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CETIM Rue J.-C. Amat 6
1202 Geneva - Switzerland
Tél: +41(0)22 731 59 63
www.cetim.ch
contact@cetim.ch



« There is not one developed world and one underdeveloped world just one maldeveloped world »

EDITORIAL

In face of the offensive from the dominant elites aimed at weakening and dismantling the multilateral system, which has intensified since the new United States government has taken office, different social movements and civil society organisations, including CETIM, have launched an international call to defend international law and a truly democratic multilateral system.

In fact, not content with withdrawing from many UN bodies and agencies, or with no longer paying their contributions to this institution, the United States has also imposed sanctions on individuals who hold mandates in the various UN bodies and stopped certain governmental or non-governmental representatives participating at the UN General Assembly, which has its headquarters in New York.

This is nothing short of sabotage of the multilateral system. Facing this situation, the majority of States seem to be paralysed and, by their inaction, they are substantiating the practice of the law of the strongest. It is in this context that we are observing with great concern the dizzying increase in military spending to the detriment of social spending, extrajudicial executions, the increase in wars and conflicts, blatant discrimination of minorities by certain

political parties, the increasingly marked influence of the dominant elites on the media and therefore on the right to information, in addition to the use of threats and blackmail to defend individual interests including those of transnational companies.

The goal of this call (which you can read in this issue page 6) is to provoke widespread popular mobilisation to protect multilateralism. It is about demanding that States honour their obligations in order to protect the rights of people to self-determination, to settle differences between States peacefully and to seek solutions to the fundamental questions that humanity is facing (combating inequality and the environmental crisis, external debt, inequitable regulation of trade and the international financial system, decommissioning, corruption, tax system, legal framework of transnational companies etc.) via international cooperation in good faith.

Peace and security cannot be achieved through wars, but only through the defence of the general interest, through strengthening public services, by respecting democratic rules and human rights, through international solidarity and through measures favouring the weakest in society.

TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

NEGOTIATIONS FOR A BINDING TREATY FOR TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS: A SHIFTING POWER BALANCE

From 20th-24th October 2025, the 11th session of the intergovernmental working group in charge of negotiating a legally binding instrument to regulate the activities of transnational corporations in the field of human rights met in Geneva.

This process, which is historic due to its ambition to fill in legal loopholes to combat the impunity of TNCs, has been constantly put to the test since its inception. There have been many attempts to sabotage the process or to block or water down the content of the future treaty, which reflects the interests being threatened: those of large transnational companies or their political allies. Critics of the process, who want to hold on to the mechanisms allowing large companies to accumulate capital, have been trying to halt any legal progress in this field.

However, thanks to the perseverance of social movements, affected communities and other civil society organisations which met as part of the Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples' Sovereignty Dismantle Corporate Power and Stop Impunity (the Global Campaign), negotiations are ongoing and there were even some positive developments during the 11th session. This year, engagement with the process has been particularly strong. The Global Campaign, represented in Geneva by some 70 delegates, has been able to take up political space and move forward with real-world proposals to bolster the content of the future treaty. Its advocacy work, led in a coordinated manner in Geneva and in capitals, has contributed to recalibrate the power balance when faced with critical States and TNC lobbies present in the negotiating room.

The Global Campaign, whose actions at the UN are coordinated by CETIM, has played a key role. By crafting a clear political narrative, being constantly present and making passionate pleas, it has ensured to recover fundamental content issues: the need for effective mechanisms to prevent violations, legal liability in the case of non-compliance and rigorous legal recourse giving affected communities access to justice.

Several states from the Global South actively participated in the debates and outlined proposals which were along the lines of the demands of the Global Campaign mentioned above. Furthermore, for the first time since the beginning of the process, three

countries (Colombia, Mozambique and Palestine) even lent their support to the Global Campaign's proposal to set up a competent international tribunal to judge violations committed by TNCs.

As a result, the dynamics and atmosphere in the negotiating room were thus different to previous years. The presidency of the Working Group, held by Ecuador, has adopted a more inclusive stance which pays greater attention to social movements and States favourable to an ambitious treaty, unlike the blocking and sabotage tactics witnessed during previous sessions. However, we must remain vigilant. The current Ecuadorian government is still aligned with the interests of economic and imperialist powers, which keep constant pressure on and continue to threaten the process.



TNC lobby destabilised

The behaviour of the TNC lobby is also noteworthy. The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), put under pressure by civil society and by the changing power dynamic, found themselves on the back foot for the first time and went as far as directly attacking the Ecuadorian presidency. This reaction confirms what the Global Campaign has been saying for a long time. It is inconsistent and dangerous to allow TNC lobbies to influence a process designed to regulate their own practices. Their participation in the negotiation is a blatant conflict of interest (see the Global Campaign report on this matter, <https://urls.fr/3pe3Do>)

Mobilisation continues

Ten years after starting negotiations, this session confirms the relevance of the Global Campaign's strategy: maintain a firm political stance without abandoning legal arguments while directly confronting TNC lobbies. It will continue to strengthen its alliances with trade unions, affected communities and committed experts. It will also support States from the Global South so that they can play a key role in the next round of the negotiations. The session concluded in a spirit of collective strength, symbolised by a joint final statement bringing together the Global Campaign and other civil society coalitions.



FROM LA GUAJIRA TO GENEVA: THE LONG STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE BY THE COMMUNITY OF TABACO (COLOMBIA)

Before its forced displacement, the Afro-Colombian village of Tabaco, located in the Guajira region, was a close-knit rural community with deep ties to its land. Agriculture, small-scale fishing, and livestock farming constituted a subsistence economy, but above all a collective way of living and managing the land, based on cooperation and respect for life.

This relationship with the land also nurtured a vibrant culture: music, dance, various rituals, and skills passed down from generation to generation, affirming Black identity and a shared history stretching back thousands of years. In 2001, the village was forcibly displaced to make way for a coal mine operated by the Anglo-Swiss company Glencore. Since then, the community of Tabaco has continued its struggle, a true symbol of cultural resistance in the face of the advance of extractivism.

In June 2025, the displaced community of Tabaco took its struggle far beyond La Guajira. A delegation travelled to Geneva to call on international bodies to address the impact of mining in their region. During the 59th session of the Human Rights Council, Afro-Colombian leader Inés Pérez Arragoces took the floor to remind the assembly that the expansion of the Cerrejón mine, one of the largest coal complexes on the continent, had been built at the cost of expropriating her people and severely damaging their environment.

In her speech, she outlined the consequences of nearly 25 years of disruption to their territory: infertile soil, altered and polluted waterways, the spread of respiratory and skin diseases linked to coal waste. Drawing on the jurisprudence of the Colombian Constitutional Court¹, she emphasized that the most basic rights – health, education, housing, and livelihoods – have been drastically restricted since their forced displacement.

This international advocacy effort took place in a tense climate. During her visit to the Netherlands,

the community representative was subjected to abusive questioning, detained, and then sent back to Colombia, despite formal invitations from organizations including CETIM and scheduled meetings with UN bodies. This treatment, based on unfounded pretexts, is part of a pattern of systematic discrimination against black women travelling from the Global South. The incident illustrates the obstacles faced by representatives of social movements when they seek to make their voices heard in multilateral forums.

In the face of these obstacles, international solidarity organizations such as CETIM reaffirm their support for the Tabaco community. They call for close monitoring by international mechanisms of the relocation process promised to the community, so that it can rebuild a territory consistent with its ancestral practices and forms of collective organization. They also demand that the transnational corporations involved assume their responsibilities and be held accountable, both in terms of material reparations and guarantees of non-repetition.

For the Tabaco community, obtaining justice is not only a legal claim, it is an essential step in rehabilitating their collective life project.



¹ <https://www.corteconstitucional.gov.co/relatoria/2017/t-329-17.htm>



PEASANTS' RIGHTS: AGRO-INDUSTRY UNDER SCRUTINY BY UN EXPERTS

At the 60th session of the Human Rights Council (September-October 2025), the UN Working Group on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas presented its annual report on global trends and systemic challenges in rural areas.

The report warns in particular of the increase in “green grabbing”, i.e. the appropriation of land for purposes of carbon offsetting. Under the guise of sustainable environmental protection, fossil fuel giants continue to invest heavily in these projects, thereby reinforcing the commodification of nature and entrenching transnational corporations’ (TNC) control over land. Green grabbing now accounts for around 20% of all large-scale land acquisitions, with a devastating impact on rural communities. The same is true of ocean grabbing, with so-called “blue economy” programmes leading to the appropriation of customary commons by transnational corporations.

During the presentation of this report at the Human Rights Council plenary, Alberto Silva of Uiterre (Swiss member of La Via Campesina - LVC), speaking on behalf of CETIM, stressed the importance of placing peasants at the centre of public policies given the existential challenges they face. He recalled that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) can be a powerful lever for legal and political action. Alfonzo Simon of the Panamanian organisation SITRAMAR (member of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples) warned about the situation of indigenous small-scale fishers in Panama, who are facing severe repression. Although they are guardians of biodiversity and food systems, their ways of life are increasingly threatened by the agri-food and extractive industries, as well as by land and ocean conservation agendas such as the 30x30 initiative.²

This session of the Human Rights Council also provided an opportunity for CETIM, FIAN International, LVC and the World Forum of Fisher Peoples to organise a side event, which was attended by the Chair of the Working Group, academics and peasants’ and fishers’ representatives. The Working Group presented another report at the 80th session of the UN General Assembly (September 2025),

focusing on the issue of peasants’ right to participation in decision-making processes. This report speaks out, in particular, against agribusiness monopolies, the influence of large transnational corporations and energy industries, and their stranglehold on forums of governance to the detriment of the people/communities directly affected. It recalls States’ obligation to take measures to protect the right to participation: reforming governance frameworks, recognising peasants as rights holders, establishing inclusive platforms enabling them to participate fully in decision-making processes, creating independent bodies for monitoring, investigation and redress in the event of violations, etc.

To mark the release of this report, the digital platform *defendingpeasantsrights.org*, of which CETIM is a founding member, organised a webinar to discuss the challenges and obstacles to participation, with a view to developing joint strategies and strengthening collective advocacy in favour of rural populations’ right to participation. The key feature of this event was the fact that it brought together, around the same table, all sectors of the rural world, as holders of the rights enshrined in UNDROP: peasants, small-scale fishers, nomadic pastoralists, agricultural workers and indigenous peoples working the land.

For further information:

Oral statements by CETIM, LVC and FIAN:

<https://urls.fr/retQtA>

Side event : Challenges and best practices in promoting the rights of peasants and rural workers in Latin America

<https://urls.fr/smROon>

Documents of the Working Group:

1/ Report presented at the 60th session of the Human Rights Council [A/HRC/60/33](#). 2/ Report presented at the 80th session of the General Assembly [A/80/180](#). 3/ The Working Group's press release (October 2025) calling for “binding accountability for agribusiness to safeguard peasants’ rights and global food security.” <https://urls.fr/6la7Dy>

² The 30x30 initiative, which aims to protect 30% of land and oceans by 2030 and which was adopted under the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022, is presented as an urgent response to the collapse of biodiversity. Its underlying rationale is one of quantitative territorial conservation, with an emphasis on percentages rather than the quality of protection or the root causes of the destruction of life (commodification of common goods, extractive economy, etc.). There is also a danger that the initiative will encourage expropriation or the restriction of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. Thus, repressive colonial dynamics risk being reproduced under the guise of nature protection.

HUMAN RIGHTS

FOR AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE FRAMEWORK THAT RESPECTS PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

The global trade and economic architecture, based on unfair rules, is facing institutional paralysis within the World Trade Organization (WTO). Indeed, the deadlock in the Doha Round and the paralysis of the Appellate Body have reduced the WTO's ability to function, opening up a strategic window of opportunity for peoples and citizens demanding an overhaul of the system.

Faced with this vacuum and the persistence of the multidimensional crisis (economic, political, social, health, environmental, etc.), La Vía Campesina (LVC), supported by CETIM, proposes to realign international trade agreements with food sovereignty. Indeed, we must stop considering food as a commodity, when it is a fundamental human right. In this sense, the needs and rights of peoples must take precedence over international trade rules, as repeatedly affirmed by UN human rights bodies. International trade standards must comply with food sovereignty, solidarity, social justice, and human rights. It is in this spirit that LVC and CETIM participated in the 16th UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) Ministerial Conference last October.

UNCTAD: from “union of the poor” to neoliberal drift. UNCTAD was historically conceived in 1964 as the “union of the poor” (according to Julius Nyerere, late President of Tanzania), serving as a critical counterweight to the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF, World Bank) and as a platform for developing countries seeking to rebalance the terms of international trade. Its initial mandate clearly linked trade (the stability of commodity prices and the regulation of financial flows, among other things) to self-determined development (the right of peoples to decide their own development model, without interference).

However, from the 1990s onwards, with the consolidation of the Washington Consensus³ UNCTAD has undergone a neoliberal shift. Under pressure from Western powers, now free from any opposition (with the disappearance of the Eastern Bloc and the weakening of the Non-Aligned Movement), the organization's scope of action has gradually narrowed and its critical analyses have been weakened with the adoption of the dominant economic language. UNCTAD now deals with issues such as trade and foreign direct investment, to the detriment of an approach to development that respects the rights of

peoples. At the same time, the presence and influence of social movements are less valued in the decision-making processes and summits of this institution. This situation creates an opportunity, but also a challenge, for organizations such as ours, which see UNCTAD as a relevant space for developing “a trade framework based on international solidarity and cooperation, on equal sovereignty among States, on social justice and the protection of ecosystems.”⁴

Investing in UNCTAD. Our analysis, shared by many social movements, is clear: the hegemonic trade architecture (WTO-IMF-WB) is responsible for transforming food into a mere commodity, leading to the dismantling of national regulatory tools and the destruction of peasant economies. Faced with this drift, LVC and CETIM propose that UNCTAD recovers its *raison d'être* by contributing to the enactment of new international trade rules, in accordance with the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (food sovereignty, market regulation, land rights, etc.). In this sense, every country and all peoples must be able to define “their own agricultural and food systems and policies, protect their local producers, regulate markets, and prohibit destructive practices such as dumping or financial speculation on food commodities.”⁵

3 The informal agreement concluded in 1989 between the IMF, the World Bank, and the U.S. Treasury “to promote liberal policies designed to compel the countries concerned to let market mechanisms play out.” (<https://www.alternatives-economiques.fr/dictionnaire/definition/96897>)

4 Statement presented by LVC at the 16th UNCTAD Ministerial Conference, <https://urls.fr/yWGf>

5 Ibid



CALL TO MOBILIZE FOR THE DEFENSE OF A DEMOCRATIC MULTILATERAL SYSTEM AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Last October, several social movements and other civil society organisations, including CETIM, launched an appeal for the defence of multilateralism, based on the UN Charter and the rights of peoples to self-determination. With more than 70 signatures obtained to date, the campaign around this appeal continues. It aims to generate a dynamic of popular advocacy that will lay the foundations for a change of course in order to build a political and institutional framework that will enable peoples and citizens to resist the offensive of the dominant powers against the multilateral system.

"We, the undersigned, social movements and civil society organizations, are deeply concerned by the attempts to dismantle of international law, in particular since the advent of the Trump administration and its subsequent attacks against the multilateral system. While several powerful States violate international law in various contexts, the United States is engaged in a uniquely abusive conduct that directly undermines the foundational principles of multilateralism and international law.

Not only has the United States withdrawn from key UN bodies and international agreements – such as Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization, UNESCO – and actively encouraged other States to abandon or undermine multilateral frameworks, but it has also ceased paying its assessed contributions, causing severe operational disruptions across the UN system. The U.S. government has further imposed sanctions on UN mandate holders, including Ms. Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, severely impeding their ability to carry out their mandates independently and effectively. It has also targeted the International Criminal Court through sanctions and political intimidation aimed at paralyzing its work.

The United States has repeatedly restricted movements or denied visas to duly accredited representatives of UN Member States – including officials of the Palestinian Authority as well as representatives of civil society organizations and social movements – thereby preventing their participation in sessions of the UN General Assembly in New York. This constitutes a direct obstruction of Member States' right to access the world's principal multilateral forum, a right explicitly guaranteed under international law and the 1947 Headquarters Agreement. The host country's abuse of its privileged position to hinder participation in the United Nations itself is an intolerable violation of the principles upon which the UN was founded. Furthermore, the U.S. President's plan for Gaza (October 2025) is yet another demonstration of that country's disregard for international law. While we fully support an immediate end to the massacres and the urgent delivery of humanitarian



aid, as demanded by citizens around the world, this plan in fact seeks to perpetuate colonial domination in new forms and denies the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. By privileging the security of colonizers over justice, it effectively grants impunity to the perpetrators of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity – even though international law categorically prohibits any amnesty for such crimes. Any genuine peace plan must therefore include mechanisms for transitional and restorative justice, accountability and uphold victims' access to justice and reparation.

In this context, we call for the mobilization of peoples, social movements, and civil society organizations to defend international law grounded in the UN Charter and the inalienable rights of peoples. Together, we must strengthen a people-centered multilateralism capable of upholding justice and accountability. Our collective action will be essential to advance restorative justice for victims and to ensure that those responsible for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity are held fully accountable.

To this end, we also urge UN Member States to:

- fulfill their responsibilities and take concrete measures to counter the systematic erosion of international law, while upholding the multilateral system in pursuit of peace, human rights, social justice, and environmental protection;
- consider the immediate transfer of the UN headquarters from New York to Geneva, pending a collective decision on the future location of the UN's principal seat, to end the arbitrary and illegal interference by the U.S. government in the functioning of the Organization.

In this spirit, we advocate for a multilateral system free from the omnipotent grip of powerful states and economic interests, thereby ensuring a democratic, inclusive, and participatory multilateralism. Defending and strengthening such a system requires resolute opposition to the law of the strongest and a firm commitment to upholding the equal rights of all peoples and states to be heard, represented, and protected under international law."



POPULAR STRUGGLES ARE WRITING A NEW PAGE OF HISTORY

Article by Raffaele Morgantini, permanent representative of CETIM at the UN –who went to the Nyéléni Global Forum, published in Le Courrier on 15 September 2025.

From the 06 to 13 of September, Sri Lanka hosted the Third Nyéléni Global Forum⁶, one of the largest gatherings of social movements and grassroots organisations in the world. Around 1000 delegates came from more than 100 countries, representing hundreds of millions of people. They came together in Kandy to affirm their shared conviction: that systematically transforming our societies is not a utopia or an option, it is an inevitable matter of urgency.

Representatives of peasant organisations, artisanal fisherfolk, Indigenous Peoples, nomadic and pastoral communities, landless workers, migrants, feminist and anti-racist movements, trade unions, climate justice organizations, youth groups, public health advocates, and actors in the social and solidarity economy were in attendance. They were supported by civil society organisations and committed scholars. This unprecedented eclecticism embodied what participants called a “movement of movements”. At a time marked by the rise of (neo)fascism, wars and multidimensional systemic crises, the Forum has demonstrated the capacity of grassroots forces to come together around common goals.

A shared analysis of global crises.

The Kandy Declaration, adopted at the end of the discussions, paints a harsh picture of the state of the world. Participants denounce the growing commoditisation of public goods, the monopolisation of land and sea, the exploitation of the working classes, the rise of patriarchy and discrimination, as well as digitisation and financialisation which create new forms of oppression. Genocide, interference and ongoing wars are highlighted as tragic examples of the collusion between imperialism, transnational corporations and corrupt state powers. Given this situation, the Forum reiterated that food and energy sovereignty, peace and solidarity among people, gender equality and social justice are not optional, they are vital conditions for the survival of humanity.

Shared commitments Going beyond mere diagnosis of issues, the third Nyéléni Global Forum enabled the adoptions of a series of actions and co-

ordinated campaigns. It was decided that from 2026, an International Day of Mobilisation against Imperialism, Wars and the Use of Hunger as a Weapon would be launched, as well as an annual Nyéléni Day of Action to maintain this dynamic of coming together started this year. Furthermore, the Forum has endorsed the need to create political training programmes related to food sovereignty, anti-racism and grassroots feminism. Developing a shared understanding of these issues has been considered a vital step towards consolidating an ideological collective imagination and for mapping out coherent political lines of action.

The Forum has also identified strengthening ties with unions as an important strategic focus, establishing dialogue between the two principal transformative political subjects, namely the rural working and urban classes in their entirety. In terms of campaigns, the delegates launched several shared causes: against the privatisation of healthcare, against the monopolisation of land and industrial aquaculture, against corporate impunity and in favour of their legal regulation, but also for a new international trade framework founded on food sovereignty and for the cancellation of illegitimate debts that are strangling countries of the South.

A founding moment for a shared future. Much more than a simple discussion forum, the meeting was a true arena for sharing and coming together, aiming to build a transformational strategy supported by the alternatives and solutions brought forward by each sector. The class, feminist, anti-imperialist and anti-racist dimension of the movement was confirmed as an inevitable compass for the future. Upon concluding this third Forum, the movements gathered in Kandy affirmed loud and clear: “Systemic transformation, begins now and is forever” Of course, this is an immense challenge but the collective strength, internationalist solidarity and the wealth of shared experiences made this meeting a historic step forward. Time will tell how far this “movement of movements” can go in terms of ushering in a new vision.

⁶ After the two previous forums in 2007 and 2005 in Mali.

N°6 of Lendemain Solidaires is out! *Feminist struggles and environmental justice: sowing resistance, reaping life* – In French

Indigenous and rural women, who are leading the fight against land grabbing, extractivism by transnational corporations and false solutions offered by the 'green economy', are the first victims of climate crises. This issue gives a voice to those who are building alternatives: from peasant women fighting for food sovereignty to guardians of ancestral knowledge, democratic planning and the position of international bodies. Environmental justice is not limited to carbon footprints. It is a fight against the power structures that perpetuate exploitation.

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