



## **Nyéléni 2007**

### **Forum for Food Sovereignty**

**23<sup>rd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007, Sélingué, Mali**

### **TOWARDS A FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ACTION AGENDA**

**February 2007**

**From: International Steering Committee (ISC)**

**To: Participants**

*(This document should be read together with the ISC's document about Process and Programme)*

At Nyéléni 2007, delegates will debate food sovereignty issues in order to deepen collective understanding, strengthen dialogue among and between sectors and interest groups and formulate joint strategies and an action agenda

As a way to focus discussion and organise the debate, the International Steering Committee (ISC) has proposed seven themes covered by separate thematic working groups through three steps of discussion. Step 1: what are fighting for? Step 2: what are we fighting against? Step 3: what can do about it? The seven themes proposed are: 1) Trade policies and local markets; 2) Local knowledge and technology; 3) Access to and control over natural resources – land, water, seeds, livestock breeds; 4) Sharing territories and land, water, fishing rights, aquaculture and 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.

The thematic working groups are the central space of the Forum where the real work will be done.

This document first summarises the current food sovereignty policy framework. It then expands on each of the three main objectives of the Forum and the outputs expected from each thematic working group. Annexed to this paper are seven short discussion guidance notes for each thematic working group.

#### **Food Sovereignty Policy Framework**

Food sovereignty is a political proposal. After several years of development, it was launched internationally at the World Food Summit in 1996 by La Via Campesina. Since then many social movements, organisations and others have adopted and taken part in developing the way in which food sovereignty is described and how it can be implemented. New issues and challenges are constantly brought up in the debates.

Food sovereignty gives space for a rich diversity of concrete proposals suitable to local and national situations, different cultures, and the aspirations and needs of different peoples. It puts farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples and other food producers as well as consumers at the centre of food and agriculture policy development rather than the demands of markets and corporate driven food production. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation.

Food Sovereignty represents a countervailing agenda to the neo-liberal policies of globalised trade and food security as currently defined by the corporate food regime and its agro-industrial production model. It offers both a strategy to resist and dismantle this regime, as well as providing directions for improved food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems.

Food sovereignty is not against trade nor food security *per se*. Rather, food sovereignty provides for genuine food security and equitable trade with a priority given to local markets, producers and consumers. Food sovereignty supports farmer-driven agriculture, fisher-focused fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, all based on environmental, social and economic sustainability, as opposed to industrial agribusinesses and corporate driven food production. Food sovereignty promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production and harvesting of food.

Food Sovereignty has been described as the following:

- the right of individuals, peoples, communities and countries to define their own agricultural, labour, fishing, food, land and water management policies, which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances;
- the true Right to Food and to produce food, which means that everyone has the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies;
- the right to protect and regulate domestic production and trade and prevent the dumping of food products and unnecessary food aid in domestic markets;
- self reliance in food to the extent desired;
- managing the use of, the rights to and control over natural resources – land, waters, seeds, livestock breeds and wider agricultural biodiversity unrestricted by intellectual property rights and without GMOs;
- based on and supportive of ecologically sustainable production and harvesting, principally agroecological production and artisanal fisheries.

In order to have control over food production, small farmers and peasants, pastoralists, fisherfolk, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and other small-scale food producers need to be actively and decisively involved in policy formulation processes. Women food producers, play a major role in food production, the maintenance of agricultural diversity and household nutrition. They especially need to be directly and actively involved in making policy decisions and setting research priorities if these are to respond to their needs and thus those of communities as a whole. As a comprehensive framework that includes production, distribution, exchange and consumption, food sovereignty also has important implications for rural youth. Reviving and strengthening local economies and ensuring that rural communities have the resources needed to be self reliant means that young people have opportunities for self development and employment.

### **Thematic Working Group Discussions**

Nyéleni 2007, Forum for Food Sovereignty, has three objectives. Under each of these objectives, there is a description of the context for discussions within each Thematic Working Groups, as well as the Steps intended to frame the discussions, which will lead to an action agenda.

*(For more on this, see the ISC's document about Process and Programme).*

In the Annex to this paper, discussion guidance notes for each theme are presented.

## **Deepening our understanding of food sovereignty.**

**Objective 1:** *“to deepen the understanding and the meaning of “food sovereignty”: what does food sovereignty mean for us, what kind of food production and consumption do we defend?”*

At the moment slightly different definitions of food sovereignty are used by different movements and organisations and there are different interpretations of what food sovereignty policies include. There is therefore a need to discuss and deepen our common understanding of food sovereignty. It is also important to further develop food sovereignty, discuss challenges, principles, what it means for different sectors, how possible conflicts can be resolved, etc.

Food sovereignty includes a rich diversity of concrete local initiatives and policies appropriate for local and national situations, different cultures, and the aspirations and needs of different peoples. Nevertheless within this diversity, the commonly held views and principles must be clear. Food sovereignty puts farmers/peasants, pastoralists, fishers, indigenous peoples and other food producers as well as consumers at the centre of food and agriculture policies, rather than the market and the corporate sector. Food sovereignty also defines the model of food production and consumption we defend. Dumping and technologies, such as Terminator and GMOs, are examples of what are not acceptable under food sovereignty, as they have strong negative impacts on communities, the environment and the model of food production and consumption we defend.

Unfortunately, food sovereignty is being co-opted by the dominant neo-liberal system and by some of those actors, such as President Chirac of France. They define it according to their interests. For example, they talk about food sovereignty for countries, but do not criticise the dumping practices of the same country. The word “sovereignty” has also historically very different connotations in many countries, which makes the term positively received in some countries, while in others it is associated with regressive, nationalist views. Some see food sovereignty, however, as a policy principle that should be respected by the international community with regard to nation states. Some also use the term to justify agriculture trade policies that benefit corporations and large commercial producers.

The Nyéléni 2007 Forum for Food Sovereignty is about PEOPLES' food sovereignty which is to be defined by social movements. It is a “vehicle”, a carrier, for our collective political project and our joint strategies and actions regarding food production and consumption at all levels.

Food sovereignty is under attack, the actors of the dominant neo-liberal model want to capture and destroy our model of production and consumption in order to bring natural resources, production and consumption systems under their control. We have to define clearly against whom we are fighting, who our common enemies are, and where we should put our joint energies.

## **Strengthening the dialogue among sectors**

**Objective 2:** *“to strengthen the dialogue and alliance building between different sectors and interest groups and seek a better understanding of their analyses, goals and strategies.”*

At the moment, organisations in the different sectors (peasants/small farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous people, pastoralists, consumers/urban movements and workers) are working together at different levels. Although this collaboration is growing, there is still a strong need to strengthen it. The Forum gives us an important possibility to help us create a space and a stronger process for inter-sectoral dialogue and collaboration after Nyéléni. Sectors and organizations can get a better understanding of each others' goals and strategies, be able to strengthen and support each others' struggles and be able to define achievable joint priorities for strategies and actions.

Of crucial importance are discussions about conflicts of interest that exist between sectors, for example between small farmers and pastoralists or indigenous peoples. We need to find mechanisms to analyse these conflicts and find ways to resolve them or to deal with them equitably in our joint struggles. For this, we can learn from many experiences that exist at national levels. One Thematic Working Group will specifically focus in depth on this issue but all will deal with it to some extent, as each thematic working group will include delegates from all sectors.

### **Formulating joint strategies and an action agenda**

**Objective 3:** *“to establish joint strategies, a joint action agenda and to increase our joint commitment in the struggle for food sovereignty.”*

We have to find ways to increase our pressure on the dominant neo-liberal development model and force it to retreat. This would enable changes in national and international policies and agreements that are desperately needed to realise food sovereignty for all peoples. Therefore we need to agree on clear JOINT political commitments for strategies and struggles which will be carried forward under the shared responsibility of all the sectors. We have to define real joint priorities, priorities that are priorities for ALL sectors instead of making a “shopping list” in which each sector, region, or organisation puts priorities that it alone holds. This requires an intense debate among and between sectors and an in-depth analysis of the current context. To determine where to place our JOINT energies, we have to agree on common joint priorities to which all sectors can contribute.

### **Seven Thematic working Groups**

The selected themes, cover some of the most crucial issues related to food sovereignty that multiple sectors and interest groups (environmental, women and youth) have raised. Within each of the themes, it is proposed that delegates focus the debate on key issues that are seen to be central to the theme and that have the potential to develop joint priorities for action.

Each thematic working group will debate its theme in relation to the specific issues raised (see annex) and in terms of the overarching issues impacting:

- food sovereignty
- gender
- youth
- environment

Each thematic working group will also look at ways to actively and decisively strengthen the involvement of sectors in policy formulation processes in order that they can have control over food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems, environmental protection, research agendas and the policies that frame these.

It is proposed that each thematic working group will discuss the issues in three steps:

**Step 1: What are we fighting for?** What does Food Sovereignty mean for us? What do we have in common? What do we defend? What do we do to sustain it? Special emphasis on what Food Sovereignty means at local levels.

**Step 2: What are we fighting against?** What is preventing us from realising 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 interests and how to overcome them?

**Step 3: What can we do about it?** What are our common struggles? How to strengthen our movements (from local to international levels)? How can we increase our resistance? How can we work better together and support one another?

Each thematic working group will conclude by proposing:

- **One key priority for action, campaigning etc.**
- **One key priority for strengthening the dialogue and the movements themselves.**

The **Annex** contains discussion guidance notes for each theme:

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

### **OUTPUTS**

The results of the three sessions of each thematic working group, and especially the key priorities agreed by delegates, will be summarised by the Chair of the Working Group assisted by the facilitator and staff. This summary will contribute to the '**Synthesis Report**' of the Forum, which will describe delegates' understanding of food sovereignty and the strategies and actions proposed. It will also contain an **Action Agenda**.

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## Trade Policies and Local Markets

*Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture policies; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets, and; to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources. 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.*

### **CONTEXT**

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 economies 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. These trade issues cannot, in practice, be separated from those concerning knowledge/ control/ guardianship/ access to natural resources, seeds, land, water and biodiversity – all of which are directly affected by Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) /WTO /Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) /bilateral trade accords etc. because of investment and intellectual property provisions, for example. But these issues are covered to some extent by other thematic working groups.

### **What are we fighting for?**

To shorten the link between producers and consumers and remove agriculture from the WTO.

Making producer-consumer links shorter heightens consumer awareness of production systems and reduces "food miles". It also restores small farmers' / peasants', livestock keepers' and fishers' control over their local markets, stimulates the setting up of local cooperatives, Community Supported Agriculture schemes etc. This process requires the development of policies that support local marketing of food, including mechanisms for stabilising national or regional markets, so that small farmers / peasants, fishers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and other small-scale food producers can maintain their livelihoods through selling products in local and national markets.

We are also fighting for a radical change in the rules that govern food and agriculture at the international level, removing these from the WTO and challenging bilateral and regional trade agreements and policies, based on the neoliberal model of economic development which reduces farmers, fishers, food and farming to focus on tradeable commodities. The neoliberal/free market model is incompatible with food sovereignty.

### **Questions:**

- Are there any experiences or examples of improving, maintaining or rebuilding local markets that should be shared among the movements in order to strengthen our struggles? Can we propose clear criteria or principles for the type of trade to which we want to give priority?
- Is food sovereignty only for people in developing countries? Some supporters of food sovereignty argue that rich countries should not be allowed to protect and support food production for domestic consumption, even if they don't destroy other markets through dumping. Their opinion is that rich countries should open up their markets for more imports from developing countries even if it will harm small scale producers in the rich countries. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Others see the struggle not as a North – South trade issue but one between contrasting food systems and supply chains; one based on the corporate/industrial agriculture and trade in food

## THEMATIC WORKING GROUP 1 – DISCUSSION GUIDANCE NOTE

commodities and the other based on small/family /peasant farms, pastoralism, artisanal fishing and other small-scale food production for (primarily) local consumption. Would you agree?

### **What kind of trade rules do we want?**

Food sovereignty is not a fixed set of trade rules. It gives the space and possibilities for different kind of trade policies. But are there, on the basis of food sovereignty, some basic trade rules we can outline? Do you agree with the proposals below? What do you want to add / take away?

#### **Questions:**

- Each country has the right and obligation to prioritise the production of food for domestic consumption.
- Each country, in both the North and global South, has the right to decide the level and type of protection, support and regulation of food production and food imports for domestic consumption so long as this does not lead to the dumping of food and agricultural commodities on other markets.
- International trade agreements on food, agriculture and fisheries that impact negatively on domestic production and consumption should be challenged and changed; for example taking the WTO out of agriculture.
- All kinds of direct or indirect subsidies for food exports and other forms of dumping must end.
- Developing countries should be allowed to support exports by small-scale and poor farmers if this improves their livelihoods and it does not impact negatively on small-scale producers in importing countries.
- Commodity agreements for international supply management and price control have to be developed to restrict overproduction and guarantee farmers, fishers, pastoralists and other small-scale producers' equitable and good prices that fully cover their costs of producing food in socially and environmentally sustainable ways .
- Fair trade initiatives and other arrangements, which give the producers better prices and bring producers and consumers closer (e.g. local markets), should be supported.
- International trade rules have to be flexible and diverse to meet different social, cultural and economic development needs. The concept of “one size fits all” has to be eliminated.

### **What are we fighting against ?**

TNC domination of international trade. National governments and regional blocs, especially the EU and the US/NAFTA, are influenced by TNC interests and lobbies when negotiating trade policies. These interests become clearly visible in the different spaces where international trade policies are defined: the WTO, Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the US Farm Bill and the practices of TNCs (such as dumping, taking control of markets, imposing vertically integrated production and distribution systems etc.).

#### **Question:**

- Given the current international context of international trade, on what do we need to focus our efforts? What are the forces we are fighting against? Are these specific companies and governments? What importance should we give to the WTO, regional and bilateral trade agreements and other spaces at international and regional levels?

### **What Can we Do About It?**

In the area of international trade there are many different “battle fields”. There is the WTO, and there are bilateral and regional agreements, government policies, TNCs, changing consumption patterns and so on.

#### **Questions:**

- If we want to stop the destructive dynamics of international trade in food, what should be our joint priority for action? Is it the fight against dumping and the countries and companies that practice dumping, combined with struggles in each country for controlling imports?
- To what extent will our demand for the localisation of markets realise lasting benefits and achieve food sovereignty?
- What is needed to strengthen our movements and our collaboration in this area?



## **Food Sovereignty, Local Knowledge and Technology**

### **CONTEXT**

Until relatively recently, knowledge about how to produce or collect food was the domain of rural communities. Over generations, communities built an impressive base of agricultural biodiversity, effective fishing methods, technologies and knowledge that was adapted to their local environmental conditions, their socio-economic needs, and their cultural interests. Innovation happened and technologies were developed by and for local communities.

The twin processes of colonialism and industrialization undermined a lot of this. Agricultural research was pushed off the farm and moved into far away institutes and labs run by Western scientists. Local fishing techniques were supplanted by floating industrial factories. Indigenous peoples saw their territories and livelihoods invaded by settlers, plantations and mining industries. In agriculture, the 'green revolution' was probably the most dramatic example of this push to industrialise agriculture based on the heavy use of external chemical inputs, and do away with a broad mosaic of local and diversity-based production systems. In a similar way, corporate interests are threatening the rights of livestock holders to use and develop their own breeding stocks, and a 'blue revolution' is being pushed upon the fisheries sectors, promoting destructive industrial aquaculture and fishing methods.

### **What are we fighting for?**

Despite the onslaught of the Western technology model, the majority of the world's food is still being produced or collected by local communities, based on local knowledge, with locally based technologies and locally available resources. For many people, a central element of food sovereignty is the promotion and further development of these local technologies and knowledge, and the strengthening of local control over them. Across the world, people are rescuing and re-integrating indigenous knowledge in their livelihood systems. Indigenous crops and seed varieties, much better adapted to local growing conditions are being exchanged and promoted. Agro-ecological production methods are being recognised as much more productive and sustainable than industrial agriculture. The same is true for indigenous fishing techniques, local livestock herding and breeding, and local agro-forestry management systems. Fighting for food sovereignty means taking these indigenous knowledge and production systems as a central element in strengthening local food systems under control of local communities.

### **Questions:**

- Is all locally developed knowledge good? How can it be improved? How can we strengthen its use? How can we help adapt it to changing environments (e.g. global warming)?
- What if communities have lost their indigenous knowledge? How can this knowledge be revived and reclaimed?
- What initiatives currently exist to protect and develop local knowledge, technologies and control over them? How can they be strengthened?
- How can local knowledge, technologies and control be protected at the regional and international levels? What is hampering this effort?

### **What are we fighting against?**

Food sovereignty is simply not possible on the basis of industrial technology under the control of multinational corporations. Industrial technology is aimed at large scale production, oriented towards food processing and international trade, often produces low quality 'junk' food, and destroys small scale food producers and the environment in the process. The most recent and extreme example of unsustainable and corporate controlled technology is genetic engineering in agriculture, livestock breeding and fisheries, which is now being forced upon farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists and consumers alike. Furthermore, new technologies, such as animal hormones, aquaculture and food irradiation, are

## THEMATIC WORKING GROUP 2 – DISCUSSION GUIDANCE NOTE

emerging to allow food to be industrially processed and easily transported. Biofuel crops are being designed to supply fuel to industrializing countries, rather than to feed people and combat world hunger. These industrial technologies reach all corners of the world through free trade agreements in which on one hand, any regulation of technology in the public interest is viewed as a barrier to free trade and on the other hand, technologies and knowledge are protected by corporate friendly intellectual property regimes. In addition, development aid programs are increasingly becoming conditional on accepting such technologies. Meanwhile, consumers who do not produce their own food are left completely unaware that their food is developed or contaminated with these technologies.

### **Questions:**

- Does western science and technology, which is increasingly dominated by corporate interests, have a place within a food sovereignty context? If yes: in what ways? How can their useful elements be appropriated to support food sovereignty? If no: why not? How can their negative impacts be stopped?

### **What can we do about it?**

Nyeléni 2007 is an opportunity to continue and develop regional, national and international campaigns to strengthen local control and knowledge, while defeating the invasion of damaging technologies. There are many possible actions and strategies do counter wrong technologies and promote local knowledge.

### **Questions:**

- There exist numerous local and regional initiatives and networks to use and exchange local seed varieties, information about local knowledge systems, etc. to regain local control. How can we encourage more such initiatives, strengthen them locally and back them up internationally?
- Many similarities exist in the corporate push for the 'green', the 'blue' and the livestock revolutions, and joint strategies against them could be explored between those involved in farming, in livestock keeping and in fisheries. How can this be done?
- How can we strengthen alliances between the different sectors to fight against damaging technologies, such as industrial plantations, factory farming of livestock, genetic engineering and patenting on life forms?
- What international campaigns targeting specific corporations, foundations and institutions promoting damaging technologies can be developed?

## **Access to and Control over Natural Resources for Food Sovereignty<sup>1</sup>**

### **CONTEXT**

Food sovereignty has its roots in the lives and struggles of peasant and family farmers, fishers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples and other small-scale food producers and workers. It is embedded in how food is produced, stored, shared, consumed and exchanged. Central to this are access, control and stewardship of the natural resources that farming, pastoral, fishing and indigenous communities rely on for food and livelihoods, for example, land, forests, water, seeds, livestock breeds and fish species. For generations, local communities have preserved the richness and diversity of these resources by practicing ecologically sustainable and biodiverse agriculture, livestock production, pastoralism and fishing, saving and refining numerous varieties of seeds, livestock breeds and wider agricultural biodiversity, and protecting their lands, territories, forests and water bodies from over-use, depletion and contamination. Farmers, pastoralists, fishers and indigenous peoples are innovators, breeders and true conservationists, using a broad array of natural resources, experimenting and adapting plant and animal species to their natural production conditions, and building an immense wealth of collective knowledge about their agricultural biodiversity, land, water and resource management for use by other communities and future generations. Agricultural biodiversity and indigenous knowledge are intricately linked whereby the holders of indigenous and community knowledge also the users and preservers of this diversity and need control over land, territory, water and aquatic resources to be able to use these productively.

Compared to the ecological wastelands of industrial, export dominated agriculture, aquaculture and livestock production, community based production landscapes contain a myriad of biodiversity. They reduce land and environmental degradation, preserve valuable ecosystems, numerous wild and cultivated crop species, fish and livestock genetic resources, and open spaces and forest cover that are critical for preserving watersheds and hydrological resources. All of these are essential for ensuring genuine food security for humanity – food sovereignty.

Access to and control over the use of these natural resources is a complex issue and inter-related to several factors crucial for food sovereignty. It implies being able to have control over secure physical access to resources as well as the organisation of production, foraging, storage and exchange activities. Communities occupying the same local areas often have well developed rules for when and how land should be farmed, forest products gathered and water-bodies fished. They also have rules for sharing, exchanging and selling what they gather and produce, and systems for resolving conflicts over natural resource use. Farm-saved seed is the mainstay of the majority of peasant producers the world over as are local livestock breeds for pastoralists. For indigenous peoples, territory is the basis for social and economic organization and cultural identifications, and viewed as part of a wider territory which includes not only the productive function of land, but also the natural environment, water, forests, subsurface minerals, the air above, and other productive resources. For fishers, control over the use of artisanal fishing grounds, beach landing zones and land-based activities to limit the impacts of harmful run-off from terrestrial land use, is essential.

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<sup>1</sup> Many terms are used in this paper that have distinct and potentially contentious meanings in different contexts. These terms include “Access and Control”, “Rights”, “Stewardship” “Natural Resources”. In this paper we are describing a system in which 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. For all these, the food sovereignty policy framework requires that local producers can decide, and indeed have the right to decide, what is used, how it is used and that they, not corporations or governments, have prior claim over their use. It is in this sense that we use the terms access, control, rights, stewardship and natural resources.

The dominant development model is eroding the access and control of local communities to the resources on which they depend for survival and dismantling local systems of resource stewardship, governance and production. Land, forests, water, plants, animals and other genetic resources are increasingly becoming commercialized and privatised commodities. The state, private agribusiness, extractive industry, and large scale tourism and infrastructure projects are encroaching on communal and public lands, natural water bodies and indigenous peoples' territories. Seeds and livestock breeds are being patented by private agribusiness and biotechnology firms. Water —crucial for sustaining life itself-- is deemed as an economic good and allocated to “high value users” (i.e., those who can pay commercial prices). Communal fishing areas, forests, wetlands, pastures and woodlands are being auctioned off to wealthy private entrepreneurs and companies for commercial aquaculture, industrial plantations, mining and logging concessions. The store of indigenous and local knowledge built over generations by communities is being pirated by pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies.

The violation of the rights of peasant farmers, pastoralists, fishers and indigenous peoples to access and control of their resources amounts to an assault on their rights to food, livelihood, economic and cultural security. The commercialisation of agriculture and fisheries has resulted in the consolidation of agriculture and forest lands, seeds, livestock breeds and other genetic resources in the hands of agribusiness and other large commercial entities, displacing entire communities from their lands and traditional occupations to seek insecure, unsafe and poorly paid employment elsewhere. This has resulted in widespread migration of farming, pastoral and fishing families, the creation of new pockets of poverty and inequality in rural and urban areas, and the fragmentation of entire rural communities. Particularly disenfranchised and disempowered here are women and youth. Women, because they are often the keepers of seeds and of local knowledge about livestock and forest products, medicinal herbs and plants, and wild food sources. Youth, because the fragmentation of their families and communities leaves them with few options for personal development and employment.

### **What are we fighting for?**

Local autonomy, governance, organisation and the defence of the commons are at the heart of food sovereignty. They ensure the rights of communities to access and control of their land, territories, water and agricultural biodiversity, and help to resolve conflicts over the use of the same resources by different user communities. They do not deny markets, but rather seek to keep markets under community/societal control. The “local” is an economic as well as political space, which helps communities from all over the world and from different constituencies to identify with each others' issues and struggles and forge common strategies. But as the commons become privatised and local spaces are occupied by market forces, the need for survival is pushing communities into conflict situations with each other.

### ***Questions:***

- How can we recognise and enforce the legal and customary rights of peoples and communities to make decisions concerning their local, communal resources, even where no legal rights have previously been allocated?
- How can the rights of peoples and communities to equitable access to and control over land, seeds, livestock breeds, water and other productive resources be protected?
- How can we build a comprehensive vision of agrarian and water reform that encompasses the rights and priorities of all communities—farmers, pastoralists, fishers, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers and migrants?

### **What are we fighting against?**

The assault on the commons and communities' rights of access and control is being led by states/governments, international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) all of whom are acting at the behest of national and multinational corporations. With financing from wealthy northern donor countries, the IFIs more or less control the dominant development model in which the only “access” that is upheld is market access by corporations to the resources and knowledge of local communities. Trade and investment liberalisation, privatisation of the commons and public services, intellectual property rights (IPR) regimes that facilitate bio-piracy, technologies that deny local control, market led “land reforms” and water privatization are the hall marks of this destructive development model. This model also forces local communities and different social constituencies to compete for access and control to a shrinking pool of resources, thus resulting in social conflicts and divisions.

#### ***Questions:***

- How can we dismantle corporate friendly IPR regimes and ensure that no patenting takes place on any form of life?
- How can we dismantle the power of TNCs and make them legally and materially accountable to the public?
- How can we disempower IFIs, the WTO and their associated institutions?
- How can we halt and reverse privatisation and liberalisation processes?

### **What Can We Do About It?**

In the neo-liberal development model, global corporations -- with the active support of government elites -- control the food chain all the way from inputs, resources and production to distribution, processing and trade. Fundamental to this control is restricting and often completely denying communities' access and control over natural and productive resources, as well as decision making about how resources, production and distribution should be organised and governed. Food sovereignty both, resists this corporate food regime as well as creates spaces for reclaiming access and control, and developing principles and practices for sustainable food, agriculture and ecological systems.

#### ***Questions:***

- How can we develop common collective principles and strategies for reclaiming control over community resources? How can we collectivise and internationalise our respective struggles and practices to create a world-wide movement for peoples' control over the resources they need and have rights to?
- How can we develop joint principles and practices of stewarding and governing natural resources among different user communities with different needs and priorities?
- How can collectively conceptualise and realise a food and agriculture system that is based on local autonomy and organisation, local markets and community action?

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## Sharing Territories and Land, Water, Fishing Rights, Aquaculture and Forest Use

Territories are faced with increasing pressure from competing uses, often leading to serious conflicts. These conflicts are not just related to the shared use of natural resources such as land, water and forests, but also to often divergent views regarding these territories.

However, in many cases these conflicts involve actors who all acknowledge the common need for the right to food sovereignty – these players will be present at the *Nyeléni Forum*. It is therefore key that during this thematic working group discussion there is a focus on the three following axes:

- Develop a better understanding of the legitimate, but often divergent expectations of the various claimants of the territories – these divergent expectations are potential sources of conflicts of interest and need to be overcome.
- Based on concrete experience, learn mechanisms of conflict resolution among claimants having conflicting usages and rights.
- Strengthen alliances among involved claimants in order to promote the use of lands and territories that respect and reinforce the right to food sovereignty.

### What are We Fighting For?

#### Concept of shared territory

*"All of the original peoples, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, tribes, fisherfolk, rural workers, peasants, the landless, nomadic pastoralists and displaced peoples, have the right to maintain their own spiritual and material relationships; to possess, develop, control, use and reconstruct their social structures; to politically and socially administer their lands and territories, including their full environment, the air, water, seas, rivers, lakes, ice floes, flora, fauna and other resources that they have traditionally possessed, occupied and/or utilized. **This implies the recognition of their laws, traditions, customs, tenure systems, and institutions, as well as the recognition of territorial borders and the cultures of peoples. This all constitutes the recognition of the self-determination and autonomy of peoples.**"*

(Declaration of the "Land, Territory and Dignity" Forum, Porto Alegre, 6-9 March 2006).

#### Questions:

- How can we develop principles for fair and equitable sharing of lands, territories, flora and fauna, and all natural resources among different user communities?
- How can we prevent the encroachment of market forces and mechanisms in the governance of lands, territories, flora and fauna, and all natural resources?

### What are we fighting against?

#### Conflicts of interest regarding 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, neoliberal policies, investment in mining and forestry, and liberalisation of land markets all contribute to aggravating existing tensions.

Even if we share a common vision on the right to food sovereignty and on sustainable management of natural resources and territories, we are nonetheless faced with divergent interests or usages that are legitimate, but that can lead to conflicts between:

- pastoralists and peasants regarding access to land use and the right of passage for cattle;
- fishers and peasants on water access and use, and on modes of production;
- indigenous peoples and peasants looking for new agricultural land;
- peasants and the expansion of suburban areas;
- farmers and environmentalists regarding land use and modes of production;
- men and women having often unequal rights in terms of access to natural resources;
- and generally, between social groups that can potentially benefit from the establishment of private rights on land and other resources.

**Questions:**

- How can we come up with principles and practices for resolving conflicts that arise between different user communities?
- How can we resist the manipulation of different user communities by governments, corporations and other private actors who seek to gain control over communal territories and natural resources?

**What can we do about it?**

Conflicts related to access to and control of territories and natural resources are increasing. Arbitrage of conflicts therefore becomes inevitable, and new types of conflicts emerge. It is necessary to build alliances and new forms of solidarity. Access to territories, land, water and forests is one of the building foundations of social justice and solidarity, also with respect to future generations.

*“... 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.”*  
(Declaration of the "Land, Territory and Dignity" Forum, Porto Alegre, 6-9 March 2006).

It is therefore imperative to develop a system of regulation (at the local, regional and global level) for territories, land, water and forests: rules that regulate access, use, bestowed rights and the responsibilities implied. This is necessary in order to establish a system of conflict management that is not only efficient, but also legitimate and commonly accepted.

**Questions:**

- How can the legitimate interests of different claimants be best considered and honoured?
- What are successful experiences of conflict management related to territories, land, water and forests?
- How can social movements improve the dialogue among claimants and prevent conflicts? What are indispensable mechanisms of common conflict management?
- What strategies need to be developed in order to involve players of social movements in defining and implementing structural mechanisms of conflict management on territories, all the while respecting diverging legitimate claims as well as the right to food sovereignty?
- How can the various claimants of natural resources move from a common political vision to the construction of common concrete battles (within the context of food sovereignty - at the local, regional and global level)?



## **Conflicts and Disasters: How does the Food Sovereignty Movement Respond at Local and International Levels?**

### **CONTEXT**

As global warming, political turmoil and scarcity of natural resources increase, we foresee that conflicts and disasters, will unfortunately only multiply worldwide. Therefore the discussion on how they impact on us and how we respond is an important one for the food sovereignty movement but one which has received relatively little attention till now. Many disasters are not 'natural', although they are triggered by climatic or seismic events beyond our control. The disastrous effects of these events result from human activity, such as deforestation, mangrove clearance, fossil fuel burning, sub-standard building construction, and most impact more on poor people who suffer more severely from, for example, the effects of floods, earthquakes, hurricanes.

Conflicts, wars, occupations and disasters all have a similar and complex relationship with food sovereignty. We have seen cases where a lack of food sovereignty has led to conflicts and human-induced 'natural' disasters. On the other hand, the struggle for control over natural resources is at the root of many conflicts, both local and international. The typical response of donors and governments to "support" communities affected by war or natural disaster, such as delivering food aid, in itself further attacks their food sovereignty. Wars and disasters are increasingly being used as opportunities to grab the territories, markets and natural resources of people who are forced to abandon their lands and live as refugees. Wars also contaminate agricultural and forest lands and water bodies and make food production extremely risky for communities. "Reconstruction" projects following conflicts/wars and disasters often alienate affected communities from lands and other productive resources.

It is important that we examine cases of how a food sovereignty approach has contributed to strengthening communities against the impacts of conflicts and disasters. By examining successful cases of local emergency planning, and disaster preparedness and response, we can try to identify the "elements" of success. Equally important is a critical assessment of food aid so that we can start to uncover the intricate links between politics and hunger. And finally, we must examine how successful our attempts at international solidarity, in the face of conflicts, wars and disasters, have been so far and how they can be strengthened.

### **What are we fighting for?**

- Does food sovereignty have any real relevance for communities suffering from conflict or disasters? Is the food sovereignty movement only useful for mobilising international solidarity, or are there practical ways in which the movement has been, or could be, useful in situations of conflicts and disasters?
- What does food sovereignty imply for children, youth and women who are the most exposed to the ravages of these conflicts as their links to the land are much closer than that of the often more mobile men?
- How can we describe the positive examples of responding to disasters and conflict that serve to strengthen food sovereignty, build resilience and the movements?

### **What are we fighting against?**

- Food aid has been a veritable tool for environmental degradation and stunting of national efforts at local food production and food sovereignty.
- How can we stop unnecessary food aid and other destructive forms of international assistance, which are not just brought to us by international organisations and governments, but also by NGOs.

## *THEMATIC WORKING GROUP 5 – DISCUSSION GUIDANCE NOTE*

- How can we resist the take-over of lands and other resources in post conflict and disaster “reconstruction” programmes?

### **What can we do about it?**

- What positive examples of international solidarity missions and campaigns throughout the world can support the case for food sovereignty?
- What common campaigns and initiatives can we build to support communities affected by conflicts, wars and disasters that are based on the principles of food sovereignty?
- How can we make a collective demand and campaign for food sovereignty to be at the heart of all post conflict/war and disaster reconstruction programmes?

## Social Conditions and Forced Migration

### CONTEXT

The liberalisation of international agricultural trade, the forced opening of national markets, the lowering of customs duties, the introduction of importation quotas imposed by the World Trade Organization (WTO)... all of this has exacerbated the economic crisis affecting the rural zones of our planet. The increased competition between producers has resulted in a general lowering of prices for agricultural produce, sometimes to unsustainable levels below production costs, which in turn has sped up the rural exodus towards the cities, as farmers cannot make a living off the land anymore. The rural infrastructure, social services, health, education, culture are then downgraded, most of the funds being set aside for the needs of the urban population, where services can be sold off to private corporations. Steadily the gap between rural areas and urban areas widens.

At first, the migration process is internal, as people leave the rural areas or the poorer regions to try to make a living in the city. They settle in slums that quickly create a belt of poverty around the cities. Frightened by the hungry masses at their doors, governments apply short-term solutions and try to provide daily food rations at affordable prices. To keep the price of basic commodities low, they subsidise food imports from Northern countries or entrust their fate to multinationals, such as Cargill, which, in some cases, end up controlling up to 50% of the food supply chain in some countries. This, in turn, creates a vicious circle. Rural migration results in high rates of unemployment, which in turn exacerbates wage competition between workers and employees, and opens the door to delocalisation, blackmail and attacks on all forms of collective organisation like labour unions.

Most of the time, rural exodus towards the cities is only the first stage of the migration process. Poor living conditions and hunger push the migrants towards distant horizons. They also result in migratory flows within a continent and between continents.

The well being of economic refugees continues to deteriorate. First, border smugglers subject them to inhuman conditions and/or rob them. Then, they face police and armed forces in the countries to which they cross. The number of migrants who die while trying to reach economic safety is staggering and has reached alarming levels. But that does not stop the ever-growing tide of emigration. Is there a more damning proof of the evils of neo-liberal policies?

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that over 200 million migrants live under very harsh economic, social and cultural conditions in their country of destination, in the hopes of earning enough money to send back to their home country and families they left behind. This migration to the North deprives many countries of a dynamic and young workforce. The growing "brain drain" towards the Northern countries removes an educated workforce and holders of essential skills, thus further weakening the economies of countries in the Global South. Migration also has a major impact on the relationship between men and women, often increasing the precariousness of women's economic conditions.

The consequences of growing rural migration, be it internal or across national borders are not only economic. When women and men leave their families and their communities to try to make a living elsewhere, the entire rural society suffers. It brings changes to food consumption, steadily erasing local knowledge, indigenous expertise and local cultural identities.

The money sent each year by the migrants to their families and to their communities becomes vital to the economic survival of the women, the men and the children left behind, creating a new form of dependency.

**What are we fighting for?**

We are fighting for fair market prices for food producers (fishers, pastoralists and farmers) allowing them to earn their livelihoods. We affirm that the poor urban populations have a right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and food-producing resources. If necessary, subsidies must be established in cooperation with urban organisations and movements so that the increase of market prices for food does not have a negative impact on the standard of living of the urban poor. Funding for social services, health, education and culture needs to be balanced between the needs of the urban and rural populations. The rural infrastructure must be developed in order to decrease the economic and overall vulnerability of the people living in rural areas.

***Questions:***

- What examples are there of concrete initiatives that have stemmed the tide of forced migration?
- How can we ensure the Right to Food for poor urban populations?
- How can we develop convergent agendas with migrants working in the food and agricultural sectors?

**What are we fighting against?**

Forced migration is a direct consequence of the neo-liberal policies dictated by the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. We fight against criminalisation of migrants, as they are the first victims of the "development schemes" of these organisations, which only see the world in terms of economy and commoditisation. We fight against the logic that reduces citizens to a cheap labour force and considers food as a 'cheap' commodity that will feed urban populations, maintained in hunger and poverty by neo-liberal policies, at the expense of rural areas.

***Questions:***

- How can we, together with the labour unions and the migrant workers' organisations, strengthen our common struggle and challenge the policies of cheap labour enacted by private companies and by governments?
- How can we be more effective in our struggle against repression of migrants by private companies and by governments?

**What can we do about this?**

- How can we establish a common political agenda based on joint struggles and solidarity initiatives between migrants/urban populations and people from rural areas? How can we take these common struggles to local, regional and global levels?
- What concrete steps can we undertake to support migrant workers' organisations, especially those working in the food and agricultural sector?

## **Production Models: impacts on food sovereignty, people, livelihoods and environment**

There are two conflicting rural development and production models:

- 1. Industrial agribusinesses, fisheries and aquaculture** produce food ingredients in monocultures for global markets controlled by few TNCs. They are supported by public and private research institutions and promoted for 'food security' yet, they harm small-scale farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk and indigenous peoples. And they damage the environment – soils, water, agroecosystems and our planet's biodiversity and life support systems. They are a major contributor to the current global water crisis and Global Warming through intensive use of fossil fuels for fertilisers, agrochemicals, production, transport, processing, refrigeration and retailing: each unit of food energy produced requires many times more fossil fuel energy inputs. Corporate controlled industrial production is capital intensive, is protected by patents and trade rules. This enables corporations to capture and control markets for inputs ((GE) seeds, livestock breeds, water, fertilizers) and products (food, animal feed, biofuels, fibre and industrial commodities), to capture ecosystems and overexploit and degrade natural resources resulting in soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, desertification, water depletion and contamination and polluted seas, the costs of which are never included in the price paid. This approach seeks to control and transform nature rather than work within its parameters.
- 2. Agroecological production, pastoralism and artisanal fisheries** are diverse and multifunctional producing many goods (food, clothing, housing materials, as well as goods for exchange and sale) and providing ecosystem functions (clean water, healthy soils) needed by local communities. They are highly productive in terms of area, inputs and energy. These methods of production and harvesting are people-centred with both women and men having decisive roles. They are knowledge-intensive and maintain livelihoods. They depend on and provide locally-developed plant varieties and livestock breeds that are adapted to local climatic conditions – such as drought resistant seed varieties, crops that grow in wetlands and flood plains, disease-resistant livestock etc. They are not dependent on agrochemicals. They sustain agroecosystems – they work with and not against the environment and, as a result, productivity is higher. These approaches do not seek to transform nature, but instead, they develop synergies with nature creating space for local experimentation and building the store of knowledge that can be shared, without high costs. They are resilient in the face of climate change and other threats and they are not 'carbon hungry', not dependent on fossil fuels: for every unit of energy input, up to 10 times as much food energy is produced. Small-scale agroecological production methods and artisanal fishing practices cannot be appropriated or 'owned' by an individual. They enable localised control over food systems i.e. food sovereignty.

### **What are we fighting for?**

- How can we promote the use of locally-controlled, diverse, small-scale agroecological production methods and artisanal fisheries in all regions of the world?
- How do we ensure that local agroecologically produced food is available locally as so much food is exported while local producers often do not have enough to eat?.
- How will the next generation adopt these production and harvesting methods?
- Most small scale food production, pastoralism and fisheries methods are ecologically sustainable, but not all. If some people decide to produce in an unsustainable way, what implications does that have for their claim to food sovereignty, for their role in the food sovereignty movement, and for the movement as a whole? Who should have the power to make them change production methods if it affects the food sovereignty of others?

## *THEMATIC WORKING GROUP 7 – DISCUSSION GUIDANCE NOTE*

- Should production be based only on local resources or on resources that are “within the control of” local producers? What is an acceptable ‘footprint’ for food sovereignty systems? If, for example, farmers in rich countries import sustainably produced animal feed from poorer countries to produce milk, eggs or meat, can this contribute to food sovereignty?
- Some international food and environment agreements, which support these changes, have been signed by many governments. How can we ensure these are implemented?

### **What are we fighting against?**

- How can we push for dismantling agribusiness corporations and the conversion of industrial production to agroecological systems, the protection of pastoral grazing areas and the outlawing of destructive fishing practices?
- Given the combined impacts of climate change and reducing oil stocks, how can we use the fight against Global Warming and water privatisation as opportunities to force changes in eating habits and production and harvesting methods?
- How can we challenge the race to produce biofuels for the affluent rather than food for people?

### **What can we do about it?**

- How do we develop a common, collective understanding of food sovereignty based on agroecological sustainable production, distribution and consumption?
- So-called ‘cheap food’ policies, that are fuelling unsustainable industrial agribusiness production, are at the heart of the present crisis. How can we unite producers (peasants, family farmers, pastoralists, food and farm workers, artisanal fisher peoples, indigenous peoples) and urban consumers to fight these policies and guarantee affordable, healthy, diverse and environmentally sustainable food for everyone including people in cities and especially the hungry? Would a campaign against industrial monocultures (e.g. Eucalyptus, Soya, Biofuels etc.) and industrial fisheries and aquaculture controlled by TNCs be a priority joint action agenda?
- How can we make common cause with all citizens worried about the future of the planet and future generations and concerned about their health, the quality of food and the need for careful management of local and the global environment, including the impacts of global warming? How can we enrol them in the fight for food sovereignty?