



Press release, 17/11/2009

## Food Sovereignty now: young people creating their future

Young people account for over one fifth of the world's population. 85% of the world's young people live in developing countries and more than half of them in rural areas. They are particularly hard hit by poverty and hunger, and by climate change. Young women and men from several Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) around the world gathered in Rome on November 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> 2009 during the CSO Forum held in parallel to the World Food Summit on Food Security 2009. "Food Sovereignty now: young people creating their future" was the slogan of the youth meeting in which participants have declared their demand for food sovereignty and inclusive decision-making at all levels worldwide.

The development of massive industrial agricultural production, trading in the past years as well as neo-liberal policies without respect to nature and human beings brought the catastrophic situation of 1.02 Billion people in hunger. 75% of the hungry people are living in rural areas and mostly young people and peasant farmers are the victims of these policies. Much remains to be done as regards youth involvement in the fight for food sovereignty and food security at both national and international levels. Food Sovereignty is a legitimate cause involving sustainable improvement of social, economic and nutritional wellbeing of all individuals on earth by increasing access to quality food, production resources and making favourable food policies for all producers in the world.

The assembly of youth made a final declaration, demanding for more participation in decision-making bodies, access to and control over productive resources and especially the land.

### Participation in decision making bodies

The youth assembly sees the necessity to rename the Committee on Food Security of FAO into "Committee for Food Sovereignty" (CFS); ensuring participation of youth movements in all three pillars of the CFS – Policy, Scientific and Financial; and the implementation of monitoring regulations through a civil society-coordinated mechanism. They have emphasised the importance of governments' commitments to the implementation of the framework and structure of the CFS at national, continental and international levels. "The CFS structure and all decision-making bodies must ensure that the voices of young people are heard in order to define policies to create their future" is one of several demands of the youth assembly.

### Genuine agrarian reform

The need for genuine agrarian reform which must recognise the socio-environmental function of land, water bodies, and natural resources in the context of food sovereignty was highlighted during the meeting. Food sovereignty implies policies of redistribution, equitable access and control over natural and productive resources (e.g. land, water, seeds, credit, and appropriate technology etc.), by all vulnerable groups and especially young people.

Young people of the assembly demanded in one voice the access to and control over land through an implementation of the right to land and land reform with respect to hereditary inheritance and protection from land grabbing. "Access to land is a pre-condition for young women and men in order to motivate them to stay in rural areas and becoming farmers" added Carolin Grieshop, Secretary General of the International Movement for Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth (MIJARC).

### Agricultural education and capacity building

The participants of the youth assembly insist on the access to agricultural education in a formal and non-formal way from an early age. Capacity building training at all levels to address the needs of young people, and promoting engagement in sustainable production through agroecological, small-scale and family farming should be supplemented by resource support.

All organisations present in the assembly decided to work in a coordinated way in an alliance on issues and the commitments declared.

## FOOD SOVEREIGNTY NOW!

contact:

George Dixon Fernandez,  
Steering Committee in charge of youth caucus  
+39-3881038275

[g.fernandez@mijarc.net](mailto:g.fernandez@mijarc.net)