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**“There is not a developed world and
an underdeveloped world
but a single world badly developed.”**

EDITORIAL

The activities carried out by the CETIM since the beginning of the year have been intense and rich. The inter-governmental working group on the rights of peasants and other persons working in rural areas finished its third reading of the draft United Nations declaration on this subject. With only a few exceptions, the overwhelming majority of member states are satisfied with this version of the text. This can also be said of the rural organizations (peasants, fishers, nomads, agricultural workers, indigenous peoples, etc.) who nonetheless proposed several amendments to improve its content. After its final polishing, the declaration should be adopted next year.

The conference on food sovereignty, co-organized by the CETIM during the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, was intended to be educational, with clarifications on this concept from peasant leaders. It echoed both the draft declaration on the rights of peasants under negotiation within the United Nations, which comports an article on this concept, and the popular initiative of Uniterre (Swiss peasants union), which seeks to enshrine the concept in the Swiss constitution.

In line with that, the CETIM's new publication analyzes the link between national sovereignty and the implementation of peasant agriculture. Written by Samir Amin, it bears the title *La souveraineté au service des peuples. L'agriculture paysanne, la voie de l'avenir !*

In collaboration with a group of local organizations, the CETIM received, here in Geneva, a delegation of water protectors from the Standing Rock movement (North Dakota/United States), enabling them to present their grievances to the United Nations human rights protection instances.

Finally, you will find in this issue a brief account of other struggles in Colombia, Madagascar and Chad, for land, for a life lived in dignity, for trade union rights... brought by the CETIM before the United Nations Human Rights Council.

STANDING ROCK

THE WATER PROTECTORS IN GENEVA



Water ceremony at Les Bains des Pâquis.

From 6 to 9 June, representatives of indigenous peoples from Standing Rock were in Geneva during the United Nations Human Rights Council session. The CETIM co-organized their trip and arranged for the spokespersons of the movement to speak before the Council.

The resistance of the indigenous peoples led by women and youth at Standing Rock is emblematic, mobilizing thousands of persons on the scene and throughout the United States for over a year.

During their European tour, the representatives of the water defenders were in Geneva. On 6 June, 30 militants entered the headquarters of Crédit Suisse in Geneva to carry out a non-violent civil disobedience action by BreakFree Geneva. They were accompanied by four representatives of the Standing Rock water protectors. Three militants chained themselves to the pillars of the bank, and banners were unfurled. The water protectors took the floor to denounce the bank's investments. They read a letter addressed to Tidjane Thiam, Crédit Suisse director general. The bank has invested \$1.4 billion in the oil pipeline and in various related projects. The objective was to ask Crédit Suisse to divest completely from the pipeline as well as from all fossil fuel projects and/or those that do not respect the right of indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent concerning projects on their lands, projects involving the disappearance of the first nations. The police intervened to remove the militants from the build-

ing. Two of them had to give their identity to the police and will be subject to a fine.

On 7 June, the representatives of the Standing Rock indigenous peoples, supported by several dozen Genevans, demonstrated in front of the United Nations. The Genevan police promptly intervened and dispersed the group. Then a representative of the First Nations read a statement before the Human Rights Council. Among other points, Nataani Means recalled that the Standing Rock resistance movement is fighting to protect the earth, the common heritage of all humankind.

Later, the water defenders' spokespersons also shared their experience during a parallel conference at the United Nations. In the evening, a large audience attended a water ceremony at the Bains des

Pâquis, before one of the First Nation's representatives gave a concert.

On 8 June, the delegation answered the United Nations journalists' questions before leaving for the Place de la Fusterie, where they asked for an accounting from the Swiss banks and demanded divestment from toxic funds. In the evening, they met with the French Swiss public during a conference organized at the University of Geneva.

The resistance of the indigenous peoples of Standing Rock is an example for the whole world. Non-violent and dignified, the water defenders oppose the brutal repression of the Trump regime. For months, they have been subjected to police violence, fired on with rubber bullets, swept by water cannons, attacked by dogs. The states of North and

South Dakota have passed new laws authorizing vehicles to charge the water defenders and incarcerate any individual arrested during a demonstration. These laws, as Nataani Means recalled, violate basic human rights.

The water defenders' European tour and their stay in Geneva have enabled them to bring their struggle to the international level. The representatives of the Standing Rock demonstrators expressed their gratitude to the CETIM for its help and support.

On 20th June 2017 a US federal judge has declared Trump's administration has short-circuited environmental review and didn't respect indigenous rights based on Treaties. Water Protectors say this judgement is an important step in the worldwide counter-strike to protect Mother Earth.



The tipi on the Place des Nations.

THE CETIM, THE VOICE OF THE OPPRESSED AND OF VICTIMS

In March 2017, the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights council took place in Geneva. The CETIM was present to represent the voices of oppressed people and victims of transnational corporations.

In the course of the session, the CETIM intervened during the presentation of the report of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, who had returned from a trip to Madagascar.



CETIM defends the Colombian social leaders.

For several years, the CETIM has been following closely the situation regarding violence in this country. The CETIM has observed that there is a very real link between the violence visited upon the population and the pillage of its natural resources, thus, of the environment. In this regard, it has exhorted that these practices, illegal under international human rights instruments, be ended, and reiterated its request to the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions to visit the country and investigate these violations. The CETIM's intervention created a considerable media stir, both in Madagascar and in France. It was a stir that could contribute to increasing pressure so that the human rights of the Malagasy population are respected.

At the beginning of the year, the CETIM was contacted by a Chadian trade union, the Union des Syndicats du Tchad (UST), regarding the serious situation to which the country's civil servants are subjected, for their union rights are daily violated. The CETIM has requested that the Cha-

dian government honor its international human rights and workers rights commitments, especially basic trade union rights such as the right to strike, the right to collective

bargaining and the right to a decent wage.

Each year, at the March session of the Human Rights Council, the Office of the High Commissioner presents the annual report on Colombia. The CETIM, in its statement made during the plenary, declared itself both surprised and preoccupied by the way the annual report omits any mention of the country's paramilitary. If, on the one hand, the guerrilla movements (especially the FARC) are being dismantled (as decided in the peace accords), paramilitary groups continue to carry on with total impunity. Further, they are increasing their power and scope of action by infesting the territories abandoned by the FARC. Given this situation, the CETIM has exhorted Colombia to protect the social leaders and to rapidly dismantle the paramilitary groups. Finally, the CETIM requested that the United Nations observers remain in the field in order to continue their work of observing and accompanying along the road to stability and peace in the country.



The CETIM with the Malagasy peasants.

PEASANTS RIGHTS

THIRD AND LAST READING OF THE DRAFT OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PEASANTS

The fourth session of the Working Group on the Rights of Peasants and Other Persons Working in Rural Areas was held from 15 to 19 May 2017 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. As in previous years, the CETIM was present accompanied by a major peasant delegation of La Vía Campesina (LVC) and other rural organizations (fishers, pastoralists, nomads, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers).

The CETIM has long been deeply involved in the struggle for recognition of the rights of peasants and other persons working in rural areas. Thus, along with FIAN International and La Vía Campesina it has long been supporting the historic project for a United Nations declaration on the subject; the objective being to develop new international legal norms to better protect these actors who are essential for an agriculture that is healthy and

sustainable from a social, economic, cultural and environmental point of view.

The process for the adoption of this new legal instrument, begun in 2012 with the creation of the intergovernmental working group under the aegis of Bolivia, this year held its fourth session. The working group's Chair-Rapporteur, the Ambassador of

Bolivia, Nardi Suxo Iturre, presented the third version of the draft declaration, arrived at after numerous intense consultations (40 in all) in 2016-2017 with governmental delegations as

pressed their satisfaction with the declaration's revised draft.

The week of negotiations was marked by constructive discussions. Many

sons working in rural areas. Venezuela (speaking for the non-aligned countries) gave its support to the declaration negotiating process.

The great majority of the Latin American also demonstrated their firm support of this historic process. El Salvador (representing the CELAC) emphasized the contribution to the health of the environment of peasants and traditional agriculture. On the

other hand, certain Latin American countries such as Paraguay, Mexico and Guatemala expressed their reservations regarding certain articles.

Regarding the European Union, which participated actively in the discussions, it presented several amendments the majority of which consisted of deleting the term "right"



Demonstration at the Place de l'ONU.

much as with non-governmental (peasant and rural organizations in particular) and representing all the United Nations geographic regions.

The demands and amendments proposed by LVC and its allies are to a large extent reflected satisfactorily in the new text. Most of the member states participating in the session ex-

pressed their satisfaction with the declaration's revised draft. The week of negotiations was marked by constructive discussions. Many

countries, such as Switzerland, India and Russia, reiterated their support for the process while other did so simply by their presence. The entirety of the African countries, represented by Tunisia (speaking in the name of the African Group), spoke in favor of the process and of the adoption of a declaration on the rights of peasants and other per-



in almost all the articles! This amounted to making voiding them of content and denaturing them, given that in the context of the Human Rights Council, the discussions focus exclusively on rights. It is regrettable that the European Union member states did not intervene constructively in the discussion whereas it is they who must assume their responsibilities both within the Human Rights Council and within the United Nations General Assembly and not the European Union as an institution, for the E.U. is not a member of either of these instances.

Regarding the United States, the only member state to formally oppose the process, they were noteworthy for their absence.

The peasant delegates and those of other rural organization, backed by the CETIM, intervened, with solid arguments to defend the draft declaration's va-

rious articles as well as to present amendments. Thus, the delegates of La Vía Campesina and other partner rural organizations presented roughly a hundred oral statements to the working group plenary.

Outside the plenary, the CETIM co-organized two parallel conferences. The first, organized with LVC and FIAN International, "Collective Rights: Perspectives of Peasants and Other Persons Working in Rural Areas", saw the participation of persons from various regions of the world. They shared their demands concerning the recognition and importance of collective rights in the context of the resistance of rural organizations to a predatory economic system destructive of collective and traditional practices. The second, organized with the International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements (IFRACM), had as its title "The Declaration on the Rights of Pea-

sants and Other Persons Working in Rural Areas: Right to Farm-Saved Seeds and Food Sovereignty". The affirmation of these two rights is a means to implement the right to food in all rural areas, in the Global South as well as the Global North.

The third and last reading of the draft declaration was crowned with success.

It was agreed that a fifth and last working group will be convened in 2018 in order to polish the text and to formally adopt it. Until then, the peasant and rural organizations (fishers, pastoralists, nomads, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers), with the support of other civil society organizations, must mobilize to broaden ever more the support for the declaration.



The peasants on the Place des Nations.

PEASANTS RIGHTS

PARALLEL CONFERENCE ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY



Organized by La Vía Campesina, the CETIM and Fian International, with the support of the Bolivian mission "Why the Right to Food Sovereignty Is Also Crucial for European Countries", was held in March 2017 at the United Nations.

The Bolivian ambassador, Nardi Suño Iturre, explained the process that led to the recognition of food sovereignty in her country (in particular the social mobilizations and the election of Evo Morales Ayma in 2006). It was in this context that, in 2009, owing to a constitutional reform, food sovereignty was recognized in the Bolivian constitution. According to the ambassador, it is possible to deal with food challenges through cooperation among countries. She observed that peasants from different regions of the world are confronted with similar problems. Thus, the solution is international recognition of food sovereignty. This recognition could, on the one hand, lessen the negative effects of the policies of certain Western states and, on the other, regulate the actions of transnational corporations.

According to Ramona Domniciu of Eco Ruralis (Romania) & European Coordination Vía Campesina and a member of the coordinating committee, the concept

of food sovereignty places peasants, agricultural producers and consumers at the heart of the discussion and supports the peoples in their right to produce locally. Food sovereignty is the right of persons to define their own food, agricultural and fishing policies. Regarding the situation in Romania, Ms Domniciu explained that her country is primarily agricultural.

The communist system had enslaved the peasants, but the capitalist system is no better, in her opinion. In fact, the entry of Romania into the capitalist market in the 1990s resulted in a land grab: 0.8% of the population now controls 45% of the land. Moreover, the market has been invaded by the major supermarket chains such as Lidl and Kaufland, which are destroying the local market. Owing to these unfavorable economic conditions, between 4 and 5 million Romanians have emigrated and are working in inhuman conditions in various European countries.

What Is the Meaning of Food Sovereignty?

Lynne Davis, a representative of the Land Workers' Alliance in the United Kingdom raises goats. She pointed out that food sovereignty is not the same thing as the right to food: the first involves the possibility of choosing what agricultural typology to use and, accordingly, of participating in the decision-making process. On the other hand, the second concept represents only the right to benefit from the necessary number of calories. In her opinion, the post-war paradigm, wherein the primary objective was to guarantee access to enough food, is now obsolete. It is through this paradigm that today

we have obtained food security, but this food is not what we need to be properly nourished. She explained that the problem derives from the reduction of the nutritive value of fruits and vegetables. In fact, over the past 60 years, nutritional values have diminished between 4% and 50% owing



to the degradation of the soils and of food in gene-



to the United Nations during the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council, the parallel conference, nations.

ral. She stated that agricultural practices are directly related to soil degradation and the consequent loss of nutritive content.

She is also of the opinion that the right to food sovereignty reflects the right to preserve traditional food and peasant culture in Eu-

must change their agricultural typology, improve biodiversity and eliminate the use of pesticides in order to build a healthy ecosystem.

Alexis Corthay, a peasant member of the peasant organization Uniterre, stated that he is watching the accelerated evolution of a society that is in the process of losing its underpinnings. In his opinion, industrial agriculture represents a major danger, for the earth has become a commodity. Thus, it is imperative to consolidate the rights of peasants. The economic laws that the WTO is trying to impose cannot be applied to the peasant sphere without causing irreversible losses. He believes that no country has been spared by the

business giants are carrying on to take control of food at the planetary level. Yet, he pointed out, food sovereignty represents an alternative to the current system of world trade.

He explained that Uniterre, with the support of numerous associations and political parties, has succeeded in putting on the ballot in Switzerland a popular initiative on food sovereignty, which will be voted on in 2018. At the local level, he noted further, several Swiss cantons have incorporated food sovereignty into their cantonal legislation. All these experiences are moving in the direction of a reappropriation by citizens of their food and must be broadly supported by the authorities in the context of their agricultural and food policies.

In a video message, Olivier De Schutter (member of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and former Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food), explained the process that undergirds

food sovereignty. He noted that even if most food does not cross national borders, most agricultural policy choices are subject to international trade laws that benefit the major agricultural producers. Thus, rebuilding the local market is necessary. For him, food sovereignty does not mean self-sufficiency, for trade is part of today's reality; however, at the local level, there must be incentives for regions to produce fresh and healthy food.

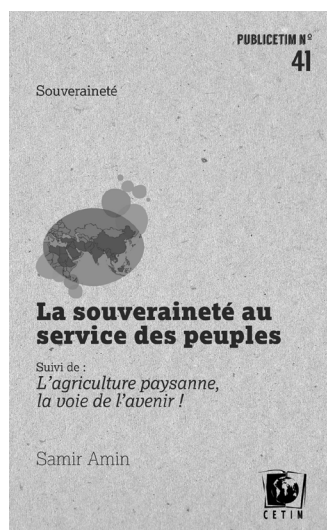
The interventions were followed by several interventions by members of the public. All the speakers (including representatives from states such as Ecuador and Nicaragua) emphasized the importance of the promotion of food sovereignty and their support of the United Nations process regarding the rights of peasants.



rope. The peasants in Europe are aware that they

consequences of this fierce struggle that the agribu-

PUBLICATIONS



LA SOUVERAINETÉ AU SERVICE DES PEUPLES. L'AGRICULTURE PAYSANNE, LA VOIE DE L'AVENIR !

Samir Amin - Book available only in French.

A point that is widely debated these days is whether national sovereignty should be supported. For the author, this question of strategy is the subject of serious misunderstandings as long as its class dimension is not identified. In fact, in capitalist societies,

the dominant social block always conceives of national sovereignty as an instrument to promote its class interests. One thus understands why the national discourse praising the virtues of sovereignty – all while hiding the class interests that it serves – has always been unacceptable to those who defend the working classes.

However, we must not reduce the defense of sovereignty to this single element. This defense is no less decisive for the protection of a people's

alternative.

It even constitutes the fundamental requirement of any advances in this direction. The agrarian question, access to land for all and food sovereignty are at the heart of the problems to be tackled. And peasant agriculture is *the only way forward for the future!*

The book will be available in October 2017.

Regarding the author: director of the Third World Forum (TWF) in Dakar and president of the World Forum for Alternatives (WFA), economist, militant, professor Samir Amin is the author of dozens of books and articles, most translated into many languages. To cite just three: *The Implosion of Contemporary Capitalism*; *The Law of Worldwide Value*; *Russia and the Long Transition from Capitalism to Socialism*.

THE CETIM NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

The CETIM's financial situation is dire.
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A big "Thank you!" for helping us, if possible, through a regular donation (even modest).

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