

Centre Europe - Tiers Monde

Centre de recherches et de publications sur les relations entre le Tiers Monde et l'Europe

CETIM
Rue Amat 6
CH-1202 Genève
Tél. +41 (0)22 731 59 63
Fax +41 (0)22 731 91 52
E-mail: cetim@bluewin.ch
Site web: www.cetim.ch

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

First session (4-15 August 2008)

Item 3

Right to food

Intervention orale du CETIM

Monsieur le Président,

La faim et la malnutrition dans le monde est un problème récurrent depuis longtemps. Ses causes ainsi que celles de la récente crise alimentaire sont bien connues pour qui se rend aux évidences. Cependant, les réponses apportées à l'une des plus grandes violations des droits humains sont loin d'être à la hauteur. Il faut également souligner que les victimes de ce problème sont paradoxalement en majorité des paysans, qui nous nourrissent mais ne mangent pas à leur faim.

C'est pourquoi, le CETIM soutient l'initiative de La Via Campesina d'adopter une Convention internationale sur les droits des paysans. A ce propos, je laisse la parole à M. Muhammad IKHWAN qui est l'un de représentant de ce mouvement international paysan qui va vous présenter cette initiative.

Mr President,

We, peasants, women and men, of the International movement La Via Campesina, organised from 20 to 25 of June 2008 the International Conference on Peasant Rights in Jakarta, Indonesia. After seven years of intense discussions on the content and strategies, our spirits are high and full of confidence that we will achieve an International Convention on Peasant Rights. This convention will be one cornerstone to sustainable life for all human beings in our planet.

We peasants, women and men, landless people, agricultural workers, small –and medium-scale farmers, indigenous people and rural youth, represent almost half of the world population and are the backbone of the food systems. The food, energy and climate crises show us the massive and systematic violations of peasant rights.

We are being increasingly and violently expelled from our lands and alienated from our sources of livelihoods. We can not earn an income which allows us to live in dignity. A mix of national policies and international framework conditions are responsible for driving us to extinction. Noteworthy among these policies are the processes of privatization of land, the dismantling of rural public services and those that supported production and commercialization by small and medium producers, the fostering of highly capitalized and high-inputs agro-exportation, the push toward the liberalization of agricultural trade and toward policies of food security based on international commerce.

Moreover, violent oppression is a daily experience for us. Many of us are arrested, terrorized, tortured and even killed. Thousands of peasant leaders are being criminalized because they were fighting for their rights.

We have inherited a long history of peasant's struggles defending our rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) and the main human rights treaties are important instruments in our contemporary struggles. Nevertheless, we feel as other oppressed groups such as indigenous peoples, and women, that time has come to fully spell out our distinct individual and collective rights. There are major gaps in the interpretation and implementation of the main human rights treaties when applied to peasants. Therefore, we need specific provisions and mechanisms to fully protect our rights.

A future Convention on Peasant Rights will contain the values of the rights of peasants—and should particularly strengthen the rights of women peasants—which will have to be respected, protected and fulfilled by governments and international institutions.

The CETIM and La Via Campesina urge the Advisory Committee to appropriate the idea of a International Convention on Peasant Rights and presents it to the Human Rights Council.

Mr President,
I thank you for your attention.