



FINAL DECLARATION OF THE FIMARC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Alternatives to re-think development

The members of the FIMARC Executive Committee gathered from 25th to 29th April 2013 in ASSESSE (Belgium). Topic of the working session: “Rethinking development in times of multiple global crises; solutions and alternatives”. These training days were also had an objective to elaborate the future theme of the next World Assembly that will take place in May 2014 in Germany and will mark FIMARC’s 50th anniversary. Resource people intervned and proposed alternative paths to foster a more human kind of development.

In all continents, the neo-liberal economy, which aims at profit at any cost for a minority (commoditization of agriculture), endangers the future of rural life; consequences: individualism, migrations of the young people towards the exterior of their countries and continents, consumerism, imposed foreign life styles , lack of infrastructures. For a better future of rural people, it is necessary to organise ourselves collectively, to create alliances between producers and consumers and get fair prices for the products.

The corruption of many leaders undermines societies and maintains dictatorships. Rural life, unknown to most of the politicians who all have urban backgrounds, is never valued nor supported. States themselves sell their lands to multinational companies from China, India, etc., who come to produce industrial crops that are unknown to the farmers on a large scale (land-grabbing). The economy of certain countries imposed by the International Financial Institutions does not allow them more to assure the fundamental rights, such as food, health or education.

We have to make sure that the external aid (States, NGOs...) are not highjacked; we must also support civil societies, who are the only ones capable of implementing another governance.

Due to the very low price of farming products, farmers borrow money to buy the inputs. They cannot reimburse and are therefore forced to sell their lands and sometimes commit suicide. This triggers a rural exodus towards slums. Let’s raise farmers’ awareness and train them on the positive aspects of the cooperative system.

In Europe, there is no longer one rural world but several rural worlds instead, both in isolated areas and in urban periphery. We have to take into account these new sociological data in order to establish new links between urban and rural areas. At the agricultural level, the trend is that farms should be bigger and bigger, whatever the consequences.

Let’s support peasants’ farming, which can better strengthen the relationships between producers and consumers.

Some alternatives for the future

1) To meet now the challenges of rural life:

- We need to strongly assert the expression of our rural identity through our values of solidarity and our relational values.
- We need to take into account the youth, women in all the political choice we make in our territories, education and training, hobbies, sports...
- Let's act to do to respect, defend and promote the rights of the peasants (in Latin America, 40% of the agricultural workers are women).
- We need to take part actively in the development of proximity collective services to meet the requirements of rural populations: health, transports, cultural activities...
- We need to develop food sovereignty in our rural communities focusing on a locally-based type of agriculture.

2) In order to meet, now, the challenges of agriculture to provide enough quality food for all:

- We need to assert strongly the main mission of agriculture, which is to feed human beings.
- We need to defend the rights of farmers to access natural resources: land, water, seeds...
- We need to foster sustainable agro-ecological production systems which protect the human health, the identity of our communities, environment and biodiversity and create jobs.
- We need to strengthen proximity food systems: local markets, short distribution chains such as AMAPS (Associations for the preservation of peasant farming), in France and Direct Marketing system of CCFM in South Korea etc.

Our hope is in our hands: our concrete knowledge to create real alternatives for another kind of development, our human resources and our community values.

The Executive Committee of the FIMARC.
Assesse, April 29th, 2013.