



FIMARC DECLARATION

Agricultural Investments

We the leaders of FIMARC (International Federation of Adult Catholic Rural Movements) from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe gathered in Assesse, Belgium from 25-27th of April 2012 for the "FIMARC FORMATION SESSION ON « INVESTMENTS IN AGRICULTURE » -CHALLENGES & IMPACTS! ANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL SCALE FARMERS? declare that

Small-scale farming is the dominant most important form of food production which provides seed multiplication and preservation of traditional crops organically world-wide. 85% of the food grown is consumed within the same local environment or within national borders. Small-scale food producers: peasants, fisher folk, pastoralists, women and indigenous people do play a very big role in increasing farm productivity and yield in an ecologically sustainable and culturally appropriate way and feeding over 70 % of the world population.

Small scale farming also contributes to the social, economic and environmental advantages such as creating employment, maintaining good cultural practices, sustainable rural development and preserving ecosystems. By far the largest part of the investment in agriculture in terms of capital and knowledge is made by small-scale food producers themselves.

Corporate investment has alienated millions of small scale producers from their own land, other productive resources there by generating human rights violations in many countries through the expansion of agrofuel production, mono cultivation. Private investors in agriculture comprise a vast and diverse range of actors from companies involved in agricultural production, processing as well as investment funds that seek opportunities to invest in land and other assets.

On going trends by agri-TNCs is directly controlling the farming system leading to an increasing vertical integration of the food supply chain trapping farmers in debt and poverty even through contract farming.

Some governments are trying to meet their food security requirements by acquiring agricultural lands and productive capacities abroad and supporting agricultural investments by their home corporations. In many countries governments are making long term leases with other countries and large scale private investors as a result farmers are losing control over land, natural resources, market share making life a struggle in rural areas. Hence Human and social investment is crucial to ensure a quality life for small scale farmers

Eighty percent of the world's vulnerable people live in rural areas. Rising and increasingly volatile food prices in recent years and the climate crisis have increased poverty, displacement, hunger and

malnourishment. Due to the fact that only a small proportion of the national budgets in developing countries and development aid is allocated to agriculture and rural development.

The negative impacts (economic, social, gender and environmental) cause by large-scale plantations, multinationals violating the rights of the small scale producers have not been considered in existing Agricultural policies in many countries.

Small-scale food producers need policies that support their production and protect it from a take-over by the corporate sector. Increased public agricultural investments, therefore, should aim at ending hunger, ensuring the right to food, enhancing the sustainable food production capacity of smallholder food producers and creating decent conditions for agricultural workers. Investments must prioritize strengthening local food systems and agro ecological smallholder food production - with special attention to women and young people.

Proposals /Positions

Food and agricultural investment policies should be based on food sovereignty that will strengthen local, sustainable domestic food systems realise the right to food and increase food security.

Agricultural policies, public investment and services should strengthen and support small-scale, sustainable food production, to increase the resilience of local food systems hence reinforcing local and national food markets.

National policies should enable and support investments by the small-scale food producers with special attention to women food producers and young people.

Public investments and policies should focus on (notably local and participatory) supporting production models that minimize negative environmental impacts, contribute to restoring ecosystems, and promote resilience to climate change.

Put in place effective mechanism to allow the inclusive participation of small scale farmers and rural people in the design of investment policies and programmes concerning agriculture, food value chains and rural development

We call to stop all the large scale investments which promotes land grabbing and alienating the local population from their access and right to natural resources and rural livelihoods

We call to ensure adequate price and market policies to generate revenues for the small holders to enable them to access to productive resources as well as to connect them to local and national markets by reinforcing their power within value chains.

Public investment should support small-scale food producer-led research considering their real needs; strengthening the existing knowledge systems that are essential for innovation; increase local capacity to conserve food producing ecological, genetic resources on-farm land and in water bodies since natural resources are destined for the common good.

Governments should devote an adequate percentage of the national budget to supporting sustainable, small-scale food production, public research, and genuine agrarian reform, processing and marketing in the framework of food sovereignty.

An evaluation and monitoring mechanism is needed to measure the impact of corporate investments and

to forestall the risks that they entail. The monitoring mechanism should also analyse the directions in which both public and private investments are being channelled in order to introduce corrective action where needed.

Promote an autonomous smallholder food production sector which contributes not only food production but also food security, employment creation, environmental protection, social security and poverty reduction.

We recognize that sustainable agriculture adopting agroecological approach is essential in order to increase resilience and combat climate change

We call the State to go beyond providing infrastructure and information but ensuring access to resources and regulating local/national/regional markets.

We call upon the governments (EU/USA) to abolish the targets on agrofuels, and the removal of subsidies and tariffs on agrofuel production and processing, given the major role played by agrofuels expansion in accelerating investments on land.

We call for the immediate implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on land tenure and natural resources in order to protect the land right of local population from the invaders.

States and public authorities should invest in peasant farming in the framework of a real genuine partnership with farmers' organizations.

We call upon all UN member states to stand up and assume their role as defenders of the human rights of their citizens and stop institutions involved in encroachment of land and defend the rights of the small scale farmers against the corporations involved in agro industry as a mere speculative business.

Conclusion /Actions and commitments

Implementation of human rights and food Sovereignty is key to resist Neoliberalism, to increase relocalisation, and to guarantee the right to food.

Food sovereignty should be promoted as both a tool and a way to enable peasant farming, ensure the livelihoods of the farmers and to feed Human kind and claim the farmers' rights.

The main use of land is to enable small scale farmers to feed Human kind; "Food is not a commodity, but nourishment for all" and therefore we refuse Agrofuels that divert food to energy production, GMO's that create a dependency of the farmers on Transnational corporations, chemical products that poison the people, land, water and environment.

Our work aims at enabling the farmers to control the natural resources, the production, the processing and the trading of their products. We want to help the small-scale farmers fulfil their practical needs (to eat and have a better life), symbolic needs (to find and give meaning to what we do as farmers), and strategic needs (to create networks and alliances).

We should strengthen the different kinds of farmers' organizations by involving women and men of the peasant's community in all their operating mechanism to create, develop a social and political democracy.

We should promote education as well as technical and social training for all.

We continue to work within networks and alliances with civil society organizations that share our goals at the local, national, regional and international level.

As leaders of rural people's and farmers organisations affiliated to FIMARC, we would like to register our solidarity with all other organizations that defend the rights of the small scale farmers against invasion by multinationals and their cohorts.

ASSESE, 27 April 2012

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