

Joint Statement

La Via Campesina, The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP), The World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples (WAMIP), International Indian Treaty Alliance (IITF), Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements (FIMARC), Centre Europe - Tiers Monde Cetim (CETIM), FIAN International, Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)

To the second session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on a United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas

Geneva, Palais des Nations, Room XX
02 – 06 February 2015

We are representatives of peasants, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fishers and rural workers from around the globe, between us representing many millions of rural people, along with CETIM, FIAN International and other human rights organizations. We have been constructively engaging in this process of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, from the field, pasture, our workplaces around the world and here in Geneva for many years. We are happy to see the ongoing process and the constructive contributions from many states and civil society organizations.

The UN Human Rights Council resolution 26/26 in 2014 gave the mandate to this intergovernmental working group to negotiate, finalize, and submit to the Council a draft UN declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. The mandate calls for existing human rights to be clarified and consolidated with a view to promoting and protecting the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

We believe that the Declaration should extend universal rights to peasants and other people working in rural areas thus filling existing normative gaps in protection. It should also be forward looking to deal with emerging gaps and thus end discriminatory practices affecting peasants and other people working in rural areas.

We, as representatives of peasants, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fishers and rural workers, shall be recognized as legitimate parties in international cooperation in relation to food and rural development, since we are the main part of the population facing hunger and malnutrition while we strongly contribute to feeding the world. The 2 billion peasants and other people working in rural areas have great knowledge and experience, and also our own perspectives. We understand the current challenges facing the world's food systems and have ideas for solution. We are able to contribute to the development process in a valuable manner.

We call on States to unite in order to recognize and further guarantee the realization of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. All states and involved UN agencies need to keep working on how to best promote and protect small and medium food producers and rural populations. This work involves a main thrust for anti-discriminatory measures, as visibly mentioned in the draft declaration for rural women, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fishers and rural workers. We believe with these measures, peasants and other people working in rural areas will be more secure, and be able to work hard to produce adequate food and nutrition for humanity.

For peasants and other people working in rural areas, the relationship with Mother Earth, her territories and waters is the physical, cultural and spiritual basis for our existence. We are required to maintain this relationship with Mother Earth for the survival of our future generations. We gladly assume our role as her guardians.

Beyond the sources already mentioned in the preamble, we wish to emphasize the importance of including the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007, pertinent ILO Conventions, and the work of the Committee on World Food Security on the right to food as sources for the Declaration.

States, civil society and UN agencies have worked hard this week to contribute and develop a UN declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. We commend the inclusive nature of the process, especially the space given to civil society organizations to participate fully. It is time to join hands and work for the best for our identity, integrity and rights.

As organizations representing peasants and other people working in rural areas, we stand ready to play our part and to take up our responsibilities. We urge that States and the UN system to live up to their obligations and to continue participating in a good faith and proactive manner to guarantee a democratic debate in line with the UN charter.

We thank you.