



A United Voice

Italy - 28 Oct 10

The fourth Terra Madre gathering of food communities came to a close on Sunday with more than 6,000 participants filling a stadium in Turin to hear a panel of distinguished speakers present the sustainability and food policies drafted during the preceding four days of meetings.



Small-scale farmers, fishers, producers, cooks and youth gathered to discuss eight key policy directions for a sustainable food future, led by eight leading thinkers from around the world: Marcello Buiatti, professor of genetics at the University of Florence (biodiversity and ecosystems); Serge Latouche, professor emeritus of economic science at the University of Paris-Sud (social systems and transformation); author and journalist Raj Patel (goods, exchanges and shared resources); co-founder of the Committee on Sustainability Assessment, Daniele Giovannucci (laws, rights and policies); Angelo Consoli, European director of the Foundation on Economic Trends (energy and systemic production); scientist and eco-activist Vandana Shiva, (traditional knowledge, gender and immaterial values); economist and environmentalist Manfred Max-Neef (sustainable education); and Slow Food's founder and president, Carlo Petrini (pleasure and well-being).

Through these policies, the global Terra Madre network will clearly articulate its shared vision and objectives. The draft policies were drawn up four months ago at the University of Gastronomic Sciences through the collection of suggestions from online forums and other universities around the world, and further contributions were made during the workshops last weekend during the international Terra Madre meeting. The final policies will be presented on Terra Madre Day this December 10, and sent to governments, food policy makers and organizations around the world.

Each policy was presented at the closing ceremony in a round table discussion. Marcello Buiatti spoke first, affirming the value of diversity and change. Responding to a previous protest by animal-rights activists, he said: "Human rights and animal rights go together. We eat plants and animals because we humans are omnivorous. But we must live in harmony with them. Biodiversity is made of living beings, which change constantly, while industry makes cars, which can't change with the environment. Industry works with dead things. Big multinationals want to control us with this absurd system in which life is money. They are killing the land and killing living beings and making them into machines. They want one type of machine in the whole world. We must change the economy and we must use our

cultural diversity to defend ourselves. We must be proud of our diversity.”

Next came Serge Latouche, one of the founders of the “degrowth” movement. “We must de-colonialize our imagery and remove from our minds the myths about modernity and productivism and consumption, based on the religion of growth. We cannot exploit nature endlessly, with no limits. Even a child would understand this is impossible. Techno-science pretends to create an artificial world in place of the real world it is destroying every day.” He described the current depletion of natural resources and fossil fuels as “total nonsense,” saying: “We have to reinvent common goods like water, soil and air, and focus on what is produced locally, in families and villages. We have to find a healthy relationship with nature and food. We must nourish ourselves with nature and let nature nourish itself from us.”

Inspiration on how to preserve nature and share resources can be drawn from indigenous people, said Raj Patel. Citing the work of the Via Campesina movement towards creating food sovereignty, he said that we need democracy and open conversation within our food system. He described the transformative power of food in political movements and the importance of pleasure in recruiting people: “With the leadership of indigenous people and the rocket fuel of pleasure, together we can reach the stars.”

“Many countries have the right to food enshrined in their constitution,” said Daniele Giovannucci, “but very few have laws to guarantee it. The right to food is the same as the right to life.” Hunger has nothing to do with the amount of food we produce, he pointed out. Instead, it comes from a lack of access to the resources necessary to grow food and to markets. “Women, the indigenous and the poor suffer the most from lack of access,” he said. He went on to talk about the importance of “tangible patrimony,” our common heritage of biodiversity and culture, which needs to be protected by laws, humanistic policies and public and private investment. “The basis of all this,” he said, “is education. We have to deepen our knowledge.”

Lack of access is also a problem within our current energy system, explained Angelo Consoli. Our current energy model based on fossil fuels and nuclear power is neither good, clean nor fair, he said, echoing Slow Food’s principles for food quality. “It’s not good because it creates entropy. There is no pleasure in its fumes and nuclear waste. Energy should be integrated with ecosystems. I don’t need to tell you why coal and oil are not clean, just look at what happened in the Gulf of Mexico. And it’s not fair. We have a very unequal society in which half of the world’s population have little or no access to electricity. The 350 richest people in the world make as much as the poorest 3 billion.” He said this inequality was created by the current capital-intensive, profit-focused, monopolistic energy model. “The energy monopolists only see the profit side, but there is also a spiritual side to energy.” Energy is a human right, like water, food and freedom. “Everyone should have their fair share. The sun gives us more than enough energy.” If only the money spent on researching fossil fuels and nuclear power had been invested in solar technology, we would have affordable solar panels, he said. “We have to fight for energy sovereignty and energy biodiversity,” he said, calling for the creation of energy communities. “We must harness the sun and distribute local energy. Food and energy must be decentralized for humans to remain on the earth.”

“A living, nurturing mother has been transformed into dead matter,” said Vandana Shiva, decrying the mechanistic, violent way of thinking that lies behind industrial agriculture. She contrasted this with the world view of indigenous cultures, who hold the earth as sacred. She went on to condemn seed patents and biopiracy: “If you patent life, you’re claiming you created life, claiming it’s a product of your mind.” But corporations do not have minds, she said, they are just “fictions with a legal personality.”

