

# Nyeléni 2007

Forum for Food Sovereignty

Sélingué, Mali

February 23 - 27, 2007





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nyéléni 2007 was truly the result of a strong collective effort by many organisations and individuals. So many people were involved that it is impossible to thank each individual here by name, and so much energy was poured into the Forum that it is impossible to mention every good deed that was done or every sacrifice that was made. We can only say that the energy and commitment of each of them to the cause of Food Sovereignty is what made Nyéléni a reality and a success.

Still, we would like to take this moment to acknowledge the work of the tireless team of volunteer interpreters; the wonderful cooks; the always helpful builders, cleaners, guards, and drivers; the indispensable group of workshop facilitators and rapporteurs, all coordinated by the methodology support group; the gracious support staff; the brilliant media team; the ever-dependable medical team; the financial report staff who came to the rescue; and the generous donors. We want especially to thank the civil society organisations and social movements of Mali, in particular CNOP and the local steering committee, for their great effort and contributions without which the Nyéléni Forum could not have taken place. We gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions of the Government and local authorities of Mali. Finally we extend our warm thanks to the people, organisations and authorities of Mali and Sélingué who graciously opened their country to welcome over 700 people from throughout the world. This beautiful country now has a special place in the struggle for food sovereignty.

Nyéléni 2007 was one step in a long process towards true food sovereignty for all peoples. While for most of us the work we do is rooted at the local level, we also find it important to come together globally to learn from each other and to build alliances. Again, our warmest thanks to all those who helped make this happen.

*In solidarity,*

*The Nyéléni 2007 International Steering Committee*

Coordination National de Organisations Paysannes (CNOP): Ibrahim Coulibaly (Mali)  
La Via Campesina: Paul Nicholson (Basque Country) and Mariam Sissoko (Mali)  
ROPPA – Network of Peasants and Farmers of West Africa: Ndiougou Fall  
The World Women's March: Nana Aïcha Cissé (Mali) and Miriam Nobre (Brazil)  
World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF): Pedro Avedano (Chile)  
World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP): Herman Kumara (Sri Lanka)  
Friends of the Earth International: Alberto Villareal (Uruguay) and Nnimmo Bassey (Nigeria)  
International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty Rome (IPC): Maryam Rahmanian, CENESTA (Iran) and Sarojeni Rengam, Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (Malaysia)  
Food Sovereignty Network: Aksel Naerstad, Development Fund (Norway) and Andrianna Natsoulas, Food & Water Watch (USA)

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## Call from the Nyéléni Steering Committee

*Time for food sovereignty.*

*Time to carry our action agenda forward.*

*Selingue, 17-8-2008*

In February 2007 the International Forum for Food Sovereignty took place in Selingue in Mali. It was a unique event that brought together many of the key movements and organisations world wide, working on food sovereignty. The Nyeleni Forum helped to shape a common international agenda and described very clearly how we want to realize food sovereignty in our countries and whom we have to resist because they devastate peasant based food production and local markets, destroy food sovereignty and make us dependent on transnational companies and international markets.

Only a year later, the deepening climate crisis and a new scale of food price and hunger crisis shows the importance of the agenda that was decided in Nyeleni!

Nyeleni 2007 has inspired many crucial events on food sovereignty all over the world, In the Latin American region significant initiatives with national governments were set up such as ALBA and the Petro-Caribe Conference; in Nepal a process was set up to include food sovereignty in the constitution; in Mali the government has increased its priority for peasant based production. Bolivia and Ecuador are discussing including food sovereignty in their new constitutions.

In June 2008, before the High Level Conference of FAO, organisations in the Nyeleni Forum launched the statement No more „failures-as-usual“ , and in 2 weeks over 600 organisations and movements signed the statement. This showed clearly the broad interest in the Food Sovereignty agenda and that more and more organisations and movements feel the need to concretise and implement its goals at all levels. Many local and regional governments have been motivated by our agenda and interested in collaborating with us to apply the principles of Food Sovereignty in their work.

In April 2008 the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) published its report calling for a complete overhaul of corporate controlled agriculture, and more support for peasant based sustainable food production. The report was supported by 58 governments. It documents the importance of traditional knowledge; strengthening regional markets; protecting natural resources; diversity; agro-ecology; and the role of women in agriculture. It recognises the threats from agrofuels, GMO's and Intellectual Property Rights and the model of industrial agriculture. In short it called for more Food Sovereignty! (can we just put in endnote saying this list is not exhaustive and ref)

It is essential that we continue to broaden and strengthen our movement for food sovereignty. We must bring the food sovereignty agenda and the symbol of Nyeleni to our cities and villages, to our urban and rural areas, where people continue the struggle to produce and consume their own food. The Nyeleni! agenda will



help us join hands, strengthen local struggles and bring this issue with force to regional and national governments and make our selves heard at the international level. We cannot accept more years of these destructive policies! Change is needed. We must protect and strengthen our food production and our local markets. We need the support of all and the cooperation of governments to face this challenge!

The Nyeleni steering committee had its last meeting in Mali, Selingue in August 2008. The steering committee has finalised its task and will stop to exist, but the organisations present are committed to carry on the agenda of Nyeleni and continue to build an effective and strong movement for food sovereignty. We will bring this agenda to all the spaces where we are active at national, regional and international level. We hope that it will become an dynamic, open and vibrant movement that can really provoke the changes needed!

The organisations of the steering committee have decided to set up the Nyeleni Newsletter (see below) and we hope that this can become an instrument for all of us to be in contact, mobilise and encourage each other in our actions!

The Nyeleni training centre is being used and developed and we hope that it will continue to fulfill its role in giving movements the opportunities to exchange experiences and build new strategies and actions. We hope that not just Mali organisations, but also movements from West Africa and from all over the world will choose Nyeleni for some of their meetings and trainings.

The organisations of the steering committee will take the initiative to organize a „second Nyeleni“ around the year 2012-2013, at a new moment that is appropriate galvanise the movements and the food sovereignty agenda. In the mean time we hope and know that the struggle will be carried forward by all those involved to place Food Sovereignty at the centre of the food agenda. We hope many local, national, regional and international actions and events will take place keeping the symbol of Nyeleni alive and ever moving forward!

***Time for Food sovereignty!***

***The Steering committee of Nyeleni 2007)***

**For the reports, declaration and other information on the Forum**

see [www.nyeleni.org](http://www.nyeleni.org)

<sup>o</sup> In the last meeting participated the following organisations: CNOP-Mali, International Womens March, Via Campesina, World Forum of Fisher People, International Planning Committee for Food sovereignty (IPC), IRPAD/COPAGEN- Mali, Friends of the Earth International, Food Sovereignty Network represented by the Development Fund and Food and Water Watch.

## The Declaration of Nyéléni

*Nyéleni Village, Sélingué, Mali  
February 2007*

We, more than 500 representatives from more than 80 countries, of organizations of peasants/family farmers, artisanal fisher-folk, indigenous peoples, landless peoples, rural workers, migrants, pastoralists, forest communities, women, youth, consumers, environmental and urban movements, have gathered together in the village of Nyéléni in Sélingué, Mali to strengthen a global movement for food sovereignty. We are doing this brick by brick, living in huts constructed by hand in the local tradition, and eating food that is being produced and prepared by the Sélingué community. We give our collective endeavour the name "Nyéléni" as a tribute to and inspiration from a legendary Malian peasant woman who farmed and fed her peoples well.

Most of us are food producers and are ready, able and willing to feed all the world's peoples. Our heritage as food producers is critical to the future of humanity. This is specially so in the case of women and indigenous peoples who are historical creators of knowledge about food and agriculture and are devalued. But this heritage and our capacities to produce healthy, good and abundant food are being threatened and undermined by neo-liberalism and global capitalism. Food sovereignty gives us the hope and power to preserve, recover and build on our food producing knowledge and capacity.



Nyéleni 2007 [8]

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal % fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations.

In Nyéléni, through numerous debates and interactions, we are deepening our collective understanding of food sovereignty and learned about the reality of the struggles of our respective movements to retain autonomy and regain our powers. We now understand better the tools we need to build our movement and advance our collective vision.

### What are we fighting for?

#### A world where...

... all peoples, nations and states are able to determine their own food producing systems and policies that provide every one of us with good quality, adequate, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food;

... recognition and respect of women's roles and rights in food production, and representation of women in all decision making bodies;

... all peoples in each of our countries are able to live with dignity, earn a living wage for their labour and have the opportunity to remain in their homes;

... where food sovereignty is considered a basic human right, recognised and implemented by communities, peoples, states and international bodies;

... we are able to conserve and rehabilitate rural environments, fish stocks, landscapes and food traditions based on ecologically sustainable management of land, soils, water, seas, seeds, livestock and other biodiversity;

... we value, recognize and respect our diversity of traditional knowledge, food, language and culture, and the way we organise and express ourselves;

... there is genuine and integral agrarian reform that guarantees peasants full rights to land, defends and recovers the territories of indigenous peoples, ensures fishing communities' access and control over their fishing areas and eco-systems, honours access and control over pastoral lands and migratory routes, assures decent jobs with fair remuneration and labour rights for all, and a future for young people in the countryside;...

[9] Nyéleni 2007

where agrarian reform revitalises inter-dependence between producers and consumers, ensures community survival, social and economic justice and ecological sustainability, and respect for local autonomy and governance with equal rights for women and men... where it guarantees the right to territory and self-determination for our peoples;

... where we share our lands and territories peacefully and fairly among our peoples, be we peasants, indigenous peoples, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, or others;

... in the case of natural and human-created disasters and conflict-recovery situations, food sovereignty acts as a kind of "insurance" that strengthens local recovery efforts and mitigates negative impacts... where we remember that affected communities are not helpless, and where strong local organization for self-help is the key to recovery

... where peoples' power to make decisions about their material, natural and spiritual heritage are defended;

... where all peoples have the right to defend their territories from the actions of transnational corporations;

### What are we fighting against?

Imperialism, neo-liberalism, neo-colonialism and patriarchy, and all systems that impoverish life, resources and eco-systems, and the agents that promote the above such as international financial institutions, the World Trade Organisation, free trade agreements, transnational corporations, and governments that are antagonistic to their peoples;

The dumping of food at prices below the cost of production in the global economy; The domination of our food and food producing systems by corporations that place profits before people, health and the environment;

Technologies and practices that undercut our future food producing capacities, damage the environment and put our health at risk. Those include transgenic crops and animals, 'terminator technology', industrial aquaculture and destructive fishing practices, the so-called white revolution of industrial dairy practices, the so-called 'old' and 'new' Green Revolutions, and the "Green Deserts" of industrial bio-fuel monocultures and other plantations;

The privatisation and commodification of food, basic and public services, knowledge, land, water, seeds, livestock and our natural heritage;

Development projects/models and extractive industry that displace people and destroy our environments and natural heritage;

Wars, conflicts, occupations, economic blockades, famines, forced displacement of people and confiscation of their land, and all forces and governments that cause and support them; post disaster and conflict reconstruction programmes that destroy our environments and capacities;

The criminalization of all those who struggle to protect and defend our rights;

Food aid that disguises dumping, introduces GMOs into local environments and food systems and creates new colonialism patterns;

The internationalisation and globalisation of paternalistic and patriarchal values that marginalise women, diverse agricultural, indigenous, pastoral and fisher communities around the world;

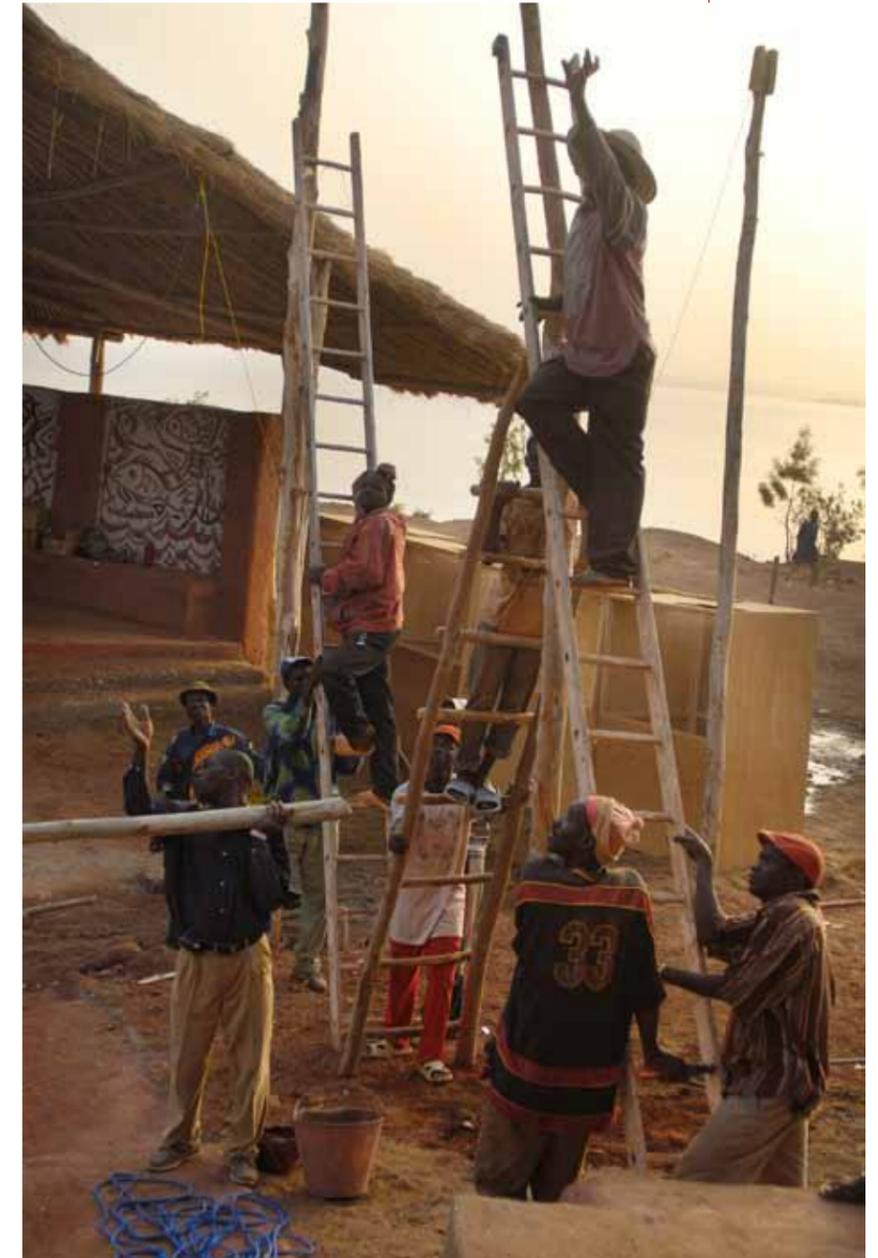
### What can and will we do about it?

Just as we are working with the local community in Sélingué to create a meeting space at Nyéléni, we are committed to building our collective movement for food sovereignty by forging alliances, supporting each others' struggles and extending our solidarity, strengths, and creativity to peoples all over the world who are committed to food sovereignty. Every struggle, in any part of the world for food sovereignty, is our struggle.

We have arrived at a number of collective actions to share our vision of food sovereignty with all peoples of this world, which are elaborated in our synthesis document. We will implement these actions in our respective local areas and regions, in our own movements and jointly in solidarity with other movements. We will share our vision and action agenda for food sovereignty with others who are not able to be with us here in Nyéléni so that the spirit of Nyéléni permeates across the world and becomes a powerful force to make food sovereignty a reality for peoples all over the world.

Finally, we give our unconditional and unwavering support to the peasant movements of Mali and ROPPA in their demands that food sovereignty become a reality in Mali and by extension in all of Africa.

### *Now is the time for food sovereignty!*



# Introduction

Nyéléni 2007, the Forum For Food Sovereignty, was an opportunity for people who harvest and produce food from the forests, waters, and lands around the world to share information and develop strategies to protect their livelihoods and the health of the Earth from the forces that seek to control, contaminate, and destroy them.

More than 500 peasants, fishers, migrant workers and others from more than 80 countries accepted the invitation to come to Sélingué in Mali, West Africa, for the Forum. They were joined by allies in the food sovereignty movement from non-government organizations in both the North and the Global South, plus a couple of hundred volunteer interpreters, administrators and coordinators, cooks, medics, and cleaning crew, not to mention the local workers who built the sleeping huts and meeting shelters.

For six days this diverse group of people discussed, debated, told stories, and struggled to overcome the communication barriers of language and culture. Most of the delegates spoke one of the four working languages of the Forum (French, English, Spanish, and the local language, Bambara) but informal conversations relied a lot on gestures, body language, and sometimes pictures drawn with on the ground with a stick.

*"Food sovereignty for us is the ability to live by what we produce. But our market is drowning in imports. Even if our products are good: our gum arabic and our shea butter are sought-for by foreigners. In Africa, food sovereignty is a question which concerns women above all; from field to plate, 80% of food depends on them. We do it all! So, for the Forum, we wanted to show that we are capable of providing meals for more than 600 people for a week. It was a defiant expression of food sovereignty. 70 women did it. Each day, we bought fresh produce from small producers. At first there were some issues, but it got better. The real problem was that we are in Africa! Everybody wanted to eat the meals... and how could we refuse? So in fact we fed more than 1,000 people!"*

## Our goals:

- to deepen our collective understanding of food sovereignty
- to learn from one another the specific challenges and struggles in which we are engaged
- to broaden our capacity for common action and solidarity
- to think together strategically and tactically in terms of both local and international arenas of struggle
- to root our work in the diversity of peoples, cultures, and struggles we represent.



**FOOD SOVEREIGNTY** puts those who produce, distribute and need wholesome, local food at the heart of food, agricultural, livestock and fisheries systems and policies, rather than the demands of markets and corporations that reduce food to internationally tradeable commodities and components.

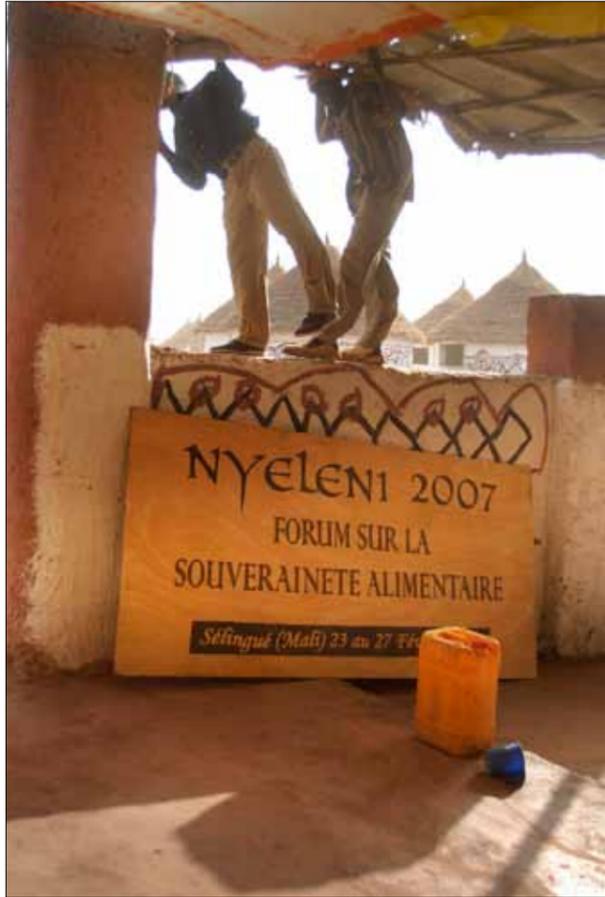
It provides a policy framework for food, farming, pastoral, fisheries and other food production, harvesting and gathering systems determined by local communities.

It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle this inequitable and unsustainable system that perversely results in both chronic undernutrition and rapidly rising obesity.

**FOOD SOVEREIGNTY** includes the right to food security – the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through socially just and ecologically sensitive methods. It entails peoples' right to participate in decision making and define their own food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries systems.

It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation and supports new social relations free from oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups and social classes.

It promotes a genuine agrarian reform and defends access to, and the sharing of, productive territories free from the threat of privatisation and expulsion.



The setting of the Forum reflected the the basic idea of food sovereignty – that people do not need to be dependent and have the ability to care for the sources of their food. The rural location was chosen to help create consistency between proposals and practical methods for achieving food sovereignty.

This was a People’s Forum. There were no power point presentations, no white draped tables, nobody in suits and ties. Instead we met in an auditorium which was really a huge open-air tent, sheltered from the blazing African sun by a roof of woven grass mats and a makeshift assortment of colourful cloths, and decorated all around with the banners and slogans of grassroots organizations from all over the world.

Located on the edge of Lake Sélingué, this structure was the centrepiece of a newly built traditional African village with round mud-brick thatched huts to sleep in, pit toilet/showers, and open-air meeting ‘rooms’ with grass thatched roofs supported by two wall of mud brick or a circle of poles with grass mats to keep the sand floor from blowing away in the constant wind.

The site was built with local materials by workers from the local area, and after the Forum it will be managed by the national peasant organization CNOP and used as a training centre for West African organizations.

The food was all local, cooked over open fires by a team of women from the area. During the long queues to get meals, participants joked that this was yet another demonstration of the theme of food sovereignty – both the long wait for food and the knowledge that it would be there when we got to the end of the line, since it was all produced locally.

For most of the delegates, the somewhat spartan conditions were perfectly comfortable, even though the electricity was being hooked up and the buildings completed even as delegates arrived. Still, many people had trouble adjusting to the intense heat and dry winds – the medics repeatedly asked people to drink at least three litres of water a day.

*“We’ve tested the water and it’s perfectly safe,” they announced. “In fact, it’s better than our water in Barcelona!”*

The occasional failures of electrical power and problems with the radio frequencies used by the interpretation system were, in fact, smaller obstacles than the barriers of language, culture, and political perspectives – and were addressed with the same good will.

At the same time, the location of the Forum was a constant reminder of the structures and policies that demand food sovereignty. The site is next to the hydroelectric dam on the river Sankarani, a tributary of the Niger, which was constructed by the World Bank with serious environmental and social consequences. Large numbers of people flocked to the area with the promise of earning a living from fishing, but the fish stocks were soon depleted, leaving the people once again in poverty and with fewer resources.



## The vision of Nyéléni

Nyéleni (the name means ‘first daughter’) was the only child of a Malian peasant couple at a time when having only one child, and a daughter at that, was considered shameful. Despite these attitudes, Nyéleni became a highly regarded farmer who supported her own family and many others through her hard work and ingenuity in production and processing of food. She is credited with the development of a local grain called ‘fonio’ which, several hundred years later, is still an important food crop.

The symbolic presence of this iconic figure at the Forum which was given her name was particularly important for the many women food producers there. As farmers, foragers, herders, processors, and cooks women in Africa as elsewhere have a central place which was recognized and honoured at Nyéleni 2007.

*“Under the eye of Nyéleni, who defied discriminatory regulations and burned with creativity and agricultural prowess, we will light a beacon for the construction of another world.”*

*“Women have historically held the knowledge about agriculture and food and today are the principal custodians of biodiversity and seeds.”*

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE FORUM

### Origins

The thinking about food sovereignty upon which the Forum was based arose as a political proposal submitted by La Vía Campesina during the 1996 World Food Summit. Food sovereignty moves beyond 'food security,' which focuses on ways to guarantee sufficient food through food aid, trade, increased production and market mechanisms at national and international levels. Food sovereignty, on the other hand, recognises food as a fundamental right of all peoples and identifies it as the common ground, starting point and guiding theme for achieving economic, social and political justice.

In the words of a Nyéléni delegate, "All peoples that want to be free and independent must produce their own foods. Food sovereignty is more than a right; in order to be able to apply policies that allow autonomy in food production it is necessary to have political conditions that exercise autonomy in all the territorial spaces: countries, regions, cities and rural communities. Food sovereignty is only possible if it takes place at the same time as political sovereignty of peoples."

### Opening the Discussions on Food Sovereignty in Sélingué

The village of Nyéléni is located in Sélingué, in the rural commune of Baya, a small village situated 140 km from Bamako. The community of Sélingué not only hosted Nyéléni, but also took part in the debate of food sovereignty. The local radio scene is vibrant throughout Mali and Sélingué was no exception: the local radio station, which broadcasts up to 200 km away, provided coverage of the Forum, and its journalists interviewed Nyéléni participants and locals about the Forum. The journalists, working on a volunteer basis, provided a very good overview of the Forum in Bambara (the local language), explained the stakes, who was participating in the Forum and why a new village was built.

The station also covered two events in Sélingué that brought together Nyéléni participants and the local community. Rice producers from Sélingué met with rice producers from Thailand and Korea and asked them frankly: why are you destroying us? This opened a discussion on the economy, imports and exports, trade conflicts between farmers, but also solidarity. The African rice farmers understood, although with surprise, that rice farmers in Asia were also poor.

In another gathering fisherfolk from Sélingué met with fisherfolk from other parts of the world and it was clear to them that their situation was similar. One fisherman from Lake Victoria in East Africa said that it's not true that fisherfolk are helpless and need handouts and outside support in order to survive. He said that if fisherfolk could organise themselves they could improve their situation, even saving small amounts of money and pooling their resources. For instance, around Lake Victoria there are 500 fisherfolk cooperatives and their main purpose is to organise themselves to regulate the amount and time of fishing of each.



Food sovereignty suggests that in order to explore how food is produced, traded and consumed, we need to question the whole fabric of global economics and society:

- resource-intensive industrial production of crops, livestock and seafood;
- the emergence of dangerous technologies, such as genetically modified organisms and nanotechnology;
- the paradigm of global trade peddled by institutions like the World Trade Organization and manifested in Free Trade Agreements;
- food aid as an extension of the North dumping on the South;
- the patenting of traditional knowledge, and;
- the overarching increased consolidation of corporate control of food production, distribution and trade;

## Organisation

The Forum was directed by an international Steering Committee that worked with a local organising committee in Mali both before and during the Forum. Members of the International Steering Committee included:

- La Via Campesina
- The World Women's March
- World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF)
- World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP)
- Friends of the Earth International
- International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty Rome (IPC)
- Food Sovereignty Network (represented by the Development Fund, Norway and Food & Water Watch, USA)
- Network of Peasants and Farmers of West Africa (ROPPA) • Coordination National de Organisations Paysannes, Mali (CNOP)

Preparatory work for the Forum was done through national and regional meetings and conferences in each of these geographic regions: Africa, West and Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast and East Asia, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe.

## FORUM PROCESS

The process for the Forum was designed to ensure that the issues and concerns of all delegates could be translated into action plans as well as statements of principles.

The first step was to discuss the main issues of the Forum's seven themes by considering the following three questions: What are we fighting for? What are we fighting against? What are we going to do about it?

### The seven themes included the following:

- 1) Trade policies and local markets;
- 2) Technology and local knowledge;
- 3) Access to and control over natural resources (land, water, seeds, livestock breeds);
- 4) Sharing territories and land, water, fishing rights, aquaculture, forest use between sectors;
- 5) Conflict and disaster: responding at local and international levels;
- 6) Social conditions and forced migration; and,
- 7) Production models: impacts on people, livelihoods and environment.

Key points from these discussions were reported to the plenary by the session Chairs. The Steering Committee then pulled out the common threads and wove them together into 15 points for consideration by the sectoral groups who added concerns from their particular constituencies, and offered proposals for an joint action agenda.



### The six sectors included:

- Peasants and small farmers
- Fisherfolk
- Pastoralists
- Indigenous peoples
- Workers and migrant workers
- Consumers and urban movements

In addition, there were three interest groups to ensure that specific concerns and perspectives were woven into all discussions, proposals and plans. Those interest groups included women, the youth and the environment.

Overall, a common response to the three questions emerged through the seven themes and across the six sectors.

What we are fighting for is the diversity within a common purpose that was embodied in Sélingué.

What we are fighting against is neo-liberal and corporate globalisation, which imposes monoculture, monopoly, control, and the consequent devastation of culture, people, landscapes, water, and all other living beings.

What we are going to do about it reflects our diversity as we are building a movement.

The 15 points, combined into 14, were sent to the regional groups to recommend specific action plans, as relevant to regional struggles. All this was synthesised by sleepless volunteers and reported to the final plenary for approval in the form of the Nyéléni Declaration.

Also a detailed Action Agenda, framed by sector and then by region (see pages 50 - 69) was presented. After the Forum, based on the action agenda, the declaration and the output from the different working groups a Synthesis Report was produced which is available (along with all the other Forum documents) on the website, [www.Nyéléni.org](http://www.Nyéléni.org)

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*"All peoples that want to be free and independent must produce their own foods. Food sovereignty is more than a right; in order to be able to apply policies that allow autonomy in food production it is necessary to have political conditions that exercise autonomy in all the territorial spaces: countries, regions, cities and rural communities. Food sovereignty is only possible if it takes place at the same time as political sovereignty of peoples."*

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## WHY A FORUM FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA?

*Ibrahima Coulibaly, President, The National Coordination of Peasants' Organisation of Mali (CNOP)*

Africa is a continent of peasants - 60-80% of the population according to official statistics, and the issue of food is central. Africa is presented in the media as a continent that is incapable of feeding itself, a continent where there is always famine and drought. The media does not present the positive aspects: the battles that peasants are fighting every day to produce food for themselves, for consumers, for the cities. Nor does it acknowledge the difficult context in which they are achieving this, which includes the liberalisation of markets and privatisation.

So, for us in Africa it is important to adhere to the concept of food sovereignty, because it encompasses all the elements of the alternatives to the current agricultural model being imposed on us. For example, food sovereignty first of all talks about the rights of states to define their own policies. This is something we have lost due to structural adjustment programmes forced on us by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Our states are no longer capable of defining and implementing their own programmes without being blocked by the World Bank and IMF, which hold the reigns of our economies in their hands. Also, food sovereignty demands that peasants should have access to resources and should be protected from the negative aspects of international markets, notably dumping. For us food sovereignty is a key concept that allows us to solve the problems that we live in our daily lives.

Today, what Africa has to offer to the rest of world is pragmatism. We have many problems and we don't have time to lose by discussing theoretical questions. We must resolve our problems now. We have a wealth of human resources and productive resources. And for us, solving problems happens through dialogue between us and those who are in power. We, the social movements, are not in power, but we cannot blindly accept how things are now, so those in power must listen to us. Yet, we don't frame this in the lan-

guage of confrontation, but in the language of dialogue. Dialogue is very important in Africa, we literally sit under trees and discuss our problems and people are not allowed to leave the shade of the tree until the solution is found. And this is what has allowed us to advance so rapidly. We have favoured dialogue. We do not immediately insult the people who are in power or jump to the conclusion that they are like the devil. It's not that we are automatically saints because we are the social movements and those in power are automatically devils. We do not have any illusions about them, but truly believe we can do things together. Everyone must understand that the interest of the country, the interest of the majority must take precedence.

As an African, I think that the movement for food sovereignty has to become more practical. People must understand that food sovereignty is not a slogan, it's a political position and proposal. When you talk about land or water or markets you're talking about the economy. This touches the interests of the people. It's not enough to discuss it in the spaces we create; we have to put it into practice so that it solves the problems of the people. For us in Africa, it's clear that unless food sovereignty is able to solve the real problems of people - poverty for example - it will not advance.

Africa is building alliances for food sovereignty. ROPPA (Réseau des organisations paysannes et des producteurs agricoles de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, includes member organisations from both francophone and anglophone West African countries) was the first structure to defend food sovereignty in West Africa. It's important to have a strong regional





platform, but it's also important to keep the ties to the base, to the local people. Problems start to occur when leaders lose their ties to their base. That's why it was so important for us in defining the process for the elaboration of the national law on agriculture and to make sure that there was a process where the base could say what they wanted included in the law. If the peasant leaders at national and regional levels were to sit in our offices and decide what should be in the law, then we would be like the functionaries.

There are also alliances with the non-governmental organisation networks in West Africa, those against EPAs, against the WTO and so on. At the international level we have alliances with La Via Campesina, with the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty and so on. This allows for a globalisation of resistances. The fights have become global and it's no longer possible to fight only in your country or region, so alliances are essential for the future of social movements. Without alliances there will be no successful social movements. Nyéléni 2007: Forum for Food Sovereignty will help Africa build alliances throughout the continent and across the world. Not only will that strengthen the struggle within Africa, but also it is the only way forward for people everywhere fighting for food sovereignty.

## WOMEN AT THE NYÉLÉNI FORUM

Women from almost all the organisations of the Nyéléni Coordinating Committee collectively organised our actions during the Forum. During the preparatory process we followed the decision of the Committee for an equal number of male and female delegates, which ensured the presence of a significant number of women representing all the sectors that participated. We also decided that we would not act as a separate sector with meetings parallel to the official program, but rather integrate women's perspectives throughout the Forum. We organised a women's assembly one day before, and met at alternative times during, the Forum. In spite of the additional work this decision entailed, it enabled us to discuss issues considered "women's" with peasant, indigenous, pastoralist and other sectors.

The Women's Assembly opened with a play and personal accounts of the struggle of women in Mali. We divided into groups to analyse the issues tackled by the Forum from a feminist perspective. Two issues emerged strongly from these discussions: women's access to land and the assertion of women's knowledge of food production and preparation. These establish women's autonomy as a condition for food sovereignty.

In striving to ensure access to land, women encounter restrictions in customary rights and inefficiency in modern legislation and in current processes of agrarian reform. In cases of separation or widowhood, women are denied the right to continue producing; their lands are taken away, they are forced to marry a brother-in-law, or their access to credit and to means of production are rendered impossible. Young women seldom inherit land. Instead, they are forced into migrating to the cities and often into prostitution and sexual trafficking.

Even the legal right to land is often not sufficient for women to be able to decide on its use. Conflicts of interest within families and communities around land use increase due to privatisation and the expansion of monocultures. When farmers are persuaded

to produce under contract with corporations or to cultivate a single crop on their land, they limit or deny women the right to cultivate vegetable gardens or raise animals due to space restrictions or because the livestock is thought to contaminate the “main” crop. Likewise, fencing common areas where women used to go for wood, medicinal plants or water, forces them to walk longer distances or put themselves at risk. Finally, we discussed

how to consider women’s desires and experiences of collective use and ownership of land.

The recognition of women’s agricultural contributions should not only be based on the fact that women produce 80% of foodstuffs in countries considered poor, but on their know-how and technology. Women have resisted by producing vegetables, medicinal plants, rearing animals, preserving important knowledge about crops - how to look after, prepare and use them. They select and improve species, considering taste and resistance to local conditions and thus become guardians of biodiversity, even though the political significance of this resistance is not yet widely acknowledged. Women’s knowledge, as well as the variety of the seeds they conserve, is enriched by interchange and exchange among equals. In this way, they challenge hegemonic and vertical systems of technical support and rural extension.

The Nyéléni Forum was also a practical exercise for women’s groups from Selingué and Bamako, in charge of preparing more than 1000 daily meals. From one day to the next they improved their use of local ingredients and recipes, adapting them to different cultures and eating habits, as well as learning to prepare and serve meals at set times during the event. This experience motivated us to re-

fect on the sexual division of labor, such as the fact that men expected to be served their food without even taking their dirty plates to the kitchen. It also led us to challenge this division, for example when we decided that the daily pay of women who prepared and distributed food should be the same as the one paid to men building the training center.

One of our other activities was the collective preparation of a declaration of various languages and political cultures. We also danced to the rhythm of drums, sharing the joy that is derived from being part of the struggle.



# Themes

## Thematic Working Groups

The work of the Forum began with three sessions of thematic working groups divided into seven central themes that relate to food sovereignty.

## Themes

- Local Markets and international trade policies
- Local knowledge and technology
- Access to and control over natural resources – land, water, seeds, livestock breeds
- Sharing territories and land, water, fishing rights, aquaculture and forest use
- Conflicts and natural disasters (amended by the group to include Occupation)
- Social conditions and forced migration
- Production models: impacts on people, livelihoods and environment

Each thematic working group was asked to address the questions:

### What are we fighting for?

What does Food Sovereignty mean for us (especially at local levels)? What do we have in common? What do we defend? What do we do to sustain it?

### What are we fighting against?

What is preventing us from realizing Food Sovereignty? What are the problems? How is neo-liberalism (from local to international level) affecting us? What are our internal potential tensions or conflicts of interest and how to overcome them?

### What can we do about it?

What is our common struggle? How to strengthen our movements (from local to international level)? How can we increase our resistance? How can we work better together?

## LOCAL MARKETS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

*Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.*

We started from the understanding that international trade is currently based on unsustainable production systems and is controlled by Transnational Corporations (TNCs). They use their power to capture local (and national) food systems, obliging people to buy food that they control.

Through mechanisms such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), bilateral and regional free trade agreements, TNCs are establishing, controlling and benefiting from global markets for food and agricultural commodities. These destroy livelihoods and local econo-

mies and prevent all peoples from having sufficient, safe and healthy food produced in ecologically sustainable ways.

For Food Sovereignty to be realised, international trade in food needs to be reduced, its governance moved from the WTO and brought back under democratic control of producers and consumers.

New governance systems must ensure that the negative impacts of international trade, for example 'dumping', are stopped and local markets are given priority.

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*"We also have to take into consideration the effect of climate change, which favours dumping. In Morocco, there are imports of grains due to the drought. We are seeking to raise awareness about this." (Morocco)*

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*"The Americans came into our country, wearing angelic smiles, offering us free food aid, but that, in turn, devastated our agriculture." (Korea)*

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### What are we fighting for?

Food is for people's health and nutrition – it should not be simply a tradeable commodity. In order to ensure the right to food for all and the right of peasant farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and others to produce healthy food sustainably, we must build new mechanisms for fairness in trading, with fair prices, that are in the hands of producers and consumers, that are transparent at all steps in the food chain, and where priority is given to local production for local markets. We must fight for radical change in agricultural, fisheries and food policies so that they are based on food sovereignty and not on free trade as promoted by its neo-liberal proponents – governments, multinational corporations and international institutions, such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation.

Food Sovereignty is not against international, regional or national trade but places priority on local production for local markets in order to guarantee food sovereignty. It values the production of culturally appropriate foods without forcing people to consume things they do not want, such as genetically modified organisms.

The local markets emphasis also supports the use of land for food production rather than for the production of agrofuels and other monocultures. It encourages laws and policies that promote local autonomy in food production and consumption so that indigenous peoples, peasant farmers, fishers, pastoralists, forest dwellers and other local food providers are able to produce for themselves, their local communities and wider society.

For indigenous people, the core issue is access to land.

### What are we fighting against?

- All bilateral and multilateral agreements that do not respond to the needs of local producers and consumers.
- 'Free trade' and other market mechanisms that promote over-production and the dumping of "cheap food" and unnecessary imported food aid, which benefit large corporate producers and harm food sovereignty.

- US foreign policy and its war economy which is hurting small farmers and fishers at home as well as devastating other countries.
- Foreign companies controlling our minerals, our water.

### What are we going to do about it?

We will combine fights against trade liberalisation with struggles to promote local production and markets and thus build food sovereignty.

We will assert the right of food providers and consumers to have autonomous control over local markets as a crucial space for food sovereignty.

We will fight against the corporate control of the food chain by reclaiming control over our territories, production, markets and the ways we use food.

We will strengthen local formal and informal markets and direct links between consumers and food providers by promoting community supported agriculture and fisheries that builds the necessary trust.

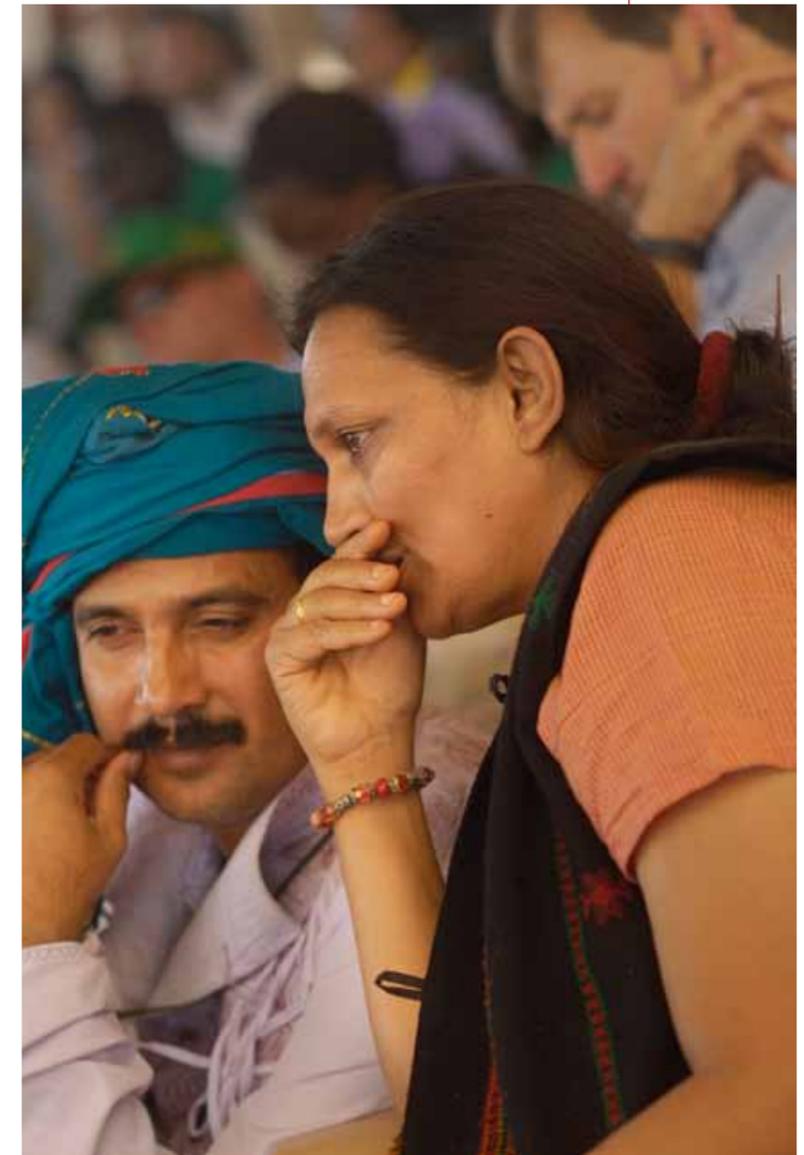
We will promote food cooperatives, local processing, consumer forums and solidarity economies that favour local markets and fair prices for small scale producers.

We will support fairness in trading and "fair trade" where it contributes to food sovereignty.

We will propose to governments, policies that protect local production and markets, and we will demand that our governments enact policies that eliminate corporate control and, instead, facilitate community control over food production and distribution.

We will continue to target the World Trade Organisation, regional and bilateral trade agreements, dumping, the politicisation and manipulation of food aid and win back the right of every country to protect its domestic production and markets.

We will fight for alternative policies in large food and agro-exporting countries that include supply management and price supports to prevent dumping, including an alternative Farm Bill in the United States of America and an alternative Common Agricultural Policy in Europe that promote family farm agriculture rather than agribusiness.



We will also take actions against the massive imports of “cheap” food, which threaten sustainable local production.

We will fight against trade rules and international financial policies that undermine food sovereignty.

We will continue to resist any bilateral and multilateral agreements that threaten the needs of local producers and consumers and threaten food sovereignty.

### Transnational Corporations

We will promote ecological production (agroecology, pastoralism, artisanal fisheries etc.) as a direct strategy against transnational corporations.

We will join international boycotts and campaigns to dismantle the power of specific corporations in the food system.

We will strengthen joint strategies by sharing information on the impact of these corporations on food sovereignty.

*“We have a campaign conducted jointly by the peasants and residents in a neighborhood where they lobbied for a “buy law” that will obligate schools to buy locally grown ingredients. They started with education that it’s better to eat locally grown GM-free food, not food that is a chemical soup. They collected signatures and brought those to the local gov-*



*ernment which legislated laws that mandated schools use locally grown ingredients. The parents were also pleased with this campaign, because protected their children from GMO food. But although the local government passed this law for their local constituency, the Supreme Court invalidated the law because it was against the WTO trade rules.” (Korea)*

*“The concept of fair trade is being more and more embedded in people’s mentality. People are more conscious of the fact that you have to pay more to get food at a higher quality. In London, there are 13 boroughs that have food from within 50 miles, that’s happened within the last five to ten years.” (U.K.)*

*“In Niger, we produce meat, we produce primary products; we export them for processing and then we import them again ...”*

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### LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY

*Traditional agricultural systems have developed based on principles of cooperation, integration and dialogue with nature. This in turn has led to highly complex agro-ecological systems... farmers are custodians of thousands of years of research and creation that has made such an extraordinary biodiversity-based agriculture possible.*

The majority of the world’s food is still being produced or harvested at relatively small scales by local communities, based on local knowledge, using locally based technologies and locally available resources. Our knowledge and wisdom is what the world needs for food sovereignty. We are the women and men, peasant farmers, pastoralists, artisanal isherfolk, indigenous peoples, forest dwellers and others who for millennia have created, maintained and developed the basis not only for our survival but also the survival of society. This includes the knowledge and skills to produce food, clothing, medicines, seeds, livestock etc, to sustain biodiversity and to respect the environment and ecosystems.

Our knowledge is alive, shows itself in many ways and is essential for food sovereignty. It is local, collective, and diverse and is ever changing and dynamic – not static – and gathers strength through exchange and solidarity.



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*"What is needed is not just to save seeds, or for there to be many different species of fish, or huge numbers of fisherfolk or peasants. A peasant is not merely a producer of seeds; a peasant is a complete person, who exists within a culture, as are fisherfolk and herdspeople. No, what we want to see is these entire cultures to be taken into account, including autonomy, rather than just sovereignty."*

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### What are we fighting for?

Fighting for food sovereignty means recognizing women's contributions and experiences and making indigenous knowledge and production systems a central element in strengthening local food systems under the control of local communities.

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*"Those who really have the necessary knowledge for food sovereignty are the peasants, the small-scale fisherfolk, the herdspeople, the people who can work and live in the forest, the people who can work on a small scale – whether it be at sea, on the land, or with herdspeople – but this is knowledge that over the last few thousand years – thirty thousand in the case of plant collection and woodland knowledge, ten thousand years in the case of agriculture, maybe more – has formed the very basis for the survival of every one of us who is alive today."*

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*"There are many sustainable and locally adapted technologies, we simply have to disseminate them on a broader scale. It's as if we have techniques, experiences, all documented by African institutes, put away in a drawer, and we need to open that drawer and take them out. As a matter of fact, transnational corporations rely on our institutes to disseminate their products – we have to do the same thing. There have been many good studies done in agriculture which show good, simple solutions but they have not been disseminated because they don't lead themselves to monopoly control." (Mali)*

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*"Avian flu has been used as an excuse to destroy small flocks and any competition to the international poultry industry. We are losing our heritage breeds, our biodiversity, and local food sovereignty."*

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### What are we fighting against?

The impacts of the technologies for intensive monocultures including those for agrofuel production, industrial aquaculture and destructive fisheries, that are imposed through the green (crops), blue (aquaculture) and white (milk) revolutions, now being reimposed on Africa, are having devastating impacts on our local knowledge systems, technologies and environment. It actively leads to the consolidation of the market power of transnational corporations throughout the entire food chain from production to distribution.

This corporate control and domination, supported by local elites, leads to the concentration of land, erosion of soils, poisoning of waters from nitrates and pesticides, damage to productive ecosystems, culminating in the disappearance of farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk. With this distortion of power come new genetically modified organisms, nanotechnologies and seed sterilisation technologies, protected by patents and other intellectual property rights. Also, the privatisation of agricultural research moves knowledge,

seed varieties and livestock breeds from the public domain into corporate hands; thus, damaging transformative local knowledge development. In the name of hunger, bird 'flu, climate change and the thirst for fuel by the wealthy, unsuitable and unsustainable technologies are being imposed in our territories, are poisoning our water bodies and, with the impacts of industrial extractive fisheries and aquaculture, are killing our seas.



*"In Chile, the traditional hens used to lay blue eggs. Now the industry has appropriated the genetics of the blue egg chickens to make a breed of chickens which produces more eggs but needs special food etc. so consumers buy the blue eggs thinking they are supporting traditional farmers."*

*"In Senegal, there are illnesses we used to be able to treat. We are doing research to get that knowledge back but after many centuries it will not all be retrieved, particularly the spiritual aspects."*

*"Monsanto has had presence in India since 1947, but only selling pesticides and herbicides (Machete, Roundup Ready). In 1991 Monsanto introduced themselves into seeds. That was the breaking point for agriculture. Indian liberalized its seeds industry and started selling hybrid seeds. Cost of production increased and Cargill, ADM, Conagra, ATC (Indian company) are now controlling the market. Only the big farmers are benefiting. Those with one or two acres of land can't sell in those markets. Also, the industry is forcing the government to change patent laws because Monsanto wants farmers not to be able to save their seeds."*

## What are we going to do about it?

We will assess any new technology by asking:

- is it on a human scale?
- do people have the choice to use it or not?
- who owns it? does it give control to the people?
- does it leave space where people with traditional knowledge can practice and teach?

We will continue to expose the effects of intensive monocultures and support and foster local research in this area.

We will intensify our global campaign to ban Terminator technology and place a moratorium on the patenting of seeds.

We will honour and promote traditional knowledge and wisdom and traditional ways of knowing, and develop opportunities for sharing and disseminating this knowledge among communities and particularly to the next generation.

## ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER NATURAL RESOURCES

*People who grow or harvest food need to be able to use the territory, land and water they require for producing or harvesting food – or the seeds and livestock breeds that they have saved, bred and refined to suit their climates, production systems, terrains and cultures.*

The access, control and stewardship of the natural resources that peasant farming, pastoral, artisanal fishing, forest dwelling and indigenous communities rely on for food and livelihoods – for example, land, forests, water, seeds, livestock, fish and other aquatic species – are essential for food sovereignty. For generations, local communities have conserved the richness and diversity of these resources by controlling access to them for the practice of agroecologically sustainable and biodiverse agriculture, livestock production, pastoralism and artisanal fishing, saving and protecting their lands, territories, forests and water bodies from over-use, depletion and contamination.

*"People used to cultivate land, fish waters directly – then eat; now many agricultural workers are still hungry such as the plantation workers in the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia; fishers and coastal workers are also hungry because all the produce is used mostly for export."*

## What are we fighting for?

*We are fighting to defend life, rights and for power to the people.*

Land and water: A genuine agrarian reform is needed that allows us continued rights of access to and control over our territories, including for Indigenous Peoples and pastoralists, that can then be used exclusively for ecologically and socially sustainable production.

We require similar rights to water bodies and coastal commons for artisanal fisheries, preventing the imposition of industrial aquaculture or destructive fishing practices, as well as



guaranteeing riparian and beach access to these resources. We must develop a common plan of action around the fight against water privatisation, commodification of water and exploitation of ground water by transnational corporations.

Legal rights: We must ensure the enforcement and implementation of international, national, regional agreements, rules, declarations that uphold the legal and customary rights of peoples and communities for access to their local, communal resources.

Seeds: Access to and control over our seed varieties, livestock breeds and fish species that are the basis of food sovereignty should not be compromised by intellectual property rights nor should they be contaminated by genetically modified organisms.

*"In all communities, but especially in indigenous and pastoralist communities, women's economic autonomy is becoming limited by the way our territories are being redrawn and governed by market forces. Women are the worst affected by privatisation of natural heritage and IPR regimes, and women are most threatened in the struggle for natural resources—intimidation, rape, killings."*

### What are we fighting against?

We must guard against humanitarian and development assistance programs that reduce access and our control over natural resources – for example, what happened after the December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.

We must force governments to apply existing international laws and agreements, or to design national laws that guarantee the rights of access to the resources which people need to realize food sovereignty, and prevent the privatization of common resources and the actions of transnational corporations which limit that access.

We must stop the displacement of communities from their resource bases and territories by large infrastructure projects such as dams and mines – or by monocultures of eucalyptus, soy and other GMOs, and agro-fuels.

*"In Palestine, water was captured by occupying forces since 1948; it is very important that we realise the role of occupations, soldiers and wars in preventing the access and control of communities to their resources for food sovereignty."*

*"These lands and rivers belonged to our fathers and mothers; but now we are becoming strangers in our own lands"*

The so-called natural resources in the land, forests and seas have intrinsic value and their integrity must be honoured. In the same way human beings must not be exploited or used as commodities, especially women who are central to food security.

### What are we going to do about it?

We will work to ensure women's access to land, abolishing discriminatory laws of inheritance and repartition in the event of divorce; transforming customs that deny women's right to the land; and equality between women and men in processes of agrarian reform.

We will insist that Indigenous peoples must be recognised as key actors in deciding issues of access and control in all the territories. They must be given opportunities to manage their own resources.

We will fight privatisation and patenting.

## SHARING TERRITORIES AND LAND, WATER, FISHING RIGHTS, AQUACULTURE AND FOREST USE

We define territories beyond geopolitical boundaries so as to include the territories of indigenous peoples, nomadic and pastoralist communities and beach-based fisherfolk. We view nature as material and spiritual beings, not as 'resources' that exist to be exploited. We understand the holistic nature of territories as including land, water, seeds, livestock breeds and aquatic organisms. Local communities and peoples that share territories – including land, water, seeds, livestock breeds, and aquatic organisms – should have equitable, but controlled, access.

The Nyéleni Forum was the first opportunity for the diverse sectors of the food sovereignty movement to discuss increasing conflicts over access to resources across food producing communities and solutions to the conflicts. The land and natural resources – the territories – that we are defending are faced with mounting pressures from competing uses,

## Some Comments from Delegates:

*"While the pygmy population of Cameroon used to live by hunting and gathering, they are now without land and their communities live in makeshift camps. The reason is that some years ago, the governments signed agreements with transnationals and sold them the territories of the pygmies for large-scale timber enterprises. After the deforestation, these areas were not replanted and the loss of their traditional food resources forced the pygmies to migrate to other territories, in particular the area of the "Bantu" population, where, with no control over productive resources, they wound up in a situation of slavery.*

*Loss of land and food sovereignty, migration, and being thrown into a situation of exploitation, have created cultural crisis among the pygmies and fostered drug and alcohol abuse and increase in illiteracy. This makes organizing very difficult and recognition of their rights even more so."*

*"In the past, in Iran, nomadic herders took their flocks and herds across farmers' fields. The lands belonged to the nomads, but they authorized the farmers to use them. For 60 years, the Iranian government has wanted to modernize and industrialize, and has put in place policies that favour cultivation and mechanization, to the detriment of nomads. Forty years ago, a national agrarian reform, incited by foreign powers, imposed privatization and separation of lands.*

*These policies reversed the former equilibrium, and while the different communities used to live in harmony and a spirit of cooperation, they now find themselves in competition for access to resources, especially water.*

*On top of this, the oil wealth of the country makes it difficult to raise a debate about food sovereignty: oil is too comfortable a source of revenue."*

*"Colombia is made up of 82 indigenous peoples, making it a pluri-cultural, pluri-ethnic country. To cope with the State's concessions to large enterprises for the exploitation of the equatorial forest, the struggle has to have an inter-ethnic base, assuring everyone has access to territory and is able to produce for themselves. Yet despite this evident necessity, misunderstandings and conflicts of interest exist, favouring conflicts and guerrilla activity – which the government knows how to profit from."*

*"In Niger, decentralization laws have developed conflicts between community members, creating issues of sharing of resources, access to wells, etc. Livestock farmers who formerly had pastures with a right-of-way are now regularly in conflict with other users: the territories are not always defined. So while formerly one could say about Niger that 'the land belongs to the tiller', the definition and carving up of territory without agreement and without taking account of local traditions have created conflicts. In fact, 130 livestock farmers are in prison in Togo for having crossed the border."*

*"As in many countries, in Brazil it is very difficult if not impossible for a woman to have access to land. To assert this essential right, Brazil's women farmers movement is fighting for the development of micro-credit aimed at women, the creation of child-care facilities (which enable women to work in the gardens), and to get a law which permits them to process the cotton they produce."*

*"We need a wider, inclusive process that balances various users' rights and access and leads to sustainable management of the resources, with decision-making power at the local level so that different users can work things out among and between their own communities."*

often leading to serious conflicts. Even if we share a common vision of food sovereignty, we are nonetheless faced with divergent and legitimate interests or usages.

## How Conflicts over Territories are created

The privatisation of land, water and material beings is one of the biggest obstacles to equitable access to territories. The privatisation of resources strongly contributes to the unequal distribution of the right to access and use of land and other natural resources. In certain areas, factors such as demographic growth, desertification, climate change, neo-liberal policies, investment in mining and forestry, and liberalisation of land markets all contribute to aggravating existing tensions.

## How to share Territories?

We need to ensure the peaceful coexistence of diverse communities within territories by strengthening our organisations and multi-sectoral alliances to democratically negotiate and share territories. A strong, aware and organised civil society will be able to assert the rights of peasants/farmers, artisanal fisherfolk, pastoralists and indigenous communities. We must also assert the rights of young people and women to access territories.

We can solve conflicts over shared territories between different sectors by improving our traditional management of territories, particularly since one major source of conflict is the overexploitation of nature and unsustainable management by one sector to the detriment of another, by one generation to the detriment of future generations.

Anchored in our traditional knowledge, we need to create our own research activities to collect and envision alternative solutions to the obstacles of sharing territories by diverse communities. One such solution is the creation of an alternative economic system among local producers that resists global market domination.

We need to fight against all forms of expulsion of peoples from their territories and against mechanisms that favour remote, corporate or centralised control of territories.





### Developing Rules and Regulations

Local communities and peoples who share territories should have equitable, but controlled, access. It is imperative to develop a system of regulations (at the local, regional and global levels) for territories, land, water and forests: rules that regulate access and use and that bestow rights and responsibilities. This is necessary in order to establish a system of conflict management that is not only efficient, but also legitimate and commonly accepted.

### The Role of the State

We must fight for governments to protect the rights of those who inhabit territories, such as through genuine comprehensive agrarian reform based on the diverse needs of peoples. As expressed in the Declaration of the Land, Territory and Dignity Forum, "... the State should guarantee community control over natural resources by peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralist, and forest communities, and by indigenous peoples, so that they can continue to live and work in the countryside and on the coasts by means of collective and community rights."

## CONFLICTS, OCCUPATIONS AND NATURAL DISASTERS

*Food sovereignty is essential for community resilience and response to all disasters, both natural and man-made. Local autonomy can be threatened by direct occupation by forces from the same country, other countries, corporations, or science and technology. Building awareness and international solidarity is an essential strategy for achieving food sovereignty for peoples living under war, occupation and disasters.*

Conflicts and disasters are increasing in their frequency and impact and are affecting an

increasing number of peoples throughout the world, in both industrialised and non-industrialised countries. Environmental disasters often have important human causes and conflicts are increasing in scope to include: wars; occupations; small farmers versus the industrial model of production; the resistance against institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; transnational corporations; conservation parks and protected areas; genetically modified seeds; and industrial health and safety standards.

### What are we fighting against?

Conflicts and disasters have complex impacts at the community level. Violence leads not only to people being killed and tortured, but also to mental destruction, physical disability, high unemployment and migration – especially of youth. And there are always those who are more vulnerable: women, children and the elderly. Bombs, mines and the pollution of war make land impossible to cultivate. Environmental degradation as a result of warfare and disasters compromise local production. Economic dependence on the occupiers is promoted (especially for agricultural products) and displaced or occupied people are used as forced labour.

Disasters, repression and state terrorism threaten communities' control over their territories. These limit their access to land, water and food, as well as excludes their participation in decision-making. After conflict or a disaster, people are often displaced from their lands and territories, which are then appropriated for other purposes, such as tourism or occupation by others.

We often speak of access to markets for local producers and peoples who want to consume local products. But for communities living with conflicts, occupation and the aftermath of disasters, access to markets is a basic physical issue when there is, for example, a wall between the producer and the market, or where the transport infrastructure disappears in a flood.

Food sovereignty is also threatened by efforts to ameliorate these situations such as through inappropriate food aid and development / reconstruction projects, which themselves can generate more conflicts. Sustained imports of food aid destroy local production and biodiversity and bring GMOs into the food systems (even HIV/AIDS assistance is used as an entry point for food aid).

### Defending Palestinian Food Sovereignty Against Occupation and Expulsion

A fast-paced and parallel process of land confiscation and tightly sealed ghettos by means of the 8 metre high Apartheid Wall, with no ability to physically move, have economic trade or flow of goods, is a reality for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. This policy seeks once and for all to ensure that Palestinian communities are unable to sustain themselves, paving the final path towards Palestinian transfer. It is important to understand the links between the 1948 expulsion and occupation of Palestinian lands, the establishment of agricultural settlements in the 1967 occupied areas, the annexation of the lands of nearly 300 villages for the Apartheid Wall, the suffocating closure of Gaza as produce rots away at sealed "crossings," and the signing of peace and agricultural agreements for a thriving Israeli agro-industry.

The Apartheid Wall seals the destruction of most Palestinian farming communities that see their land isolated behind cement walls and razor wire. Some 50% of the West Bank land is being stolen for Zionist colonisation and the ghettoisation of the Palestinians imprisoned within the Wall.

Palestinian markets and access to those markets have been completely destroyed. While internal markets are ruined, export of Palestinian products relies upon the enslavement of Palestinian farmers under Israeli companies.

Through Occupation checkpoints, authorities and rules, farmers are compelled to hand over their produce to the Israeli State owned company Agrexco and other Israeli exporters that sell "Israeli products" in world markets. Prices, conditions, amount and type of produce are all dictated to farmers who have little choice other than to accept the exploitation by the Occupation's companies.

With agricultural production having historically underwritten the economic self-sufficiency of Palestinian villages, the annexation by Israel into even more Palestinian agricultural lands forces Palestinians to become cheap labour for Israeli industries and settlements. Otherwise Palestinians cannot survive and thus are forced into exile.

The food that does not enter international markets or whose quality is not suitable for export is dumped on Palestinian markets, forcing local producers out of business, since they cannot compete with cheap subsidised goods produced at their expense.

Within Palestine, renewed efforts for an effective boycott of agricultural produce are paving the way for a grassroots de-

fense of Palestinian farming communities and a strengthened self-consciousness and pride. Already under the most adverse conditions, Palestinian-only markets are being established. Israeli goods have been burned in popular demonstrations, a symbolic refusal to allow the occupation to continue its stranglehold upon Palestinian life and economy. Boycott trade fairs are held and recently trade unions began to join the efforts.

The Palestinian appeal to the world was clearly stated by a unified call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions issued on July 9, 2005. It has become a core strategy to support the Palestinian liberation struggle and to force Israel to respect international law. It serves people of the world to exercise their power and exert pressure on their governments, institutions and companies. It reveals the true nature of Israel's occupation and policies, gives human rights real value by holding Israel accountable, highlights the responsibility of the international community in supporting Israel, and, above all, ends international support for Israel, since its policies would be unsustainable without external assistance.

*Excerpts taken from a report of the same name by the Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign. For the full report and more information see: [www.stopthewall.org](http://www.stopthewall.org)*

*"What does food sovereignty mean for farmers who cannot access their lands?" (Lebanon)*

*"Over 800 people have been killed in the Philippines, mostly farmers and their families who were fighting for the rights of farmers to the land. In most cases, before they were killed the military branded them as members or supporters of the rebel group in the country, which operates mainly in the rural areas. The alarming and unabated killings of farmers have stopped food production and have destroyed the social and physical infrastructure of food sovereignty for the people."*

*"After independence in 1962 in Uganda there was a land grab in the northeast of the country, with 3/4 of the land gazetted into game parks. This dramatically reduced the access of the Karamojong pastoralists to grass and water, and with drought it has become worse. The government advocates settled cattle keeping, but this is not possible without infrastructure for water storage and grass. The pastoralists must continue to move their animals in search of sustenance, but there are no policies to support them. Cattle keeping is the major source of livelihood in the area, and cattle rustling, which has happened sporadically for the past 50 years among different clans, has increased as a response to the lack of alternative livelihood /security."*

## What are we fighting for?

For peoples living under occupation, self-determination and local autonomy become crucial in order to achieve food sovereignty, and food sovereignty is essential for community resilience and response to all disasters. Self-determination contributes to preparing against the impacts of natural and human-made disasters by ensuring ecological community-based production systems, reliant on traditional knowledge and lifestyles that increase the resilience of ecosystems to catastrophic events.

In order to achieve food sovereignty, we must ensure that those who are victims/survivors of disaster/conflict can determine and lead the relief, recovery and rebuilding efforts. We must continue to develop and strengthen local responses to disasters. It is also important to build local awareness of the importance of food sovereignty and of resisting against Transnational Corporations and other forms of remote control. And we must create local food, farming and market systems that are strong enough to survive disasters.

Strong legal frameworks are needed to defend food sovereignty in situations of wars, occupations and disasters. In Nepal, food sovereignty is now included in the national constitution. In all countries strong regulations are needed to prevent the importation of GMOs. Equally important is how to secure the benefits from legal frameworks that should maintain biodiversity and provide compensation when the livelihoods of communities are intentionally destroyed, as well as an international convention on food sovereignty, especially for communities living with conflict, occupation or disaster.

Building awareness and international solidarity is an essential strategy for achieving food sovereignty for peoples living under war, occupation and disasters. We will join struggles against occupation and fight the walls and militarization of borders that splinter peoples and prevent their access to local food and productive territories, recognising that conflicts and occupations present a serious threat to food sovereignty and that asserting food sovereignty is crucial for peoples and communities to survive and thrive under adverse conditions. This includes standing in solidarity with all peoples who live under occupation, whose territories are divided by walls and who suffer from conflicts and disasters. We will strengthen our struggles, resistances and responses to conflict, occupation and disasters through learning from the experiences and strategies of each others' communities and movements.

## SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND FORCED MIGRATION

*"If they throw you into boiling water, you have to escape, there is no option."*

### What are we fighting for?

Human populations have always migrated from place to place in search of new opportunities or as a result of natural disasters. Now, however, we are seeing forced migration caused by an economic system that is being imposed on the planet by transnational capital. Mega-project such as dams and mines and structural adjustment policies result in appropriation and contamination of land and crops, warfare, and the destruction of habitats and cultures.

Food sovereignty respects local cultures and food systems and ensures that even in a situation of conflict or natural disaster people are able to take care of themselves.

When people decide to migrate to another place they must have free access to opportunities to earn a living free from harassment. Countries like the USA and Canada must follow the international conventions on the rights of migrants.

We are fighting for the rights of all migrants, whether they are displaced internally, moved to other countries, or stuck in refugee camps, sometimes for many years.

We are fighting against all the oppressive and exploitive conditions which force people to flee their homes, including large infrastructure projects, mono-cultures, and 'drug wars'.

We recognize that migration provides benefits for wealthy countries, not just in the profits from the mega-projects which have displaced the people, but also because migration represents the loss of social and cultural capital so the receiving countries are acquiring substantial resources at a very low cost.

Migrants can also provide political benefits for the receiving country: In the case of El Salvador, the families that were receiving remittances from their relatives in the USA were obliged to vote for the party that the USA was supporting in the El Salvador elections.



Another benefit is the ability of governments in the northern countries to make immigrants the scapegoats for the social and economic problems that these governments are unable to resolve.

We also recognize new kinds of slavery, in the form of traffic in humans. Women, men, and children of both sexes are trafficked for labour or prostitution, under extremely degrading conditions.

### What are we going to do about it?

We will strengthen and promote independent migrants' organizations and movements, from local to international. This includes strengthening alliances between organizations and social movements in countries of origin and the places where migrants live and work.

We will increase awareness about forced migration and the conditions that migrants face, especially in the food, fishing and agricultural sectors, and we will stand in solidarity with migrant organisations as crucial allies in the fight for food sovereignty.

We will continue to promote awareness of the contributions of migrant workers, and we will fight for policies to support the right of displaced peoples to return to their home communities, particularly those who have been displaced by occupation, disaster, or conflict.

We will address the causes of forced migration through:

- defence of territories, cultures, food sovereignty and self-reliance and the defence of rural, farmer, agrarian and urban organizations that are essential to ensuring dignity in the countryside and the city;
- articulating the value of peasant production and the creation of sustainable economic relationships that are outside of capitalist market rules.

## PRODUCTION MODELS

*Food sovereignty is rooted in environmentally sustainable production and harvesting, under local control and honouring traditional knowledge. But this is only viable if society values and supports the local food system in the market and through regulation.*

Industrial production models are capturing and destroying local markets, the livelihoods of small scale food providers and the diverse ecosystems upon which sustainable, low energy production depends. This industrial model pushes monocultures as well as the use of food crops and land for agrofuel production rather than to feed people. This capitalist-industrial model of production is based on exploitation of humans and ecosystems and has dramatic impacts on workers, communities and social relations. The corporatized production model is also environmentally damaging, destroying nature's capacity to adapt and flourish and greatly contributes to climate change. It also causes downstream pollution which, together with industrial fisheries and aquaculture, is killing our seas.

These destructive production models are part of larger, globalized economic models and of an international division and a sexual division of labour which exploit differently men



and women, and the workers, the societies and natural resources of every region of the world. Injustices and socio-economic inequalities are fostered and exacerbated, because they contribute to maximizing the accumulation processes and profits of capitalist corporations. This is why promoting equality, justice and solidarity, between peoples, between regions of the world and within societies and communities is so important for the building of alternative production models. This is why food sovereignty is as applicable in Northern industrialized countries as in the global South.

We are sensitive to the need to be clear about the meaning of words such as ecological, biological, organic, agro-ecological, which are understood quite differently in different regions and cultures. Similarly, the definition of scale of production varies by region: an operation considered small in Brazil would be quite large according to the criteria in Vietnam.

### What are we fighting for?

Food sovereignty requires the establishment of another economic model, one which is based on cooperation and solidarity between individuals and peoples and places biological and cultural diversity above competition and specialization.

Food sovereignty also requires a transformation of social relations so there is equality between social classes, races, sexes and generations.

Food sovereignty emphasizes democracy, including democratic control of natural resources and food distribution, and local development. Everything that can be produced and consumed locally should be. But these considerations about democracy must also govern regional, national, and international systems. We use the term 'democracy' even though we are aware that it is a term which (like other terms we have used) has been captured by international institutions; for us it highlights the concepts of people's power and participatory democracy.

We require policies that support all scales and levels of democratic and sustainable food production and distribution.



### What are we fighting against?

We cannot continue the current system of industrial agribusiness which is unsustainable socially, environmentally and economically.

Economic: the myth of 'comparative advantage' is used to impose structural adjustment which forces nations or regions to produce cash crops for export, resulting in local food insecurity and corporate control.

Social: discrimination and exploitation of rural, fisher, pastoralist, Indigenous and other food producing communities who play an important role in society but have been marginalized under the present system and whose work has not been recognized as having real economic value. Cutting across communities, some social groups, such as women and youth, are even more marginalized. Generally, their work is exploited with little or no recognition or remuneration even though it is crucial to society and to the economy.

Environmental: large-scale monocultural production causes erosion of genetic diversity, production of toxic agricultural products for export which are banned in their own country, dangerous technologies and processes such as genetic engineering, cloning, irradiation and nanotechnology whose effects are not yet known.

Around the world we confront government policies which promote industrial agriculture through privatization of commons such as water, land, and seas; through laws and regulations which discriminate against artisanal and on-farm processing and local markets; through industry-sponsored research and promotion; and through privatized extension services.

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*"Food is being used as a weapon of imperialism, with violence specifically targeting those who produce food, as well as their crops, animals, land, and water."*

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*"Transnational corporations use national governments to peddle policies and programs. In the past two years, in our part of the country they have started promoting small farmers to grow the plant that is to be used for biodiesel. And government has been giving a subsidy for farmers growing it. It's not only a question of them making small-scale agriculture becoming unviable, but changing the growing of food to grow products that aren't used as food but used as fuel." (India Women's Group)*

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*"The Pak Moon dam has prevented at least 6,000 families from fishing in the Moon River since it was completed in 1994. The mega project has violated our right to fish, and therefore our food and cultural security. Many of us have had to migrate to big cities to find work. This is all caused by the dominant development model that has been sponsored by the World Bank." (Thailand)*

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### What are we going to do about it?

Food sovereignty and environmental stability are underpinned by agroecological production of food and the use of ecologically sensitive artisanal fisheries practices. But this form of production can only continue if society values and supports it and buys local foods whilst at the same time removing privileges and subsidies from industrial production systems that benefit transnational corporations.

We will struggle for access to, and truly democratic control of, land and other natural resources by the peoples, especially marginalized communities and social groups, including women. We will struggle against capitalist privatization, exploitation and accumulation. We will struggle for social justice, equality and solidarity, and for the valorization of trades, professions, occupations and crafts that contribute to food sovereignty.

We will work to strengthen the links between producers and consumers and persuade



them to switch to a 'solidarity economy' that supports local farmers, livestock keepers, artisanal fisherfolk and their systems of agroecological production and harvesting. We will also work to persuade authorities at all levels to buy locally produced foods for schools, hospitals and other public institutions.

*"Food integrity is ceremonial for Indigenous people, it's not just a matter of nutrition. For example, people are linked to corn, or salmon. If something happens it changes the very identity of the people. So Indigenous people must be consulted and part of the decision-making process."*

We will strive to protect the fertility of the land, the integrity of seeds, to insist on government investment in agriculture (not subsidies to agro-business), and to organize food producers in relation to centralized control of markets.

A challenge for the current generation is not only to change policy and societal support in favour of ecologically sustainable production, but also to keep alive the values and the resources needed for this production system so that they can be taken up and used by the next generation.

We will work to strengthen the movements, networks, organizations and coalitions that

struggle for food sovereignty and for the social changes necessary to create alternative social relations and economic models in which food sovereignty is possible.

Awareness-raising, education and training, as well as the creation, valorization and diffusion of alternative knowledges are central to all our strategies.

*"Danish meat production is based on soya from Latin America, especially Argentina, where vast areas are planted with monoculture GM soya. Soil is depleted of nutrients and exposed to erosion. The soya producers grow bigger and bigger – taking new land from forest and virgin land. Even Danish farmers are losing, as they have to produce ever cheaper food, which is only possible on large farms. Small farmers have to give up in this competition. Danish nature is also losing due to a surplus of nitrogen fertilization deriving from the manure – extracted from the Argentinian soil (which is depleted!). The peasants in Argentina that were originally producing a variety of food (vegetables, meat, milk) are selling their land to the soya producers as their possibilities to produce are undermined by pesticide spraying from the air, or their land is taken away, since they have no papers on their legal rights to the land. As local farmers no longer produce for the local people, there is hunger and malnutrition. People are fed soya, which is not part of the traditional diet. The Danish population loses the ability and knowledge to live on a diet with local fruit and vegetables – and get used to too many animal products in their diet – as does the rest of the Western world."*

## Women's Declaration on Food Sovereignty

*Before the Forum a day was set aside for women to meet, organized by the World March of Women. The perspectives and concerns they shared were raised by participants throughout the Forum. The women delegates also worked together to produce this Declaration, which was read to the final Assembly.*

We, women of 86 countries and diverse Indigenous peoples, from Africa, the Americas, Europe, Asia, Oceania and various sectors and social movements, are gathered at Nyéléni 2007 in Sélingué, Mali, to work together on the construction of a new right—the right to food sovereignty. We reaffirm our will to act together to change the capitalist and patriarchal world that prioritizes market interests at the expense of human rights.

Women, who have historically held the knowledge about agriculture and food, who continue to produce up to 80% of the food in the poorest countries, and who today are the principal custodians of biodiversity and seeds for farming, are particularly affected by neoliberal and sexist policies.

We suffer the grave consequences of these policies: poverty, inadequate access to resources, patents on life, rural exodus and forced migration, war and all forms of physical and sexual violence. Monocultures, including those used to produce agro-fuel, and the massive use of chemicals and genetically modified organisms, have a negative impact on the environment and human health, particularly reproductive health.

The industrial model and transnational companies threaten the existence of peasant agriculture, artisanal fisheries, pastoralism, artisanal production, and local food businesses in urban and rural areas—all sectors in which women play a major role.

We want to remove food and agriculture from the WTO and free trade treaties. More than that, we reject the capitalist and patriarchal institutions that consider food, water, land, people's knowledge and women's bodies simply as merchandise.

In our struggle for equality between the sexes, we want an end to the oppression we face in both traditional and modern societies and the market system. We want to use this opportunity to put sexist prejudice behind us and develop a new vision of the world based on the principles of respect, equality, justice, solidarity, peace and freedom.

We are mobilized. We are struggling for access to land, territories, water, and seeds. We are struggling for decent working conditions. We are struggling for access to training and information. We are struggling for our autonomy and the right to make our own decisions and participate fully in decision-making bodies.

Under the eye of Nyéléni, an African woman who defied discriminatory regulations and burned with creativity and agricultural prowess, we will find the energy to transform the right to food sovereignty into a beacon for the construction of another world.

We will find this energy in our solidarity. We will bear this message to women across the world.

## Declaration of the Youth

The youth gathered reunited in Sélingué, Mali, in the Forum for Food Sovereignty - Nyéléni 2007 want to thank for the offered space where we will be able to be meet, to discuss and to share some central issues that affect to us at the moment. But the time was not sufficient to discuss more profoundly a declaration.

We are part of the solution and of the struggle for food sovereignty, we are firm and determined to work together with farmers and peasant organizations, indigenous, pastoralists, women and students in the construction of our future and the improvement of our present. The youth, we are the present and the future.

To continue the struggle for food sovereignty, we have decided to organize in 2008 in Latin America, the youth forum for food sovereignty; where we will decide our strategies and alliances in the fight for food sovereignty.

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*"The knowledge about management of natural resources is on the way to disappearing among the nomads of the Sahel. Many of the youth of Sahel prefer to live in the cities, creating a huge hole in the heart of the communities, as it is the youth who have had the responsibility for leading the herds to pasture. As for the girls, they learned to make butter and cheese, preservation of dried meat, and plant care. The organization Tinhnanbe is organizing special training for girls to stem the loss of these skills."*

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## Statement from the Environmentalists

Members of the environmental movement present at the Nyéléni Forum affirm our conviction to struggle for justice and sustainability in our territories and to defend the world's cultural and ecological diversity, destroying the despotic model of civilization that has

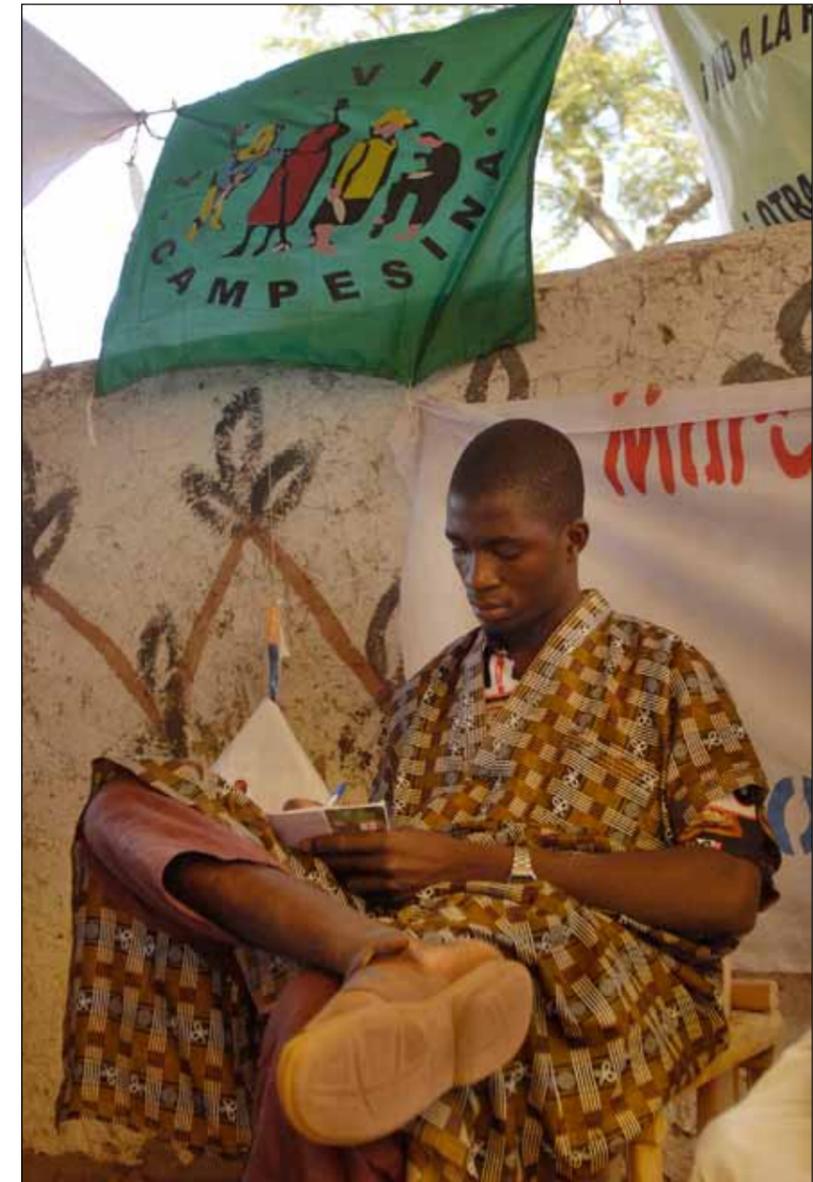
taken root thanks to patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism, and wars imposed by greed and private appropriation of nature's gifts.

As environmentalists, standing in solidarity with the food sovereignty movement, we confront free trade agreements and investment treaties, the World Trade Organization's market rules and the financial institutions' policies of looting that threaten food sovereignty. We also confront the norms and laws that in our own lands seek to control and expropriate from our peoples their ecological and nutritional heritage. We face "debt for nature exchanges" that mislead people and are promoted by 'Conservation' transnationals, wolves in sheep's clothing. We fight against biosecurity laws, laws that favour foreign investment and unequal economic exchange, laws that seek to put water in the hands of transnationals, laws that privatize our common and public heritage. All of these policies and measures degrade and threaten our peoples' food sovereignty.

We are witnesses to megaprojects of energy, timber, agrofuels, transportation infrastructure, ports and waterways, communications, etc, not to satisfy the needs of the impoverished majorities but for the accumulation of wealth in few hands. Science and technology are a monopoly of the transnational seeds and energy companies and are not used to resolve the challenges that humanity faces but rather to crush nature and people. For them and their market mentality, nature and people only count when they have capital value. Life is commercialized in their hands like the myth of the Midas King, everything he touched turned to gold.

These transnationals want to impose their colonialist agricultural model, which is linked with a technological dependency, demanding the use of GMOs and carcinogenic chemical inputs, petro-addicted mechanization, forcing us out of our lands and territories. How much unhappiness does the apparent happiness of the few create in humanity? How do we not resist when faced with such outrage?

Now they come to us with the sophism that fossil fuels can be changed for agrofuels. But they say nothing about the inequities and inequalities in the distribution of food and energy; they remain quiet about the monopolies they hold over land and water,



they hide the technological dependence that subordinates local knowledge; they elude the discussion of their ecological footprint and debt; they say nothing of the selfish and unsustainable modes of transport and they are silent in the face of the demands of justice and liberty. The same people who have provoked the climate chaos and species extinction now appear as our saviours. But at the Nyéléni Forum we have been clear in denouncing that it is they who suck out the world's wealth and energy, making life on earth unsustainable and spreading misery through the periphery's countries and peoples.

We environmentalists have made ourselves present in this forum with humility, but we are conscious of the ethical and political responsibility that we share with all of the movements and groups present here, and their expressions of solidarity are the best tool for confronting so much injustice. We all carry the seeds of life which we have exchanged, but we are also carriers of the seeds of resistance that are disseminated throughout the planet.

Our resistance is against the model of misery imposed by force by the capitalists, based on exploitation and colonialism.

Our resistance is for the right to be of the land and access land and for the distribution and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity.

Our resistance is to ensure that there be just laws that can serve the common and public good and for trade to be outside the capitalist market.

Our resistance is so that there be recognition and respect for the ancestral wisdom of our peoples, ethnic groups and communities.

Our resistance is for peoples' food sovereignty.

Long live the seeds in the hands of peoples.

Long live the peoples' food sovereignty.

Long live the Nyéléni Forum.

## What will we do?

At Nyéléni 2007 our main goals were to deepen and broaden our understanding of food sovereignty, to strengthen dialogue among the many disparate sectors and interest groups, and to come up with a joint action agenda. With such diversity, we never expected to reach a simple, common action plan. In each location, people must develop their struggles according to their context. Nevertheless, we did arrive at a series of actions and strategies which will be common ground for our local struggles, our solidarity work with one another, and our common engagement with the forces of global domination.

Our common plan is to realise food sovereignty through actions to promote our agenda, to resist policies and practices that undermine it and to strengthen our movement.

We also developed a series of specific action items for each region.

### Promote

We will promote strategies, policies and lifestyles that strengthen community control, ecological sustainability, local knowledge and autonomy, and traditional wisdoms to assert food sovereignty in all of its dimensions as well as our associated Rights. We will iden-

## MALIAN PEASANTS CREATE NEW FOOD SOVEREIGNTY LAW

In Mali the peasants' organisations have included the concept of food sovereignty in the national law, "loi d'orientation agricole", which is the basis for the country's new agricultural policy. We believe that food sovereignty must be imposed by law so that it will be applicable to everyone – even to the head of state. Realising this law was a very long process; we have been fighting for food sovereignty for a long time. We, the peasants' organisations, have been demanding a new agricultural policy for 10 years based on the principle that we have to make policies, not the politicians. For 40 years it's been the politicians who have been making policies, programmes and projects and for the past 10 years we've been demanding our role in the decision making process.

When the government finally agreed to this idea in principle, there were negotiations between us. After a lot of lobbying on our part, we were supported by some of the top ranks (such as advisors to the President) who said, "the peasants are right: for 40 years the functionaries have been making the policies and it hasn't worked well so if they say they can do it, we should at least allow them to try." Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA) supported us too. They had already defended food sovereignty at the level of regional policy making, at the Community Development of West Africa (CDAO). It was important for us to be able to say that food sovereignty has been accepted at the regional level by CDAO, although it is not yet operational.

It was decided that CNOP would be responsible for having consultations throughout the country to provoke and gather the views of the peasants regarding the law. It was a huge task! We tried to put everything in place to ensure that the consultations were really participatory, inclusive and transparent. It wasn't just about including the peasants' organisations, but also the customary leaders, the chambers of agriculture and in general everyone who has a responsibility in the rural world. It lasted more than one year; in each region we set up committees to implement the consultations in the villages. They mobilised people in the villages to choose their representatives to attend the consultations at local and regional levels. We couldn't go into every single village, but we visited many of them.

Then there was a national meeting to synthesise all the viewpoints gathered. One common point that peasants throughout the country were making was that we wanted to produce our own food, that we did not want to be dependent on others for food. We also said that we needed resources – such as land and water – to produce food, and that we wanted prices that covered our costs of production and allowed us to have a profit. And we said, "all of these elements are in food sovereignty!" So even though there was no term for "food sovereignty" in our local language, the peasants expressed all the main elements of it. Peasants have always thought it was important to produce for their own needs first, and then to market what was left. But they never had the chance to participate in policy making until then. The result of the national meeting, in which food sovereignty was a clear message, was a document called the "peasants memorandum" and armed with this document, we re-wrote the law with the relevant ministries.

Now that we have the law in Mali, we should start implementing it and that will of course be very complicated because this will challenge the interests of certain groups, such as the transnational food corporations. But we have no alternative but to move ahead.

CNOP-Mali



tify and strengthen existing autonomous practices that provide food sovereignty as well as push our governments to respect and protect our rights to food sovereignty.

### Resist

We will resist the corporate-led global capitalist model and its institutions and policies that prevent communities from asserting and achieving food sovereignty. This includes challenging government policies that facilitate corporate control of our food production and distribution, as well as taking direct action against corporate practices.

### Strengthen the Movement

We will strengthen the movement for food sovereignty through mobilisation, alliance building, education, communication and joint action among movements throughout the world; and we will win.

## PROMOTE:

### LOCAL MARKETS

We will assert the right of food providers and consumers to have autonomous control over local markets as a crucial space for food sovereignty.

We will strengthen direct links between consumers and food producers in the North and the South to build an appreciation of the value of local and seasonal foods, and raise the status of farmers and fisherfolk. We will create opportunities for an alternative market, and initiatives such as community funds and product exchanges, such as bartering and seed fairs, which reinforce links and solidarity among small scale food providers.

*"In consumer awareness raising, you have to take into account that all trends tend to spread from up to down in society, with drip down effect from the wealthiest to the poorest. Therefore, in Europe, we can use exclusive trends like the Slow Food Movement, and with restaurant chefs, to promote our aims. Likewise, in developing countries, it's the wealthiest who set the example by starting to consume according to Northern models, so we should work to raise their awareness and support for the value of local products and traditional food consumption patterns."*

We will explore policies for institutions such as hospitals, schools, and government offices to buy food locally.

We will support fairness in trading and "fair trade" where it contributes to food sovereignty, and we will expose and denounce all forms of dumping. We will propose government policies that protect local production and markets.

We will work to increase the capacity of co-operatives for both producers and consumers, and in particular to work with women's co-ops for processing and marketing their products.

Even in the North, food sovereignty is critical to ensuring food for the poor. We will promote non-market food production, including access for indigenous people to their traditional hunting and gathering. We will share information on urban agriculture and other practices that increase the access of urban people to wholesome food.

*"The concept of fair trade is being more and more embedded in people's mentality. People are more conscious of the fact that you have to pay more to get food at a higher quality. In London, there are 13 boroughs that have food from within 50 miles, that's happened within the last five to ten years." (U.K.)*

*"Sometimes in the South producers can't get a fair price for their produce even if they do reach the consumers at the local market. These countries' economies must be developed so that people can afford to buy the local products."*

## AGROECOLOGICAL PRODUCTION AND HARVESTING

We will promote socially and environmentally sensitive production systems that can be controlled by local food providers.

Peasant and family farmers: Organic and other certification systems have been developed as a tool to capture higher prices on an export market. However, they also have a role in assuring consumers in local markets of the integrity and value of locally produced foods. Therefore, in promoting agroecological production of food by peasant and family

farmers, we will also investigate models of certification which are not externally imposed and do not put a large financial burden on producers.

*"We shouldn't think that organic products are just for some rich people who can afford to buy organics, or that it comes from elsewhere, ordinary people from our own country should be purchasing it." (Iran)*



Pastoralism: we will support traditional migratory and cross-border pastoralists who conserve grazing territories and utilise them for meat, milk, other foods, as well as fibre, fuel and other goods;

Artisanal fisheries: We will promote the work of fisherfolk who limit catching of fish and other aquatic organisms in order to conserve fish populations, fishing grounds, coral reefs, mangrove swamps and other areas and fish habitats essential for the regeneration of fish populations. We will step up our fight for the protection of marine and coastal ecosystems through community based management of these ecosystems and with a central role for women.

We will honour the forest dwellers who recognize and live by the diversity of forest products, and insist on the establishment of conditions which enable them to continue to do so.

## LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

**We will assert that local knowledge and cultural values are paths to realising food sovereignty, recognizing that food sovereignty depends on a respectful relationship between human beings and the other natural beings which are part of our food systems.**

We will identify local, collective, and diverse experiences and practices as examples, recognising that they are ever changing and dynamic – not static – and gather strength through exchange and solidarity.

We will respect, recognise and strengthen local wisdom through preserving seeds, local seed networks, natural and traditional farming and alternative markets.

Most importantly, we will conserve local knowledge by encouraging its use and supporting peoples who keep this knowledge alive through daily life, particularly women and indigenous communities.

We will fight against all forms of intellectual property over life and knowledge, including the privatization and patenting of traditional wisdoms associated with food production.

We will encourage the teaching of local knowledge in schools.

We will organise research activities in order to compile and develop alternative solutions to problems faced by the different communities in their territories, emphasising and promoting traditional knowledge and wisdom.

We will support research that is done by the people themselves and their local organisations, that strengthens food sovereignty and helps preserve productive land, water, seeds and livestock.

*"Plant species are being lost due to modern practices. Women traditionally held knowledge, we are losing part of ourselves as women when we lose our seeds and the knowledge they contain. Loss of biodiversity is connected to loss of identity and loss of knowledge."*

*"Avian flu has been used as an excuse to destroy small flocks and any competition to the international poultry industry. We are losing our heritage breeds, our biodiversity, and local food sovereignty."*

## USE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND PROGRAMMES

**We will assert food sovereignty and associated rights by utilising international legal instruments and pressuring governments to implement them.**

In particular, we will use the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Protocols, decisions, guidelines and programmes have been developed through the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Fund for Agricultural Development which must be implemented and elaborated at the national level as well. For example, the human right to food

is asserted through the “Voluntary Guidelines” on the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

We will also support national and international adoption of instruments that can limit imports of genetically modified organisms and granting of intellectual property rights on living organisms.

We will pressure governments to implement international agreements that enforce policies in support of food sovereignty and small scale production, and in the framework of these agreements, to enact legislation that eliminates policies and practices that undermine food sovereignty.

Through these instruments and related international negotiating forums we will promote the rights of farmers, livestock keepers, nomads, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk, indigenous peoples and others.

### **AGRARIAN REFORM AND COMMUNITY CONTROL OF TERRITORIES**

**We will fight for a comprehensive genuine agrarian reform that upholds the rights of women, indigenous peoples, peasants, fisherfolk, workers, pastoralists, migrants and future generations and enables the coexistence of different communities in their territories.**

Customary rights to territory must be recognized but must be adapted if they discriminate against women or marginalised communities.

Agrarian reform must ensure priority in the use of land, water, seeds and livestock breeds, etc. for food production and other local needs rather than production for export.

We will promote community-based management of territories that recognises the needs of diverse users and that protects territories from environmental threats, such as the destruction of mangroves and the fragility of coastal and marine ecosystems.

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*“We have fought for and won the right to fish for our own consumption, but it is a hollow victory when the fish are contaminated by industrial waste and make us sick.”*

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We will protect our territories by promoting traditional low-impact production mechanisms and fighting against industrial aquaculture and agribusiness. We will promote the role of traditional management knowledge in seeking appropriate contemporary practices.

We will insist on the rights of migrants, so they can achieve legal status and not be criminalized. We will demand laws that allow migration and cross-border movement, and we will fight the militarization of borders.

We will promote the just sharing and management of water territories by, among other strategies, presenting a united alternative to the 2009 Istanbul Summit on Water.

People who grow or harvest food need to be able to use the territory, land and water they require for producing food; or the ponds, rivers, lakes and coastal fishing grounds they



need for harvesting fish; or the steppes, savannahs and other grazing territories they need to raise their animals; or the seeds that they have saved, bred and refined to suit their climates and terrains; or be able to use the rich agricultural biodiversity they’ve developed that not only produces food but also provides support for that production (pollination, soil nutrition, pest control) and other ecosystem functions that provide clean air, healthy water and living landscapes.

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*“The nomadic populations of the Sahel were prosperous before colonization. Friendships existed between the different communities of each village (farmers, herders, and nomads). Since colonization, the large agrarian reforms have called into question the policies, the practices, and the traditional knowledge of the past. Agrarian reforms and laws of decentralization have each ignored the local populations, not consulting them, and so have heavily favoured farmers in the reallocation of lands. The result is that today there are more and more conflicts between farmers and nomads.*

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*One of the struggles today is to have the rights of nomads recognized by the UN.”*

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### **RESIST:**

We will resist the corporate-led global capitalist model and its institutions and policies that prevent communities from asserting and achieving food sovereignty. This includes challenging government policies that facilitate corporate control of our food production and distribution, as well as taking direct action against corporate practices.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**We will combine fights against trade liberalisation with struggles to promote local production and markets and thus build food sovereignty.**

We will continue to target the World Trade Organisation, regional and bilateral trade agreements, dumping, the politicisation and manipulation of food aid and win back the right of every country to protect its domestic production and markets.

We will fight for alternative policies in large food and agro-exporting countries that include supply management and price supports to prevent dumping, including an alternative Farm Bill in the United States of America and an alternative Common Agricultural Policy in Europe that promote family farm agriculture rather than agribusiness.

We will also take actions against the massive imports of “cheap” food, including those resulting from climate change events (drought or flood) which threaten sustainable local production. We will fight against trade rules and international financial policies that undermine food sovereignty.

We will continue to resist any bilateral and multilateral agreements that threaten the needs of local producers and consumers and threaten food sovereignty.



*“The ancestral practices of traditional fishing have always assured food sovereignty for the fisherfolk. But a few years ago in West Africa our governments signed agreements on fishing with the EU, with China, giving multinational corporations access to new fishing territories. The arrival of these TNCs has strongly increased the pressure on these resources and the areas that were managed by the traditional fishers have rapidly become over-exploited, since fishing conducted by TNCs is regulated more by economic laws than by care for a sustainable management of the resource.*”

*Confronted with this drop in fish stocks, the West African fishers are forced to diversify, for instance towards horticulture. The testimonies from Indonesian fishers shows that despite the fact that sharing of fishing territories between traditional fishers and TNCs is regulated by national laws, multinationals and fishing industrialists rarely respect these laws, and the fishing zones are frequently raided by other countries.*

*These problems are very similar between West Africa and Indonesia: the agreements and the laws that regulate fishing do not seem to be able to stop the invasion by industrial fishing fleets. Their excessive harvests (linked to non-sustainable fishing practices such as using fishing nets with small mesh) are uncontrolled, and the raiding of the fishing grounds goes unchecked because of a lack of government monitoring and enforcement.*

*The fisherfolk thus no longer have food sovereignty and have to organize themselves in order to have their rights respected and have influence on fishing agreements. Today, even though it may not be in the culture of fishers from Indonesia and Africa to seek political power, they are organizing and training in order to enable fishing communities to struggle for food sovereignty.”*

*“Our rice sells at 210 CFA francs a kilo in the local market and at 260-300 francs in Bamako. Rice from Thailand or Vietnam sells here, in Sélingué, at 200 CFA francs. But you know, the small farmers in Thailand don't know where their rice goes. It is bought by the multinationals.” (Mali farmer)*

## TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

**We will fight against the corporate control of the food chain by reclaiming control over our territories, production, markets and the ways we use food.**

We will demand that our governments enact policies that eliminate corporate control and, instead, facilitate community control over food production and distribution.

We will promote ecological production (agroecology, pastoralism, artisanal fisheries etc.) as a direct strategy against transnational corporations.

We will join international boycotts and campaigns to dismantle the power of specific corporations in the food system. We will strengthen joint strategies by sharing information on the impact of these corporations on food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty and environmental stability are underpinned by agroecological production of food and the use of ecologically sensitive artisanal fisheries practices. But this form of production can only continue if society values and supports it and buys local foods whilst at the same time removing privileges and subsidies from industrial produc-

tion systems that benefit transnational corporations. This includes regulations which serve the needs of production for global trade but cripple local food processing with high costs.

We need a wider, inclusive process that balances various users' rights and access and leads to sustainable management of the resources, with decision-making power at the local level so that different users can work things out among and between their own communities.

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*The big players in the world seed industry are grumbling about loopholes in the plant variety protection system, which was the alternative to patenting that they set up in the 1960s. The Europeans want to get rid of farmers' limited entitlement to save seed. The Americans want to restrict the exemption by which breeders have the free use of each other's commercial varieties for research purposes. In both cases, the point is to reduce competition and boost profits. In the short term, the victims will be farmers, who will probably end up paying the seed giants an additional US\$7 billion each year. But in the long run, we will all lose from the growing corporate stranglehold over our food systems.*

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*"Occupational diseases and industrial injuries are very common in Export Processing Zones in China. In one case, hundreds of migrant workers, most of them women, got cadmium poisoning. These workers had been forced to leave their land to support their families because they could not make a living from their land. Globalisation Monitor helped organize workers and campaigned for compensation. The Hong Kong-based company set up a 1 million Euro compensation fund, but workers were not satisfied and the struggle continued with international support from trade unions and consumers groups. The company responded by suing the globalisation minister and the Hong Kong trade union. The campaign and struggle is still underway."*

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*During the past ten years, numerous transnational logging companies have come to exploit the forest resources of Cameroon. This has led to a rapid deforestation of one of the last ancient forests in the world. The communities living inside these forests, specifically the Baka and Bagyelis 'Pygmy' communities, have lost their habitat and their hunting territories. The International Conservations organization has forced the administration to create parks and Natural Reserves and the communities are not allowed to have their food producing activities inside these conserved territories even though they continue to live inside them.*

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*We must stop forest exploitation by TNCs and develop new approaches to forest conservation that do not harm forest dwellers. All conservation policies should be adapted to local communities' rights and cultural needs, so that people are involved in their management and not forced to adopt foreign food practices."*

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*"In Norway there was a sign-on letter saying that every country should have the right and obligation to produce food for domestic consumption. International trade rules in agriculture should only deal with international trade. They should only regard the 10% of food that actually crosses borders, not with the conditions of production for the 90% of world food production that doesn't cross borders."*

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*"Imported powdered milk is posing a real challenge. One kilo of powdered milk, which can be made into 8 litres of milk, is sold for 200 CFA, whereas we can only sell our milk at 350 to 400 CFA per litre. We simply cannot compete." (Burkina Faso)*

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*"In most African countries, if we decide not to import milk powder it will come in anyway for free from the US assistance programs, as milk powder is always part of them. Also, we have high quality local honey, but we are invaded and producers are killed by industrial honey. We must not abandon our traditional cereals and the traditional knowledge to process our own products." (Morocco)*

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## CONFLICTS AND OCCUPATION

**We will join struggles against occupation and fight the walls and militarization of borders.**

Conflicts, disasters and occupation can splinter peoples and prevent their access to local food and productive territories, presenting a serious threat to food sovereignty.

On the other hand, asserting food sovereignty is crucial for peoples and communities to survive and thrive under adverse conditions.

We will stand in solidarity with all peoples who live under occupation, whose territories are divided by walls and who suffer from conflicts and disasters. We will strengthen our



struggles, resistance and responses to conflict, occupation and disasters through learning from the experiences and strategies of each others' communities and movements.

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*"Nagalim' is a mountainous and forested land of about 48,000 square miles, situated between India, Burma, and China. The population of Nagalim is about 4 million, speaking diverse languages and sharing a culture founded on values of generosity and egalitarianism. At present 200,000 Indian soldiers and 100,000 Burmese soldiers occupy Nagalim in a military campaign. Naga people are denied their right to self-determination and to live as one people and nation. Some villages have been burned down more than 10 times; 150,000 people have been killed. The occupation has imposed forced labour, restriction of movement, torture, killing and the burning of standing crops by Burmese troops in 2005.*

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*Despite brutal setbacks, Nagas are continuing their tradition of non-violent resistance."*

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*"In 1916 Britain occupied Palestine; the following year the Balfour Declaration supported the idea of a State of Israel. Palestine resistance to British occupation started in 1919. In 1948 Britain withdrew, and Israel was created; 600,000 Zionist settlers immigrated to Palestine, and 200,000 Palestinians became refugees. At that time the land was divided with 87% owned by Palestinians, 6.6% for Jews and 5.9% was State land. In 1967, 44% of the land was confiscated; 131 settlements were built, with 150 random settlements all over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip housing 400,000 settlers in total. The 'first Intifada' resistance started in 1987, and after the failed peace process, a 'Second Intifada' started in 2000.*

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*In 2002 the Israeli occupation began construction of the Apartheid Wall, 1000 km long and 8-12 metres high. This entailed confiscating 45% of the agricultural lands (13,350 km<sup>2</sup>), uprooting 300,000 trees, and building 530 checkpoints, cutting off Palestinian villages and cities. Today, 85% of the agricultural land is under Israeli occupation, 90% of water sources are under Israeli control (both ground and surface water reserves) and Israel has full control of the borders.*

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*The result is that Palestinians are unable to market their products, thereby choking all major cities as well as agricultural villages. Import/export is prevented, forcing Palestinian farmers into Israeli industry as cheap labour, and freeing up their land for Israeli agribusiness and settlement. They are struggling for a secure agricultural society with its own food supply in a free Palestinian state, with improved living standards for farmers in an integrated framework of sustainable development."*

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## TOXIC TECHNOLOGY

**We will continue to fight against genetically modified crops, animals, and trees; against industrial aquaculture; against cloned livestock; and against the irradiation of food.**

We will fight against the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and the introduction of genetically modified crops through food aid.

We will organize national campaigns to prohibit Terminator and other technologies that lead to the sterilization of seeds and animals, in addition to supporting the international moratorium.

We will work towards an immediate moratorium on new technologies such as nanotechnology, which has already been introduced into food and agriculture, and now presents new threats to health, the environment and peasant and fishing economies.

*"We are told that people in the US have been eating GM foods for 10 years with no ill effects. But when Golden Rice was introduced into Sri Lanka we did our own research and found increases in blue baby syndrome, cancer, high blood pressure, kidney disease, diabetes, spontaneous abortions, and infertility."*

*"Orissa is the origin of 700 indigenous paddy seed varieties. The tribes are happy with these seeds and the local organization, THREAD, has conserved and multiplied over 400 types of indigenous seeds. The importation of GM seeds will wipe out precious local seeds which is a criminal act of raping Nature. It also creates dependence on developed countries, affecting our sovereignty to decide our relationship with Nature and imposing slavery on us. We are fighting for respect for all-sustaining Nature and the protection of our common heritage."*

*"Nanotechnology is going to be the biggest new technology wave the world has ever seen. Its total effects are unknown, and it exists within a regulatory vacuum. And its being developed by the same big corporations that developed GMOs. Now for us the most important thing is to achieve a moratorium on nanotechnology in connection to the human body or other living organisms, like animals and plants."*

## MONOCULTURES AND AGROFUELS

**We will mobilise and engage in international campaigns against the industrial production of agrofuels which are often under the control of transnational corporations and have negative impacts on people and the environment.**

We will highlight the destructive impacts of the production model that pushes the conversion of productive land into monocultural production for agrofuels, paper pulp, genetically modified trees, and similar industrial crops (e.g. through the International Green Desert Campaign).

*"The agrofuel industry brings together the interests of the automobile industry, the GMOs and the distributors of grains – three of the most powerful industries in the world; they are developing agrofuels at the cost of losing fertile land and ecosystems, in order to feed the auto industry instead of feeding people. This will produce new waves of migrants and the disappearance of peasants from the land. It also promotes transgenic GMO trees, monoculture, and non-edible GMO food crops, generating an enormous risk of contamination to the whole food chain."*

*"Models of production should be energy efficient – and it is incoherent to base a so-called green technology on toxic monocultures. Agro-fuels, or energy crops, are connected to the GMO issues. This is a new communication trick of the pro-GMO lobby to get around consumer refusal of GMOs by pushing GMO crops meant for energy use. They say, you don't have to eat it, so you really have nothing to say about it."*

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**We will denounce industrial agriculture as a contributor to climate change and question the utility and effectiveness of carbon markets to reduce emissions and ensure climate justice.**

We will evaluate the impact at local and regional levels of climate change on food sovereignty, particularly how climate change affects our seeds, animals, fish etc, and the resilience of diversity to the effects and impacts of climate change.

We will also look at climate change as a creator of natural disasters and support communities affected by climate change in developing mechanisms for adaptation and survival.

We will develop strategies based on solidarity and exchanges between regions, but always ensuring local control.

Finally, we will promote food sovereignty as an effective response to the impact of climate change.

*"TNCs and governments have proposed technologies as solutions to the climate change, but these are themselves threats: agrofuels, geo-engineering which is the manipulation of climate and environment. Also synthetic biology, the creation of artificial live organisms to produce energy."*

*"The North of Cameroon is regularly affected by food shortages resulting from drought and people have to depend on food aid. Swaziland has had a continuous drought for the past ten years, which has led to food shortages in some regions, and has also pushed up levels of poverty. Food aid, coming from the USA, Germany and others has changed consumption patterns for the worse, killing local food production; and there is a proliferation of GMOs in the local territories, both in farming and further up the food chain. HIV/AIDS is an entry point for more foreign food parcels and varieties."*

*"People are struggling to raise local awareness these changes and food sovereignty, building local resistance in the population against the activities of the transnational corporations and developing a local response to drought and other disasters."*



## The “Force” of the Peasants’ Movement

In the last ten years the peasants’ movement has been the social unit to most strongly mobilise against the neoliberal agenda. It has done this at the global and local levels by surpassing the easy oversimplification of the North-South “conflict”. It has effected this mobilisation from its global organised forms – such as Via Campesina – to its regional forms – such as ROPPA – and national forms – such as FSPI, down to local or individual forms of resistance – such as Family Farm Defenders. The more obvious result of this mobilisation is the dead-end in which the World Trade Organisation negotiations for the liberalisation of agricultural markets find themselves (accompanied by the imposition of the industrial model on the agricultures of the planet).

The “solitude” of the peasants’ movement is obvious, especially at global and continental levels. Even though it carried out a frontal battle based on the defense of collective interests - food sovereignty, it has not succeeded in joining together - except in episodic moments, other social forces that are the expression of various actors in food production and distribution. Neither has it been able to join other social layers outside rural areas.

One cannot resolve this “solitude” with the sum of logos of a number of organisations. Rather, it is necessary to build shared alliances and strategies through the platform of food sovereignty. A social opposition can then develop that will change the direction of the world, not only oppose its current direction.

To build alliances for food sovereignty, it is necessary to recognise, identify, confront and share the resistances that followed the first years of structural adjustment programmes and later extreme neo-liberal policies. These resistances were developed in the subordinate layers of societies: in rural areas and urban spaces through youth movements, migrants, etc.

Faced with continual marginalisation and “lack of future,” societies both in the north and south have expressed forms of resistance against the degradation produced by the governing elites over the last twenty years. They have managed to do this while building and practicing economic, social and environmental alternatives.

This wealth of these experiences is still vastly dispersed, ignored, hidden and sometimes clandestine; it is obviously not easy to identify and is very different in the various continents, various local societies and multiple specific conditions. But it exists and is the force that explains how the battle for one’s own dignity became the means to survive for billions of the poor, otherwise simply condemned to be eliminated.

### Alliances for whom?

It is a question of building common strategies – not a single organisation – between the social actors that animate this resistance. Such an engagement requires a new capacity on the part of the more structured global, regional and national movements to open a process of building alliances.

Alliances are necessary first and foremost for reinforcing individual resistance (which fight every day for survival and for assuring one’s own future) and for creating initiatives at local levels since the confrontation with the government elites is becoming increasingly acute, not only at the global level but also national. At the global level alliances are necessary to build alternatives to the instruments of neoliberalist domination and to thus prop up political ramparts behind which to “rest” in the mobilisation that

will continue in the years to come against the dominant model of “development.”

### Alliances with whom?

Alliances can be consolidated if they are the result of vast, strategic and permanent processes. Thus, they require a commitment to confrontation as well as an understanding of various social realities starting from the local, but not forgetting the other levels of aggregation. With the current state of affairs, the fields to build this process can be realised. Meanwhile, it is necessary to collect the experiences of other peasant movements, which, in the diversity both of their positions and their dimensions, identify themselves with the platform of food sovereignty in their daily practices and demands. These movements have forms of organisation with which it is necessary to form a stable dialogue to consolidate common strategies by also incorporating their culture and operational modalities. There then exists other social subjects or “producers of food” (indigenous people, artisanal fisherfolk, nomadic herders, etc) bearing not only their own agendas of protest but also their cultures, values and methods of organisation. Moreover, they have expressed and continue to express a very strong will and capacity for resistance, which does not always reflect their organisational capacity, especially at regional and global levels. Often they retain a strong capacity for mobilisation to defend collective rights, autonomy and ethical and religious values.

Outside rural areas they are intermediaries to food sovereignty, such as small artisans and traders. There are also other producers of goods and services, such as factory workers. All of whom consume the food produced. Above and beyond being simple consumers, everyone from food industry employees to the workers of the service industry, are more or less directly connected to the destiny of food production. The relationship with their social organisations, in particular what are called “workers’ trade unions,” requires the starting of a difficult process since there are areas of conflicting interest on which it is necessary to deepen the possible common action, such as those that have already taken place between the peasants of the north and south, or the solidarity groups between agricultural producers and the consumers of cities.

And moreover, there are all forms of “citizen’s associations,” from the very small and local to those with international importance, which often do not have a specific reference to food, agriculture or food sovereignty but are attentive to the quality of life (economic, social, environmental) by the very nature of the social actions.

These are the actors who should establish relationships at Nyéléni to start or to advance the process of building alliances.

Separately, we must consider possible collaborations with governments and international institutions that recognize themselves within the framework of food sovereignty and intend to implement it, rather than co-opt it. We must proceed with caution by deeply evaluating each institution or government, by avoiding preconceptions, and by clearly maintaining the distinct roles and responsibilities of each actor. Through this process, the autonomy and capacity of the various forces and social aggregations will be guaranteed and food sovereignty will not be manipulated for individual gains, but spread across the world to ensure all peoples can achieve food sovereignty.

## STRENGTHEN THE MOVEMENT

We will strengthen the movements for food sovereignty through mobilisation, alliance building, education, communication and joint action among movements throughout the world; and we will win.

### MOBILIZATION

We will mobilise across sectors in our joint struggles against those governmental policies, corporations and institutions that prevent the realisation of food sovereignty. Importantly, we will come together as pastoralists, fisherfolk, peasant farmers, women, indigenous peoples, and other communities from all regions of the world to practice and expand food sovereignty. By forging a common agenda and developing joint policy proposals we will be able to build a united movement that is strong enough to win the struggle for food sovereignty.

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*“In Indonesia, consumer groups evaluated government officials according to Food Sovereignty criteria; they then encouraged their members to bombard the worst with letters denouncing their activities, while the officials rated best got letters of encouragement. Consumers can and must be mobilized!”*

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*“During 11 years of armed struggle in Nepal 14,000 people have been killed and 4,000 people disappeared; a huge number of people have been displaced. Many people have been injured and disabled, mentally destroyed. Women and children are mostly affected, as many students are out of school and youth leave for foreign countries. On top of this, natural disasters – land slide, river flooding, heavy snow, drought – leave the people with no access to land, natural resources, or jobs. They are fighting against the WTO, IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and their policies. They are struggling to raise people’s awareness, pressure the government to include food sovereignty in the Constitution, and to strengthen the solidarity network internationally.”*

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### ALLIANCE BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING OUR OWN MOVEMENTS

We will build the movement for food sovereignty by strengthening organisations, cooperatives, associations and networks, and building strategic alliances among diverse constituencies such as consumers, students, academics, health practitioners, religious communities, the environmental justice movement, water justice movements and people affected by large dams, extractive industry, wars, occupation and disasters.

We will encourage constructive relationships between urban and rural communities, between producers and consumers and between peasants/farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, and indigenous peoples.

We will work with migrants’ organisations to build solidarity with them and increase our understanding of their priorities. We will strengthen networks and alliances between social movements and migrants’ organisations, in both their countries of origin and the places where they live and work, and promote a code of rights from their point of view.

We will support women’s organisations engaged in food sovereignty and the defence of

local seeds and culture. We will reach out to peoples and communities that are not present at this forum and yet are essential in our collective struggle for food sovereignty.

The organizations represented at Nyéléni are committed to continuing to work together.

## EDUCATION

We will promote political education in order to assert food sovereignty. We will increase awareness within our organizations and movements, by learning from each other, and will also raise awareness in other constituencies that include urban consumers and environmentalists in both North and South.

Some education tools include: awareness raising days; workshops based on local wisdom; popular and political education and outreach in school systems.

We will rely on our own wisdoms and hands-on education experiences that bring food sovereignty to life. We will implement education strategies on, for example: migration, the conditions of migrants and the links to our food; how our customary rights and land ownership laws affect our food sovereignty; the importance of consuming healthy local foods; and the effects of using genetically modified organisms and pesticides.

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*“Shrimpers in both Louisiana, USA, and Indonesia, have been struggling with low prices, despite abundant stocks. Massive shrimp farms, displacing coastal wetlands, destroying vital habitat, were flooding global markets with cheap, tasteless and often contaminated industrially farmed shrimp.*

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*Then disaster really struck – a tsunami in the Indian Ocean and Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf of Mexico wrecked their homes and livelihoods. The outpourings of assistance in both cases should have been enough to restore coastal infrastructure and help the fishing communities back to their feet, but instead resources were channeled into the very causes of both the fishermen’s and the fragile coastal ecosystem’s plight: expanding industrial aquaculture and coastal development.*

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*Alone and marginalised, with the choice of a sharecropper’s existence or life as a refugee, neither fisher would have much hope. But sharing their stories, and finding common ground with fisherfolk, farmers and other food producers from around the world at Nyéléni gives them a stronger voice, and greater hope for justice.”*

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## COMMUNICATION

We will strengthen our own means of communication based on our cultures and local conditions, in order to counter corporate propaganda, challenge the globalised industrial food system and highlight good local experiences and knowledge.

We will use diverse media, such as Radio Mundo Real, websites and community radio, working to bridge the digital divide. We will maintain the Nyéléni 2007 website.

We will disseminate local evaluation of how climate change will affect seeds, animals, fish etc. and evaluation strategies for defense.

We will publicise struggles of indigenous peoples through alternative media.

## DAYS OF ACTION

We will coordinate and participate in days of action that are organized and promoted by allied organizations, bringing a focus on food sovereignty and encouraging the participation of all constituencies, especially women.

For example:

8 March: International Women’s day

14 March: International day against large dams

17 April: International Day of Peasants’ Struggle

1 May: The International Day for Workers’ Struggle

12 October: Day of Indigenous Resistance

16 October: World Food Day

21 November: Small scale Fisherfolk Day

10 December: Human Rights day

18 December: International Migrants’ Day



## EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS PROPOSED BY SECTORS

### Peasants / Farmers

- Undertake a massive global awareness campaign on food sovereignty.
- Fight against Transnational Corporations and the corporate control of the food chain – from seeds to supermarkets.
- Fight against transgenic industrial monocultures which are destroying biodiversity and promote agroecological agriculture as our option and a weapon against Transnational Corporations.

### Fisherfolk

- Step up our fight for the protection of marine and coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, through community based management of these ecosystems and with a central role for women.
- Continue to struggle against industrial aquaculture and destructive fishing and for the rights of subsistence and artisanal fisheries.
- Unite with others against the privatisation and liberalisation of coastal areas and the open seas and for the access to and control over these areas by traditional fisheries and artisanal aquaculturalists.

### Pastoralists

- Increase recognition that pastoralism is essential for food sovereignty and that pastoralists need to be mobile in order to survive. Build alliances with other sectors in support of pastoralism. We will organize an international day of support for pastoralism. Work with other sectors to ensure Human Rights and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Strengthen the pastoral movement at all levels and base our movement on traditional social organizations and tribal structures and find ways of sharing territories with other communities. Improve communication within our communities and learn more about our rights.
- With the support of the food sovereignty movement, pastoralists will pressure local governments and states to set laws to allow migration and Trans-boundary migration.

### Indigenous Peoples

- Protect territory of indigenous peoples. Continue producing our food in a traditional way, as we have done.
- Publicise, through alternative media, the struggles of indigenous peoples to gain food sovereignty.
- Strengthen local and national networks of indigenous peoples as well as national and international coordination spaces and seek international support for national and local mobilizations: for example on April 17 throughout the world to join the campesino movement against Transnational Corporations, asking the campesino movement to join indigenous peoples on October 12 (Day of Indigenous Resistance).
- Adopt the Atitlan (Guatemala) Indigenous Peoples declaration on food sovereignty and other similar international declarations.

### Migrants

- Participate in and, in solidarity, support the fights against the walls in e.g. Palestine, Ceuta-Melilla, and on the Mexican-US border; militarization of borders; detention centres; criminalisation of migrants and their families; deportation.
- Work for the legalization of migrants and their families to enjoy the rights that others have; promote legal rights framework for Migrants.
- Oppose policies and models of Transnational Corporations and the states that serve them. Oppose agreements, wars and violence that cause displacement and make the situation worse for migrants.

### Consumers

- Promote local markets as well as public procurement for schools, hospitals, government offices and get a fair price for producers.
- Diffuse information and share experiences about Community Supported Agriculture movements and local food systems, from countries where these systems already work, to countries that do not have these: link local initiatives into a global movement.
- Raise awareness of urban consumers through farmers as educators not exhibits for tourists, bearing in mind that consumer attitudes are mainly formed by elites and the media; in this context, hands-on education has a vital role, from city farms to edible school gardens.

## EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC ACTIONS PROPOSED BY REGIONS

### Africa

- Calls for agriculture to be removed from the World Trade Organisation; and rejects Economic Partnership Agreements that are currently being foisted on our people and calls for a moratorium on this process.
- Rejects all moves by Transnational Corporations and their international support institutions to control our seed and demands a moratorium on the introduction of genetically



modified organisms and particularly Terminator seeds into our continent.

- Africa can definitely feed itself but three successive globalisations have obstructed us; our farmers - and especially women who today do most of the work in food production and whose rights must be fully recognised, supported and realised - are the quintessential practitioners of agroecological farming practices.

### West and Central Asia

- Initiate solidarity campaigns with farmers affected by occupation and wars, especially those denied access to their lands due to confiscation, unexploited ordinances/cluster bombs and apartheid walls; including media actions, boycott products of occupants and strengthening market opportunities of affected farmers.
- Run eco-friendly local markets and fight against Government policies that stop subsidies being applied to small scale production but which are in favour of large scale production.
- Plan joint regional actions and campaigns to reclaim and protect agricultural biodiversity in the region, starting with wheat.

### South Asia

- Campaign as a region against eviction of farmers from the land, fisher people from the sea; and mobilise landless people to acquire land.
- Organise a regional campaign against privatisation of water, land and seeds; take direct action against genetically modified organisms and Bt Cotton; declare GM-free villages.
- Organise a forum similar to Nyéléni 2007 in South Asia to develop a regional level platform and train a wide group of people from different sectors in food sovereignty issues.

### South East and East Asia

- Campaign against Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), the international fish trade and against transnational corporations (TNCs).
- Support the struggles of peasants, fisherfolk and indigenous peoples for a comprehensive and genuine agrarian reform in the region.
- Further substantiate the Food Sovereignty framework and strengthen alliance building and communication among and between sectors and countries in the region through people-to-people exchanges

### Latin America and Caribbean

- Campaigns against monocropping, green deserts, genetically modified organisms and agrofuels (not biofuels).
- Campaigns against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), Free Trade Agreements, World Trade Organisation and Plan Colombo.
- Campaign to defend and restore marine and coastal resources, defend access to water and against its privatisation and against large dams.

### North America and Mexico

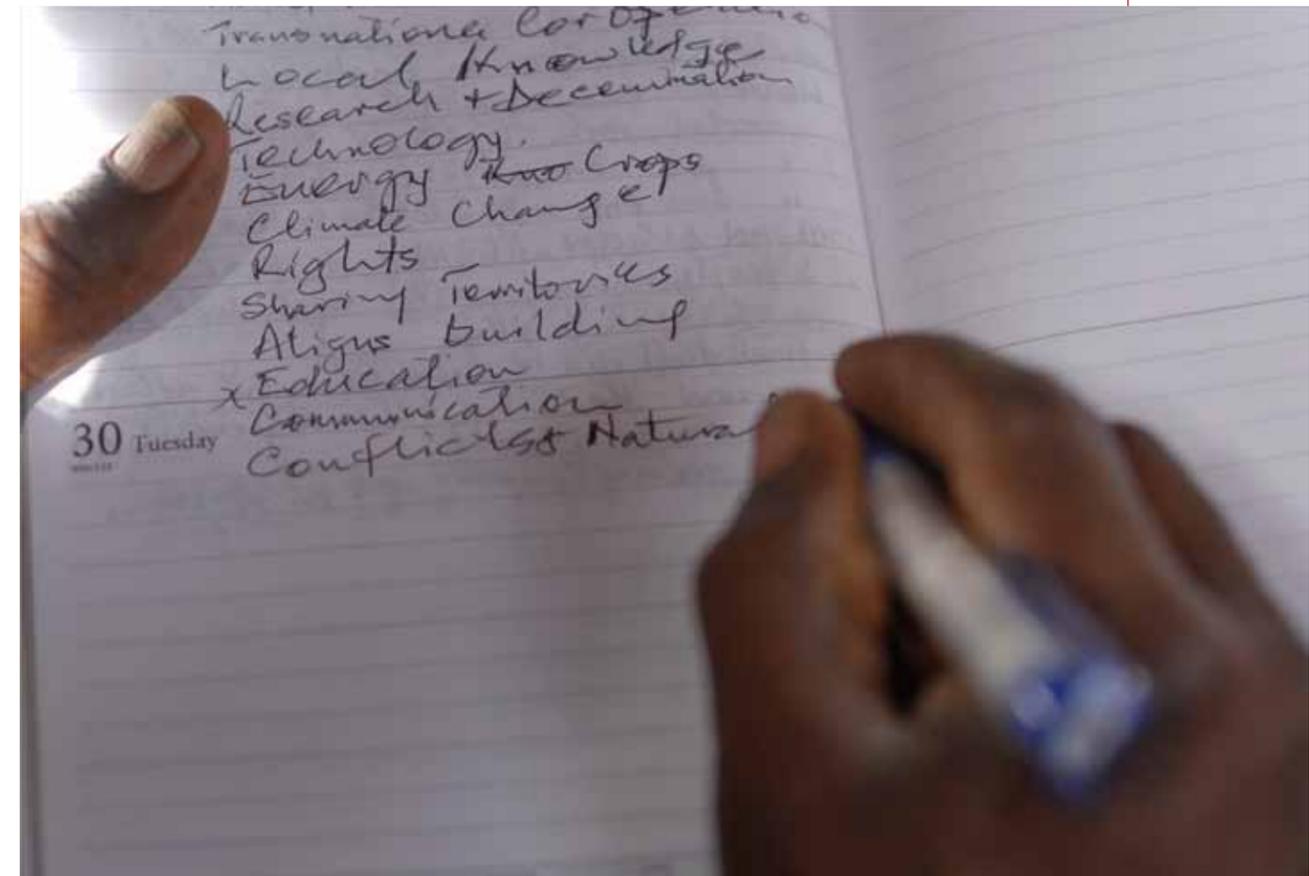
- Carry out massive education campaigns on food sovereignty and campaign, with international support, to change the US farm Bill.
- Demand that Free Trade Agreements be renegotiated and agriculture taken out; de-

monstrations with Canadians on US border, US in Washington, Mexicans on US border. Fisherfolk joining our struggle; Indigenous Peoples embraced and supported; women, youth, workers included.

- Continue anti-GMO and Ban Terminator campaigns, working for national bans around the world, and targeting specific Transnational Corporations.

### Europe

- Campaign against Free Trade Agreements / Economic Partnership Agreements with regional trade blocks and link with activists from the respective regions; join Global Week of Action against Economic Partnership Agreements; change the Common Agricultural Policy with one based on Food Sovereignty.
- Build on existing campaigns – such as those against genetically modified organisms, Terminator technology (especially at the Convention on Biological Diversity/9th Conference of the Parties CBD/COP9 in Bonn, Germany), agrofuels and Transnational Corporation control – identifying and promoting food sovereignty elements in these campaigns and incorporating new actors who support the Declaration of Nyéléni.
- Promote Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) systems including in countries where they are not yet present; strengthen local markets; campaign to break the armlock of supermarkets



## CONTACT LIST

**Common information about Nyéléni:** [www.nyeleni.org](http://www.nyeleni.org) / [info@nyeleni.org](mailto:info@nyeleni.org)

**La Via Campesina:** [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org) / [viacampesina@viacampesina.org](mailto:viacampesina@viacampesina.org)

**The World Women's March:** [www.worldmarchofwomen.org](http://www.worldmarchofwomen.org) / [info@marchemondiale.org](mailto:info@marchemondiale.org)

**World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF):** [www.pcffa.org/wff.htm](http://www.pcffa.org/wff.htm)

**World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP):** [www.wffpfishers.org](http://www.wffpfishers.org) / [Samitha@wffpfishers.org](mailto:Samitha@wffpfishers.org)

**International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC):** [www.foodsovereignty.org](http://www.foodsovereignty.org)  
/ [lo@foodsovereignty.org](mailto:lo@foodsovereignty.org)

**Friends of the Earth International:** [www.foei.org](http://www.foei.org) / [info@foei.org](mailto:info@foei.org)

**ROPPA – Network of Peasants and Farmers of West Africa:** [www.roppa.info](http://www.roppa.info)

**Coordination National de Organisations Paysannes, Mali (CNOP-Mali):** [www.cnop-mali.org](http://www.cnop-mali.org) / [cnopmali@yahoo.fr](mailto:cnopmali@yahoo.fr)

**Food Sovereignty Network**, represented by **Food & Water Watch (USA):**  
[www.foodandwaterwatch.org](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org) / [foodandwater@fwwatch.org](mailto:foodandwater@fwwatch.org) and the  
**Development Fund (Norway):** [www.utviklingsfondet.no](http://www.utviklingsfondet.no) / [post@utviklingsfondet.no](mailto:post@utviklingsfondet.no)

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*"It is not possible that our problems are larger than our desire to continue to overcome them!  
We must walk like a river, drop by drop, little by little, but gaining strength with each step."*

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# Six Pillars of Food Sovereignty...

**1. Focuses on Food for People:** Food sovereignty puts people, including those who are hungry, under occupation, in conflict zones and marginalized, at the centre of food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries policies, ensuring sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples and communities; and rejects the proposition that food is just another commodity or component for international agri-business.

**2. Values Food Providers:** Food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights, of women and men, peasants and small scale family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants, who cultivate, grow, harvest and process food; and rejects those policies, actions and programmes that undervalue them, threaten their livelihoods and eliminate them.

**3. Localises Food Systems:** Food sovereignty brings food providers and consumers closer together; puts providers and consumers at the centre of decision-making on food issues; protects food providers from the dumping of food and food aid in local markets; protects consumers from poor quality and unhealthy food, inappropriate food aid and food tainted with genetically modified organisms; and resists governance structures, agreements and practices that depend on and promote unsustainable and inequitable international trade and give power to remote and unaccountable corporations.

**4. Puts Control Locally:** Food sovereignty places control over territory, land, grazing, water, seeds, livestock and fish populations on local food providers and respects their rights. They can use and share them in socially and environmentally sustainable ways which conserve diversity; it recognizes that local territories often cross geopolitical borders and ensures the right of local communities to inhabit and use their territories; it promotes positive interaction between food providers in different regions and territories and from different sectors that helps resolve internal conflicts or conflicts with local and national authorities; and rejects the privatisation of natural resources through laws, commercial contracts and intellectual property rights regimes.

**5. Builds Knowledge and Skills:** Food sovereignty builds on the skills and local knowledge of food providers and their local organisations that conserve, develop and manage localised food production and harvesting systems, developing appropriate research systems to support this and passing on this wisdom to future generations; and rejects technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these, e.g. genetic engineering.

**6. Works with Nature:** Food sovereignty uses the contributions of nature in diverse, low external input agroecological production and harvesting methods that maximise the contribution of ecosystems and improve resilience and adaptation, especially in the face of climate change; it seeks to heal the planet so that the planet may heal us; and, rejects methods that harm beneficial ecosystem functions, that depend on energy intensive monocultures and livestock factories, destructive fishing practices and other industrialised production methods, which damage the environment and contribute to global warming.