

ROAD TO NYELENI 2007 – N°1
Real World Radio - Pre-coverage World Forum Food Sovereignty-
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The Forum on Food Sovereignty in progress

Several social organizations from around the world are preparing for the Nyéléni 2007: the World Forum on Food Sovereignty to be held in Mali in February.

It is estimated that 500 representatives will participate in the meeting to "affirm food sovereignty and fine-tune their economic, social, environmental and political implications".

The Forum is being convened by: peasants, indigenous, women, workers, ecologists, consumers, NGOs and young people.

According to a communiqué issued by the organizers, the goal of Nyéléni 2007 is to develop an "international movement to achieve the true right to food sovereignty".

They estimate that the activity will enable definition of a "worldwide and collective strategy".

"The struggle for food sovereignty is the long-term struggle where everyone is necessary, organizations, governments, institutions, that approve the concept".

They point out that the participation of more organizations is crucial for the struggle "against corporate dominance over our food, fish and agriculture" and to develop alternative "strategies to neoliberal trends".

They claim that "The consequences of the dominant neoliberal policies are hunger, misery and environmental damage. While transnational corporations take over power, and fisherfolk are marginalized and consumers increasingly receive food in bad condition".

The organizers of the forum claim that the suspension of the negotiations at the World Trade Organization "stresses the need" for an absolute change in the food, agriculture and fishing policies.

"They are going to leave us without food or with the big corporations' junk food".

One of the members of the environmentalist organization Redes – Friends of the Earth Uruguay, Alberto Villarreal, said in the Argentinean capital, Buenos Aires, that "with the advance of agribusiness they are expelling those who have traditionally lived on the lands, those who have taken care of the environment and the territories, like indigenous and peasant peoples".

Villarreal attended the Forum in Resistance to Agribusiness and he was interviewed by Real World Radio's correspondents in Argentina, Raquel Schrott and Ezequiel Miodownik.

"I coordinate Friends of the Earth's regional campaign against free trade agreements and the WTO. We believe that agribusiness is one of the main capitalist strategies for Latin America and the MERCOSUR. We want to coordinate with other organizations, not only ecologists and members of Friends of the Earth, but peasant and citizen organizations, to create a much more united and consistent front, from a political and social point of view, to oppose the privatization of our territories in the hands of agribusinesses, which only look to profit by them.

In Friends of the Earth, we are politically reformulating different campaigns, looking to make them

more consistent and coherent. For instance, I coordinate the trade campaign, which so far has been focused on the WTO and bilateral free trade agreements. But the real aim is to unite this campaign against the policies of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which finance agribusiness. We also interlink with the corporations campaign, which was in a different path, in order to focus on agribusiness in the region.

There is a model in the region, based on forestry monocultures and the expansion of soy, not only to feed cattle but also for biofuels, which seems to be the new frontier, the new horizon of agriculture, aimed at producing an alternative energy to oil, which is in the hands of the "axis of evil", as president Bush says.

Without integrating the struggles of the countryside and the city, we won't be able to win this battle. The struggle has to be for food sovereignty, even against the official discourse of the "leftist" governments, which argue that biofuels will be a new agricultural production, which will generate employment. But this will be detrimental to food sovereignty. They are going to leave us without food or with the big corporations' junk food. We have to fight for healthy food, produced by our peasants.

This forum has been a very important initiative. It has introduced the organizations that are struggling in Latin America and the Southern Cone, not only to get to know each other, but also to coordinate and generate strategies".

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