**Speech delivered for the plenary on day one**

**Rupert Dunn on behalf of Urgenci.**

Hello, I am Rupert from Wales, UK, I am here representing Urgenci, the international network of community supported agriculture initiatives and solidarity based food production and distribution systems in both urban and rural areas.

The CSA model represents 1-1.5 million consumers worldwide. It is a diverse and growing movement with around 20,000 farms worldwide.

When thinking about CSA here, we are discussing what the interface between agroecology and the consumer/society could look like.

What if we could go beyond producing, buying and selling? The connection that food and other staples creates between consumers, producers, each other and the land is one in which can nourish much deeper relationships.

Some key words and principles we focus on in the solidarity economy is working together with a shared sense of trust an openness, and as consumers, to share both the risk and the reward with our producer.

Once we create these relationships, based not solely on finance but on mutual support, the role of the producer becomes much more of that than only producing food. The producer becomes an educator, demonstrating to people the extraordinary commitment it takes to produce sustenance for us.

Through this relationship we can also ‘open source’ our understanding of what it takes to run a farm for instance, what are the costs of producing a basket of vegetables and what is the producer getting in return? Once consumers have been educated to understand this, the logical next step is that they want to support their producer with fair recompense.

I would like to give you an example of how CSA can not only give a fair wage to the producer but actually take the redistribution of wealth into our own hands, creating more equity in society.

At Garten Coop, a CSA in Freiburg, Germany, members attend the annual general meeting, at which the budget is presented for the following year. Once the budget has been agreed, members anonymously write how much they are able/willing to pay. Once everyone has submitted their amount, this is added up and if it does not reach the final budget, they go round again. No one knows what anyone has paid, all pay according to what they can afford.

They have never failed to raise the required amount of money and their producers are paid well above the average farmers wage in Germany.

CSA farms are also places where the community comes to support the producer with shared workdays. People benefit from gaining skills and attend celebrations, festivals and shared meals together, so CSA and other solidarity based agroecological methods are actively building community.

So when we think about agroecology, I would encourage us to think about how we can share risk and reward with each other in a spirit of mutual trust and openness, deepen our relationships with each other and create peace and equity in our societies.

Thank you.

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