

FIMARC: International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements

The right to food: time to act

This year, the FIMARC has the pleasure to join all the groups, associations, countries and international organizations that will celebrate the World Food Day next 16th October. This year, the theme selected is particularly important to us, since it is one of our first demands, i.e. the right to food.

The right to food is a universal right. Every person – man, woman and child – must have access at all time to the food they need, diversified and of good quality, to meet their dietary needs, food with no harmful substances and culturally acceptable, or must have the means to buy it.

Even if we do not deny the progress made in the fight against poverty and hunger in the world, we cannot accept the fact that today, 59 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed, 854 million people are still suffering from hunger.

How could things be different considering the policies developed by international organizations such as the WTO and the IMF? All the negotiations carried out all around the world in the framework of the Economic Partnership Agreements, Free Trade Agreements... go against people's right to food, which cannot be isolated from the other rights. Since the Uruguay Round in 1994, many countries have seen their local markets totally destabilized and the possibility to feed the local populations almost disappeared. The example of South Korea is significant with its food self-sufficiency rate that went from 80.5% in 1970 to 25% today and, should the free trade agreements be signed between the European Union and this country, this rate would go down to 2.7% in a close future.

It is difficult to resist the globalization steamroller. Global warming, the increase in the oil price and the desire to develop agrofuels from foodstuffs could make the little sovereignty that countries have disappear.

It is time we acted, it is time we claimed clear and loud the right to food and its realization in the framework of people's food sovereignty. It is time we claimed this right, we insisted on it and understood that we will not limit ourselves to the access to food and forget about the things that are missing. Our dignity as people, our culture and health depend on it.

The realization of the right to food is mainly the responsibility of States. They must take measures to ensure a total implementation of the right to food adapted to all. States must respect the existing right that people have to have access to the food they need and not take measures that could prevent some people from having this access. They must protect the right to food from those people who could hinder it, making sure that companies or individuals do not prevent people from having access to adequate food. The might of law must face the might of the strongest. The answer must come from the legal and political worlds.

Since we are convinced of the eminent dignity of all human beings and since we have always been concerned about the total realization, all around the world, of rural people's fundamental rights, the FIMARC and its movements are committed to this struggle, since the history of mankind teaches us that we have to fight for getting rights but that we have to fight for their implementation as well.

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FIMARC, 15 rue Jaumain 5330 ASSESSE - Belgique fimarc@skynet.be