

the Milan Charter for the Mountain

We man and woman, citizens of this planet, share and endorse the Charter of Milan, to take on specific commitments in relation to the right to food that we believe should be considered an essential human right.

We also believe that the mountains and their richness and their ecological, anthropological and cultural biodiversity are essential resources to ensure the welfare of the populations of the planet and for this we propose a Charter of Milan for the Mountain.

Preamble

- " (...) The mountains are an important source of water, energy and biodiversity. In addition, they are a fount of key resources such as minerals, forest and agricultural products as well as recreation. As an important ecosystem, representing the ecological complexity and interdependence of our planet, mountain environments are essential to the survival of the global ecosystem" (Agenda 21, Rio de Janeiro, 1992, Chapter 13, Sustainable development of the mountains);
- The United Nations declared 2002 the "International Year of the Mountains", to promote greater awareness internationally of the global importance of mountain areas, in the interdependence of the global ecosystem;
- The UN General Assembly designated 11 December of each year, starting in 2003, as "International Mountains Day" with the aim of bringing mountain issues to wider attention and to first place in international priorities and to ensure a better quality of life and sustainable development for the benefit of millions of people living in mountain areas.

Rights

We believe that:

- o either appropriate policies must be developed to encourage and support specific activities consistent with the resources of mountain areas, such as agriculture and traditional products and handicrafts made in a sustainable way based on local and traditional knowledge of the mountains on the Earth, interpreted and implemented in a modern and innovative way, so that the quality and uniqueness they express become real factors for competing with the production of lowland areas and together promote the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of local communities to ensure the protection and preservation of common goods such as biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services, with benefits for all the communities of the planet;
- o The mountain should represent for humanity an important natural, cultural, scenic, water and forests heritage, the use of which should be properly monitored and regulated in order to preserve it and ensure access to it for local people and the planet;
- o The management of the traditional countryside and farming adapted to and compatible with the environment should be maintained in the general interest; unique high-quality products must be associated with fair economic outcomes; it is necessary to enhance food production in the mountains thanks to the application of new knowledge, the processes and tools specifically developed from research and innovation in order to increase the sustainability of food products

and processes of transformation and the development of methods of certification and commercial development strategies that generate positive effects in the first place for local communities;

- o Knowledge and mountain traditions must be defended and promoted so that every inhabitant of the highlands can have their cultural heritage guaranteed.

Awareness

We are aware that:

- o The mountains on Earth are an important reservoir of biodiversity, whose value is priceless because essential to the permanence and evolution of life on the planet;
- o The mountains on Earth are places rich in cultural resources, often cradles of civilisations and religions, as well as of agricultural and rural resources and food production methods of great value, generated by the deep relationship between man and a challenging environment;
- o The mountains of the Earth and their inhabitants, despite the wealth of resources and the role they play for the planet, are mostly relegated to the margins by the adoption of development models that invest in and enhance socio-cultural and environmental context other than mountains, generating great inequalities in opportunity and in access to services and to modernity between the mountain people and lowlands and urban and metropolitan centers.

Commitments

As citizens of this planet, in accordance with the Charter of Milan, we commit ourselves and call on governments, institutions and international organisations to:

- o Protect, support and promote the value of the mountain environments as a valuable reserve of biodiversity of global interest;
- o Promote a global agreement on urban and rural food strategies in relation to access to healthy and nutritious food, involving the key metropolitan areas of the planet, the countryside, marine areas and mountain areas;
- o Introduce or strengthen in schools of all levels and in school canteens nutrition education programs and promote knowledge of the agro-biodiversity, agricultural products, foods, culture and typical products of the mountains;
- o Preserve the traditional cultural heritage, local knowledge, autonomy – promoting practices of self-government as expressions of political empowerment for good local governance – and social identities, lifestyles and the age-old ability to relate to the environment and to the use of resources, including food, in an adapting and truly sustainable way by promoting non-intensive farming in defence of the production specialities of the mountains, which are not compatible with quantitative agro-industrial models;
- o Promote policies and actions aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and social and economic conditions between the citizens of the lowland and the mountains.

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