

FIRST OF ALL, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE, AND FOR INVITING ME. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO BRING YOU THE BEST REGARDS OF CARLO PETRINI, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF SLOW FOOD, WHO UNFORTUNATELY COULDN'T PARTECIPATE TODAY.

I THINK THAT THE REASONS WHY WE SHOULD REJECT **GMOS**, AND AN AGRICULTURE BASED UPON THEM, ARE ALREADY CLEAR TO THIS ASSEMBLY. SO I WILL BE VERY SHORT ON THESE TOPICS.

GMOS ARE THE PRODUCT OF AN INDUSTRY THAT DECLARES ITSELF TO BE 'AGRICULTURAL', BUT IN REALITY HAS NOTHING AT ALL TO DO WITH THE PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE GUIDED AGRICULTURE FOR CENTURIES. THEY ARE THE OFFSPRING OF A REDUCTIONISM THAT HAS LED US TO BELIEVE THAT FEEDING PEOPLE IS SIMPLY A MATTER OF FILLING THEM WITH NUTRIENTS.

BUT FEEDING PEOPLE IS MUCH MORE: IT IS AIMING TO THEIR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELL BEING. IT IS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "HIDDEN CONNECTIONS" IN LIVING SYSTEMS: IT MUST BE GOOD BOTH FOR NUTRITION AND THE ENVIRONMENT; FOR THE MARKET AND WORKERS

GRATIFICATION; FOR TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES.

GMOs ARE PART OF AN OUTLOOK THAT TREATS NATURE AS SOMETHING CONQUERABLE, TO BE DOMINATED AND EXPLOITED, IN WHICH HUMANS ACT AS THE OWNERS OF NATURE.

IN THE MODERN TIMES, THIS VISION HAS BROUGHT TO FURTHER EVOLUTION: ON ONE SIDE THERE IS THE NATURE, ON THE OTHER SIDE THERE IS NOT THE HUMAN BEING AS A WHOLE, BUT ONLY A PART OF IT: THE HUMAN BEING WITH MONEY. AND MONEY IS SEEN AS A WAY TO AVOID THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCES. IF I HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY FERTILIZERS I DO NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF OVEREXPLOITING THE SOIL.

THIS MEANS THAT IN THE “NATURE” SIDE, NOW, IS INCLUDED ALSO A HUGE PART OF HUMANITY, THE ONE WHICH HAS NOT ENOUGH MONEY TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF NATURE.

IF MONEY BECOMES THE MAIN GUIDING LINE OF ACTION – AS IT HAPPENS IN THE CORPORATES – IT WON’T MAKE ANY SENSE THE IDEA OF A CO-OPERATION WITH NATURE, IN WHICH HUMANS WILL ACCEPT ITS CYCLES AND NEEDS FOR THE COMMON WELL BEING.

IN THE NATURE SIDE, THE SMALL SCALE PRODUCTION DOES FIT THE MULTI-PURPOSE, SUSTAINABLE, INTEGRATED-PRODUCTION-AIM THAT CAN BE GOOD FOR FEEDING BOTH THE HUMANS (RICH OR NOT) AND THE REST OF LIVING FORMS OF THE PLANET.

GM CORPS CANNOT BE PROFITABLE ON THE SMALL SCALE BASE: THEY NEED HUGE SURFACES, HUGE CAPITALS, HUGE TRANSPORTATIONS.

THEY PRODUCE FOOD TO BE SOLD, NOT FOOD TO BE EATEN!

THEY ARE THE OFFSPRING OF THE MARKET SEEN AS A SUPREME ENTITY, IN A VISION OF A WORLD SPLIT IN TWO: ONE HALF FOR SELLING, THE OTHER FOR BUYING.

TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES HAVE BEEN CALLED BY THE ANTHROPOLOGIST MARCEL MAUSS “THE GIFT SOCIETIES”. THE IDEA OF GRATUITY AND MUTUALITY IS BASIC IN THE TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES, WHICH LEARN IT FROM THE NATURE.

SEEDS CAN BE SEEN AS THE CORE ISSUE OF THIS SYSTEMS. IN THE TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURE SEEDS EXCHANGE IS A BASIC ACTION: IF SOMEONE IS ASKED FOR THEM, HE OR SHE CANNOT REFUSE TO DONATE.

**SO THE SEEDS CORPORATES – GM OR NOT - HAVE ATTACKED
PRECISELY THE CORE ISSUES.**

**THE OBVIOUS CONSEQUENCE IS THAT LIFE ITSELF – FOR THE GM
SUPPORTERS - BELONGS TO THOSE WHO CAN FIND A WAY TO SELL IT.**

**IF WERE THE GMOs SUPPORTER SO WORRIED FOR THE STARVING
PEOPLES, THE FIRST THING THEY COULD DO WOULD BE TO CANCEL ANY
FORM AND POSSIBILITIES OF EARNING MONEY THROUGH ROYALTIES!**

**BUT REGARDING US, REJECTING GMOs MEANS, FIRST AND FOREMOST,
REJECTING THE SYSTEM THEY STAND FOR: MEANING LARGE-SCALE
INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE, FOOD AS A COMMODITY, PROFIT AS AN
ABSOLUTE END — IRRESPECTIVE OF OUR NEEDS AND THE NEEDS OF
NATURE.**

**ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FUTURE WILL DEPEND BY NECESSITY ON THE
RELOCATION OF AGRICULTURE, ON THE CONQUEST OF FOOD
SOVEREIGNTY BY LOCAL POPULATIONS AND ON ECONOMICALLY VIABLE
LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS.**

TRADITIONAL FARMING HAS THE WHOLE MEANING AND THE WHOLE ACTIONS THAT CAN FEED THE PEOPLE, THE LAND, THE WATER, WILDNESS AND THE ANIMALS AT THE SAME TIME.

SO WE NEED TO DEFINE THE KIND OF DEVELOPMENT WE ARE THINKING ABOUT, AND WHAT EXACTLY WE MEAN BY THE WORD ITSELF.

JUST AS NATURE TEACHES US THAT BIODIVERSITY IS FUNDAMENTAL FOR SURVIVAL, SO THE DIVERSITY OF PEOPLES AND LOCAL SMALL-SCALE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS BECOMES THE MOST IMPORTANT GUARANTEE FOR OUR FUTURE.

ANCIENT POPULAR WISDOM, WHICH DEVELOPED *WITH*, AND NOT *AGAINST* NATURE, IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE MOST MODERN WAY OF RESTORING SUSTAINABILITY TO OUR PLANET'S FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION.

SAVING SUCH WISDOM, USING IT PRACTICALLY, MAKING IT INTERACT WITH SCIENCE AND MODERN TECHNOLOGIES, INTERCONNECTING ITS DIFFERENT FORMS: THIS IS THE CREATIVE RESPONSE OF TERRA MADRE, THE WORLD NETWORK OF FOOD COMMUNITIES CREATED BY SLOW FOOD.

SLOW FOOD'S PHILOSOPHY HAS EVOLVED OVER THE ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY AND CRYSTALLIZED AT THE REALIZATION THAT "EATING IS AN AGRICULTURAL ACT AND PRODUCING IS A GASTRONOMIC ACT."

THE MOVEMENT HAD ALWAYS STOOD FOR THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE, FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD-TASTING FOOD, AND TO MAINTAIN FOOD DIVERSITY IN THE FACE OF GROWING HOMOGENIZATION. IT SUPPORTS SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS - AND FIGHTS AGAINST SYSTEMS, INCLUDING GM CROPS, THAT PUT THEM IN DANGER – BY BRINGING THEM TOGETHER WITH PLAYERS WITH DECISION-MAKING POWER: CONSUMERS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, CHEFS AND COOKS, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH ENTITIES, NGOs.

FOR SLOW FOOD, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT IT IS ONLY THROUGH REPEATED, CUMULATIVE LOCAL ACTION, FOLLOWING A GUIDING GLOBAL VISION, THAT A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT CAN BE ACHIEVED.

THUS TERRA MADRE WAS BORN: TO GIVE VOICE AND VISIBILITY TO THE RURAL FOOD PRODUCERS WHO POPULATE OUR WORLD. TO RAISE THEIR AWARENESS, AS WELL AS THAT OF THE VALUE OF THEIR WORK. TO SUSTAIN THEIR ABILITY TO WORK UNDER THE BEST CONDITIONS, FOR ALL OF OUR GOOD AND FOR THE GOOD OF THE PLANET.

FOR THESE REASONS, CONSTRUCTING A GLOBAL NETWORK SEEMED INVALUABLE. A GLOBAL NETWORK WITH INFORMATION-SHARING TOOLS, THE MEANS TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION IN MANY WAYS. BECAUSE WE MUST CONTINUE TO HAVE FERTILE LANDS, LANDS ON WHICH GROW PLANTS AND ANIMALS APPROPRIATE TO THOSE ENVIRONMENTS, RATHER THAN NEEDING TO BE PUMPED FULL OF CHEMICALS TO MAKE THEM THRIVE ARTIFICIALLY. AND WE MUST ALSO CONTINUE TO HAVE THE PEOPLE CAPABLE OF STEWARDING THESE LANDS AND TO KEEP THEIR KNOW-HOW.

THE INAUGURAL GATHERING OF TERRA MADRE LAUNCHED THE NETWORK IN 2004 IN TORINO, AND WAS ON AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE. THIS FIRST EDITION BROUGHT TOGETHER 5000 PRODUCERS FROM 130 COUNTRIES AND RAISED GLOBAL MEDIA ATTENTION ON THEIR CRISIS. THE SECOND EDITION WAS IN 2006, AND INCORPORATED AN ADDITIONAL 1000 COOKS, FROM RENOWNED TO MODEST, BUT ALL AWARE OF THEIR ROLE RELATIVE TO FOOD PRODUCERS. ALSO IN ATTENDANCE WERE 400 RESEARCHERS AND ACADEMICS, SEEKING TO BRIDGE THE THEORY OF THEIR WORK WITH HANDS-ON PRACTICE.

THE 2008 EDITION BROUGHT TOGETHER OVER 7000 PRODUCERS FROM 153 COUNTRIES, REPRESENTING MORE THAN 1200 FOOD COMMUNITIES. FOR TERRA MADRE AND SLOW FOOD, FOOD COMMUNITIES ARE THOSE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION, TRANSFORMATION, AND DISTRIBUTION OF A PARTICULAR FOOD, WHO ARE CLOSELY LINKED TO A GEOGRAPHIC AREA, EITHER HISTORICALLY, SOCIALLY, OR CULTURALLY. FOOD COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE SMALL PRODUCERS WHO MAKE HIGH-QUALITY PRODUCTS IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY.

NOW THE TERRA MADRE NETWORK IS GROWING DAY-AFTER-DAY, MAKING REAL THE SLOW FOOD CONCEPT OF GOOD, CLEAN, AND FAIR THROUGH THEIR DAILY WORK, PROJECTS AND EXCHANGES. LET ME BRIEFLY EXPLAIN THIS CONCEPT OF QUALITY, GOOD, CLEAN AND FAIR: GOOD REFERS TO THE QUALITY OF FOOD PRODUCTS AND OF THEIR TASTE; CLEAN, TO A PRODUCTION PROCESS THAT RESPECTS THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN HEALTH; FAIR CONTAINS THE DIGNITY, AND AN APPROPRIATE ECONOMIC RETURN FOR THE PEOPLE WHO PRODUCE, INCLUDING RESPECT FROM THOSE WHO CONSUME.

WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF THE GREATEST FOOD CRISIS TO OCCUR IN A TIME OF PEACE.

SMALL PRODUCERS AND SUBSISTENCE PRODUCERS ARE THE FUTURE: WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THEY WILL BE THE LEADERS OF A THIRD INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION. FOOD COMMUNITIES, WITH THEIR LOCAL ECONOMIES BASED UPON SMALL-SCALE PRODUCTION, HAVE BEEN PRACTICING AGRICULTURE WHICH RESPECTS THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, IN A DECENTRALIZED, DEMOCRATIC AND COOPERATIVE MANNER, WITHOUT THE CONTROLLING HAND OF MULTINATIONALS.

THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE THEY PRACTICE IS BASED UPON PRINCIPLES OF DIVERSITY, BALANCE AND RECYCLING. RENEWABLE ENERGY IS USED, AVOIDING THE WASTE TYPICALLY PRODUCED BY CONSUMER SOCIETIES. THESE WILL BE THE PRINCIPLES FOR A THIRD INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION. IT IS WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE, NOT THAT OF GM TECHNOLOGY, THAT WE WILL FIND THE KEYS FOR FUTURE FOOD SYSTEMS, FUTURE WAYS OF PRODUCING, AND THEREFORE FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET.

THANK YOU