Oral statement by FIAN Belgium

52nd Pre-session of the UPR on Belgium

Geneva, February 12th, 2026

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Emilie de Bassompierre. I am speaking on behalf of FIAN Belgium. In view of these sessions, we have consulted with our network including FIAN International, European Coordination Via Campesina, the Réseau de Soutien à l'Agriculture Paysanne, Boerenforum, Voedsel Anders, Agroecology in Action, and the Coalition against Hunger.

My declaration will focus on the right to food and the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. More than ever, at a time when planetary boundaries are being exceeded and geopolitical tensions pose threats to food security, these rights must be protected, respected and fulfilled. The universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights must continue to serve as a compass for Belgium, both in its domestic policy and on the international stage.

Please note that FIAN Belgium was not invited to participate in a prior national consultation.

First and foremost, I would like to express our solidarity with the Palestinian people, as well as with all peasants around the world who see their land destroyed or stolen, which constitutes a grave violation of their human rights. With the FIAN International network, FIAN Belgium strongly condemns the use of hunger as a weapon of war in the Gaza Strip and the illegal occupation of Palestinian land.

While we welcome measures that have already been taken, we demand that Belgium:

- ✓ **Take measures to improve traceability in order to completely ban imports, including of agricultural products, from illegal settlements ;**
- ✓ **Materially support Palestinian organizations in the reconstruction of local, sustainable and resilient food systems.**

Since 2022, the price of the food basket in Belgium has increased by 32%. The Special Rapporteur on the right to food demonstrated in a 2025 report that 'large companies are taking advantage of various crises to artificially inflate their prices and make exorbitant profits'. In this context, the weakening of social security in Belgium (including a reduction in the food aid budget) is only exacerbating inequalities and food insecurity. Without alternatives, this means a regression on the right to food. Moreover, FIAN Belgium insists that the coexistence of food insecurity and high obesity rates reflects inequalities in access to adequate food.

Therefore, we call on the Belgian governments to:

- ✓ **Provide financial and technical support for research and pilot projects on a social security of food, in order to establish sustainable alternatives to food aid and support the transition of the Belgian food system towards more solidarity-based, local and ecological modes of production and consumption.**
- ✓ **Impose mandatory regulatory measures for the food industry including banning advertising for junk food.**

While Belgium made positive progress in 2023 with the recognition of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), in our report we noted significant obstacles to its implementation.

We stress that the most vulnerable people in the agri-food sector in Belgium are migrant workers, many of whom work informally or in precarious conditions, especially seasonal workers.

Furthermore, recent massive protests should be a clear signal of the distress of the agricultural sector. Belgium has lost 39% of its farms over the last 20 years. The liberalisation of agricultural trade, the push to overproduction, the concentration of land ownership, administrative complexity, and the lack of support to adapt to climate change, all contribute to the disappearance of small producers. And it is not only their rights that are at stake, but those of the whole population, as without farmers people will not have access to adequate food in the long term.

We urge Belgium to:

- ✓ **Promote and implement UNDROP in Belgium, including via the participation in decision-making processes of the most vulnerable rights holders ;**
- ✓ **Produce an analysis of the coherence of Belgian agricultural, commercial and development policies with regards to UNDROP ;**
- ✓ **Appoint a human rights officer directly within the Ministry of Agriculture ;**
- ✓ **Support the installation of small farmers and their transition to agroecology (including via the regulation of land markets to control speculation) ;**
- ✓ **Adopt holistic strategies at federal and regional levels to implement right to food obligations through the transition to agroecology, with ambitious targets accompanied by indicators, timelines and a dedicated budget.**

Finally, we welcomed Belgium's commitment in previous UPR cycles to achieve its target of 0.7% of GDP for development cooperation, wherein the Coalition against Hunger has consistently called for a minimum of 15% dedicated to agroecology. However, recent budget decisions will cause development assistance to fall from 0.48% to 0.40% of GDP in a single year, moving Belgium away from this commitment.

Moreover, the prominent role given to the private sector in both European and Belgian cooperation, combined with a wave of deregulation, is raising alert. Meanwhile, human rights organisations are increasingly being hindered in their role as watchdogs with the restriction of civic space. Belgium should go beyond the status quo to enable accountability and ensure that human rights are respected by companies headquartered in Belgium,

Including by :

- ✓ **Setting an example of strong action on corporate due diligence by maintaining the original application scope of the CSDDD including companies of 1.000 or more employees and €450 million net turnover ;**
- ✓ **Effectively transposing the European Directive on the protection of persons participating in public debate against clearly unfounded or abusive legal proceedings (SLAPP).**

Belgium has the opportunity to play a major role within the international community in promoting justice and human rights. We thank you for taking this request seriously and for mobilising our country to put an end to these violations of international law.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I kindly thank you for your attention.