

Second session of the Open- Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Living in Rural Areas.

Oral Statement by FIAN International - Item 4 - Articles 19-23 Geneva, 04 February 2015

Madame Chair:

FIAN supports this set of rights and would like to highlight several remarks:

First, we support the inclusion of Article 20 on the right to a safe, clean and healthy environment. As pointed out by John H. Knox, the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in the 2012 preliminary Report: « all human rights are vulnerable to environmental degradation, in that the full enjoyment of all human rights depends on a supportive environment» (para. 19). Therefore, we further advocate for the enforcement of an appropriate and mandatory system of inspection in the workplace, prior to workers' exposition to hazardous substances.

Reports from the ILO and WHO have shown the use of pesticides causes some 70,000 poisoning deaths each year and, at least, seven million cases of acute and long term non-fatal illness. The 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and several other reports from WHO warn about the harmful impacts of pesticides on biodiversity and people's health, such as the rising number of cancers caused by the endocrine disruptors present in some pesticides. Consequently, a clear prohibition should be included regarding the use of pesticides proved to negatively impact on health. Regarding all those products that are not proven to be totally safe for people's health, the precautionary principle should be applied.

Second, on article 22, FIAN is concerned about the perverse effect that trade agreements and oligopoly managed seeds commercialization, especially when peasants use their own seeds. We have received complaints regarding criminalization of use of seeds that are not patented or do not belong to those patented and commercialized by the industrial seed producers. Moreover, peasants' food production has also been negatively affected by genetically modified seeds, which threaten and damage seeds diversity. Technologies, such as the terminator seeds, impede peasants to continue with the traditional reproduction of seeds that has been critical in maintaining food diversity and production during ages.

We support the whole article and bear in mind that states have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfill the right of peasants to use, maintain, and develop their own seeds, and to save, store, transport, exchange, donate, sell, use and re-use farm-saved seeds, crops and propagating material.

Finally, on article 24, we would like to emphasize on the relevance of a recognition of the right to water, which goes beyond the personal consumption and recognizes the right of

FIAN INTERNATIONAL

المنظمة الدولية لحق التغذية
International Human Rights Organisation for the Right to Food
भोजन अधिकार संघटन
Organisation Internationale pour le Droit Humain a l'Alimentation
Internationale Organisation für das Menschenrecht auf Nahrung
Международная Организация Защищающая Право Человека На Питание
国际人权机构目的在於协助落实食物权
Organización Internacional por el Derecho Humano a la Alimentación

International Secretariat
Willy-Brandt-Platz 5, 69115 Heidelberg
+ 49 6221 653 00 30 TEL
+ 49 6221 83 05 45 FAX
PO Box 10 22 43
D 69012 Germany
www.fian.org



peasants and other communities living in rural areas to water for farming, fishing, livestock keeping and to secure other water related livelihoods. In fact, without a broader scope of the right to water, peasants and other rights holders covered by the declaration would not be able to develop their activities so that they can maintain their livelihoods and live in dignity.