children; improvement of food labelling regulation; taxes for sugary drinks, regulation of the sales and advertising of ultra-processed foods in schools; and broaden supply network of healthy, in natura or minimally processed food.

- Policies and actions to disincentivize consumption of ultra-processed products.
- Actions of food and nutrition education arising mainly from the public sphere, regarding issues from production to consumption, in the many food environments, in accordance with the Food and Nutrition Education Framework for Public Policies.

## PATHS FOR ACTION



### HOW IT CAN BE DONE

- Recognizing breastfeeding as a practice that promotes healthy food systems, and ensuring it is the first sustainable, in natura food to which we have access, which makes it a strategic issue.
- Promoting and disseminating the Food Guidelines for the Brazilian Population and the Food Guidelines for Brazilian Children under two years old.
- Implementing regulatory measures to restrict access to ultra-processed products, with actions to control production, restrict advertising and improve labelling, as well as taxation mechanism for unhealthy products.
- Improving public policies for the school food environment, taking into consideration not only the meals offered in public schools as established by government guidelines, but all of circumstances that affect food consumption in schools, including the restriction of sales and advertising of ultra-processed products in public and private schools, together with adequate monitoring systems.
- Implementing strategies of food and nutrition education that take into consideration the different dimensions of eating, the processes and stages of food systems, social and environmental impact of eating patterns and the importance of food heritage and culture. For example, awareness actions to disincentivize the consumption of

food that use more natural resources and pollute the environment, such as intensive livestock and ultra-processed products.



## IDEC IN ACTION

**A**iming to highlight the importance of adequate and healthy food, a campaign was conducted to raise awareness of consumer-citizens on the Food Guidelines for the Brazilian Population, published by the Ministry of Health.

Based on the idea that **“You are already in favor of the Dietary Guidelines for the Brazilian Population”**, people were invited to get to know the document and find out that healthy eating is much more than counting calories and nutrients. More than 100 thousand people downloaded the Guide. Idec is still in contact with these consumer-citizens in order to spread messages that help make better and healthier choices.

Adequate and healthy food is a right that involves the guarantee of permanent and regular access to adequate eating habits which are socially fair. It must be based on the food cultures and consider gender, race and ethnic dimensions. It must be accessible both physically and financially and based on adequate and sustainable productive practices.

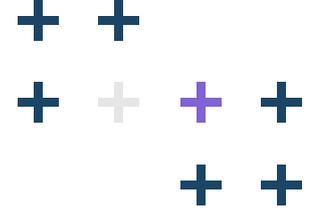
The Food Guide is a heritage of the Brazilian people. It gathers official eating guidelines for our people. Idec understands the importance of spreading the Guide because one of our goals is to fight for the right to know what to eat. All of this information can be accessed at <https://guiaalimentar.org.br>.



## DIMENSION 5: **GOVERNANCE**

Recent setbacks in Brazilian public policies for food and nutrition security, and the dismantling of the National Food and Nutrition Security System undermine the transition to healthy food systems





**G**overnance is the dynamic in which the state, regulations and agents interact in order to create and maintain food systems. More than just a set of rules or institutionalized legal frameworks, what is at stake in this dimension is how these processes, whether formal or informal, which influence and guide relations between different agents in the system, take place. It involves, therefore, relations between governments, NGOs, civil society groups, multinational corporations and the global capitalist market. It is a highly complex and dynamic dimension that directly and indirectly affects all of the issues we have discussed, since corporate hegemony in food systems is kept by asserting dominant narratives and political power.

Brazil used to be a global reference, for having a legal framework in sync with multiscale and multisector assurance of Food and Nutrition Security and the Human Right to Adequate Food, with clear procedures for inclusive governance, as well as principles to allow society's control of the state.

The National Food and Nutrition Security System is a highlight: anchored on the Organic Law of Food and Nutrition

Security, active since 2006 and striving to be a public, intersectoral and inclusive system. The country used to have a set of policies and programs capable of improving conditions of life of most of the population, which included Food and Nutritional Security, by supporting food production from family agriculture and agroecology in local and sustainable practices. It is important to remember that the most significant result of these practices was Brazil leaving the Hunger Map in 2014.

However, despite the legal framework, the current situation represents a grave political setback, in which many Food and Nutrition Security policies were undermined by budget cuts, increasing precariousness of services or even the complete closure of the organization, as was the case with the National Council on Food and Nutrition Security. This ends up demanding much societal effort to upkeep rights. Since 2019, Brazil no longer has a national Food and Nutrition Security plan, nor any organized government actions, or budget earmarked for Food and Nutrition Security in order to secure the Human Right to Adequate Food.

On a global scale, it is also clear how multilateral governance spaces like the United Nations Committee on World Food Security and their Advisory Groups are losing ground. The most recent example was the secondary role the Committee played in the UN Food Systems Summit, taken place in September 2021 and summoned by Secretary-General with the aim to transform food systems in order to achieve

the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The multiplication of parallel initiatives, many falsely inclusive, and the so-called multi-stakeholder platforms also contribute to weaken the institution, as it shifts the debate and the set of commitments into spaces with no legitimacy, transparency or rules to prevent conflicts of interest.

**PATHS FOR THE TRANSITION**

**TO HEALTHY AND**

**SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**



**A**s the goal is to resume advancements in Brazilian public policies regarding food, while strengthening public governance as a resistance to industry interference in eating habits, it is necessary to prioritize the decentralized power approach, aimed at the Human Right to Adequate Food, which is paramount to ensure food security for the population while empowering local governments. In parallel, we must watch closely multi-stakeholder spaces that privatize public solutions and oppose the population's and big companies' desires; these are never done on equal terms, given the huge resources companies have at their disposal to influence governance and food systems.

## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR THE TRANSITION



### WHAT MUST BE DONE

- Defending a Brazilian legal framework that is in sync with a multiscale and multisector assurance of food and nutrition security and the Human Right to Adequate Food, resuming the original foundations of legitimate and inclusive governance, as well as principles that allow society's control of the state with the possibility of rights holders to exercise democracy.
- Structuring decentralizing mechanisms of food and nutrition security with the installation of bipartite and tripartite forums to help states and municipalities transition to healthy and sustainable food systems.
- Defining a code of conduct and processes that prevent conflicts of interest and private interference in decisions of public interests, such as multi-stakeholder spaces.

## CAMINHOS PARA A AÇÃO



### HOW IT CAN BE DONE

- Providing instruments to expose, document and repair violations to the Human Right to Adequate Food.
- Creating a stable multiscale financing dynamic in the National Food and Nutrition Security System that is less dependent on the federal government, as well as strengthening intersectoral activity, especially on the local level.

- Structuring decentralizing mechanisms focused on improving and increasing the reach of Food and Nutrition Security, ensuring federal funding with participation from other government spheres, so as to both help states and municipalities, but also make them liable to ensure the transition into agroecological and fair food systems, including local agendas that bring rural and urban dynamics together.
- Strengthening social participation with representativeness and diversity of rights holders, so as to ensure that the interests of civil society and public health prevail in the decision-making process.
- Implementing training strategies for local technical bodies and managers involved in the implementation of Food and Nutrition Security programs.
- Fostering the elaboration of state and municipal Food and Nutrition Security plans that include monitoring of execution indicators and accountability.
- Monitoring the participation of the private sector in public debates and the decision-making of public policies, law and regulations.
- Making use of instruments to prevent and manage conflicts of interest in nutrition programs, as proposed by the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization<sup>17</sup>

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17. Preventing and Managing Conflicts of Interest in Country-level Nutrition Programs: A Roadmap for Implementing the World Health Organization's Draft Approach in the Americas. Available at: <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/55055>.



## IDEC IN ACTION

Did you ever think that your food choices are not as free as you imagine? The documentary *Big Food: The Power of the Ultra-processed Food Industry* helps the public reflect on how their food is up for negotiation between food and beverage companies.

Produced by Idec in partnership with Coletivo Badoque, it was awarded best short documentary at the Rome Independent Prisma Awards in 2021. Big Food is how the ultra-processed food and beverage corporations are called, producers of frozen lasagnas, chips and sodas; they are all over the world and use strategies to influence public policies that impact eating habits, labor conditions and the use of resources. In Brazil alone, these companies make R\$ 700 billion yearly.

Teaser at: <https://youtu.be/j5FYyo-lwdg>

Book a screening here: <https://alimentandopoliticas.org.br/big-food/>

## A CALL FOR ACTION!

The effects of food production, supply, trade and consumption standards are currently one of the largest global goals, with effects on climate change mitigation and adaptation, the fight against inequality, malnutrition and obesity, as well as other non-communi-

cable chronic illnesses associated to eating standards.

Both by increasing social inequality and threatening the world with new pandemics caused by environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, the

COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the negative effects of the hegemonic food systems, forcing many families into more precarious situations and away from the right to food.

Eradicating hunger and food and nutrition insecurity among more than half of the population of Brazil is an urgent matter. This must be done with emergency and structural measures against inequality and poverty. Just as important, we must act upon the complex web of agents, processes and interactions involved in the cultivation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food - a web that depends on and interacts with self-feeding cycles.

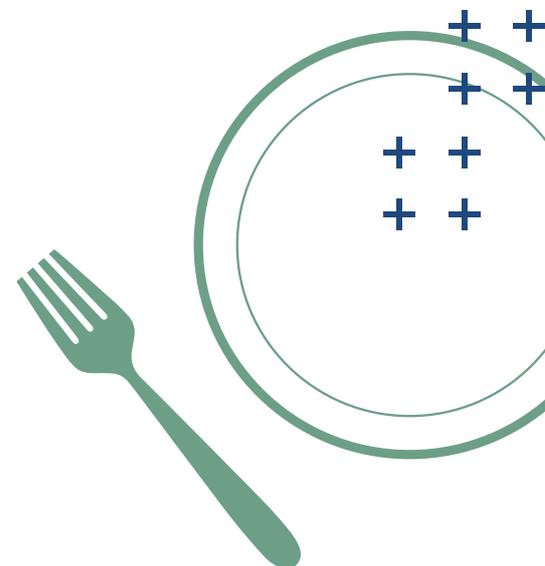
Accelerating change toward healthy and sustainable food systems requires the joining of forces between many sectors and organizations committed to a transition guided by human rights, not commercial interests. The right to health and the right to choose adequate eating must come before economic and commercial interests.

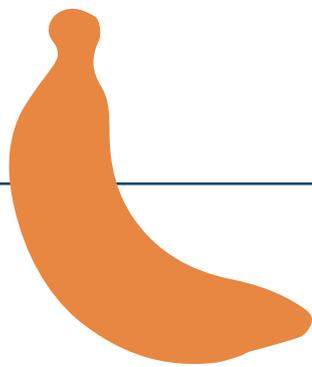
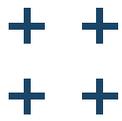
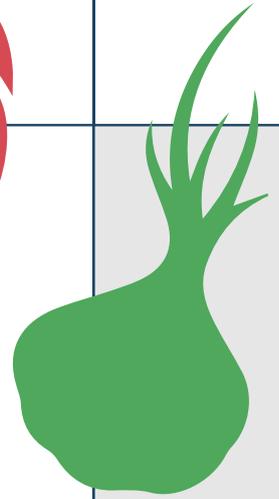
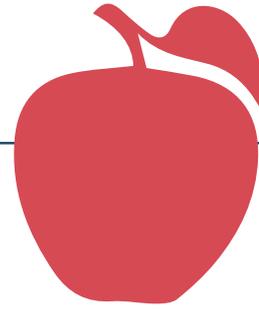
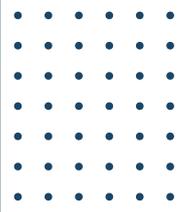
This is a call to all decision makers, activists and rights holders to act together through feasible solutions and based on scientific evidence that can strengthen, broaden and sustain public policies promoting the right to food and the health of people and our planet.

It is paramount to ensure governance that takes into consideration the interaction between public bodies and that is protected from the conflicts of interest inherent to the relationship between agents and other interested parties, guided by the basic principle of eating as a common good. In order to effect the necessary change, we must have consultation and negotiation spaces that show the grave power imbalances between different actors; we must also establish procedures that empower rights holders and sectors of the civil society that are subject to more vulnerability.

Overcoming these imbalances requires that economic interests do not supersede the defense and guarantee of fundamental rights. The private sector must not interfere in the formulation of norms and public policies on food and health.

In order for food systems to contribute to the health of people and the planet, and not the other way around, we need a true transformation.





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Defesa do Consumidor

