My compliments to AFA and PAKISAMA who are organizing this important forum to fight hunger and poverty. My compliments also to the people who are participating in this forum – the government agencies, the NGOs, the academic organizations, and more particularly, the organization of women and men farmers from the Philippines.

My name is Maria Emilia Pacheco. I work for a non-government organization called FASE (Solidarity in Action). FASE is an old NGO from Brazil that aims to participate in the process of popular education, environmental education, in the city and in the rural areas. And in behalf of FASE, I am a member of the Brazilian forum on food sovereignty and foo d security and nutrition that was created 10 years ago in Brazil. Through this forum, I was nominated in the national council for food security and nutrition (CONSEA), where I am the President since 2012.

The Council is a very important space for social participation. Social participation is one of the most important principles that rule the historical creation of the Brazilian System of food security and nutrition. The Council already existed before the Lula government, but the activities were limited during the period of the government of Fernande Enrique Cardoso. The actual form of the Council was installed by the government of Lula in 2003 as a space for social participation and consultation with government and of elaboration of policy proposals, a place where it was possible to have a critical view of the programs and policies in order to try to ameliorate them. It is participated in by 2/3 of the representative of the civil society, and 1/3 by the government. There are 20 ministries that are represented in the CONSEA. Among the organizations, we have representatives of the indigenous peoples, of the Quilombola community (which are self-organized traditional community of descendants of escaped slaves). There are also representatives of different farmer organizations. Among them FETRAF (Brazilian Federation of Family Farming) from which Marcos Rochinski, who will participate in this forum, but also other organizations like La Via Campesina, CONTAG. There are also organizations representing people with special needs related to food like organization of diabetic people. We also have different type of platforms representatives like representatives of some region like semi-arid regions from the Northeast. There are also representatives from other platforms like agroecology or researchers. We also have representatives from the private sector like the federation of agro-industry and the confederation of agriculture.

 In its daily work, the Council is honored by the presence of ministers, especially Minister Eliza Campelo, who is in charge of the secretariat of the council. But the presidency is always convened through a representative of civil society. Aside from the council, the other space for participation, which gives some sense to what we call the system of food security and nutrition, is the very important Conference on Food Security and Nutrition.

We already organized four conferences, and the fourth conference that was already organized four years ago and can count from all the process that started from the organization at the municipal level by the different levels to arrive to the national level, was involving more than 75,000 people from 3,200 municipalities in Brazil. This year, we are preparing the fifth conference in Brazil which has a very important motto, “Real Food from Rural Areas to the City, for the Right to Food Sovereignty.” This motto is very important for us and has a very important meaning, because we understand the profound move of the agro-food system in the world and specially here in Brazil shows a very big problem. Because on one hand, if Brazil goes out of hunger, we have a lot of chronic illnesses like diabetes, which are expressions of the change of the profile of the health in Brazil and the change of the pattern of consumption. For example, there was a very big role in this pattern of the agro-industrial processed food in Brazil. For this reason, when we speak about real food from the rural area to the city, we try to defend the need to valorize the food culture, artisanal food, the locally produced food, the agro ecological production of men and women farmers and indigenous peoples in the name of food sovereignty, because in Brazil at the same time we have a very high use of agro-chemical products, also with the liberalization of transgenic is continuing, that is why we have to have this discussion of the different models of agriculture and to give our views on the way that agriculture policies should go.

Together with this national Conference, the national system of food security and nutrition is also counting alongside this Conference there is an Inter-Ministerial chamber of food security and nutrition. And all of these are found in the Federal national plan, the different state plans, and the municipal plans. It is also important to say that this construction has a recent history in Brazil. It is the claiming of public policy through a huge mobilization of civil society through their movement and through the CONSEA to include in the national Constitution in its article 6, which is an article that has a direct reference to the human right to adequate food.

The Constitutional mandate means that all the spheres -- from the Government, from the Federal Plan, the State plane, Municipal plan -- are really engaged to accomplish the human right to adequate food. The fact that it is in the constitution goes beyond Government and must be translated into public policy. And in Brazil, we have a national policy of food security and nutrition, which is translated in a plan. And I would like to explain the direction and vision of these policies. There are many programs and different policies in the case of Brazil that are directly resulting and implementing the principle of universal access to food.

One example in this line (direction) is the program of scholar alimentation (school feeding program), which was one of the proposals of CONSEA to allocate 30 percent of the money from this program (which concerns more that 40 million daily meals) that have to be produced from food bought from the family farmer, organized through a national system.

Another direction (principle) is on the sustainable agro ecological system of production, which secures the food production. This direction is very important as we have very big challenge in Brazil. And this was also demanded first at the level of the COnSEAl. And it was a proposal for an agro ecology and organic law, which is now a reality since 2 years ago. So in Brazil if we use a lot of transgenic and toxics, we continue with this challenge to try to change the model of production to a more sustainable one, which is based on an acknowledgement of the form of life.

But also this principle links us to another debate which is very important in the council, which is the right to land. We have a priority of the process of agrarian reform. We have view that it is not possible to have a real food security without having a real working agrarian reform and a kind of balance in the territory.

And we need also in Brazil a channel to commercialize the products that valorize the short circuit (of food distribution), that valorize the local agroecological market, the public system of commercialization of food through institutional public purchase.

Another principle is the link to the education process for food and nutrition. And about this it is important to say that it was subject to a lot of debate, a guide for nutritional health of the population. There was also an appeal from society to the state to check the quality of food. And it is very important to educate the people on the problem of too much use of very processed products. And this education to food culture must be done by the civil society organizations. And for example that there is the need to control the publicity for food. And different normative things that need to be organized to obtain a good for healthy food.

But there is also some program that is really linked to the marginalized community. There is a necessity to have a special policy. For example, Brazil without poverty or bolza familia. It is necessary that this kind of program is also articulated to this population. But it is very important for all these things to have an intersectorality of all the program.

There is also the important program on access to water. Because there is also a model of production that makes concentration on the land of a few in some regions.

Another important thing is the defense of food security and the right to food in the context of the international negotiations, that it is written in the law in the policies and the programs and that the program like the program of food acquisition, about which Rochinski has spoken about , these are in the principles that are driving the policy in Brazil, and must be debated at the international level.

Also as part of the national policy on food security and nutrition, there is the part about the initiative of monitoring. It is necessary to create some indicators for analyzing the situation of people who are suffering from nutrition. It is an important area where the council is contributing….

What I want to say about … how it is important to articulate all the programs in different directions. We cannot just be concentrating on the policies to access to food, but also how it is commercialized, distributed, what are the educative measure to valorize it. And with all these things we can really advance on the principle on the right to food. And for this reason the notion of social society participation is so precious. When I discuss about these directions or principles, it is important to note that very often, the proposition that came from the civil society, which was then brought to the council that was built into a proposition, and elaborated in a dialogue with the Government. But this participation cannot be reduced at the participation at the national Council, because there are also councils at the regional and local levels, which are participated in by all these organizations that make up the civil society, which gives inputs to these processes. The importance of civil society, participation that is what makes the difference. That tis what the Brazilian experience has demonstrated.

The different components of civil society gave inputs to all these councils at all levels. And they influence all the dialogue in the council related with the government. And what makes the difference is really the quality of social participation. And that is something that the Brazilian experience shows. We want to share it with other countries. I will finish by saying that this forum that is uniting us with the Philippines. I wish that there is a lot of success. For the mobilization of the civil society movement, from the farmers, which are very important, to arrive at food sovereignty.

Thank you very much.