

## **The Voluntary Guidelines on the Tenure of Land Fisheries and Forests are complete**

13/03/2012 Last Friday, 9th of March in the evening, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) completed the intergovernmental negotiations of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Tenure of Land Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security. With the successful completion of these negotiations after a participatory process lasting nearly 3 years, the CFS has shown clearly that it has the capacity to bring a wide variety of social actors to the debate and to seek solutions to one of the most difficult and delicate issues we face today, that of **access to natural resources for food production/provision**. More than 45 persons representing 20 civil society organizations attended the final round of negotiations.

The Guidelines contain valuable points that will provide backing to organizations in their long struggle to ensure the care and use of Resources and Natural Goods in order to produce more nourishing food, so helping to eliminate hunger from the world by addressing its root causes.

Ensuring access to land, fisheries and forests is absolutely vital, not just to enable small food producers to nourish the world. Access to natural resources is a question of dignity and a matter of life and death for millions of peasant communities, pastoralists, indigenous Peoples and fisher folk. In many parts of the world, land-grabbing causes great suffering by displacing people and communities and destroying and confiscating their lands, further increasing the incidence of violent conflicts.

Just in the last few months, while this document was being negotiated, **leaders of social movements in different parts of the world have been persecuted or assassinated for their struggle**. In Latin America, we wish to remember Jerónimo R. Tugri y Mauricio Méndez de Panamá, Bernardo Méndez Vásquez de México, Christian Ferreyra de Argentina, and the peasants who were assassinated in the land conflicts of the Bajo Aguan region of Honduras. We also want to show our solidarity with Herman Kumara, leader of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples, who has been threatened with death and forced to leave his country, Sri Lanka.

In spite of the massive and systematic violations of human rights, violations that take many forms in rural regions of the world, governments remain reluctant to re-affirm the commitments they have already made to different international Human Rights instruments relating to natural resources. This means we must all redouble our efforts. We deeply regret the fact that over the course of these negotiations, governments maintained their position that large investments in industrial agriculture are essential for development.

We call once more on the whole international community, the states and governments of the world, to finally commit themselves to establishing a new era in history, based on food sovereignty. These Guidelines, when understood as rights to land, fisheries and forests, are another tool in the ongoing struggle to eradicate hunger from the world

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