

**V Regional Consultation of the Peoples, Social Movements and Civil Society
Organizations for Food Sovereignty and Social Justice
for the 34th FAO Regional Conference
for Latin America and the Caribbean
Panama City, February 19 – 20th, 2016**

Unity and organization regarding the political principle of Food Sovereignty is needed now more than ever in the continental and global context.

We, women and men, representatives from 20 countries and 14 networks coordinated through social, regional and subregional platforms, comprised of *food producers, inhabitants of rural areas, mountain ranges, islands, steppes, grasslands and mountains of Latin America and the Caribbean*; are gathered in this consultation, on the path towards the 34th FAO Regional Conference, to be held in Mexico City from February 29th- March 3rd, 2016.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Mexico and the struggle of the farmer movements, as well as with the families of the missing rural student-teachers in Ayotzinapa. We stand with those deprived of their liberty due to the struggle for land, natural resources and food sovereignty. We oppose the practices of eradicating farmers and indigenous families in the region, such as the recent occurrence in the province of Mendoza, Argentina involving the eviction of smallholder farmers.

We applaud the progress of certain governments in their integration of positive actions towards food sovereignty in public policies in their respective countries, and we appreciate the space which they have provided to us. We hope that the Member States present consider this statement when defining the FAO agenda for the next biennial conference.

Continuing with the process initiated in the previous consultations with the platforms and social movements prior to the FAO regional conferences, we reaffirm our commitment to the fight to continue developing small-scale production of healthy and culturally appropriate food, helping to eradicate hunger and poverty in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030, taking into account the regional and international treaties and agreements¹. This is a forum for exchange and action for

¹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December 10, 1948), the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (January 3, 1976), the Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (September 13, 2007), the Charter of Farmers' Rights under discussion, along with the Voluntary Guidelines on responsible land tenure, fisheries and forests in the context of food security (November 5, 2012), the Voluntary Guidelines to Ensure Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (June 10, 2014), the Declaration of the Decade of Family Farming (2015-2025) and CEDAW (December 18, 1979), which supports the elimination of all forms of violence against women, CARICOM Food and Nutrition Policy (September 13, 2010), the Caribbean Regional Strategy for Agricultural Development Resilient to Climate Change (2009-2015), and the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy.

indigenous peoples, farmers, rural workers, pastoralist communities, environmental advocates, and artisanal fisherfolk; with a space for dialogue and exchange with urban inhabitants, workers and the general population.

Meanwhile, our experience as continental organizations and networks, as coordinated in the Alliance for Food Sovereignty and other platforms, has confirmed that there are no truly inclusive public policies and effective actions towards the Sustainable Development Goals if the principle of food sovereignty, achieved through agroecology, is not made a priority. And this new consultation in preparation for the 34th FAO Regional Conference confirms this conviction. We will not relinquish our principles and rights, as we are joined together from our own identities, and from this same principle we denounce the false solutions to hunger and rural poverty, namely: carbon markets, green economy, biotechnology and "climate smart agriculture."

Therefore, we question the proposals which increase the dependency on food production based on capitalism- exploiting the population, workers and ecosystems under the policies and strategies of commercialization and profit- as opposed to the right to food and food sovereignty as a fundamental human right; contributing to autonomy, peace, and adequate nutrition free of GMOs, for a dignified life for rural and urban populations alike.

The Paris Agreement does not represent a turning point in combating climate change, in our opinion. The agreement is non-binding, as it simply addresses adaptation and does not tackle the root causes which exacerbate climate change. It is presented as a success but in reality it was a setback, as it lacks the binding character of the Kyoto Protocol which had called for the top polluting countries to reduce their emissions; and was replaced with a compensation system based on the carbon market and linked to monoculture and forest plantations.

These mechanisms are false solutions to climate change. Thus, we reject the introduction of the concept of climate-smart agriculture as well as FAO's definition of forests and the UN REDD Program as solutions to the problem of climate change. Today, large-scale food systems are responsible for 41- 54% of greenhouse gases.

Therefore we propose the following:

Acknowledge the role of artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in the consumption of aquatic products to guarantee food security and sovereignty in communities around the world. Governments should promote public policies for the preservation and management of responsible and sustainable fisheries, including the use of our resources for nutrition; contributing to financing and infrastructure, with access to markets, social security and incentives to improve productive development, and with the participation of fisheries on a global scale, as we are an important contribution to family culture.

We request the recognition, strengthening and support of the governments and international organizations of the FAO and IFAD to the national committees, which have participated in the actions of the International Year of Family Farming (2014), such as national forums for dialogue between family farmers, rural and indigenous peoples, artisanal fisherfolk, and pastoralists together with the governments; made furthermore relevant due to the global commitment to the decade of Family Farming (IYFF + 10).

Regarding the challenges to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, we declare that extractive industries are negatively impacting indigenous peoples; a situation which has worsened in recent decades. Companies have the same obligations and responsibilities in protecting peoples' rights and to respect our fundamental rights to free, prior and informed consent as an exceptional framework which benefits women, youth and adults in the face of these negative impacts; which cause more suffering for women due to the extraction and depletion of natural resources in the affected ancestral territories. Thus we must also eliminate militarization and forced displacement.²

Concerning education, we propose and demand investment and access to land, paying special attention to the integration of youth in order for them to stay in rural villages and indigenous territories, promoting incentives for appropriate technologies with research and participatory action; while respecting intergenerational knowledge in rural areas for future generations in agriculture, through agroecological food production.

Pastoralist communities ask for the inclusion of participatory means of consultation consistent with the reality of isolation from our communities and environments where our families live, also ensuring differentiated policies for land tenure, development programs and access to services.

We understand agroecology, and defend it, as a key form of resistance to an economic system which prioritizes profits over life. Our various forms of small-scale food production based on agroecology generate local knowledge and promote social justice, as well as nourish identity and culture and reinforce the economic viability of rural areas. (Nyeleny Declaration, Mali, 2015).

We propose an evaluation of the impact of the Paris Agreement on small-scale farming, as this has an effect on the commercialization of the climate. The role of food producers and small-scale family farming should not be acknowledged as vulnerable populations nor as interested parties, but rather as rights holders and key players in fighting global warming. If the governments propose mechanisms of adaptation and mitigation of climate change, they should build on traditional and ancestral knowledge.

² Political positioning and action plan of indigenous women around the world, Lima, 2013.

We call upon the governments and FAO to move forward in constructing dialogue with the participation of social movements and platforms.

Agroecology is a right of the people. We demand Food Sovereignty now!

Panama City,
February 19 and 20, 2016