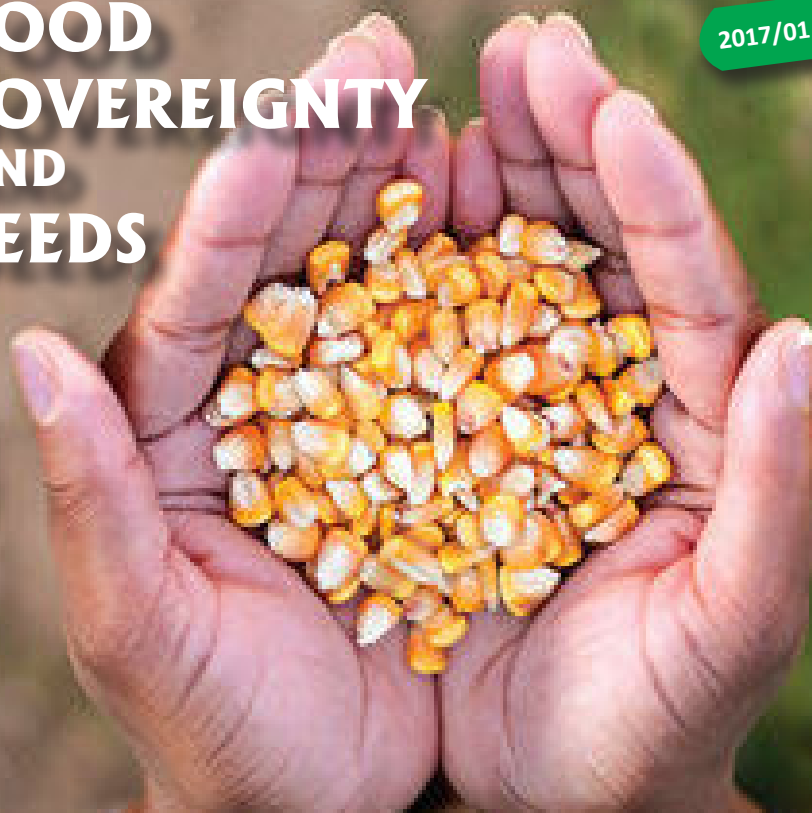


VOICE OF THE RURAL WORLD

2017/01 No.125

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND SEEDS



VOICE OF THE RURAL WORLD No.125

Chief editor:

George Dixon
FERNANDEZ

Secretariat:

FIMARC aisbl
rue Jaumain 15
5330 ASSESSE
BELGIQUE
Tél/Fax: +32-83-656236
www.fimarc.org
fimarc@skynet.be

Account number:

ING 310-0756026-94
IBAN
BE87 3100 7560 2694
BIC/SWIFT
BBRUBEBB

Lay out:

FIMARC aisbl

Photos & Design:

FIMARC aisbl
except special mention

Subscription:

15,00 €/an

Publishing:

33e année

Printing:

FIMARC aisbl

Summary

Editorial	3
Food sovereignty and Seeds	5
FIMARC News	11

Periodical published by FIMARC in four languages.
It highlights the rural world's life and activities of
the member movements belonging or not to the Federation

© FIMARC



Dear Readers,

Greetings from International Secretariat!

This edition of VMR is about Food Sovereignty and Seeds. Let me bring you some aspects of Food Sovereignty that we defend first. FIMARC has been working on the topic food sovereignty ever since its origin. FIMARC was part of the meeting with Via Campesina in 90's when this topic was first brought into limelight. Food Sovereignty concept was then brought into discussion by Via Campesina, during the World Food Summit 1996. In 2001, delegates from peasant, fisher-folk, indigenous peoples, civil society, and academic organisations met in Havana at the World Forum on Food Sovereignty to elaborate the different elements of food sovereignty. Then the International Forum on Food Sovereignty in 2007 in Mali was a defining milestone for food sovereignty and brought together more than 500 people from 80 countries to pool ideas, strategies and actions to strengthen the global movement for food sovereignty. Nyeleni Forum defined Food sovereignty as the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume



food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal-fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations. Food sovereignty makes sense for people in both, rural and urban areas, and poor and wealthy countries. It is as much a space of resistance to neoliberalism, free market capitalism, destructive trade and investment, as a space to build democratic food and economic systems, and just and sustainable futures.

When we speak about the seed rights of farmers, Seed is the basis of agriculture; the means of production and the basis of farmers livelihoods. Farmers Rights to Seed is the Right to Life Seed is the kernel of the life, the source of our food, when contaminated have an adverse effect on our health and also health of our planet. The right of farmers to save, reuse, exchange, or sell seed from their own harvests are is restricted to various extents both by patents and by Plant Breeder Rights (PBRs). GMO seed varieties protected by patents or PBRs will result to a major change in the relationship between farmers and their crops. New plants and crops are being developed not to solve problems of hunger and deprivation, but mostly to increase shareholder values of companies that have invested heavily in R&D efforts in the biotechnology sector. Seed saving and self-seed production, practices common among farmers in the third world will be a thing of the past, as contracts bound by patent laws will prevent these practices. Traditional varieties of vegetables and grains are a vital heritage: they are the key to our food security at present and in the future. But, where hundreds of varieties of a crop were once grown, now there may be only two or three, or the crop itself may have been abandoned. And at a time when the global climate is changing in unpredictable ways, nobody knows what sort of crops may be needed in the future -- the meagre number of commercial varieties available could prove useless in the new conditions. So it is our duty to defend the seed rights of farmers. Let us save our seeds for future

Enjoy your reading

George Dixon Fernandez
Secretary General



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND SEEDS



At the point where the European Union has just signed a contract with Monsanto, prolonging the use of Glyphosate in agriculture, unconditionally and for a period of 5 years, it is without doubt worth recalling what is food sovereignty, the importance of the availability of seeds for farmers, the issues of healthy and affordable food for all as well as the necessary protection of our environment.

Food sovereignty

Food sovereignty derives from the right of peoples to define their own agricultural and food policies without ‘dumping’ to other countries^[1]. At the local level, it encourages maintenance of agriculture locally intended primarily to supply local, regional and national markets. It favors farming techniques promoting the autonomy of farmers and a greater respect for the environment. The defense of food sovereignty articulates with the requirement of agricultural policies and policies of resources management for other models of production and consumption, in order to promote a just, human and sustainable development. Food sovereignty appeals to other notions such as food security and the right to food^[2]. Food security stipulates the right of every human being to have access to sufficient, nutritious food that suited to health requirements and culture without in a situation of dependence.



The 8 pillars of food sovereignty

- The right to produce healthy, ecological and local foods
- The right of access to land
- The right of access to the seeds and natural resources
- The right of peasants and farmers
- The right to protection at the border / end of subsidies to' export
- The right of access to local, transparent, supportive and profitable markets
- The right to produces what, where, how and for whom
- The right of access to healthy food and culturally adapted

One of the levers to achieve food sovereignty is to ensure access to resources (land, seeds, water, and finance) for family farmers. Land is one of the more unevenly distributed assets on the planet. It must be the subject of a new share. The seeds are the first link in the food. But their right to free use by farmers is threatened. The rules must be changed to their advantage. Water is essential to life and to the development of rural populations. Access to drinking water must be possible for all and the resource is preserved for use by future generations. Fisheries resources, i.e. those resulting from the product of fishing, feed 200 million people worldwide. Small-scale fishermen need access to these maritime assets that are now the subject of a competition. Finance, key economic initiative, are difficult to access for the poor. New ways for prices and financing adapted to small producers should be explored.



For the South or North?

If at first the concept of food sovereignty was expanded to protect producers in the South, it can equally argue the same way for all farmers around the world who defend peasant family farming. But there are still misunderstandings to raise in the debate on food sovereignty, as is self-sufficiency or recipe, nationalist concept, or opposition on principle to trade. What is at stake, it is the possibility to regulate the trade, so that peasant agriculture that feeds the planet can continue to play its role, and that women and men who do it to live with dignity



The 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals of sustainable development (SDG) offer a new perspective for cooperation of development in the achievement of food sovereignty because this comprehensive action plan advocates interventions as well to the North than to the South, in a coherent and concerted way. The future of food sovereignty in Africa pass through the preservation of peasant family farming, which is flexible and has the ability to use resources in a sustainable way. If we preserve peasant agriculture, which has a link with the land and which is adapted to the specific local needs, as well in Europe around the world, we will be able to overcome all crises.

What are the links between food sovereignty, seeds and biodiversity?

Ensure high quality food for all, in the prospect of an increase of 30% of the population by 2050, will ask a continued agronomic and genetic progress in use and renewal of natural resources. It will also take into account the phenomena of climate change that could affect some parts of the world more than others in making difficult the conditions of food cultures. In this context the safeguard of seeds in the hands of the peasants, the right for them to select and reproduce is a major issue for the future. Over the centuries, farmers and may be even more women farmers have developed know-how to select but also to cross the species to adapt to the needs of the growing populations. Today, place the real threat of GMOs. But as we know, these GMOs are large consumers of inputs, making the earth barren short-term and major polluter of groundwater. Another threat that weighs on the peasants is the patentability of life.



Intellectual property and the right of farmers to sow their seeds

Intellectual property rights have a very important impact on the rural world. Actually, a protected variety cannot be grown freely since reproduction at the farm of the seeds (of protected varieties) from one year to another is regarded as a forgery.

The European Union regulation dating back to 1994 requires the farmer to pay “fair compensation” to the breeder to sow his seed of protected varieties. Small farmers producing less than 92 tonnes are not subject to the obligation of compensation. For other species protected by the IPR, the seed of farm is prohibited.



The position of multinationals

By multiplying requests for patents on plants and animals, the multinational agro food Industries such as Syngenta and Monsanto are trying to assert their economic interests all over the world. They thus endanger human rights, especially the right to food and the right to health. In France and Europe, the sector is driven by many SMEs and cooperatives, at the global level, ten companies share 60% of the market. Among them, Limagrain, Syngenta Seeds, Bayer CropScience, BASF Plant Science, Monsanto... However, this concentration of players, added to intellectual property issues, could adversely affect the maintenance of a diversified agriculture.

Biodiversity and international agreements

Driven by a legitimate concern about the fate of biodiversity in natural ecosystems, the international agreements of Rio 1992 were very influenced by patenting on species and all of their components, to the level of the gene.

Yet, so that companies that have taken patents on genes of species used or belonging to populations do not spoliate them with all their rights, the Nagoya treaties for non-domestic species and the international treaty on Resources Plant genetics for food and agriculture, for cultivated plants, framing the management of biodiversity and “profit sharing”. These are the benefits that anyone would derive from the use of genetic resources and should therefore share with those who were the traditional custodians.

But these treaties don't condemn or prohibit the patenting of life. While the recognition of this previously unrecognized work in the value of genetic resources is certainly a step forward, there is a growing number of people who argue that it is the patent that must be banned.

In fact, biotechnology companies file patents for two main reasons: on the one hand, patent portfolio increases the speculative value of their shares; on the other hand, to the conquest of a market on a particular character (some nutrients, performance, content), ownership of a patent, associated this character discourages the competitor to invest from the rights that they should to the company detaining. It is thus an instrument of domination on the genome, which appears as a battle field between





the empires of the seed are the big three companies being formed (Pioneer-Dow Chemicals, Chem China-Syngenta and Bayer - Monsanto). Also, contrary to the right of the varieties, the VOC, the patent requires one who creates the variety containing patented elements (genes, for example) to account to the one who has the patent. In addition, it banned totally farmers their own seed production while it is allowed for varieties.

Genetics in the service of all.

Why accept these multiple violations of fundamental rights: the right to food sovereignty of the states, the right of access to genetic resources around the world, the rights of public and private laboratories to freely access knowledge about Genes?

Why privatize and restrict access to all genetic resources?

Why give in to a system that tramples on the VOC that was put in place 70 years ago and which has made such progress?

Rant of a peasant

And if the basic seeds are better well the farmers will buy it from themselves, freely. Why force them to pay! It is the seed to be creative, intelligent and know-how to show that their seed will be better than the third generation of a farmer's seed. So to speak of "purer" seeds.

With these patent compilations we are transforming agriculture into finance and what will count is the annuity that the seed grower of its farmers forced to buy the seeds every year. The farmer as a new financial investment.

For me the living, unless it is created of all parts by man should never be patented.

Farmers must have the right to reuse their seeds for free. What right should pay a seed for that! It is their land, their work, their sweat that given this new generation of seeds. The seed has nothing to do with it.

It is at best of the flight, at worst pure and simple exploitation.

And if the basic seed are better , well then farmers will buy it from them selves, freely. Why force them to pay! It is the seed to show creativity, intelligence and know-how to show that their seeds will be better than





the third generation of seed of a farmer. So to speak of “purer” seeds.

With these compilations of patents we’re transforming agriculture into finance and what will matter is the annuity that will pull the seed of its farmers forced to buy seeds every year. The farmer as a new financial investment.

The farmer must be free!

Dealing with these issues?

It is the peasants who are the carriers of the food security of the people of their country. For the farmers, access to seeds is essential. The vast majority of farmers in developing countries depend on their ability to produce, select, swap, sell traditional seeds.

The seeds represent between 80% and 90% of the seeds planted in Africa and between 70% and 80% in Asia and Latin America. The right of farmers to seeds is essential for the reduction of poverty of the farmers themselves and for global food security. However many countries of the South are becoming markets coveted by the multinational seed. Lately buying Monsanto to 59 billion euros, Bayer will control nearly a third of the world market of seed and thanks to Monsanto, will provide the herbicides, pesticides and other fungicides. It is therefore strengthening the rights of farmers and we advocate for adoption at the earliest of the “Declaration of the United Nations on the rights of peasants and other people working in the rural areas”. We ask that in addition to the rights already recognized, are recognized new rights for a specific audience: peasants, like: the right to land, the rights to seeds and the right to food sovereignty.



^[1] This political definition was introduced by via Campesina, during the World Food Summit (1996), in opposition to the concept of “Food security” of the United Nations for Agriculture and food) FAO)

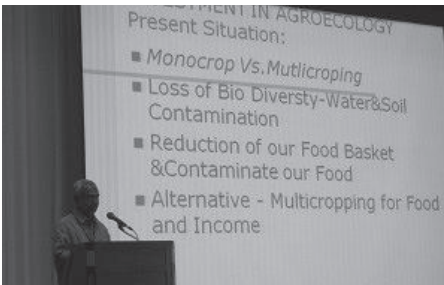
^[2] Statement on article 25 of the Universal Declaration of human rights of 1948

^[3] The plant variety certificate on the variety: in Europe, a new variety or “plant” can be protected if it is new, distinct, uniform and stable. Its creator may then hold a VOC: certificate, valid for a period of 25 to 30 years depending on the species to be protected.

FIMARC NEWS

CSO CONSULTATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH 33RD FAO ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Rony Joseph (FIMARC Asian Coordinator) participated in the CSO Consultation as well as in the official APRC meeting to bring the voice of the movement on policy debates.



33rd FAO Asia-Pacific Regional Conference. Participation of Rony Joseph

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON AIDS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ICAAP) – DHAKA ,BANGLADESH

12th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) was held in Dhaka ,Bangladesh from 12-14 March 2016..FIMARC organised different workshops including the role

of religion in promoting health of the communities etc. Rony Joseph from India and Philip Biswas from Bangladesh led the activities of FIMARC in this important in Asia Pacific.

AFRICAN CSO CONSULTATION MEETING IN CONJUNCTION WITH FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE- ABIDJAN, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

The African regional Conference was preceded by a self organised Regional consultation of Civil Society Organizations, on 1st to 2nd of April 2016, at Hôtel Belle-Côte, Abidjan. FIMARC supported the participation of Medard Meyanga (Afrian Coordinator of FIMARC) in the pre CSO consultation held in Ghana to prepare the FAO regional conference of Africa. Joseph Kama from Senegal and Lucy Lubano from Kenya participated in the Civil Society Preparatory conference for the FAO regional Conference of Africa from 1-2 April 2016 and also in the FAO regional conference which was from 4-8 April in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

FIMARC FORMATION SESSION ON AGRO ECOLOGY 2016, RESOLUTION, FIELD VISITS



FIMARC organizes a yearly formation session for the global and continental leaders on the key burning topics related to rural people and agriculture. We organised an International Formation Session on Agro ecology from 10-12 April 2016. This study session was organised prior to the Exco meeting of 2016 in Belgium. It was a sharing and learning platform on Agro ecological experiences and initiatives. Few CIDSE Secretariat members participated in this programme. FIMARC global leaders



visited an Agro ecological farm “ ARC EN CIEL“ and had an interactive session with local farmers. A Concrete resolution on Agro ecology was declared by the Exco 2016.

FIMARC EXCO AND BUREAU APRIL 2016

The Bureau Meeting was held on 8-9 April 2016 prior to the formation session and the second bureau meeting was held in Rome during the CFS 43 meeting in October 2016. This gave the opportunity for the Bureau members to have different meetings with various government representatives as well as the leaders of other global organisations and networks



The Exco 2016 was held in Assesse, Belgium after the formation session on Agroecology. Exco made a concrete planning for the strong and committed engagement of FIMARC to build the

agroecological movements at different levels, approved the work and financial report of the movement, provided inputs for the engagement of FIMARC at the Human rights council, FAO, CFS, UNESCO and also approved the resolution on Agro ecology. Exco evaluated the work of the continental movements, made the operational plans of the movement in different levels and updated our lobby advocacy actions.

FIMARC AT CIDSE MID-YEAR MEETING JUNE 2016

On 20-22 June, CIDSE held its Mid-Year Meeting of Directors in Lyon, France hosted by CCFD-Terre Solidaire. A special Mid-Year Meeting session took place on 20-21 June with the participation of Directors and members of the CIDSE Systemic Change group, together with some twenty partners and allies to further discuss the new CIDSE strategy and the implications on CIDSE future work. George Fernandez, Secretary General of FIMARC was invited for this important and special meeting of the CIDSE Directors to provide views on behalf of the social movements with catholic background and being a long time strategic partner of CIDSE.

PEASANT RIGHTS TO SEEDS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS-PRIOR TO MONSANTO TRIBUNAL-PARIS- OCTOBER 2016

FIMARC participated in the Conference organised by the Coordination SUD, France, on Peasant Rights to seeds and Intellectual Property Rights, Monsanto Trial and “New GMOs” which was held on 12 October 2016 at CIRAD France. This meeting was of civil society actors from France, Europe and Southern Countries for the preparation towards Monsanto Tribunal. George Fernandez, Secretary General of FIMARC was a pannelist on the topic of seed rights in India.

CIDSE WORKSHOP ON AGRO ECOLOGY-SEPTEMBER 2016

FIMARC was actively involved in the preparation and organisation of CIDSE workshop on agroecology and climate sustainability as member of the CIDSE FAST Working group which took place in Brussels, Belgium, on the 19th, 20th, and 21st September 2016. George Fernandez, Secretary General of FIMARC was a panellist on Monday 19th September in the round table titled “Agroecology or Climate-

Smart Agriculture: two models for the future?”

**FIMARC ASIAN ANNUAL
WORKSHOP FOR REVIEW
OF PROGRESS ON PLDP –
OCTOBER 2016**

FIMARC Asian Annual Workshop for review of progress on PLDP was held in Manaragala, Sri Lanka from 07th -11th October 2016 .The programme was hosted by our local partner organisations CEC, CRPC, UWWO. Review of the activities/ actions planned and accomplished in relation to the PLDP process in the piloting countries was the main objective of the Workshop. Participants from Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh, India and Srilanka attended the workshop. General Secretary of FIMARC Mr. George Dixon Fernandez and FIMARC Asian Coordinator Mr. Rony Joseph facilitated the entire



PLDP progress : a womens meeting in Sri Lanka

event in association with Kali Charan Marandi (Coordinator of PLDP platform in India).



PLDP progress : with a social worker in Indonesia

**FIMARC EUROPEAN
COORDINATION MEETINGS
-JULY 2016**



FIMARC Europe Coordination meeting was held in Wursburg on 25-27 July 2016. Wolfgang Scharl (President of FIMARC) and Jean Claude Germon (Treasurer) participated in this meeting. The main objective of the meeting was to plan the activities of FIMARC Europe in the framework of Erasmus Plus initiatives of FIMARC in different countries.

MEETING WITH PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR FAMILY- OCTOBER 2016

The newly elected chaplain of FIMARC Fr. Tomas Jose Spanghero had a meeting with the Pontifical Council for Family on 20 October 2016 to discuss about the challenges of social actions and the life of the movements in the contemporary societies.

PARTICIPATION IN FAO, CFS (COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY) AND CSM (CIVIL SOCIETY MECHANISM)

FIMARC participated in the CFS 43 Session, CSM annual forum and Coordination Committee Meetings which were held in FAO Headquarters in Rome in October 2016. It is an important forum for lobbying towards world leaders on the governance of food and agricultural policies and systems.

The Annual CSM Forum was ended with a Public Panel Debate on “The CFS at the crossroads, 7 years after its Reform” with the speakers Ms Amira Daoud Hassan Gornass, (CFS Chair), Kostas G. Stamoulis (Assistant DG of FAO), George Dixon Fernandez

(Secretary General ,FIMARC), Alberta Guerra (Action Aid International) and Member country representatives , in occasion of the WFD 2016.

Wolfgang Scharl (President, FIMARC), George Dixon Fernandez (Secretary General), Jean Claude Germon (Treasurer), Rony Joseph (FIMARC ASIAN coordinator) and Fr. Tomas Jose Spanghero participated in the CSM Annual forum on behalf of FIMARC. FIMARC was also participated in the CSM coordination committee meeting which was held prior to the CSM forum. George Fernandez represented FIMARC in the CC meeting. FIMARC also had a meeting with Jean Vettrains of secours-catholique France to discuss about our engagements in CFS and CSM.



*FIMARC delegation at CFS 43 and
CSM Forum*



VMR

***VOICE OF
THE RURAL WORLD***

PUBLISHED BY

Fédération internationale des Mouvements d'Adultes Ruraux Catholiques
Federación internacional de los Movimientos de Adultos Rurales Católicos
Federação Internacional dos Movimentos de Adultos Rurais Católicos
International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements

Chief Editor

George Dixon FERNANDEZ, rue Jaumain 15 - 5330 ASSESSE (BELGIQUE)
