

# Declaration of Vechele on Sustainable Hunger and Poverty Alleviation

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7th September 2013, Vechele, Germany

Scientists from all the continents met at 5<sup>th</sup> ICSA International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture for Food, Energy and Industry in Developing and Industrial Countries at Community Hall, Vechele, Germany from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Under the patronage of political leadership from Germany, India and other countries they resolved to declare that:

The key challenges discussed during the conference included the best possible strategies' to ensure that our food and energy projects are always implemented in letter and spirit to serve the needs of our communities.

We have today an overproduction of food in some parts of the world despite the fact that more than 900 million people suffer from hunger and 1 billion are considered as undernourished. In addition, almost 50% of food commodities are globally being wasted or decayed due to improper storage and transport facilities.

Roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year — approximately 1.3 billion tons — gets lost or wasted. This leads not only to huge economic losses of around 600 billion euros and wasting of water and energy resources, but it also causes substantial environmental damage. The annual cultivated area amounts to 28 percent of the global arable land used to produce food which is never consumed. In contrast, the global agricultural area used for the production of biofuels is about 1%." Hence more arable areas could be used to develop energy farms to gain energy for sustainable development without compromising food security.

The main reason of hunger is poverty as these people have no or limited access to food because they cannot afford it.

Poverty is the trigger for hunger and not *vice versa*. It is never mono-causal, but multi-causal, not only rural but also urban. Mainly women and children are affected by hunger and poverty.

Improper economic policies and the over-exploitation of farm land and arable soils in post green revolution era led to degradation of natural resource base including land, and water resources. Consequently, insufficient water availability, perpetual droughts and enhanced soil salinization, decreasing factor productivity have led to the recent global poverty.

There is actual and future significant increase of hunger due to continued adherence of world economy and fossil and nuclear energy.

In addition the humanity is facing immense challenges: Climate change, natural disasters, deterioration of the environment and radioactive contamination of soils, vegetation and water due to explosions of atomic power plants such as Chernobyl and Fukushima.

Another key element is the energy question. Energy is essential and a determinant factor as real development is impossible without adequate energy availability.

The old industrial model that has for over two centuries used toxic energy sources to power development is clearly no longer viable. We need to change it for a system that is just, equitable and sustainable.

Renewable energy solutions can be designed to meet the needs of our communities and can be harnessed to fulfill the aspirations for a better life.

Meaningful long term alleviation of hunger should be rooted in the alleviation of poverty and reducing poverty requires new strategies and political actions. Isolated and single solutions are of cosmetic nature which can never be the solution.

In this context, the FAO, UN concept of the "Integrated Energy Farms (IEF)" is one of the most comprehensive strategy towards poverty alleviation. It considers: Integrated production of energy and food, combined use of

different renewable energies, social, educational, economic and ecological components as well as gender issues. The concept considers also the specific climatic and local conditions as well as the needs of population in various regions worldwide. It explores the Interfaces and potential synergies between “Cradle-to-Cradle” and product innovations.

Proper food and renewable energy programs can rapidly bring about a shift in meeting the world’s need for sustainable solutions. At the same time, it would enable thousands of new small industries and millions of new jobs. With national and international initiatives and incentives a vehicle for global economic growth can be achieved.

The time is right for progressive political initiatives. Targets oriented research programs, dialogue and cooperation and mutual respect among nations are further key drivers for a sustainable world wherein its population could live in peace and dignity.

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*ICSA: „International council for Sustainable Agruculture*

*IFEED: International Research Centre for Renewable Energy*

*Manav: Manav Institute of Technology & Management (MITM), India*

*For the participants of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture for Food, Energy and Industry: Prof. Dr. N. El Bassam, Chairman, Germany; Prof. Dr. R. K. Behl, General Secretary, India; Prof. P. Maegaard, Denmark; Prof. Dr. M. Osaki, Japan. Mr. S. Bankoti, England; Prof. Dr. R. Chibbar, Kanada; Dr. M. Evri, Indonesia; Dr. A. Hoffmann-Dally, Egypt; Dr. M. Kern, Germany; Mr. Tobias Klaus, Switzerland; Prof. Li Dajue, China; Mr. L. Lukasek, Austria/Austalia; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Azmy Hj. Mohamed, Malaysia; Prof. Dr. T. A. Mohammad, Malaysia; Mr. A. Opong, Ghana; Mrs. M. Schlichting, USA; Mr. S. Volkwein, Switzerland; Dr. A. Wais, Afghanistan*