



PROGRAM

Thursday 9 October 2008 - Arrivals

21.00 : Welcoming of participants by Piero Parenti, Chairman of Pace Adesso and Frieda Thaler (Initiatives of Change – Italy)
Presentation of the conference (Cristina Bignardi)

Friday 10 October 2008

Food quality and consumers' responsibility (GMO's, biodiversity, artificial diet, health problems)

09.30 : Opening Conference (facilitator: D. De Leo)

10.00 : Round table of experts

11.00 : Coffee Break. - 11.30 : Debate.

13.00 : Lunch

14.15 : Experiences around the world

Claude Bourdin (France) – **International Farmers Dialogue**

Luciano Centonze (Italy) – European Committee on Agricultural Training (**CEFA**) and GMOs

David Cuming (Canada) – The problem of **labelling and freedom of the consumer**

Ingrid Franzon (Sweden) – **Treatment of diseases caused by nutrition.** Problems connected with the use of pesticides and new biotechnologies.

15.30 - 16.30 : Debate

17.00 : Visit to the cooperatives LACME or CLAI (to be confirmed)

Saturday 11 October 2008

10.00 : Meeting with political representatives of the relaunch of the Agricultural Districts of Appennino

12.30 : Lunch

15.00 : Visits

Dinner – Monzuno (to be confirmed)

Sunday 12 October 2008

10.00 : To end hunger in the world: the essential role of farmers, in teamwork with food-industry and consumers

Opening by Senator Giovanni Bersani.

Vincenzo Zacchiroli – Mayor of Castel S. Pietro : experiences in international cooperation.

13.00 : Lunch (Friends of Peru)

15.00 - 18.00 : Visit to Bologna for foreign guests.

20.30 : Conference evaluation – Results/Comments

Monday 13 October 2008 - Departures

'Be the change you want to see in the world' Mahatma Gandhi

Initiatives of Change is a global network of people committed to transforming society through changes in individuals and relationships, starting in their own lives...

IofC is an INGO with participative status in the Council of Europe and Special Status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Site Internet : www.iofc.org

Pace Adesso – Peace Now ONLUS (Bologna – Italy) is a non Profit Organisation founded in 2000 on the inspiration of Giovanni Bersani and a group of friends for peace. The organisation aims at helping people to solve social conflict and works in Italy and in many foreign countries.

CEFA – THE SEED OF SOLIDARITY is an initiative of agricultural cooperatives aiming at solving hunger by encouraging food self-sufficiency and promoting basic development in rural communities.

PRACTICAL DETAILS

- **Arrival at airport :** A shuttle from the airport will be laid on. Participants must state whether they need it in the morning or in the afternoon (see application form)
- **Arrival by train :** local bus to Castel San Pietro
- **Conference costs :**
 - 220 euros per person (double-room)
 - 320 euros per person (single-room)
- **Location :** Hotel ANUSCA Palace (Castel San Pietro Terme)
- **Payments :** cash, international bancomat, credit card
- **Contact address, telephone, email :**
 - **Cristina Bignardi** - Pace Adesso Onlus
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BETWEEN SURPLUS AND FAMINE FOOD : A CROSSROADS FOR PEACE

Bologna, Castel San Pietro

Thursday 9 – Sunday 12 October 2008



If, as a consumer, you believe that one shouldn't simply consume...

If you believe that hunger in the world is not just an issue for developing countries...

If you believe that protecting agriculture on this planet means development, freedom and democracy for all...

If you believe that a serious discussion on food quality, protection of biodiversity and GMOs can send out a positive message for the future generations...

If you want to take responsibility...
...then let us meet and talk together !

**“THERE IS ENOUGH IN THE WORLD FOR EVERYONE'S
NEED, BUT NOT FOR EVERYONE'S GREED”**

Organised by Iniziativa e Cambiamento Italia
and sponsored by Castel S. Pietro City Mayor.



Building trust across the world's divides
Initiatives of Change International



Between surplus and famine Food : a crossroads for peace

By Cristina Bignardi, Bologna,
Organic Farmer – Consultant

Food, energy resources and water are at the heart of today's conflicts that unfortunately spill too much blood in too many places of the world. Greed is unfortunately a trigger for struggles and wars all over the world. Food is essential for people's well-being.

Food consumption implies numerous highly diverse and complex aspects. Being seated around a table is a cultural, symbolic, anthropological and religious act. In fact, our eating habits define many social practices of the culture we belong to. Access to food is closely connected with the economic empowerment of every individual. This is why some types of food become a status symbol; others are needed simply to survive. The quantity and the quality of the food we eat are fundamental both for our health and for our ability to make our own living.

Food production and food industry have a major impact on a country's economy. Food is, above all, a right that determines people's freedom and their planning skills. Hungry or malnourished people are not able to look towards their future because they are caught up in a mere struggle for survival.

The FAO (the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation), during its World Food Summit in 1996, defined the concept of Food Security in the following terms :

“Food that is available at all times, that all persons have means of access to, that is nutritionally adequate in terms of quantity, quality and variety, and that is acceptable within the given culture”.

As regards access to food worldwide, we are faced on one hand with surplus that leads to a waste of food and to illness in the so-called developed countries, and with famine and undernourishment in developing countries on the other: two sides of the same coin with a variety of interests at stake.

Too often food is being wasted by our personal behaviour or by buying large amounts and, what is more, often at low prices and of poor quality. Besides the effects this food has on health, its production also requires enormous amounts of energy. This is typical of an economic system which organises the wastage (how much food is thrown away in supermarkets because of its sell-by date?).

This was not the case in agrarian societies all over Europe before the Industrial Revolution, which were characterised by self-sufficient economies. Nor is it happening (at least not on the same scale) today in developing countries, based on a rural economy.

Today, three major groups are facing each other in the food chain: **global agribusiness**, mainly driven by profit, **farmers** with all their difficulties and modern challenges and **consumers**, often searching for better prices and seeking quality, but mostly unaware of the reality of production.

The “Most Favourite Nation”-Rule applied by GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade – this rule determines a general basis from the situation in the most efficient country) is disputable, and there are more voices today defending the right for any country to protect a basic self-sufficiency in food and a dynamic rural economy based on agriculture, even in difficult conditions.

Agriculture is part of the culture of every nation. Its traditions go back thousands of years and have marked our environment. It cannot be standardised across different countries. What would Tuscany be without its hills and vineyards? And what would Bavaria be without its typical farms and the vast pasture lands for dairy cows? The English enclosures are as fascinating as the landscape created in France through the “herbage et bocage” system.

Europe's agricultural safeguard policies are a result of the desire to preserve its thousand-year history (which would be lost if we allowed agriculture to disappear) and to provide the food needed in the country. Developing countries should be given the same rights to develop and protect their agriculture, and food production system as well as their cultural and landscape treasures.

In order to save biodiversity we must seriously question the system of uniformity which prevails today and which mostly benefits rich countries. It does however also make them poorer.

Considering this background, it becomes obvious that reforms of global trade policies and rules concerning food production are urgent in order **to decrease poverty** and accordingly food insecurity and hunger.

Successfully strengthening farmers' ties to their land means avoiding rural flight, a trend which can be observed today mainly in developing countries, where people give up rural life to move to big cities. This leads to hunger, marginalisation, unemployment and creation of ghettos, where they fall prey to ever more ferocious and uncontrollable crime.

At the same time, **the European Union**, faced with an agricultural crisis caused by competition from outside, had to put forward new policies for rural marketing, aimed mainly at preserving local and typical production. Take the situation in Italy: the boom of the farming areas and the new law on Multifunctional Farming Undertakings are offering farmers alternative sources of income to prevent their abandoning this vital branch of the economy.

In addition, a new actor has appeared on stage: the **GMO (Genetically Modified Organism)**, giving rise to much controversy: on one hand, its proponents advocate the further development of research with the perspective of progress for agriculture. On the other hand, its opponents fear unknown consequences for people's health and the possibility of a gradual disappearance of our biodiversity. Many farmers refuse to become fully dependant on big multinational companies controlling seed-production. There is clear confrontation between the advocates of alternative agriculture (organic or bio-dynamic farming, farming with integrated pest management...) who fight for respect for the environment, and the advocates of the new biotechnologies used in farming, and this promises to continue for a long time. The interests at stake make any attempt to create understanding and common search on this debate almost impossible.

But the challenge is there!