

National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP)
6th International Encounter on Agroecology, Sustainable Agriculture and Cooperativism
November 24th, 2017
Havana, Cuba

FINAL DECLARATION

We, the delegates of the 6th International Meeting of Agroecology, Sustainable Agriculture and Cooperativism, which took place from November 19 to 24, 2017, at the Niceto Pérez García Training Center of ANAP, municipality of Güira de Melena, province of Artemisa, Cuba, with the participation of 250 delegates from 19 countries, state that:

During these days we have had the opportunity to exchange experiences, knowledge, flavors and culture with the Cuban people, especially with peasant families.

We visited farms, cooperatives and historical sites in all the provinces of the country. We were able to appreciate the beautiful work of the Cuban Revolution in the field and the positive results in the production of healthy food.

The Peasant-to-Peasant Methodology arrived in Cuba from Guatemala and Nicaragua 20 years ago. The National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), with the accompaniment of other institutions and organizations in the country, converted it into a mass movement and has managed to involve more than 120 thousand peasant families, being a reference in the implementation and promotion of Agroecology for the whole world.

70 papers were presented in five working committees that addressed issues related to Agroecology, agrobiodiversity, seed production and conservation, gender, training processes, food security and sovereignty, agrarian reform, territory and cooperativism.

We must highlight the panel that addressed the role of young people in promoting agroecology and the challenges they face in rural areas. The experiences shared at the international round table are also of special significance.

Unity, solidarity, cooperation, integration, exchange, generalization, friendship and many other words of remarkable strength have been present in our voices, our minds and our hearts during these days.

In many of our countries, inequality and the concentration of wealth generated by poverty and social marginalization predominate. Human trafficking, organized crime, drug trafficking, little or no access to education, healthcare and essential human rights, high rates of unemployment, social insecurity, and corruption are among many other consequences of neoliberal policies and capitalism.

Ruling transnational corporations and free trade agreements are the cause of the predation of our natural resources and degradation of our ecosystems resulting in serious consequences for our planet and its inhabitants.

Minimal access to land and water, the criminalization of native seeds and their privatization through laws and treaties, violence, eviction, migration, malnutrition, illiteracy and precarious health are present in our peasant and indigenous territories.

Cuban peasants live another reality. They enjoy a dignified and full life. They are beneficiaries of governmental public policies that guarantee their human rights and favor the productive process and the protection of the environment. We saw smiles of happiness in their faces.

We go home convinced that another world is possible. With enough strength to continue facing the ravages of capitalism, neoliberalism and their negative consequences.

We ratify in this meeting that Agroecology is our alternative way to build a world based on mutual respect, social justice, equality, solidarity and harmony with nature.

We urge everyone to know and to disseminate the Declaration of the International Forum on Agroecology of Nyéléni, Mali in 2015; a document that reflects the common vision of organizations and international movements of small-scale producers and consumers. Among them are peasants, indigenous peoples, communities, hunters and gatherers, families of farmers, rural workers, livestock shepherds, fishermen and urban movements. Agroecology is a key element in the construction of Food Sovereignty and collaborative strategies are needed in order to promote it and protect it from co-optation.

From Nyéléni in 2015, we warned that agroecology is at a crossroads: "The industrial food production system is beginning to exhaust its production and profit potential due to its internal contradictions - land degradation, weeds resistant to herbicides, shrinkage of fisheries and monoculture plantations devastated by pests and diseases - and the negative consequences of greenhouse gas emission. The health crises of malnutrition, obesity, diabetes, colon diseases and cancer are caused by diets in which industrial foods and junk food are more and more ostensible.

"Popular pressure has led multiple institutions, governments, universities and research centers, some NGOs and other organizations to finally recognize the importance of Agroecology. In spite of everything, they have tried to redefine it as a set of technologies, in order to offer some tools that seem to mitigate the crisis of the sustainability of industrial food production.

"This co-optation of Agroecology, aimed at fine-tuning the industrial food system, while its proponents continue with their greenwashing discourse, has received various names, such as "Climate-smart agriculture", "sustainable intensification" or "ecological", and industrial production in monoculture of "organic" foods.

"We do not recognize these practices as agroecology: we reject them and we will fight to unmask the appropriation of the term.

"The real solutions to these crises cannot start from subjecting to the industrial model. We must transform it and build our own local food systems that foster links between rural and urban areas, based on a truly agroecological production of food.

"We can not allow Agroecology to be just another tool in the industrial food production model. We see it as an essential alternative to that model and as the means to transform the way we produce and consume food into something better for humanity and for our Mother Earth."

There are many challenges ahead, and only with unity, solidarity and by preserving peace can we continue to move forward.

The experiences transmitted by each one of the participants in this Encounter reflect the resistance of the organized social movements with the leadership of women and youth. We recognize and we stand in solidarity with their struggles and we are convinced that together we will achieve the Sovereignty of all our peoples.

We thank the ANAP for the warm welcome given to each participant, for organizing the conference, allowing us to fully enjoy the program and for meeting the expectations that we all had for this event.

We express our unconditional support and solidarity to the peasant families and to the Cuban people in their battle of resistance against the unjust and illegal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of North America for almost six decades. We commit ourselves to divulge and clarify to the world the achievements of the Cuban Revolution.

We hope to meet in this space again in November of 2019 for the 7th Meeting of Agroecology, Sustainable Agriculture and Cooperativism.

We want to conclude our speech with a simple tribute to Fidel Castro Ruz, the unbeaten commander of the Cuban Revolution and world-class leader, remembering this call he made to humanity in November 1996, one which is still today fully valid:

"The bells that ring today for those who die of hunger, will ring tomorrow for the whole of humanity if it did not want, did not know or could not be wise enough to save itself".