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Editorial

Water is essential to life. The growing shortage of water should have led the world community to improve the management of water resources in order to preserve this heritage for future generations. Instead, water is already a source of conflict in some regions of the world; if steps are not taken urgently in a concerted fashion to husband water resources more sensibly, more and greater conflicts are likely to arise in the near future.

In recent years, many popular movements and organizations have gone into action in order to ensure that water remains available to everyone on this planet and to oppose transnational corporations for whom, in total disregard of the essential needs of humanity, water is merely a source of profit.

It was in the wake of these protest movements that the Alternative World Water Forum came into being. Its second session, to be held in Geneva from 17 to 19 March 2005, has as its goal to "develop and promote public institutions and public policies which would ultimately give every human being access to drinking water and would enable water resources to be managed democratically, sustainably and in a spirit of solidarity".

The United Nations General Assembly recently proclaimed the years 2005 to 2015 "International Decade of Action for 'water, source of life'", and 22 March 2005 "World Water Day".

This Special Issue of the Bulletin focuses on a hitherto neglected aspect: the fact that the right to water is a Human Right. It has been recognized in various international and regional instruments and many countries have included it in their legislation, which enables their citizens to demand that it be implemented by their governments.

In this issue, we also review some of our partners' recent publications which CETIM warmly recommends you read.

We demand the implementation of the right to water!

The availability of clean drinking water is a crucial issue for mankind; it is becoming an increasingly rare commodity owing to the pollution caused by the intensive development methods applied world-wide, especially in industry and agriculture. Some observers are warning that if urgent steps are not taken, clean drinking water will become a major source of conflicts in the not too distant future.

Some facts about water

At present, 1.4 billion people have no access to clean drinking water, and nearly 4 billion live without proper

sanitation. Only 3% of the water on our planet is fresh water, and 99% of that is hidden in glaciers or in the deep layers of the earth. Water undergoes an uninterrupted natural cycle, but its total volume does not vary; this leaves only 1% of the globe's fresh surface water supply available to the planet's inhabitants. Furthermore, this supply is not evenly distributed: abundant in some regions of the globe, water is a rarity in arid areas¹.

The main reason for the short supply of clean drinking water is pollution. This is caused mainly by industrial activities (e.g., 280 000 litres of water are needed to produce one ton of steel, and 700 litres of water are needed to produce one kilogram of paper); by intensive cultivation methods in agriculture which utilize highly polluting and non biodegradable chemicals (2); and also by the construction work on large retention and other major engineering projects (dams) which has not only caused nearly 60% of the world's 227 major rivers to become polluted but also forced the displacement of between 40 and 80 million people since the 1950's³.

Many diseases have direct or indirect link with quantity and quality of water supplies:

- 4 billion cases of diarrhea causing 2.2 million deaths annually; and, in addition, 10 % of the population in the developing countries suffering from intestinal infections;
- 2 million deaths annually caused by malaria, which affects nearly 100 million people;
- 6 million people affected by blindness caused by trachoma, a communicable eye disease;
- 200 million people affected by schistosomiasis, a serious parasitical disease⁴.

It was first in 1972 that the United Nations alerted the world community to the risks of destroying the ecology when it convened the first UN Conference on the Environment and the problem of water, which lay the foundation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The right to water is a human right

Although the UN has, in the past thirty years, organized many international meetings on water and has proclaimed special Days or Decades on the subject⁵, water has only rarely been viewed from the legal point of view⁶. And yet, various international instruments on Human Rights refer to the right to water explicitly or implicitly. The United Nations bodies dealing with Human Rights have accomplished a great deal in this respect.

Thus, article 14 (h) of the *Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*⁷ makes explicit reference to the right "to enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications."

Similarly, Article 24.2.(c) of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*⁸ requires States to take appropriate measures for,

inter alia, “the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution.”

The first paragraph of Article 25 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, for its part, states that “Everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services”, recognizing implicitly the right to water, since an adequate standard of living would be inconceivable without water. The same can be said of Article 11 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.

In order to clarify the scope of this right, the *Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, responsible for monitoring the the Covenant's implementation (cf. see presentation below), adopted General Comment No.15⁹, which specifies, among other things that: “Water is a limited natural resource and a public good fundamental for life and health. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights”.

The *Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights responsible for the realization of the right to clean drinking-water* stated, in agreement with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, that “the right to drinking water and sanitation is an integral part of internationally recognized human rights and may be considered to be an essential factor for the implementation of several other human rights - the right to life, the right to food, the right to health, the right to housing.....”¹⁰

According to the *Human Rights Commission's Special Rapporteur on the right to food*, the “term food covers not only solid foods but also the nutritional aspects of drinking-water”¹¹.



Cartoon taken from *Vía Campesina Calendar 2004*.

The right to water appears in national legislations

The right to water appears in the legislation of many countries¹² and is included in many regional instruments¹³. A study performed by FAO's Legal Office on the basis of 69 national reports submitted between 1993 and 2003 states that “it is possible or probably possible to institute legal proceedings in 54 countries by invoking the right to nutrition”¹⁴. For example, the legislation of South Africa considers that all economic, social and cultural rights can be invoked in legal proceedings, including the right to food and

water: “the right of access to food and water in adequate quantities, to be realized progressively”.¹⁵

Notwithstanding all that, some quarters still claim that the right to water does not exist, or that it is not sufficiently explicit in the international texts (some cited above) which happen to be legally binding on States. This misrepresentation of the facts is undoubtedly a reflection of the present-day trend, prompted by neo-liberalist policies, to consider water an economic resource that can be privatized for the sake of profits.

Imposed by the World Bank on poor countries, among others, as part of the policies for debt relief, the privatization of water has caused in many countries more problems than it has solved.

The abuses of water privatization

The example of Cochabamba (Bolivia) is very instructive in this respect. Not only did the transnational companies fail to provide the services they had promised or provided them at prohibitive prices, but the price of water went up 400%, which tantamount to a death sentence for the populations in question. Even though the Bolivian government was forced to back-track under the massive protest of the people of Cochabamba, it seems that the “water war” has resumed, since one of the transnational corporations (*Abengoa-Spain*) which was party to the privatization agreement has lodged a complaint before the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), demanding compensation from the Bolivian government (see CETIM's press release).

The same scenario is now being replayed at El Alto, Bolivia's second largest city, where leaders of neighborhood committees went on a hunger strike in support of their demand to have the water resources in their city placed under public management. Like the Spanish transnational company, the French *Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux* corporation is threatening the Bolivian government that it will lodge a complaint with ICSID if the government breaks the privatization agreement¹⁶.

In Uruguay, having experienced the excesses of privatization, the people went one step further in their own defence: by a referendum supported by 65% of the voters, last year they included in their Constitution a text on the right to water which reads: “Access to drinking water is a basic right the implementation of which can not be guaranteed by private entities”¹⁷. This, of course, does not offer the Uruguayan government protection against a complaint being lodged with the ICSID. It is our view that, being under the control of the World Bank, this body's arbitration should be rejected.

The dominant economic and political system in the world today provokes ever more pollution and environmental degradation with disastrous effects on water resources. The privatization of water automatically takes power away from public authorities whereas, under international law on human rights, it is their responsibility to assure the respect, the protection and the implementation of all human rights, including the right to clean water.

Conclusion

Water must not be treated like a commercial commodity; it must be treated as the common good of all humanity and as a Human Right. Reaffirming the right to water and its status as a Human Right will make it possible to avert future conflicts over this increasingly rare commodity and to ensure the survival of future generations.

It is therefore important that all sectors of society and especially organized public movements mobilize their efforts:

- to promote the right to water and its observance;
- to oppose the privatization of water;
- to promote a concerted and rational use of water (at the national and international levels)
- to require that governments, in conformity with numerous UN resolutions, uphold the precedence of human rights over any commercial agreements, and that governments reject the arbitration of the ICSID.

¹ "L'eau, patrimoine de l'humanité", Ed. CETRI, *Alternative Sud*, Feb. 2002.

² *Idem*.

³ UNDP Report presented at the "World Summit for Sustainable Development", Johannesburg, 26 Aug.- 4 Sept. 2002 (www.h2o.net/magazine/urgences/enjeux/politiques/2002_johannesburg/francais/johannesburg_2.htm).

⁴ *Idem*.

⁵ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/217, "2005-2015: International Decade of Action, 'Water, source of Life'" to begin on 22 March 2005.

⁶ Probably the most important international meeting was the International United Nations Conference on Water held at Mar del Plata (Argentina) in 1977, which proclaimed in its Final Declaration, inter alia, that "everyone has the right of access to a quantity and quality of drinking water commensurate with their essential needs."

⁷ Adopted on 18 December 1979 by the UN General Assembly (cf. Resolution 34/180), entered into force on 3 Sept. 1981. Ratified by 170 States to-date.

⁸ Adopted on 20 November 1989 by the UN General Assembly (cf. Resolution 44/259), entered into force on 2 Sept. 1990. Ratified by all Member States except Somalia and the United States of America.

⁹ Cf. E/C.12/2002/11, adopted at the 29th Session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (11-29 November 2002).

¹⁰ Cf. E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/20, drafted by Mr. El Hadji Guissé.

¹¹ Cf. E/CN.4/2001/53, Report presented by Mr. Jean Ziegler, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

¹² European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, American Convention on Human Rights, and African Charter on Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples.

¹³ For example, South Africa, Chile, Colombia, France, Indonesia, Switzerland, Vietnam... among others.

¹⁴ Cf. IGWG RTFG 2/INF 1 (Rome, 27-29 October 2003).

¹⁵ Cf. E/CN.4/2002/58, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

¹⁶ Cf. *Le Courrier*, Geneva, 5 March 2005.

¹⁷ Cf. *Idem*, 18 November 2004.

PRESS RELEASE

The water war continues in Bolivia

The Spanish transnational company Abengoa asks \$25million from the Bolivian government

◀ In a complaint lodged with the International Center for Settlement of Investment Related Disputes (ICSID)¹, the transnational corporation *Abengoa* is asking the Bolivian government for \$25million in damages for breach of the 2002 Cochabamba water privatization contract by the Bolivian government – a breach made under pressure from the inhabitants of the region, who have established grass-roots management of the water.

Summary of the facts ²

In October 1999, following the passage of Law No 2029, the Bolivian government awarded a 40-year water concession, for the province of Cochabamba, to the international consortium Agua del Tunari, underwritten by International Water Limited (*Bechtel* and *Edison*), *Abengoa Servicios Urbanos* and a group of Bolivian companies.

Immediately following the privatization of the Cochabamba water, the Aguas del Tunari consortium raised the price of water 400% through a monthly indexing of the rates in relation to the United States dollar. This did not include installation costs billed to the customers (meters, connections to water mains and sewerage and systems), which came to several hundred dollars. For desperately poor people, it was equivalent to a death sentence.

The concession accorded to the consortium a total, overreaching monopoly, making it illegal for anyone to use water from natural springs or wells in the areas where Agua de Tunari supplied water.

These factors prompted a substantial mobilization, over several months, of the local population, both urban and rural, who demanded, in essence, the cancellation of the contract with Agua del Tunari, the amending of Law No 2029 and a rejection by the government of water privatization. In spite of severe repression by the authorities (who killed one adolescent and injured and arrested dozens of people), in April 2000, the Bolivian government was obliged to break the contract signed with the abovementioned transnational corporations.

The complaint to the ICSID is neither acceptable nor tolerable

The lodging of the complaint with the ICSID is neither acceptable nor tolerable given that this institution is heavily influenced by the private commercial sector and presided over by the president of the World Bank.

Given the Herculean efforts of the World Bank in pushing for privatization, including in the case in question, and given the bias that characterizes its actions, it is reasonable to expect a decision in favor of *Abengoa*. Moreover, the ICSID norms do not take account of these concerning human rights and environment.

Further, the sum sought is disproportionate, for the consortium in question has invested, according to its own estimates, only somewhere between \$.5 million and \$2million, and *Abengoa* owns only a 25% share in the consortium.

It is also worth noting that the other members of the consortium (*Bechtel* and *Edison*) accepted the arrangement proposed by the Bolivian government.

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This case demonstrates yet again – if need be – the profit driven motivation of transnational corporations. They have no interest in the vital needs and development of countries and regions in which they operate. It is intolerable that private interests should take precedence over the basic rights of human beings such as the right to life and its concomitant right to water, without which life is not possible. Moreover, numerous United Nations resolutions reflect the acknowledgement within the international community that human rights take precedence over commercial interests.

Thus, the American Association of Jurists and the Europe – Third World Centre maintain that litigation between governments and transnational corporations should be resolved by the courts of the country in question and, secondarily, by a permanent international jurisdiction at such a time as it may come into being, which will rule in accordance with existing international human rights standards.

The American Association of Jurists and the Europe – Third World Centre call upon the Bolivian government to reject the arbitration of the ICSID and acknowledge the right to food and, in particular, to water, and by so doing the right of its citizens to life, a right of which it is the guarantor.”

¹ The ICSID was established by the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States (the Convention). Its headquarters are at the World Bank, and the president of the Bank chairs the ICSID Administrative Council. As of 15 December 2002, 136 countries had ratified the Convention (cf. www.worldbank.org).

² For additional information, cf. *Vía Campesina: une alternative paysanne à la mondialisation néolibérale*, Ed. CETIM, October 2002, and www.aguabolivia.org.



Cartoon taken from *Vía Campesina Calendar 2004*.

The Committee is comprised of 18 members who are experts with recognized competence in the field of human rights. Members of the Committee are independent and serve in their personal capacity, not as representatives of Governments. They are elected by ECOSOC for four year terms, and are eligible.

When a State ratifies one of the Covenants, it accepts a solemn responsibility to apply each of the obligations embodied therein and to ensure the compatibility of their national laws with their international duties, in a spirit of good faith. Through the ratification of human rights treaties, therefore, States become accountable to the international community, to other States which have ratified the same texts, and to their own citizens and others resident in their territories.

Under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, States parties undertake to submit periodic reports to the Committee – within two years of the entry into force of the Covenant for a particular State party, and thereafter once every five years – outlining the legislative, judicial, policy and other measures which they have taken to ensure the enjoyment of the rights contained in the Covenant. States parties are also requested to provide detailed data on the degree to which the rights are implemented and areas where particular difficulties have been faced in this respect.

Upon completion by the Committee of its analysis of reports and the appearance by States parties, the Committee concludes its consideration of States parties' reports by issuing “concluding observations”, which constitute the decision of the Committee regarding the status of the Covenant in a given State party.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with the opportunity to submit written statements and make oral submissions to the Committee about how the Covenant is or is not implemented by States parties.

At present it is not possible for individuals or groups who feel that their rights under the Covenant have been violated to submit formal complaints to the Committee. The absence of such procedure places significant constraints on the ability of the Committee to develop jurisprudence or case-law and, of course, greatly limits the chances of victims of abuses of the Covenant obtaining international redress.

Recently, the Commission on Human Rights created a working group “to consider options regarding the elaboration of an Optional Protocol to the Covenant” (see bulletin N° 20 of the CETIM).

¹ For more information, please see High Commissioner on Human Rights' website: www.ohchr.org

² Adopted by General Assembly on the 16th December 1966 (cf. Resolution 2200A (XXI)). At present ratified by 150 States, the Covenant is entry into force on the 3rd January 1976.

The right to water: the position of the United Nations

Presentation of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ¹

Established in 1985 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has primary function to monitor the implementation of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ² by States parties.

Excerpts ¹ General Comment No. 15 Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on the right to water

Adopted in November 2002 by the above-mentioned committee, General Comment No. 15, on the right to water, offers an interpretation of Article 11 (the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing) and of Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural

Rights which deals with the right to health. The Comment is an important reference for States, parties to the Covenant, for their implementation of the right to water. Objections have been voiced, claiming that the General Comment adopted by the Committee has no legal power since the State Parties ratified the Covenant and not the interpretations adopted by the Committee. However, it should be borne in mind that the 18 experts, members of the Committee, are selected by State Parties which represent a variety of legal systems and different political shadings. The Comments, adopted by consensus, are intended solely to delineate the scope of the Covenant and thus to help States to better implement it. If we draw a parallel with a national judicial system, the Committee's Comments can be compared to the body of case law resulting from the sentences passed by a constitutional tribunal or by a court of appeals.

Below, some selected excerpts from the Comment.

Definition of the right to water

“The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses. (...)” (para. 2)

“The right to water contains both freedoms and entitlements. The freedoms include the right to maintain access to existing water supplies necessary for the right to water, and the right to be free from interference, such as the right to be free from arbitrary disconnections or contamination of water supplies. (...)” (para. 10).

“(...)Water should be treated as a social and cultural good, and not primarily as an economic good. The manner of the realization of the right to water must also be sustainable, ensuring that the right can be realized for present and future generations.” (para. 11)

Priorities in the use of water

“Water is required for a range of different purposes, besides personal and domestic uses, to realize many of the Covenant rights. For instance, water is necessary to produce food (right to adequate food) and ensure environmental hygiene (right to health). Water is essential for securing livelihoods (right to gain a living by work) and enjoying certain cultural practices (right to take part in cultural life). Nevertheless, priority in the allocation of water must be given to the right to water for personal and domestic uses. (...)” (para. 6)

States parties' obligations

“States parties have immediate obligations in relation to the right to water (...). Such steps must be deliberate, concrete and targeted towards the full realization of the right to water.” (para. 17)

“(...) Realization of the right should be feasible and practicable, since all States parties exercise control over a broad range of resources, including water, technology, financial resources and international assistance, as with all other rights in the Covenant.” (para. 18)

“(...) The obligation [States parties] includes, inter alia, refraining from engaging in any practice or activity that denies or limits equal access to adequate water; arbitrarily interfering with customary or traditional arrangements for water allocation; unlawfully diminishing or polluting water, for example through waste from State-owned facilities or through use and testing of weapons; and limiting access to, or destroying, water services and infrastructure as a punitive measure, for example, during armed conflicts in violation of international humanitarian law.” (para. 21)

“(...) Violations of the obligation to respect follow from the State party's interference with the right to water. This includes, inter alia: (i) arbitrary or unjustified disconnection or exclusion from water services or facilities; (ii) discriminatory or unaffordable increases in the price of water; and (iii) pollution and diminution of water resources affecting human health; (...)” (para. 44 a)

States obligations in case of third parties intervention

“The obligation to *protect* requires State parties to prevent third parties from interfering in any way with the enjoyment of the right to water. Third parties include individuals, groups, corporations and other entities as well as agents acting under their authority. (...)” (para. 23)

“Where water services (such as piped water networks, water tankers, access to rivers and wells) are operated or controlled by third parties, States parties must prevent them from compromising equal, affordable, and physical access to sufficient, safe and acceptable water. To prevent such abuses an effective regulatory system must be established, in conformity with the Covenant and this General Comment, which includes independent monitoring, genuine public participation and imposition of penalties for non-compliance.” (para. 24)

International cooperation

“To comply with their international obligations in relation to the right to water, States parties have to respect the enjoyment of the right in other countries. International cooperation requires States parties to refrain from actions that interfere, directly or indirectly, with the enjoyment of the right to water in other countries. (...)” (para. 31)

“Depending on the availability of resources, States should facilitate realization of the right to water in other countries, for example through provision of water resources, financial and technical assistance, and provide the necessary aid when required. (...)” (para. 34)

Obligations of the International Financial Institutions States members

“(...) States parties that are members of international financial institutions, notably the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and regional development banks, should take steps to ensure that the right to water is taken into account in their lending policies, credit agreements and other international measures.” (para. 36)

¹ Titles inserted by CETIM.

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110 pages, ISBN : 2-7475-6595-5, June 2004, French version. To order form their website : www.editions.harmattan.fr
indicative price: € 11.50

Les obstacles à « la santé pour tous »

Points de vue du Sud

Joint publication. Vol. XI (2004), n°2

A quarter century after the Call of the World Health Organisation which aimed at guarantying "Health for Everybody" for 2000, the balance sheet must to be contrasted. If significant scientific progress has been achieved, a large part of human population does not benefit from them. Worse, their life conditions and sanitation have been deteriorated. Inequalities concerning diseases and death increase day after day. The prevailing development model is being challenged, which on the one hand constraints States to reduce or privatize the sanitary services, and on the other hand promote pharmaceutical industry with a priority toward profitable markets, as far as creating new needs.

However, this process can be reversible. As a demonstration of that, remember the sudden burst provoked among Public Opinion regarding the opposition of the laboratories-in the name of "Intellectual Property"- to the distribution of generic antiretroviral treatment against VIH/AIDS in Africa. The popular movements, NGO and some States pressures have finally won one's case. Partially. The idea according to which access to health care should be considered like a public duty on a planetary scale remains to be promoted.

206 pages, ISBN : 2-84950-016-X, Ed. CETRI / Syllepse, french version, price to order at the CETIM: CHF 20.-

Interventions humanitaires ?

Points de vue du Sud

Joint publication. Vol. XI (2004), n°3

The appearance of the controversy around the concept of "right" or "duty to intervene" exists since the beginning of the nineties and the accession of the new unipolar world order. Today, the crisis called "humanitarian" and the wars called "preventive", have set the issue of an interventionism in search of ethical or legal legitimization at the core of the international debates. Considering the current conditions, the ambiguity of humanitarian action is complete. Often diverted from its initial objectives or recovered, its promoters and their intentions look like to be the vassal of geostrategic interests and politics of "deux poids deux mesures" principle of the Big Powers. Henceforth, on the ground, the mixture between humanitarian interventions and military interventions prevail. In other situations, the impulses and the logic of the "humanitaro-urgencier complex" continue to be questioned.

Is the organization of the Charity taking the place of development programs? Does humanitarian intervention not betray a failure confession converted into urgency? How do articulate, in "assisted" countries, external interveners and local actors? And for which effects and results, in terms of durability and democratic and egalitarian reconstruction?

206 pages, ISBN : 2-84950-028-3, Ed. CETRI / Syllepse, french version, price to order at the CETIM: CHF 20.-

La mondialisation, et après...

Quel développement au 21^{ème} siècle ?

By Peter Niggli

At a time of globalization, the industrialized countries dictate the economical politics to a majority of developing countries. With negative results. The forced deregulation of the international capital flows, which produced since the nineties several catastrophic financial crisis, is particularly serious. If the balance sheet isn't completely bad, it's thanks to countries like India, China or South Korea, which, precisely, didn't align oneself with the "Washington Consensus". In his essay, Peter Niggli warn against the illusion that we could civilize the economic globalization with some social and ecological safeguards. Democracy and self-determination are not compatible with the full economic integration of every country. Then, the author calls for a new regulation regime of the global economy which leave more leeway to the countries to define their own development strategies and release them from the stranglehold of the financial markets liberalization. Such course change requires the public opinion of the industrialized countries to strongly oppose to the new "liberal imperialism" designed by the United States to fight against "terrorism".

140 pages, 2004, ISBN 3-033-00223-4, Éd. Communauté de travail, Swissaid, Action de Carême, Pain pour le prochain, Helvetas, Caritas, Eper. French version. To order beside with the Communauté de travail des oeuvres d'entraide, email: mail@swisscoalition.ch, price CHF 18.- / € 11,50

Chicken connection ; Agrobusiness, dumping, souveraineté alimentaire

Le poulet africain étouffé par l'Europe

By Denis Horman

The massive and uncontrolled exportations of "frozen chicken" pieces from European Union to sub-Saharan Africa -exportations which benefit from indirect subsidies- constitute a disaster for the producers-farmers, the national economies and the population's health. Chicken thighs, frozen cull hens (hens which lay not anymore) are sold cheaply on African markets at prices twice, three times lower than the local poultry production. The European producers-farmers (in France, Belgium, ...) aren't spared by a trade war either, where Brazil and Thailand particularly score in their exportations toward European Union, thanks to low production costs. The neoliberal politics (agricultural subsidies, WTO agriculture agreement), supporting the agribusiness, strengthen an industrial and based on profit agriculture (poultry farming), which push the employment, the environmental respect and the quality of the products into the background. And the huge profits, reaped by the agribusiness firms and the big marketing chains, are realized without the price drop being reflected on consumers. Today, the fundamental right to food sovereignty unifies the claims taken on by the farmers, social and citizen organizations, in the South and in the North, for a durable and united agriculture. This right is at the basis of campaigns lead in Belgium and France, in solidarity with the campaigns launched in West and Central Africa (Senegal, Cameroon,...) for the right to food and the right to development.

136 pages, 2004, Ed. GRESEA, French version, price to order at the CETIM, price CHF 15.-