

People's Food Sovereignty Now!

Declaration from Social Movements/NGOs/CSOs Parallel Forum to the World Food Summit on Food Security Rome, November 13–17, 2009

Saturday 13 February 2010, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 17 November 2009).

Uno no vende la tierra por la cual camina su pueblo Tashunka Witko –1840 – 1877

We, 642 persons coming from 93 countries and representing 450 organisations of peasant and family farmers, small scale fisher folk, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, youth, women, the urban people, agricultural workers, local and international NGOs, and other social actors, gathered in Rome from the 13 –17 of November, 2009 united in our determination to work for and demand food sovereignty in a moment in which the growing numbers of the hungry has surpassed the one billion mark. Food sovereignty is the real solution to the tragedy of hunger in our world.

Food sovereignty entails transforming the current food system to ensure that those who produce food have equitable access to, and control over, land water, seeds, fisheries and agricultural biodiversity. All people have a right and responsibility to participate in deciding how food is produced and distributed. Governments must respect, protect and fulfil the right to food as the right to adequate, available, accessible, culturally acceptable and nutritious food.

Governments have obligations to provide emergency aid. But this must not undermine food sovereignty and human rights. Emergency aid should be procured as locally as possible and must not be used to pressure countries into accepting Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). Food must never be used as a political weapon.

We call attention to the violations of rights of people, both urban and rural, living in areas under armed conflict or occupation and in emergency situations. The international community must urgently address violations of human rights like those related to forced displacement, confiscation and alien exploitation of property, land, and other productive resources, demographic manipulation and population transfers.

Who Decides?

We declare our support for the renewed Committee on World Food Security: We take particular note of the commitment of those Heads of State present at the FAO Summit have shown to this important body in their Declaration. We emphasize the fundamental importance of the renewed CFS as the foremost inclusive international policy body for food and agriculture within the UN system, and as an essential body where the knowledge and perspectives of those whose daily labours have fed humanity for generations are not only heard, but also acted upon. We assert the centrality of the Right to Food as a principle to guide all elements of the Committee on World Food Security's work.

We express concern that the CFS is not receiving the funding appropriate to the ambition of its work programme. We urge FAO member states to back their political commitment with financial resources. We also note that much work remains to be done within the CFS to ensure that there is coherence between the different organs of the global food and agricultural institutional architecture. In this regard, we are extremely concerned by the proposed World Bank Global Agriculture and Food Security programme whose governance mechanism appears

undemocratic, un-transparent, and destined to lead to a replication of past mistakes. As long as institutions such as the WTO continue to privilege commercial interests over the globally marginalised and malnourished, hunger will continue to stalk the world.

Civil society has played a fundamentally important role in the CFS reform process, opening up a critical space which we intend to fully occupy in a responsible and effective manner. In so doing we will ensure that the voices of the excluded continue to be heard at the heart of food and agricultural policy-making and governance, at all levels. However, whilst we value the work that has been done, and hold high expectations regarding the CFS's future achievements, we will vigilantly monitor its work to ensure that member states follow through on their commitment to create an effective mechanism that is strong in its powers of coordination at all levels; able to hold its members to account; and start now to realise its commitment to develop a Global Strategic Framework for food security and nutrition.

Ecological Food Provision

We reaffirm that our ecological food provision actually feeds the large majority of people all over the world in both rural and urban areas (more than 75%). Our practices focus on food for people not profit for corporations. It is healthy, diverse, localised and cools the planet.

We commit to strengthen and promote our ecological model of food provision in the framework of food sovereignty that feeds all populations including those in marginal zones like small islands and coastal areas. Our practices, because they prioritise feeding people locally, minimise waste and losses of food and do not create the damage caused by industrial production systems. Peasant agriculture is resilient and can adapt to and mitigate climate change. We insist, however, that food and agriculture be kept out of carbon market. We will defend and develop our agricultural, fisheries and animal biodiversity in the face of the aggressive commodification of nature, food and knowledge that is being facilitated by the 'new Green Revolutions'. We call for a global moratorium on GMO. Governments must protect and properly regulate domestic food markets. Our practices require supply management policies in order to secure availability of food and to guarantee decent wages and fair prices. We are ready to discuss new legal frameworks to support our practices.

We call for a reframing of research, using participatory methods, that will support our ecological model of food provision. We are the innovators building on our knowledge and skills. We rehabilitate local seeds systems and livestock breeds and fish/aquatic species for a changing climate. We commit to promote the findings of IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development). We call for accountability by researchers. We reject corporations' control of research and will not engage in forums that are dominated by them. We will promote our innovations through our media and outreach programmes for capacity building, education and information dissemination.

We will strengthen our interconnecting rural –urban food webs. We will build alliances within a Complex Alimentarius –linking small-scale food providers, processors, scientists, institutions, consumers –to replace the reductionist approach of the Codex Alimentarius. We commit to shorten distances between food provider and consumer. We will strengthen urban food movements and advance urban and peri-urban agriculture. We will reclaim the language of food emphasising nutrition and diversity in diets that exclude meat provided from industrial systems.

Control over food producing resources

Land grabbing by transnational capital must stop. Landlessness and land grabbing have intensified in the wake of the global food crisis, deforestation, sequestering of water bodies, privatization of the

sea inland waters and coastal zones. Land and water confiscation and isolation practiced by occupying forces must be stopped. Countries and companies are colluding in alarming land grabbing practices. In less than a year, over 40 million hectares of fertile land in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe have been usurped through these deals, displacing local food production for export interests.

Instead of promoting large-scale industrial agricultural investments, we urge our governments and the FAO to implement structural changes implied in the Declaration of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD) and in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) must play a critical role in ensuring the effective participation of social movements and civil society organizations.

We demand comprehensive agrarian reforms which uphold the individual and collective/community rights of access to and control over territories. All States must implement effective public policies which guarantee community (those whose derives their livelihood) control over all natural resources. Strong accountability mechanisms to redress violations of these rights need to be in place. Gender equity and the youth interests must be at the heart of genuine agrarian and aquatic reforms. Reforms should guarantee women and youth full equality of opportunities and rights to land and natural wealth, and redress historical and ongoing discrimination.

Access to water is a human right. Water must remain in the “commons” and not be subject to market mechanisms of use and governance. Aquatic reforms should give legal recognition, protection and enforcement of the collective rights of small-scale fishing communities to access and use fishing grounds and maritime resources.

Closure of pastoralists routes and expropriation of lands, natural wealth and territories from local communities through economic concessions, big plantations, industrial agriculture and aquaculture, tourism and infrastructure projects and any other means must come to an end. Gathered food is also an important source to feed many of our communities and therefore deserves specific protection. The rights to territory for indigenous peoples encompass nature as a living being essential to the identity and culture of particular communities or peoples. As guaranteed by Articles 41 and 42 of the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples Rights, we call FAO to adopt a policy for Indigenous Peoples , to recognize Indigenous Peoples’ Territorial Rights, and to ensure their participation in resource decisions. .We urge FAO and IFAD to create a Working Group with Indigenous Peoples in the CFS.

We reject intellectual property rights over living resources including seeds, plants and animals. De facto biological monopolies -where the seed or breed is rendered sterile - must be banned. We will keep the seeds in our hands. We will keep freely exchanging and saving our seeds and breeds. We value our traditional knowledge as fishers, livestock keepers, Indigenous Peoples and peasants and we will further develop it to be able to feed our communities in a sustainable way. Our songs and tales express our cosmivision and are important to maintain our spiritual relationship with our lands.

Civil Society Commitments

We commit ourselves to increase our level of organization, build broad and strong alliances and promote joint actions, articulations, exchanges, and solidarity to speak with a strong voice for defending our food sovereignty. We are convinced that only the power of organized peoples and mobilization can achieve the needed changes, thus our principal task is to inform, raise awareness, debate, organize and mobilize people.

Women participants in the forum, noting the systematic oppression of women through the processes

of globalization and corporatization of agriculture, fisheries and livestock, intensified by patriarchy, commit ourselves to achieving equality in representation and decision making bodies. We demand gender justice, peace and respect for the rights of women, including common property rights. Our rights over seeds, productive resources, our knowledge and our contributions to enhancing resilience must be respected, valued and protected. Women agricultural workers and their communities must be assured safe working conditions and fair wages.

Youth participants of the forum reaffirm that young people are key to the development and implementation of ecologically and socially sustainable agriculture policies. All decision making bodies must ensure the effective participation of young people. We insist on agricultural, fisheries and livestock education (formal and informal) from an early age, and the FAO and IFAD should provide adequate funds for capacity building training at all levels to address the needs of young people and rural women. Our commitment to food sovereignty includes a demand that the Committee on Food Security be transformed into the "Committee for Food Sovereignty" and a call for a moratorium on agrofuels.

We engage ourselves to collectively accept our responsibilities to mobilize from the local to the international levels in our struggles for food sovereignty. We claim the control and the autonomy of our processes of organisation and alliances and we will further enhance our mutual accountability by valuing the wealth of our diversity and in the respect for our autonomies. We recognise the essential role of the IPC in the facilitation of alliance building.

We demand Food Sovereignty now!
