



People's Food  
Policy Project

Pour une **politique**  
**alimentaire** populaire

## **The People's Food Rationale**

May 19, 2010

The People's Food Policy Project is part of a powerful, vibrant food movement across Canada that is reclaiming and rebuilding our food system. The People's Food Policy Project is creating a food policy based on the principles of food sovereignty, that will ensure the provision of healthy food for all, will create a place for citizens in shaping food policy and programs, and will support the web of relationships among peoples and the natural world in which we live.

In Canada, we have watched the development of a food system that is based on exploitation of both people and the Earth, that concentrates power in the hands of corporations, marginalizes food providers, increases inequity and leads to hunger, malnutrition, and obesity. It is a global system which produces cheap food based on cheap oil and synthetic fertilizer. It respects neither national boundaries nor natural limits. Natural elements are now defined as 'resources', ignoring the ancient relationships between people and the lands and waters they inhabit. Transformed into commodities, they are being exploited, degraded, and destroyed. The Earth can no longer sustain this way of life.

We firmly believe that another way is possible. There are real and viable alternatives to the ongoing colonization and exploitation of peoples and lands. Communities around the world and across Canada are creating new models to feed themselves and to reclaim their food systems. Some aspects of this process are visible in Canada in: urban agriculture; reclaiming Indigenous foodways and territories; organic certification; Buy Local policies in schools, hospitals, and workplaces; community shared agriculture; sustainable fisheries; community kitchens and restaurants featuring local food – and more. These new ways of relating to one another and the planet must be supported and the barriers that limit them must be broken down. We are developing policies and governance structures to support this fundamental and structural shift.

Our life depends upon food, which comes to us from our labour and that of others but also as a gift. We are embedded in a circle of life which provides for us, and we must ensure that nobody is left outside of that circle. We honour the relationships with our food sources and our food providers. From our diverse cultures and teachers we are learning how to manage our behaviour, to abandon individualism and arrogance and to build a community culture of respect and care.

We are building food sovereignty from the ground up. We call upon governments at every level to give up divisive and destructive policies supporting privatization and commodification and implement policies that support food sovereignty.

The People's Food Policy Project is proposing policies that:

- provide a meaningful role to citizens, civil society and a diversity of stakeholders in the shaping of food policies and programs
- ensure sustainable livelihoods for those who grow and harvest food
- give immediate priority to local consumption before food exports
- put universal programs in place to ensure that everyone, without exception, has assured and dignified access to appropriate and acceptable food
- highlight the central role of women throughout the food system, in recognition of their work in providing food, and in building and maintaining community
- honour the culture and autonomy of Indigenous peoples and therefore ensure that they are able to continue, and teach the rest of us, their relationships of care and respect for the natural elements with which they have always lived
- limit the powers of food corporations, including advertising, sponsorships, and every other technique used to promote non-nutritional food, particularly to children
- replace the regime of intellectual property and secrecy with an open, public process for research and knowledge sharing which acknowledges different ways of knowing
- develop health and food safety regulations based on the lower level of risk in small-scale, locally-focused food processing and distribution
- encourage research and innovation, while imposing the precautionary principle on any new technologies, which must prove a reasonable assurance of no harm before being allowed to enter the food system
- enact trade and aid policies that support the food sovereignty of other nations and peoples.