



Illustration: First poster (of three) created for the Nyéléni Forum 2025

## editorial

# nyéléni process: creating a joint political agenda for systemic transformation

Seventeen years have passed since 2007, when the first Nyéléni Forum took place in Mali, bringing together social movements for food sovereignty from all over the world. The movement has been growing and gaining momentum, advocating at all levels

for collective rights, human rights and food sovereignty. However, much remains to be done.

The world is in unprecedented turmoil, and we are all facing deep-rooted overlapping crises. We need a paradigm shift to reclaim the right to shape our own food systems for the well-being of people and the planet. That is why we are calling for a new mobilization within and beyond the food sovereignty movement, to build our response at both global and local levels, and tighten alliances with climate justice, antiracism, health, labour, feminist, and social and solidarity economy movements and organisations. Systemic transformation is now or never.

We, the small-scale food producers and their allies, launched a new Nyéléni Process, inviting global social movements, organizations, and networks to articulate an intersectional convergence towards joint proposals for a system change. Through this multi-year process, we've brought together thousands of grassroots organizations and other allies across six world regions, to discuss and put forward joint proposals for a system change and a strong political agenda for the years to come. The Nyéléni Global Forum, to be held in 2025 in India, will be the space for strategy and organization, and to kick off this new phase of the food sovereignty movement.

*IPC for food sovereignty*

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## 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. **Nyéléni is the voice of this international movement.**

Organisations involved: AFSA, ETC Group, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN, Grassroots International, IPC for Food Sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Real World Radio, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers, Transnational Institute, VSFJusticia Alimentaria Global, WhyHunger, World Forum of Fisher People, WAMIP.

# box 1

## Political debates in the FAO and CFS get heated as governments stall

The long wave of the Covid pandemic, the food crisis, and multiple conflicts affected political discussion in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) spaces. Trade shocks and their impact on food systems have been extensively discussed in the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP). Most countries continued to support neoliberal policies, while some isolated voices mentioned local markets as a response to the global market volatility and fragility. The Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) joined the new Committee on World Food Security (CFS)'s workstream to develop an Action Plan that could serve as a roadmap to strengthen the dissemination and implementation of the policy documents agreed by CFS at local, national, regional and global levels.

The same need for implementation was raised by the fisheries movements at the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), where they advocated for the implementation of the Small-Scale Fisheries Guidelines at the national level. Another space to promote the food sovereignty agenda was the Global Forum on Family Farming within the United Nations' Decade on Family Farming (UNDDF). The IPC Working Group on Youth participated to bring the voices of young farmers and Indigenous Peoples and create a toolkit to facilitate generational turnover in agriculture. In the meantime, negotiations in the Plant Treaty (ITPGRFA) are at a critical stage. By refusing to regulate digitised version of seeds (DSI), governments are allowing corporations to bypass the Treaty rules, creating space for a huge new wave of biopiracy on peasant and Indigenous Peoples' biodiversity.

The coming years will be pivotal for peasants and Indigenous Peoples movements, as efforts will soon converge towards organizing a new International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD+20).

# in the spotlight

## Building a stronger movement: gearing up for the third Nyéléni Global Forum

Launched in 1996 at the World Food Summit, food sovereignty promotes a people-focused approach to food systems, prioritizing locally produced, stable, healthy, and affordable food over dependence on global markets and neoliberal policies. The International Nyéléni Forum in Mali (2007) established this vision as a global standard, uniting movements and organizations dedicated to food sovereignty and social justice. In 2015, the Nyéléni International Forum on Agroecology reinforced this, placing peasant, indigenous, family agroecology at the centre of a strategy for addressing climate and biodiversity crises.

Despite these achievements, we now face interconnected crises — economic, social, political, environmental and health-related— which are rooted in the oppressive capitalist system. These crises require systemic, transformative change beyond what existing frameworks offer. To achieve this, a broader, stronger movement with a unified agenda and coordinated action is essential. Expanding the food sovereignty movement with new voices and perspectives can drive impactful change that addresses current global challenges.

In response, the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) has initiated the “Nyéléni process,” a global mobilization that builds on the successes of the 2007 and 2015 forums. Named to honour the past gatherings, the Nyéléni process calls on social movements worldwide to unite in joint proposals for systemic transformation. The process will celebrate a key milestone in September 2025 at the third Nyéléni Global Forum in Karnataka, India, offering a unique chance to set the agenda for just, sustainable food systems and system change. By fostering an inclusive, intersectional movement, the Nyéléni process aims to inspire and direct coordinated global efforts towards a hopeful, just future.

Building momentum toward the third Nyéléni Global Forum, social movements advocating for transformative change are already shaping the agenda for September 2025. Central to the Nyéléni movement political goal is the development of a joint political action agenda - a pivotal step towards realizing the Nyéléni process's main objectives. This joint political action agenda will focus on key aspects that have emerged from the Nyéléni regional consultations organised in 2024 to provide a unified direction for social movements in the years ahead.

On a more technical level, while the host organisation is finalising logistics to allow the forum to take place, the regions are already building the delegations that will attend the Global Forum, striving to have all sectors represented, including those organizations or groups outside the food sovereignty movement, and respecting intersectional criteria. Meanwhile, many working groups— composed of representatives of social movements and support organizations—have emerged and are developing the work towards the forum: methodology, communication, fundraising, logistics, involvement of researchers, care and respectful processes, interpretation, and political formation.

# voices from the field

## nyéléni process

### Indigenous Peoples heading to the third Nyéléni Global Forum

Saúl Vicente Vázquez, *Unidad de la Fuerza Indígena y Campesina (UFIC), IPC facilitating committee*

Indigenous Peoples have struggled alongside other social movements of small-scale food producers since 1996, when the vision of Food Sovereignty was launched at the World Food Summit in Rome and became a reference in the global debate on trade, food and agriculture; a people-centred vision. The need for stable, healthy and affordable, culturally appropriate food, primarily produced locally and removed from neoliberal policies, privatisation and free trade and dependence on global markets, became the central reference at the global level for all key movements and organisations working on these issues.

Since then, we have managed to build a widespread movement within the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), influencing the policies of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), through autonomous organisation, mobilisation and the holding of two Nyéléni Global Forums for Food Sovereignty, with important achievements such as the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure, the Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF Guidelines), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), a reform of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), along with the adoption of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism for its relationship with the CFS, the adoption of the principles and elements of agroecology within the FAO and the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, among others. All these international agreements and policies have led the way and have already begun to influence national and regional public policies and initiatives.

Despite these achievements, over the past decades we have approached a fundamental crossroads. People are increasingly worried and feel increasingly threatened. Governments have so far been unable to find sufficiently robust responses to people's concerns and to the risks of multiple crises related to climate, biodiversity and extractive practices that continue to destroy the planet. There is a crisis of governance at the UN and at the national level.

We are convinced that we can take a different course, but we urgently need to join forces to push for the necessary changes. We need to fight for economic solidarity, climate justice and against the dominant influence of transnational corporations (TNCs) and big tech companies.

It is in this context that the third Nyéléni Global Forum is taking place, from where we propose to build a broader and stronger movement with a common platform and actions that can make a difference, promoting a profound transformation, a systemic change that allows the participation of the people, of the social movements that advocate for food sovereignty, participatory democracy, community empowerment, human rights, solidarity, cooperation between peoples and peace, and to promote real solutions to these multi-faceted crises.

## box 2

### Let's counter the corporate offensive on global governance!

*Many fronts important for the food sovereignty movement*

The right of communities to grow their food and to feed themselves is increasingly under threat, including in global policy spaces such as the United Nations. Large corporations and their political allies are taking advantage of current wars, climate, biodiversity and social crises to prioritise the industrial food system, serving profits instead of people.

The UN bodies negotiating climate (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - UNFCCC) and biodiversity (Convention on Biological Diversity - CBD) policies are in the cyclone's eye. Over time, the UNFCCC has fostered a surge of false solutions such as carbon markets that are turning nature into profit, without bringing any benefit to the climate. Risky geoeengineering technologies that are supposed to 'fix the climate' by manipulating solar radiation or industrially capturing carbon are also on the rise. All these 'technofixes' threaten to increase land-grabbing and could destroy ecosystems that food producers rely on. Even though the CBD has shown a lack of ambition and financial power at the last COP16 in Cali, it has maintained a de facto moratorium on geoeengineering, thanks to a strong civil society mobilisation.

The digitalisation of agriculture and AI technologies are also entering policy spaces, threatening farmers rights, as seen in the recent UN Summit of the Future. Now or never, solidarity and strong resistance at all levels of power are needed and will allow us to transform the food system.

For more info: listen to the podcast mini-series "*Who will control the food system?*" <https://www.etcgroup.org/tags/podcast>, read *Trojan Horses on the Farm: Challenging the digitalization of agriculture* - <https://www.etcgroup.org/content/trojan-horses-farm> and watch the animated video: *Big Brother is Coming to the Farm* (in 12 languages) <https://www.youtube.com/@etcgroup9306>

# voices from the field

## nyéléni process



### Near East and North Africa (NENA) region

*Jana Nakhal, World March of Women*

We prepare for the 2025 Nyéléni Global Forum as our region goes through an Israeli terrorist war, including a genocide on Gaza, a destructive war on Lebanon, and continuous attacks on Syria and Yemen, in addition to a plunderous war by the Gulf princes on Sudan.

The amount and extent of wars that the NENA region has experienced in the last 100 years and is still experiencing, has affected its food sovereignty, amongst other people's rights in the region.

This, in addition to indirect and political intervention from the global north, has meant that the region's food sovereignty has also been absent from the agendas of the civil society and states' policies. Additionally, it is approached through the food security lens, while dismissing a very much needed intersectional approach to the issue.

Consequently, and while developing the Nyéléni process, we are also producing a list of expectations from and hopes for the Nyéléni Global Forum. We think that this forum is an opportunity for our region to globalize its causes and find solidarity, but also to learn from other contexts and experiences, and to pitch in with our local culture and the heritage of our decolonial movements.

In this sense, the Global Forum seems like an opportunity for our region as well as other regions, to process the rooted intersectional character of food sovereignty, and create a space of sharing knowledge, learning and radicalizing our conceptions and movements.

There is no doubt that patriarchal, capitalist, colonizing powers are launching renewed terrorist offensives on peoples of the global south. And we can only resist them through a collective grassroots and intersectional world view, which posits food sovereignty, access to basic human rights—such as access to housing, land and resources, education, health, etc.—the liberation of peoples and women, as well as personal liberties, as inalienable rights.

### Africa region

*Ali Aii Shatou, IPACC*

The African regional consultation, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2024, played a central role in framing Africa's position. Participants reflected on their food systems, identified key issues, and developed a declaration that emphasizes the following outcomes:

Small scale food producers are recognized as the backbone of Africa's food security. Support for these producers through access to natural resources and recognition of the value of peoples' knowledge is critical to ensuring sustainable food systems.

Agroecology emerged as a key solution to the interconnected challenges of climate change, land degradation, and food insecurity. The consultations emphasized the need for policy support to scale up agroecological practices, including resilient seed systems and climate adapted farming methods.

A strong call was made for policies that empower women and youth in agriculture. This includes access to resources, promoting youth engagement in agriculture, and ensuring that women's leadership is central to food sovereignty efforts.

Protecting land and water rights for small scale producers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and Indigenous communities was highlighted as essential to preventing land and water grabbing and ensuring that these resources remain a basis for food production and cultural survival.

Despite numerous positive outcomes, food sovereignty movements in Africa face significant challenges:

Many African governments remain aligned with industrial agriculture models, which prioritize export-oriented farming and undermine local food systems.

Multinational agribusinesses dominate food systems, pushing profit-driven agendas that prioritize genetically modified crops over local, traditional varieties.

Climate shocks are threatening agricultural productivity, while migration from rural areas undermines the sustainability of smallholder farming.

The African movement expects Nyéléni 2025 to be a platform for bold policy advocacy which challenges existing power structures and prioritize people-centred, sustainable food systems. Key demands include policies that prioritize small scale producers, agroecology, and land and water rights, as well as a call for an end to land and water grabbing and corporate control of food systems. There is also a desire to amplify the voices of marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and Indigenous communities, and to foster cross-border solidarity to address shared challenges like climate change and food insecurity.

# voices from the field

## nyéléni process



### Asia and Pacific region

*Tammi Jonas, Australian Food Sovereignty Network*

Sixty representatives from 12 countries and more than 20 global and regional social movements and civil society organisations across Asia and the Pacific came together in Negombo, Sri Lanka, to reflect on the current polycrises caused by patriarchal colonial capitalism, and to collectively build our strategies towards the third Nyéléni Global Forum.

From the fields and local halls to the plenary, we shared stories of struggle and resistance specific to Asia and the Pacific, yet generalisable to all regions of the world. Whether at the level of micro-finance peddled to smallholders or World Bank loans to sovereign states, debt is crushing families, communities and countries, propped up by neoliberal policy reforms introduced by the IMF across the region. Disaster capitalism is rife across a region suffering greatly under climate change, from corporate tourism that robs fisherfolk of access to their customary waters while destroying natural barriers against tsunami, to mega-infrastructure projects purported to stem salinity from rising sea levels thereby inundating peasants' rice paddies.

From land and water grabbing to the new frontier of carbon and data grabbing, colonial capitalism is moving to the cellular and even digital level. The struggle for food sovereignty is founded on knowledge, territory and sovereignty, asserting rights as enshrined in the UNDROP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas) and UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), which require a profound restructuring of who holds, uses, and shares power and knowledge in agri-food systems, and puts control of the means of production back in the hands of Indigenous Peoples, dalit, landless, peasants and local communities, starting with land, our mother.

Working with invited allies from other key global movements for health, debt justice, climate justice, social and solidarity economy, labour, and gender diversities, we look towards Nyéléni 2025, active in our optimism to work collectively for everyone's right to nutritious and culturally-determined food grown in harmony with nature, processed and distributed by and within our communities, and democratically governed by us, for us.

### North America region

*Cicely Garrett, National Black Food and Justice Alliance (NBFJA)*

The food sovereignty movement in North America (N.A.) is active, even if decentralized and lacking a core coordination support structure. For the purposes of the Global Nyéléni process, North America region is made up of more than the two nations of Canada and the United States (U.S.). There are over 1,200 sovereign Indigenous, Native, Métis, and Inuit nations that call the land home. Many of these are active in the regional food sovereignty movement.

The food sovereignty and food justice movements have faced a growing set of challenges in both Canada and the U.S., as a systems approach to food is still mostly missing from most levels of government, public sectors (i.e. health, education), and public awareness. In the U.S. in particular, the government has cut thousands of families from food assistance and other social programs and institutions use violence and incarceration against social movement communities.

At the same time, signs of a new wave of popular, mass movements for #BlackLivesMatter, Climate Justice, and actions against Monsanto and other corporations have emerged. New and existing national alliances are strengthening the leadership of working-class families and communities of colour to reclaim their lives and their bodies from structural racism and defend justice and food sovereignty.

The North American consultations happened virtually on May 8th and 9th, 2024. There were 125 participants, including coordination members, support staff and translators, representing over 70 organizations, coalitions, networks, farms and community food centres, based in the many nations that make up Turtle Island. While a lot of conversation focused on the challenges to achieving land justice and food sovereignty, there was a great focus on amplifying successful strategic interventions and root causes systemic changes. There was a renewed call and commitment to solidarity and transformative actions to build collective power. All in all the consultation was a beginning, a catalyst if you will, to continued coordination in route to the 2025 in-person Global Nyéléni convening and beyond.

# voices from the field

## nyéléni process



### Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region

*Ia Ebralidze, ELKANA*

In recent years the Nyéléni ECA movement has made significant strides across Eastern Europe and Central Asia in fostering solidarity among individuals and organizations committed to food sovereignty and working on connecting local agroecology initiatives. Collaboration with the FAO regional office has amplified civil society voices, enabling meaningful contributions to regional policy debates. The National-level mobilization efforts despite pandemic challenges, have continued their efforts. However, as the region is characterized by diverse political and social cultures, country development levels, and agricultural systems, the Nyéléni working strategy of the region is still under formation. A new strategy aims to achieve clear processes and transparency within the network to build trust and boost strategic action.

Politically the region faces intersecting crises – the Russian invasion in Ukraine, frozen and/or ongoing armed conflicts in Caucasus and Central Asia, as well impacts of war in Palestine, preceded by the effects of climate change, especially water shortage, and natural disasters resulted not only in loss of thousands of lives, displacements of millions, destruction of civil infrastructure and cutting supply chains but also highly destabilized the whole region. The rise of authoritarianism and populism all over Eastern Europe and Central Asia, using the traumatic and fragile conditions of the populations, the introduction of so-called “Agent laws” backed up by the Russian Federation, results in stigmatization and marginalization of civil society organizations including individuals and organizations working on peasants’ and indigenous’ rights or food sovereignty.

Meanwhile, skyrocketing food prices, disrupted supply chains, and limited access to essential resources—land, water, and labour—are devastating local food producers. These pressures have intensified working migration, marginalized small-scale farmers, and deepened regional food insecurity.

Yet, amidst these crises, agroecology has proven its critical importance. As a low-input, family-based farming system, agroecology offers a foundation for food security and resilience during extreme events. The small-scale food producers, despite immense challenges, remain the backbone of sustainable food systems. To support them, public policies must strengthen civil society and Indigenous organizations, prioritize human rights, include vulnerable constituencies, and bolster local economies.

### Latin America and Caribbean region

*Perla Álvarez Britez, CONAMURI/CLOC*

In our region, we are determined that this third Nyéléni Global Process will help us to strengthen the movement for food sovereignty: to convene a widespread popular movement, to build new relationships between humans and nature and among each other, so that we can leave this beautiful land to the next generations.

In our Popular Consultation in February 2024, we called for new waves of popular agrarian reforms and for the expansion of agroecological food systems to achieve food sovereignty: we are aware that this implies a systemic change.

In our consultation we involved some twenty organisations from the continental, regional and national levels, including peasants, Indigenous Peoples, fisherfolk, fisherwomen, women, youth, the movement for human rights, climate justice and health, among others. Our children deserve a better world, the possibility of a total meltdown is more certain than ever and ever closer if we do not act. Therefore, we call on all emerging movements, the climate justice movement, the feminist movement, the workers’ movement, youth and academia committed to the struggles of the people to join this call to the Global Forum in India in 2025.

We call for joint action with our allies to demand that governments take responsibility for ensuring public policies based on human rights and the rights of nature, to fight against corporations that devastate our territories, to build new subjectivities based on feminist contributions, and to take on diversity as a challenge for the future. We are therefore organising a series of open webinars to build a common agenda.

We hope that the Global Forum will conclude with a powerful call to humanity, to governments and intergovernmental bodies to act with real solutions, not false solutions; a call for peace, with social and environmental justice, with respect for the diversity of life and people. Therefore, from Latin America and the Caribbean we propose a new ICARRD+20 (International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development), where we will have active and leading participation of the people.