

# VOICE OF THE RURAL WORLD

2014/02 N°114



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the member movements belonging or not to the Federation

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Dear Readers of VMR

*Greetings from International Secretariat!*

FIMARC World Assembly as well as the celebration of 50 years of our existence took place in Volkersberg, Germany. The global conference, Field Visits, Dialogue forums, panel debates etc. deeply reflected on Global multiple crises and new paths of alternative development. The main article will give you more details about the major priority topics that was discussed during our meeting in Germany.

Foundation of FIMARC 50 years ago was a response to the aspirations of the rural and farmers' movements in different countries to come together as people of similar interests, to exchange their reflections and actions. In a sense, the past 50 years was also about building rural capacities on the most fundamental challenge of our time — sustainability of development and life itself. FIMARC has been struggling against hunger and for the eradication of poverty ever since it was founded. Today FIMARC fellowship has spread over 60 countries in five Continents and has brought together the respective rural and farmer's movements at National - Regional - Continental - Global levels. FIMARC will continue to be remembered for its rootedness in the community, in the rural villages, and local environments. We will strive to maintain such rootedness while aiming to make a difference on the big picture

The World Assembly gathers every 4 years in order to establish the working lines and to elect the responsible people

The World conference also debated the topic on family farming and rights of farmers and other people working in rural areas and adapted a strategic planning in this regard. The final resolution of the World Assembly, which you can find in this edition, call for an alternative development, which includes our cultures, values and spiritual being, and is based on solidarity. Our vision, based on human dignity, equality of opportunity, and the realization of human rights. FIMARC believe in lifestyles of living simply, in community, and aspects of well-being. We want to promote Alternative models include degrowth, buen vivir, transition economy, agro ecology, sustainable family farming etc. and to give priority to local, socially oriented, small-scale models and actors. We look forward for more articulation between cities and countryside

In the upcoming editions of VMR, you will receive more details about the action plan of FIMARC in various levels. I take this opportunity to thank all those who helped

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me to carry out my mission as the Secretary General of FIMARC for the last 4 years, most especially the past Bureau members Kihwan Chung (President), Nieves Martines Bravo (Treasurer), Fr. Pascuale Kinoti (Chaplain) and all other Exco members. I also would like to congratulate the newly elected Bureau and Exco members of FIMARC. You can also find a letter from Wolfgang Scharl, the newly elected President of FIMARC in this edition.

The world we live in is in deep trouble.” And things will not change with the heroic action of a few do-gooders. We need to hang on together, draw inspiration from each other’s ideas and energies as we strive to make a difference. It is still a long way to go from here. A world that is free of poverty and exclusion, a world that is more safe, more fair, more caring, more peaceful is still far out in the horizon. But it will come one day if people work together and try hard enough to build it. This was indeed the feeling and aspiration that was raised during the World meeting in Germany.

We have celebrated 50 years and now it is time to move ahead with more courage, strength and energy .In closing, let me share with you this motto of the Australian Commission for the Future. “The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating; the paths to it are not found but made; and the making of those pathways changes both the maker and the destination.”

Let us proclaim the slogan of our World Assembly in all our actions in the filed “Democracy, autonomy and dignity for all”.

Enjoy your reading

George Dixon Fernandez  
Secretary General



*New Exco of FIMARC*



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## MESSAGE FROM FIMARC PRESIDENT

I want to thank all the member movements for having confidence in my person and having elected me as President of FIMARC. I live in Germany and work as theologian and pedagogue for the Diocese of Würzburg. I am responsible for accompanying the Catholic Rural People's Movement (KLB) and also for counseling farmer families with familial, psychological or financial problems. Since 2002 I am voluntarily representing KLB Germany in FIMARC. From 2002 to 2010, I was once a member of FIMARC executive committee.



Priorities for my term as FIMARC president :

- To maintain good contacts to the member and contact movements as well as to the FIMARC responsables on national and continental level. For me it is also very important, to have good contacts to networks and different committees, with whom we are connected. Many movements and organisations are committed to a fairer economic system and a more human world. We have to network and raise our voices against injustice. And we must continue our common efforts, to be well heard and taken seriously in the various international bodies.
- To struggle - together with the other members of the executive committee and with all FIMARC movements - for the objectives we have formulated in the final resolution and the action plan of the world assembly 2014. There we have committed ourselves, at this time of global crisis and misery, to campaign for an alternative worldwide development, which leads to more dignity, autonomy and democracy for all. Therefore we want to promote for instance peasant family farming, regional eco-

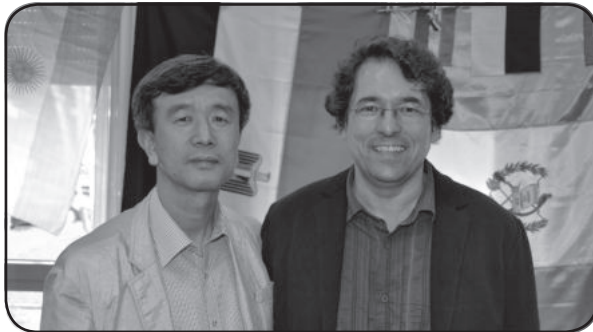
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conomic cycles and alternative rural development projects. We want to raise our voices against land grabbing and exploitation of farmers and the rural population. Many countries are in dire need of an effective land reform. We want to campaign that the UN Human Rights Council takes up the farmers' rights on access to land and natural resources into the list of basic human rights. I am glad that with our requests and concerns we are in accordance with Pope Francis, who calls for a new fraternal humanity, instead of the current unjust system of indifference and inhumanity all over the world.

- To work, together with my fellows in buero and executive committee, for a continued secure funding of FIMARC. We essentially need sufficient finances for the necessary staffing, as well as for the realisation of meetings and events and for all our important work.

I am looking forward to work together with the secretary general George, the treasurer Jean Claude, the international chaplain Father Pascuale, the members of the executive committee and with all movements. I ask all members and friends of FIMARC to support me in my work as president. And I ask you to pray for me, for FIMARC and for the dignity of all people all over the world.

Wolfgang Scharl  
President of FIMARC



*Kihwan Chung (Outgoing president of FIMARC ) and  
Wolfgang Scharl (New president of FIMARC)*



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## RESOLUTION

### FIMARC WORLD ASSEMBLY – VOLKERSBERG - GERMANY MAY 2014

We, the member movements of FIMARC coming from 33 countries and representing rural communities, gathered on 15th to 28th May 2014 in Volkersberg, Germany, at a moment of global crisis which is turning nowadays into a general crisis of food, finance and the climate, pushing more and more people into poverty and sufferings, leading to a moral crisis. We strongly denounce the multinational companies who are invading and controlling our lives, our food baskets and even our ways of thinking. We are also denouncing them as the main actors responsible for this crisis while they are favoring the development of the agro-business with the complicity of the world financial system.

And when people denounce violations of their rights, they run a risk of being criminalized....This so-called “development” promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund creates an atmosphere of terror and social injustice that in many countries is leading to war, forced migrations and suicides.

The main topic of the World Assembly was “At this time of global crisis, opening the paths of an alternative development; democracy, autonomy, and dignity for all”. With these objectives we reaffirm our will to build a society living in peace, in a fair redistribution of the richness, in the respect of the creation and for the food sovereignty. This is the base of our faith, the hope that we want to share with all - Christian and other - religions, and to all people of good will.

During the three days of exposure visits in Belgium, France and Germany, the delegates had the chance to experience different situations related to sustainable family farming and the development of rural areas. They saw how the life of the farmers can be also difficult for the farmers in those developed countries, in spite of the high mechanization, and the support of the EU through the Common Agricultural Policy. The right to food is a fundamental human right. But nowadays in many places, even in developed countries, it is more and more violated due to the intervention of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank through their neo-liberal policies.

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For us being the movement of rural people and farmer's, it is not all acceptable that the food products are used for fuel instead of human nutrition. The multinational companies are grabbing more and more land all over the world for their profit. All such grabbing is an organized act but done in silence or even with the complicity of the governments. This land grabbing is a scandal for rural people and farmers and we strongly denouncing those practices.

The movements of FIMARC want to advocate for a life in dignity, in autonomy, peace and democracy. When we speak of dignity, it means that we claim to have a fair income from our work, good living conditions allowing our families to stand on their feet, our children to study, our mothers to benefit from social services. When we speak of autonomy, we refuse to remain under the control of the multinational corporations who are controlling our seeds, grabbing our land water, minerals and all other natural resources, and even dictating what we have to consume. When we speak about democracy, this means that we want to be the protagonists of the decision-making process, especially when it is related our lives, our farms and our communities.

During the last four years, our movements in FIMARC have worked a lot on the concept of DECREASE, declaring that LESS IS MORE. We have to go further with this concept and seriously reflect on alternative projects that will develop into alternative models for a better life for all. For viable alternatives we need to develop our own creativity, to invent new paths and models. The current model of development is coming to an end. It has nearly consumed all natural resources, water and biodiversity. We want to get out of the consumerist culture and invent new ways of consuming, and marketing. We call for simplicity – with respect for nature and of the environment.

A lot of projects already exist, for example, family farming, direct marketing, agro-ecology, local money, alternative health practices, traditional knowledge and education, seed banks... We are really supporting these kind of alternatives, which provides jobs to a good number of people in the sector of the solidarity economy. It is fair enough to think of sharing the resources in a just way. Big majority of people are suffering every day when a small number of persons are benefiting from huge money. We movements gathered in FIMARC want to re-define the term of brother- and sisterhood for a dignified life for all. This is simply a question of justice.





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Solidarity is the opposite of competition. We want our people, our communities, and our movements to strengthen their links, to build a new mutual confidence, to build fair relationship also with our representatives, in the church and at the political levels.

Concretely we have to reinforce our solidarity, not only between farmers, but also between farmers and consumers, between rural and urban areas. We have to strengthen our efforts to maintain our villages alive, providing our inhabitants and children with the same services as in the cities.

This is why we call for

- A genuine agrarian reform
- The establishment of clear rules for the decision-making processes
- The participation of all stakeholders when it comes to new projects
- The support of the governments as far as Farmers' Rights are concerned

At the end of this 14th FIMARC Assembly, at the moment we are celebrating our 50th anniversary, we reaffirm our commitment as a lay Catholic movement for the development in solidarity for the rural world and its inhabitants, farmers, fisher folk, indigenous people and all marginalized sectors of the society . We commit ourselves to work on the UN draft declaration on Farmers Rights. We commit ourselves to work in our respective countries for autonomy, dignity and democracy.

In this year of our Golden Jubilee, the UN has taken the decision to declare the year 2014 as year of Family Farming. FIMARC is happy with this decision but we want to define family farming from our experiences, our needs and our will for justice and fair redistribution. We call on our partners, our political representatives, our church and other religious leaders to appeal to the international authorities to make family farming one of the millennium goals for development 2015. Furthermore we strongly appeal to our governments and church authorities to support this statement and we commit ourselves to build a new society allowing all people to live in dignity, in autonomy, in peace and love.

Volkersberg  
27/05/2014

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# FIMARC World Assembly 2014

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AT THIS TIME OF GLOBAL CRISIS, OPEN THE PATHS OF AN ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:  
DEMOCRACY, AUTONOMY AND DIGNITY FOR ALL

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*The world meeting of the FIMARC took place from 15 to 30 May, 2014. In these pages, we will try to give you an overview of the different steps and conclusions of this meeting.*

## **Step 1: Join the World Meeting**

The world meeting took place this year in Volkensberg in Germany. For several years now, this meeting is organized every four years in rotating among 4 continents. After Benin, South Korea and the Paraguay, it is Europe that was having this honor and took charge of organizing logistics to accommodate seventy delegates for 15 days. To host means not only accommodation and food but before the arrival of the participants even, the entire procedure of letters of invitation, many requests for the dossiers and visa records, ... This also means to arrange the logistic to welcome the delegates at the airport at all hours, day and night, even with the delayed flights. All this work has been ensured, always in a friendly way and warm welcome by our friends and colleagues from the KLB. Thanks again to all of them

## **Step 2 : The Pleasure of the Meeting**

The arrival of delegates is spread over a few days. When we arrive with George, the general Secretary, quite a lot of delegates were already arrived. What a pleasure to meet again “old” friends, Nicholas from India, Irénée from Burkina, Sophie from Kenya, Manuel, Oscar from Latin America... and meet new delegates, more shy, observing with curiosity and interest about what is happening around them. Hugs, family news, exchanges in English, Spanish, and French... we are in world meeting.

In this year 2014, the general Secretary- is able to celebrate the 50 years of the FIMARC, in support with the KLB succeeded the bet to gather for a fortnight, around 70 delegates, from 4 continents and with a significant presence of representatives from the Eastern European countries.

## **Step 3 : The International Seminar**

The theme chosen by the Executive Committee was: “At this time of global crisis, open the paths of an alternative development : democracy, autonomy, and dignity for all”.



The tone is set from the first day. Ms. Luiche, spokesman for the Civic Pact, organizations and private persons platform which aims to stimulate change and democratic quality, talks of the will of the Pact to open a conferred space to gather the energies and generate debates. There are 4 imperatives in this Pact: creativity, sobriety, justice and brotherhood. We are in the heart of our subject. To open the path to autonomy and dignity, we have to put the economy at the service of man, to fix the rules of a fair and redistributive, social contract, to build new policies with the participation of citizens and revitalize living together.

Hildegard Hagemann of Justice and Peace put the issue of human rights at the center of her speech: the right to food as a right to life, the right to a dignified wage for the work performed, the right to organize, often denied by the agri-food sector. Development and peace are intertwined. This is why it is essential to integrate thinking about social peace in the thinking of the great issues of our society, in order to define more fair and redistributive policies.



*FIMARC global training session in Germany during the World Assembly 2014*

Pierre Careil, former Treasurer of the FIMARC strengthened this analysis by offering some reflections for a search to follow still on development indicators. He advocated for relocation, a local economy which aims first to satisfy the basic needs of populations. He gave then some tracks, like for example the barter economy, recalling that barter

was the basis of the economy, monetary exchange have come until later in the history of exchanges. In this sense, he advocated for the development of the SEL (Services of local exchanges), local economies, local currencies... The challenges are for him: popular education, autonomy and values of all the know-how development and especially to find a trust capital to develop these relations of proximity.

With Thierry Wiard of ATD Quart Monde, the speech is more radical: it is not a question of reducing poverty but to eradicate it. Dignity is to participate and not to live in denial of the fundamental rights. Autonomy will be to develop new methods so that the poor and disadvantaged can participate in discussions and decisions. Thierry warns against the danger of the "human waste". The poor have things to tell us, experiences to share in what they developed to get by.

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This session was punctuated by intervention of delegates from various continents to illustrate and to reinforce these findings. Participants also met to identify the main challenges facing by the peasant and rural world. Unanimously, even in Europe, the issue of access to land remains first. In many countries land is grabbed to install large monocultures, in others, as is the case in Belgium, France and the European countries in general, it's more speculation on land, set aside to benefit from subsidies of the Common Agricultural Policy. How in this landscape, get access to land, to an environmentally friendly production, for quality food? The answer is not simple but it is much a question of mutual confidence, short circuits, cooperatives... as well as development of a work of political lobby of resistance such as against the current attempt of the transatlantic Treaty.

In terms of action, we can mention the demand of Mr. Hans Geisslhofer, geographer, and specialist in the fight against land grabbing. Mr. Geisslhofer is trying to draw up a cadaster of land already grabbed almost everywhere in the world. Often these negotiations were kept secret and the known figures are unfortunately well below reality and it would be a precious help for this work of cadaster to provide the elements in our knowledge.



*Delegates during the Exposure visit in Belgium*

#### **Step 4 : The Exposure Program**

The exposure program was the next step in the world meeting. Atmosphere of excursion... groups of 5 to 6 people were formed to reach different regions of Germany, France and Belgium. The idea of an exposure program is to meet, to share experiences, to question each other on what is life in rural areas. From

the questions and issues that arise in various realities, delegates were able to realize that everywhere the main issue is the right to land. How to live in autonomy, if from the outset, the issue of land is not solved? How to access to productive resources, how to stand, how to organize to develop viable alternatives?

All these issues were addressed in the various groups to enrich the work of the world session. But it would be incomplete to finish this little chapter on the exposure program, without stressing the pleasure of these meetings, conviviality and the desire of all to communicate a maximum to better know each other and to discover the richness of our land!



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## **Step 5: The return.. in Germany for the Rest of the World Meeting**

Later in the work of the Assembly, Gaby Falch' head of the Working Group on the human rights of FIMARC presented the ongoing work in the Group concerning the right of peasants. To talk, the FIMARC had invited Ms. Angelica Navarro, Ambassador of Bolivia. Ms. Navarro stressed the importance of the family peasantry and its contribution to food security, to the fight against climate change, for the conservation of biodiversity and the alleviation of poverty and hunger, major problems in many rural areas. This is why a work is carried out by the CETIM and other NGOs, including the FIMARC, to adopt a declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. At the present time, a draft declaration has been submitted to the States, which largely have warmly welcomed this proposal. However, it should be noted the negative attitude of developed countries, in particular European Union and United States which attempt to block this text. Ms. Navarro asked delegates of the world meeting, so they communicate all the information concerning situations of violations of their rights, through our human rights working group to continue its important work of lobbying Governments to make this Declaration on the rights of peasants successful.

## **Step 6 : The Statutory Assembly**

The world meeting always provides a statutory Assembly, a general Assembly. After the presentation of balance sheet accounts and the budget by the year 2015, the general Secretary submitted the report of the Executive Committee, summarizing the past 4 years. At the global level, much work was done, including a reinforced presence in international forums close to the United Nations bodies. On the other hand, at the level of the continents, it should be noted some weakness, due in large part to the lack of resources that has failed to develop the action plan as it was adopted during the world meeting of Paraguay. The Executive Committee in an attempt to compensate this ,proposed to the General Assembly to opt for an Executive Committee strengthened, passing a member by continent to 2 members. This proposal was passed by a large majority.

During the General Assembly, it was also the time to renew the teams. After the presentation of the candidates, the members of the General Assembly voted for candidates. The result was an Executive Committee consisting of Sophie Elisabeth Kibuywa of Kenya, Médard Meyanga of Cameroon, Modesta Arevalos from Paraguay, Manuel Moran from El Salvador, Rony Joseph from India, Philip Biswas from Bangladesh, Wolfgang Scharl from Germany, Jean Claude Germon from France,

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Pascual Kinoti, our international chaplain and George Dixon Fernandez, general Secretary. At the end of the Assembly, the Executive Committee met to elect the Bureau consisting of George Dixon Fernandez, general Secretary, Jean Claude Germon, Treasurer, Pascual Kinoti, international chaplain and Wolfgang Scharl, President.

The Executive Committee will be assisted for this work by continental coordinators responsible for implementing the action plans.

### **Step 7: 50 Years of the FIMARC**

At the end of the world meeting, after the solemn ceremony presided over by Archbishop Joseph Clemens, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity and in the presence of Bishop Friedhelm Hofmann, Bishop of Würzburg, all delegates, official guests, members of the KLB joined us to celebrate 50 years of the FIMARC. After a presentation outlining the 50 years of existence through the highlights of the life of the federation, we had the pleasure to receive the congratulations of the personalities present. All acknowledged the importance of the FIMARC work and encouraged to continue this commitment because the challenges are many. We also had the pleasure of welcoming at various times the former officials of the FIMARC, include Irénée Loyara who was President from 2002 to 2006, Gaby Falc'hun who was the first permanent of the FIMARC and general Secretary from 1974 to 1978, Joseph Pirson, general Secretary from 1986 to 1994, Léon Tillieux, general Secretary from 1994 to 1998 and Daisy Herman, general Secretary from 1998 to 2010. Include the presence among us Christophe Heradeaux representing the CCFD, long standing partner of our federation.

### **And then...**

A world a meeting is an opportunity to celebrate, ending up outside the working time, exchanging local products, to meet in a different way and discover a beautiful country. Delegates will keep an excellent souvenir of the visit of the city of Würzburg and the Volkensberg House that welcomed us. All this was made possible thanks to the magnificent organization of the KLB. Volunteers have worked hard to meet the demands of some and the others, to solve the small problems inherent in this type of organization and all this always with a smile and lots of availability. Thanks to them all and to all delegates who have for some dedicated 3 weeks of their time to bright this world meeting.



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## FIMARC NEWS

### **SOUTH ASIA RIGHT TO FOOD-SARF CONFERENCE 2014**

'General Meeting' regarding SARF Conference 2014 was held on 14 August 2014 at Chhayanaut Bhaban, Bangladesh. Philip Biswas participated in this meeting. Eminent Economist Dr. Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad Chair, Organizing Committee of SARF Conference 2014 presided over the meeting. SARF Conference 2014 will be held on 21-23 October 2014 and details of online registration can be found on Conference Website [www.southasiarighttofoodconference.org](http://www.southasiarighttofoodconference.org).

### **DIALOGUE FORUM ON ALTERNATIVES TO STRENGTHEN FAMILY FARMING AND FARMER TO FARMER EXCHANGE**

FIMARC organised a dialogue forums on Alternatives to Strengthen Family Farming during the farmer to farmer exchange programmes prior to the world conference in collaboration with KLB Germany, ACRF Belgium and CMR France to provide space for North South Dialogue on this topic with participants outside Europe.

### **ASIAN YOUTH ACADEMY (AYA)/ ASIAN THEOLOGY FORUM (ATF)**

WTI (Woori Theology Institute) Korea in association with INAG (Indian Network of Action Group and Pax Romana) organized the Asian youth academy &

Asian theological forum from 16- 27th July 2014 at Trivandrum, Kerala, India. The Theme of the Asian youth academy was "Holistic human development and ecological sustainability with focus on overtory of farmers in Asia" and the theme of the Asian theological forum was "towards spirituality-motivated development and ecological sustainability"

Around 40 young activists from various Church-based NGOs in Asia participated in the event. WTI has conducted AYA/ATF, a Pan-Asian program for young lay leaders, since 2009. WTI aims to support social transformation and to promote peace in Korea and Asia through dialogue and cooperation among religions in Korea and Asia where various religious traditions have been often witnessing and experiencing conflicts. In order to achieve this goal, WTI has focused to empower young NGO activists working for social actions such as the fields of the migrants, refugee, women, Indigenous Peoples (IPs), justice and peace, ecological crisis, and so on by having conducted training workshops on yearly basis in various countries in Asia. Following Pope Francis' the spirit of renewal, WTI as lay-centered theological institute purports to help the institutional Church renew or improve itself by providing systematic formation programs for lay leaders and Religious so that the Church could serve the world to be a better place.



*Participants of the FIMARC World Assembly 2014*

# VMR

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