



## who we are

In the last years hundreds of organisations and movements have been engaged in struggles, activities, and various kinds of work to defend and promote the right of people to Food Sovereignty around the world. Many of these organisations were present in the *International Nyéléni Forum 2007* and feel part of a broader **Food Sovereignty Movement**, that considers the Nyéléni 2007 declaration as its political platform. **The Nyéléni Newsletter wants to be the voice of this international movement.**

Organisations involved: Development Fund, ETC Group, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Food First, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, Grassroots International, IPC for food sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Oxfam Solidarity, Real World Radio, Roppa, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers, VSF-Justicia Alimentaria Global.

now is time for  
food sovereignty!

## editorial : wto kills farmers

**Food and agriculture** are central to our lives as peasants and small farmers. **Agriculture is not only our livelihood; it is our life, our culture and our way of relating to Mother Nature. The logic of free trade runs counter to this**, as it makes **food a commodity**; a mere product to be bought and sold. This principle of free trade is embodied and pushed forward by the *World Trade Organization* (WTO). The WTO's Agreement on Agriculture aims to make agricultural policies the world over more market oriented in order to facilitate greater trade flows.

This is why we in La Via Campesina have been at the forefront of the struggle against the WTO since its launch in 1995. Since the beginning, we have consistently called for **"WTO out of agriculture"**. We were in the streets of Seattle, Cancun, Hong Kong, Geneva and this year in Bali.

The commodification of food and agriculture through the WTO has caused the death of farmers – farmers' livelihoods have been wiped out by cheap agricultural products being dumped in their markets below their costs of production. Korean farmer Lee Kyung Hae killed himself on the fences of the WTO Cancun Ministerial wearing a sign that said **"WTO Kills Farmers"**. *That still carries true today as hunger grows, lands are grabbed by transnational corporations, peasants go into vicious debt cycles as they are unable to sell their produce, family farmers are wiped out by large agribusiness and food is poisoned by genetically modified organisms.*

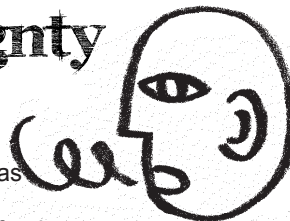
We in La Via Campesina believe that the only way forward is to fight for **Food Sovereignty**. All peoples should have the right to culturally appropriate, nutritious and healthy food, and their food and agricultural systems should not be determined by the whims of the free market. We need to call for **an end to the WTO and fight for an economy based on justice with food sovereignty at its heart.**

Henry Saragih, *Chairperson of Serikat Petani Indonesia*

## wto vs food sovereignty

### How the WTO opposes the six pillars of Food Sovereignty

- 1. Focuses on Food for People.** The WTO sees agriculture as being a source of raw materials to feed industrial production of processed goods, fuels, plastics and other materials, not food for people. Under the WTO, food is subject to financial speculation as it is regarded as a commodity not as a right.
- 2. Values Food Providers.** The WTO is the greatest threat in history to the livelihoods of small-scale food producers and workers. The WTO puts the needs of TNCs, financial capital and global markets ahead of people. The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) has forced many developing countries to freeze or eliminate investment in their local agriculture, while allowing richer countries to continue dumping subsidized food in developing countries' economies.
- 3. Localises Food Systems.** The WTO and agribusinesses believe in producing food and materials wherever it is cheapest to do so. This means monocultures of certain crops in certain countries and processing in others, while eliminating localized food production and food systems.
- 4. Puts Control Locally.** The WTO takes away local autonomy and people's rights over their territory. It pushes for the privatization of all natural resources (seeds, water, land...). It was not created by people for people, but by corporations for corporations.
- 5. Builds Knowledge and Skills.** Knowledge is also a commodity under the WTO. Traditional knowledge, which has been nurtured by communities all over the world, is subject to privatization and expropriation. For example, the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPs) regime prevents farmers from saving their own seeds, and feeding themselves and their communities.
- 6. Works with Nature.** The WTO supports an industrial system of production, consumption and trade which prioritizes profit over the environment and sees nature as an adversary which can be controlled and defeated, not as an ally with which we can build a better world for future generations.



### Building a Common Platform of Social Movements in Asia

**Gerak Lawan**, a national coalition in Indonesia which includes peasants, migrants, fisherfolk, women, youth, human rights lawyers and many others, has joined forces with the **Bali WTO Network**, a coordination of local movements in Bali, and with the **Social Movements for an Alternative Asia** (SMAA), a newly formed platform of social movements which includes La Via Campesina, World March of Women, Migrant Forum in Asia, Jubilee South-APMDD, Focus on the Global South, Alliance of Progressive Labor, Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, several other trade unions, water warriors and many others. Together they are planning a week of action in Bali including a Peoples Tribunal, an Economic Justice Assembly and a Peoples Forum on Reclaiming Rights-Defending Nature, focused on presenting and debating alternatives to free trade, investment and the WTO.

In Asia, social movements have a long history of working together and a brilliant expression of this solidarity was the massive mobilization against the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference in 2005 in Hong Kong. Today, that solidarity continues as hundreds of representatives of social movements come together in Bali to strike a decisive blow against neoliberalism and move closer to building Another Asia, Another World and reclaiming peoples sovereignty.

## box 1 The WTO

Launched in 1995, the WTO is a powerful multilateral trade agreement that goes beyond the issue of trade. Succeeding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the WTO expanded the multilateral trade agreement on goods to cover the areas of agriculture, textiles, services and trade related intellectual property rights. Another very significant change from the GATT to the WTO was the creation of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM). This legal mechanism enables the WTO to enforce the 60+ agreements under it, forcing sovereign nation states to change their national policies if they are found to be in conflict with the rules of the WTO.

## box 2 People's Movements resist the WTO

In 2003, a Korean farmer took the extreme step of sacrificing himself outside the conference halls of WTO's 5th ministerial in Cancun. Lee Kyung Hae climbed atop a fence that guarded the WTO meeting wearing a sign that said "**WTO Kills Farmers**" and then proceeded to stab himself to death, shocking the world and reminding everyone that the WTO literally spells death for farmers around the globe.

While the WTO has tried to carry on with its agenda of trade liberalization, **Peoples movements have not let it succeed**. They have carried out dramatic demonstrations outside each of WTO's ministerial venues. In 2003 in Cancun, in 2005 in Hong Kong and in 2009 in Geneva there have been massive protests by farmers, indigenous people, youth, students, women, workers and NGOs. They have been met with fierce police repression. In Hong Kong there were 70 injured, in Cancun the venue looked more like a military base camp - full of barbed wire and with naval ships stationed in nearby waters. *The militarization of the summits to carry on the neoliberal project only served to demonstrate its lack of legitimacy and anti-people agenda.*

**The demonstrators have demanded economic justice - an end to a trade regime that is at the service of transnational corporations and not people.** In agriculture, they oppose the unfair trading system that pits *small farmers against mass-producing agribusinesses from industrial countries that are large, subsidized, wealthy and unsustainable.* Peoples' demonstrations are a big support to developing country governments inside the negotiation halls who want to oppose the unfair trade regime imposed by rich nations like the US and EU who want to protect their agribusiness and market interests. *The disagreement on the issue of agriculture is one of the main reasons why the WTO ministerial conferences*

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# in the spotlight

## The WTO: the lies of development and...

When the World Trade Organization (WTO) was established in 1995, there was a promise to developing countries that this all-encompassing multilateral free trade agreement would deliver development and bring them economic growth. After 18 years of the WTO though, it is clear that the only development and growth delivered were for the rich and industrialized countries and their corporations.

The Doha Development Round, also known as the Doha Development Agenda, is the current basis of negotiations in the WTO. Its overall objective is to get rid of the remaining trade barriers to facilitate greater and easier trade flows. In essence the Doha Round was about delivering more development and advantages to developed countries while requiring more and more concessions from the developing ones. It was also about taking away the policy space of developing country governments, locking them into the rigid path of trade liberalization through dismantling public policies that protect fledgling industries, small farmers, public services and public health.

## ... the threats to our future

After several years of stalled negotiations, the WTO is now attempting to inject new life into itself by pushing for a **Bali Package**. Realizing that the Doha Round is too difficult to conclude, it put together a smaller package of agreements that would be easier to move forward and agree. And just like the lie of development from the beginning, the Bali Package also pretends to be about delivering development and concessions to least developed and developing countries, however, upon closer inspection, it can be seen that the Bali Package is really about securing new advantages for the developed countries in exchange for some empty promises to poor countries. *The three main elements of the Bali Package are: Trade Facilitation, Agriculture and Development of least developed countries (LDCs).*

**Trade facilitation** is the real agreement in the package. Once agreed, it will be a legally binding agreement that will facilitate the relaxing of customs procedures to allow faster and easier trade flows for corporations across borders. This was one of the "new issues" that were soundly rejected by developing countries at the 2003 WTO Ministerial in Cancun, Mexico. (The four "new issues" were competition, government procurement, investment and trade facilitation.) Developed countries and their transnational corporations are poised to gain the most from an agreement on trade facilitation as they get easier and faster access to developing country markets.

The proposed deal on **Agriculture** covers the long-standing demands of developing countries for an end to export subsidies of the rich countries, access to developed countries' markets and the right to implement public stockholding for food security and domestic aid. As it looks so far, the developed countries are not going to deliver on any of their promises of ending export subsidies by 2013 nor give effective market access to developing countries. Furthermore, the developed countries are only willing to give a temporary concession to allow developing countries to support their small farmers.

The promises on **development for LDCs** are just that, promises. The proposed deal contains very little real special and differential treatment for LDCs and actually has much less than what LDCs were already promised in previous Ministerial meetings.

In conclusion, as the **WTO gets back on its feet and pushes for this Bali Package**, the even bigger *threat is the opening of new negotiations into other areas* previously not covered by the WTO and *deepening trade liberalization in these areas.*

*have consistently failed.*

Now the WTO will meet again in Bali in December 2013. The **Bali package** will aim to inject new life into the stalled WTO talks. La Via Campesina along with the peoples' movements of Asia are organizing a big mobilization.

**They have vowed to get the WTO out of agriculture and never let the sacrifice of Lee Kyung Hae be forgotten.**

*As Lee Kyung said, moments before taking his own life - "Don't worry about me, just struggle your hardest".*

