



FINAL DECLARATION OF THE WORLD FORUM ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Havana, Cuba, September 7, 2001

For the peoples' right to produce, feed themselves and exercise their food sovereignty

From September 3 to 7, 2001, some 400 delegates from peasant and indigenous organizations, fishing associations, non-governmental organizations, social agencies, academics and researchers from 60 countries around the world met in Havana, Cuba at the World Forum on Food Sovereignty.

This Forum was convened in Cuba by the Cuban National Association of Small Farmers and a group of international movements, networks, organizations and people committed to peasant and indigenous agriculture, artisanal fisheries, sustainable food systems and the peoples' right to feed themselves. It also serves as recognition of the efforts of a Third World country which, despite suffering over four decades of the illegal and inhuman blockade imposed by the United States and the use of food as a weapon of economic and political pressure, has managed to guarantee the human right to nutrition for all of its population by way of a coherent, active, participatory and long-term state policy based on profound agrarian reform, appreciation and support for small and medium-sized producers, and the participation and mobilization of the entire society.

We gathered to analyze the reasons why hunger and malnutrition grow every day throughout the world, why the crisis in peasant and indigenous agriculture, artisanal fisheries and sustainable food systems has worsened, and why the peoples are losing sovereignty over their resources. Likewise, we gathered to collectively develop, from the perspective of the peoples and not the transnational food corporations, viable proposals, alternatives and strategies for action on a local, national and global scale, aimed at reversing current trends and promoting new focuses, policies and initiatives that can guarantee a dignified and hunger-free present and future for all the men and women of the world.

Five years after the World Food Summit, seven years after the agricultural agreements of the GATT (now WTO) Uruguay Round, and following two decades of the application of neoliberal policies by a large part of governments, the promises and commitments made to satisfy the food and nutritional needs of all are far from being fulfilled. On the contrary, the reality is that the economic, agricultural, fishing and trade policies imposed by the World Bank, IMF and WTO, promoted by the transnational

corporations, have widened the gap between the wealthy and poor countries and accentuated the unequal distribution of earnings within countries. They have worsened the conditions of food production and access to healthy and sufficient nutrition for the majority of the world's peoples, even in the so-called developed countries. As a consequence, the most basic human right of all, the right to food and nutritional well-being enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is not guaranteed to the majority of the world's peoples.

The sustainability of food systems is not merely a technical matter. It constitutes a challenge demanding the highest political will of states. The profit motive leads to the unsustainability of food systems by surpassing the limits on production allowed by nature. The sustainability of food systems is not viable within the current trade system and the context of liberalization promoted by the WTO and international financial organizations.

The hope for a new millennium free of hunger has been frustrated, to the shame of all humanity.

THE REAL CAUSES OF HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

Hunger, malnutrition and the exclusion of millions of people from access to productive goods and resources, such as land, the forests, the seas, water, seeds, technology and know-how, are not a result of fate, of happenstance, of geographical location or climatic phenomena. Above all, they are a consequence of determined economic, agricultural and trade policies on a global, regional and national scale that have been imposed by the powers of the developed countries and their corporations for the purpose of maintaining and increasing their political, economic, cultural and military hegemony within the current process of global economic restructuring.

In the face of the neoliberal ideological theories behind these policies:

- We affirm that food is not just another merchandise and that the food system cannot be viewed solely according to market logic.
- We consider as fallacious the argument that the liberalization of international agricultural and fishing trade guarantees the people's right to food.
- Trade liberalization does not necessarily facilitate the economic growth and well-being of the population.
- The underdeveloped countries are capable of producing their own food and could be capable of doing so in the future.

- The neoliberal concept of comparative advantages severely affects food systems. In keeping with this concept, the importing of basic food commodities leads to the dismantling of domestic production, given the possibility of buying them “cheaper” from the wealthy countries. This in turn leads to the reorientation of their productive resources towards export crops that are “more competitive and have greater value added” for the First World markets. It is a lie that countries should not be concerned with establishing and implementing state policies to guarantee food security for their citizens. Neoliberal theorists argue that the global supermarket of exporter countries can satisfy any demands with no problems whatsoever.
- They try to deceive the population when they claim that peasant and indigenous farmers and artisanal fisheries are inefficient and unable to meet the growing needs for food production. They use this claim in the attempt to impose widescale, intensive industrial agriculture and fishing.
- We denounce as false the argument that the rural population is overly large in comparison with its contribution to the gross domestic product. In reality, this reflects an attempt to brutally expel the rural population from its lands and fishing communities from the coasts and seas, privatizing natural resources.
- We reject the use of widescale, intensive industrial agriculture and fishing as the means to confront the world’s growing food needs.
- They attempt to convince us that the only alternative for peasants, fishers and indigenous peoples is to give way to the privatization of their lands and natural resources. This leads, among other effects, to massive migration to the cities and abroad in order to expand the supply of cheap labor needed to increase the “competitiveness” of the dynamic sectors of national economies linked to exports and transnational corporations. At the same time, unemployment and the loss of jobs are on the rise in the developed countries.
- There is an attempt to impose the food model of the transnational corporations as the only viable, appropriate and correct model in a global world. This is veritable food imperialism, which threatens the diversity of the peoples’ food cultures and their national, cultural and ethnic identities.
- In this context, the hegemonic powers use food as a weapon of political and economic pressure against sovereign countries and popular resistance movements.
- All of the above is taking place within the framework of the systematic weakening of states and the promotion of false democracies that systematically disregard the public interest and real participation of society in general and the rural population in particular in the discussion, design, adoption, implementation and control of public policies.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NEOLIBERAL POLICIES

The consequences of these false and erroneous policies are visible: they have increased the sales and profits of the economic powers of the developed countries, while the peoples of the Third World have seen the growth of their external debt and heightened levels of poverty, extreme poverty and social exclusion. The concentration of the international agricultural market within a number of transnational corporations has been accelerated, while the dependence and food insecurity of the majority of peoples has increased.

There continue to be heavy subsidies for export agriculture and fishing, at the same time that many governments provide absolutely no protection for small and medium-sized producers who produce mainly for the domestic market.

Policies of production and export subsidies in the developed countries allow the transnationals to acquire products at very low prices and sell them at much higher prices to consumers in both the South and the North.

Neoliberal policies towards the countryside have in fact promoted a process of forced deruralization of vast proportions and dramatic consequences, a genuine war against peasant and indigenous agriculture, which in some cases has come to constitute veritable genocide and ethnocide.

Artisanal fishing communities have been increasingly losing access to their own resources.

As a result of neoliberal policies, hunger and malnutrition are growing, not because of an absence of food, but rather because of an absence of rights.

We are witnesses of examples that allow us to assert that the eradication of hunger and malnutrition and the exercise of lasting and sustainable food sovereignty are possible. Likewise, we have seen in practically every country countless examples of sustainable and organic food production in peasant and indigenous communities and sustainable and diversified management of rural areas.

In view of the foregoing, the participants in the World Forum on Food Sovereignty DECLARE:

1. Food sovereignty is the means to eradicate hunger and malnutrition and to guarantee lasting and sustainable food security for all of the peoples. We define food sovereignty as the peoples' right to define their own policies and strategies for the sustainable production, distribution and consumption of food that guarantee the right to food for the entire population, on the basis of small and medium-sized production, respecting their own cultures and the diversity of peasant, fishing and indigenous

forms of agricultural production, marketing and management of rural areas, in which women play a fundamental role.

2. Food sovereignty fosters the economic, political and cultural sovereignty of the peoples.
3. Food sovereignty recognizes agriculture involving peasants, indigenous peoples and fishing communities with links to the territory; primarily oriented towards the satisfaction of the needs of the local and national markets; agriculture whose central concern is human beings; agriculture which preserves, values and fosters the multifunctionality of peasant and indigenous forms of production and management of rural areas. Likewise, food sovereignty entails the recognition and appreciation of the economic, social, environmental and cultural advantages of small-scale, family-based, peasant and indigenous agriculture.
4. We consider the recognition of the rights, autonomy and culture of indigenous peoples in all countries as an imperative requisite for combating hunger and malnutrition and guaranteeing the right to food for the population. Food sovereignty implies the recognition of the multi-ethnicity of nations and the recognition and appreciation of the identities of aboriginal peoples. This implies, as well, the recognition of autonomous control of their territories, natural resources, systems of production and management of rural areas, seeds, knowledge and organizational forms. In this sense, we support the struggles of all of the indigenous peoples and peoples of African descent in the world, and demand full respect for their rights.
5. Food sovereignty further implies the guarantee of access to healthy and sufficient food for all individuals, particularly for the most vulnerable sectors, as an imperative obligation for national governments and the full exercise of civil rights. Access to food should not be viewed as a form of assistance from governments or of charity from national or international public or private entities.
6. Food sovereignty implies the implementation of radical processes of comprehensive agrarian reform adapted to the conditions of each country and region, which will provide peasant and indigenous farmers – with equal opportunities for women – with equitable access to productive resources, primarily land, water and forests, as well as the means of production, financing, training and capacity building for management and interlocution. Agrarian reform, above all, should be recognized as an obligation of national governments where this process is necessary within the framework of human rights and as an efficient public policy to combat poverty. These agrarian reform processes must be controlled by peasant organizations – including the land rents market – and guarantee both individual and collective rights of producers over shared lands, as articulated in coherent agricultural and trade policies. We oppose the policies and programs for the commercialization of land promoted by the World Bank instead of true agrarian reforms accepted by governments.

7. We support the proposal put forward by civil society organizations in 1996, calling for states to draw up a code of conduct on the human right to adequate food, to effectively serve as an instrument for the implementation and promotion of this right. The peoples' right to food is included in the Declaration of Human Rights and was ratified at the World Food Summit in Rome in 1996 by the member states of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
8. We propose the most rapid ratification possible and application by a larger number of countries of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966.
9. In defense of the principle of the people's inalienable right to food, we propose the adoption by the United Nations of an International Convention on Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Well-Being, which should rule over decisions adopted in the fields of international trade and other domains.
10. International food trade should be subordinated to the supreme purpose of serving human beings. Food sovereignty does not mean autarchy, full self-sufficiency or the disappearance of international agricultural and fishing trade.
11. We oppose any interference by the WTO in food, agriculture and fishing and its attempt to determine national food policies. We categorically oppose its agreements on intellectual property rights over plants and other living organisms, as well as its intention to carry out a new round of negotiations (the so-called Millennium Round) including new themes for negotiation. Keep the WTO out of food.
12. We propose the creation of a new democratic and transparent order for the regulation of international trade, including the creation of an international appeals court independent of the WTO and the strengthening of UNCTAD as a forum for multilateral negotiations on fair food trade. At the same time, we propose the promotion of regional integration schemes among producers' organizations, unrelated to neoliberal goals and parameters.
13. We demand an immediate end to dishonest practices that establish market prices below production costs and provide subsidies for production and exports.
14. We oppose the FTAA, which is nothing more than a hegemonic strategic plan developed by the United States to consolidate its control over Latin America and the Caribbean, expand its economic borders, and guarantee itself a large captive market.
15. We support the demands made by peasant and social organizations in Mexico for the suspension of the NAFTA agreements concerning agriculture.
16. Genetic resources are the result of millennia of evolution and belong to all of humanity. Therefore, there should be a prohibition on biopiracy and patents on living organisms, including the development of sterile varieties through genetic engineering

processes. Seeds are the patrimony of all of humanity. The monopolization by a number of transnational corporations of the technologies to create genetically modified organisms (GMOs) represents a grave threat to the peoples' food sovereignty. At the same time, in light of the fact that the effects of GMOs on health and the environment are unknown, we demand a ban on open experimentation, production and marketing until there is conclusive knowledge of their nature and impact, strictly applying the principle of precaution.

17. It is necessary to promote widespread dissemination and appreciation of the agricultural history and food culture of every country, while denouncing the imposition of food models alien to the food cultures of the peoples.
18. We express our determination to integrate the goals of nutritional well-being into national food policies and programs, including local productive systems, promoting their diversification towards foods rich in micronutrients; to defend the quality and safety of foods consumed by populations; and to fight for the right of all individuals to information on the foods they consume, by stepping up regulations on food labels and the content of food-related advertising, exercising the principle of precaution.
19. Food sovereignty should be founded on diversified systems of production, based on ecologically sustainable technologies. It is essential to develop initiatives for sustainable food production and consumption generated at the local level by small producers, with the establishment of public policies that contribute to building sustainable food systems around the world.
20. We demand the justly deserved appreciation of peasant, indigenous and fishing communities for their sustainable and diversified management of rural areas, through appropriate prices and incentive programs.
21. When addressing the problem of food on a worldwide scale, we must take into account the cultural diversity that leads to different local and regional contexts, because the protection of the environment and biodiversity are closely related to the recognition of cultural diversity.
22. The development of sustainable food systems must include nutritional considerations, such as the demand for the regulation of the handling of agrottoxins.
23. We recognize and appreciate the fundamental role played by women in the production, harvesting, marketing and preparation of the products of agriculture and fishing and in passing on the food cultures of the peoples. We support the struggles waged by women for access to productive resources, and for their right to produce and consume local products.

24. Artisanal fishers and their organizations will not relinquish their rights to free access to fishing resources and the establishment and protection of reserve areas for the exclusive use of artisanal fishing methods. Likewise, we demand recognition of ancestral and historic rights over the coasts and inland waters.
25. Food aid policies and programs must be reviewed. They should not be an inhibiting factor for the development of local and national food production capacities, nor should they foster dependence, the distortion of local and national markets, corruption, or the dumping of foods that are harmful to health, particularly with regard to GMOs.
26. Food sovereignty can only be achieved, defended and exercised through the democratic strengthening of states and the self-organization, initiative and mobilization of all of society. It requires long-term state policies, an effective democratization of public policies, and the development of a solidarity-based social setting.
27. We condemn the U.S. policy of blockading Cuba and other peoples and the use of food as a weapon of economic and political pressure against countries and popular movements. This unilateral policy must end immediately.
28. Food sovereignty is a civil concept that concerns society as a whole. For this reason, social dialogue should be open to all the social sectors involved.
29. Achieving food sovereignty and eradicating hunger and malnutrition are possible in all countries and for all peoples. We express our determination to continue struggling against neoliberal globalization, maintaining and increasing active social mobilization, building strategic alliances and adopting firm political decisions.
30. We agree to launch a call for intensive activity and widespread mobilization around the following focuses of struggle:
 - Declaring October 16 as World Food Sovereignty Day, known until now as World Food Day.
 - Demanding that the World Food Summit Five Years Later go ahead as planned from November 5 to 10 of this year, and that the FAO fully assume its mandate and responsibility. Social organizations should organize events at the national and continental level to promote their proposals and pressure official delegations.
 - Demanding that the Italian government fully respect the freedom to demonstrate and refrain from repressing social movements opposed to neoliberal globalization.
 - Participating in and mobilizing around the WTO Ministerial Meeting, to be held in Qatar from November 9 to 13, 2001; the Hemispheric Conference Against the

FTAA, to be held in Havana from November 13 to 16, 2001; and the 2nd World Social Forum, to be held in Porto Alegre from January 31 to February 6, 2002.

KEEP THE WTO OUT OF FOOD
ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

**Done at the International Conference Center in Havana, Cuba
on September 7, 2001**