This training course on Food Sovereignty is a collaboration of IBON International, the People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty and partner organizations from Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. The modules are designed as tools for facilitators to assist them in organizing and conducting the training that includes issues on corporate globalization, conceptualizing food sovereignty and formulating campaigns and policy recommendations.

IBON International is a service institution with an international character and scope of work. Its defined service role encompasses a broad range of capacity development functions, and is directed towards social movements and civil society constituencies in all regions of the world especially in the global South. IBON International's main focus is on knowledge-building and sharing through research, education, information, and on international networking and partnership for capacity development.

The People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty is a global network of various grassroots groups of small food producers particularly of peasant-farmer organizations and their support NGOs, working towards a People's Convention on Food Sovereignty. It was established erst as an Asian component of the global agri-trade network on People's Food Sovereignty in 2001 then eventually resulted in the collaboration of those involved in the People's Caravan 2004 process and those who participated in the Asia Pacific People's Convention on Food Sovereignty in Dhaka, Bangladesh in November 2004.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note to Facilitators</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Modules</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module I: Understanding</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Globalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module II: Conceptualizing</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Sovereignty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module III: Food Sovereignty as a Basis for Rural Food and Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigning, Policy and Program</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module IV: Mobilization and Campaigning for People’s Food Sovereignty</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This training module was made possible through the collective efforts of IBON International, the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty and partner organizations.
INTRODUCTION

Food is essential for people to live and endure everyday life. It is inseparable and actually an extension of the realization of our basic human right to life. And intrusions on people's right to food (production and consumption) are invasions of human rights as well.

Right to food does not only mean taking of food to ease hunger and starving. It should be a societal or collective initiative to ensure that safe, nutritious and culturally acceptable food is available to all its constituents especially the children and elderly. It is also not just ensuring availability but making sure of accessibility and stability of food supply that guarantee food security too.

In this training, we will appreciate the concept of food sovereignty that elevates the right to food and food security to the level of recognition to human rights and people's empowerment in producing and consuming food. It pays close attention to the mass of food producers including the farmers, farm workers, pastoralists and fisherfolks with attention to indigenous people and women who feed the world to have and attain the genuine food security.

NOTE TO FACILITATORS

The training is to be conducted in four (4) full days including a day for field visit that will enable an actual interaction and first-hand data on the agricultural situation of the rural farmers and food producers in the host county. It is targeted to cater at least 30 participants from the national, regional and international levels thus accommodating issues and concerns from these levels as well. The target audience consists of leaders of grassroots groups, civil society organizations and advocates working on food, agriculture and rural development thus it is necessary to remind the participants on the objectives of the trainings to create a common understanding among all participants. Two or three persons may deliver the entirety of the training workshop.

USING THE MODULES

The modules are tools for facilitators to assist them in organizing and conducting the training that includes issues on corporate globalization, conceptualizing food sovereignty, and formulating campaigns and policy recommendations. Specific objectives of each session are enumerated at the beginning of the modules itself to level-off each participant's expectations on the presentation. The training modules may include presentation components such as powerpoint slides, handouts and videos as well as workshop activities to further comprehend and discuss the issues involved in the discussion. These are significant to engage and involve the participants as actively as possible. However some of the components may be extended or omitted depending on the training's time constraints.
Objectives:

The participants will be able to do the following:

1. Identify the manifestations of corporate globalization in rural peoples’ everyday life,
2. Explain the historic evolution of corporate globalization,
3. Identify the actors and factors behind corporate globalization, and
4. Understand the need to resist corporate globalization.

Activity 1: Workshop on determining our lives and conditions

Participants will be divided into groups of four or five (4 or 5) members and discuss difficulties faced by them in (1) agricultural production, (2) adequate livelihood to access basic needs such as food, education, shelter and other daily living needs and (3) support or lack of political governance structures at the provincial and national level to secure livelihood and other social services such as sanitation, utilities, education, health, among others.

The participants will then be asked to draw a sample balance sheet of their household income and expenditures, which is likely to indicate deficits and imbalances. The facilitator can now ask the participants how they cope with such situation. The exercise can use all of the above questions or shorten the list based on time and capacity of the participants.

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<th>FAMILY INCOME</th>
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<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Daughters</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House Rent</td>
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(The following sections to be used as summing up of Activity 1)

**Rural Poverty and Underdevelopment**

*Our Lives and Conditions*

Peasants, currently estimated at around 1.2 billion or around half the world’s population, are the backbone of the world’s food systems. They account for the majority of the world’s food production. Ironically, they form the majority of the world’s poor and in fact comprise the world’s poorest. Whether they may be from Africa, Asia, or Latin America, peasants disproportionately suffer from poverty, hunger and misery.

Despite claims of substantial progress in poverty reduction in some parts of the world particularly in East Asia, most regions face worsening poverty. An estimated 1.4 billion people globally are still living in extreme poverty ($US 1.25/day) and close to 1 billion experience hunger. Almost 70% of the world’s very poor are from rural communities, a large number of whom are women and children.

In 2008, Sub-Saharan Africa which has the highest rural poverty incidence recorded that:

- 497 million out of 777 million total population is rural
- 433 million (87.2%) of rural population is living in poverty ($US 2/day) and
- 306 million (61.6%) of the rural population is extremely poor ($US 1.25/day)
During the same year, Asia and the Pacific have:

- 2,188 million rural population out of 3,543 million total population
- 1,325 million (60.5%) of rural population is living in poverty ($US 2/day) and
- 687 million (31.4%) of the rural population is extremely poor ($US 1.25/day)

Despite Latin America and the Caribbean’s documentation of poor people living in urban rather than rural areas, there are still:

- 24 million (19.9%) of 122 million rural population living in poverty ($2US/day) and
- 11 million (8.8%) living in extreme poverty ($1.25US/day)

Farmers, rural wage earners, landless peasants, indigenous peoples, and fisherfolk, are unable to access the most basic necessities of life such as food, water, health and shelter. Most are landless, work extremely long and difficult hours, earn below minimum wages, and incur huge debts. Even with the variety of rural activities- including agricultural and non-agricultural- income remains insufficient to provide rural family’s needs hence the adoption of alternative income-generating activities including livestock production become prevalent.

In an attempt to escape the cycle of poverty, hunger and debt, many also resort to migration. For many years now in fact, there has been a steady rise in the number of rural dwellers migrating to urban centres and in other countries. By no means, however, is migration a solution to the problems of rural and urban poor. What it does is underscore the deeply entrenched poverty that compels millions of peasants to leave their families behind in search of greener pastures.

### The Roots of Poverty and Underdevelopment

#### Political Aspects

The roots of poverty and deprivation in the lives of small and landless farmer’s lives can only be understood in a political context which includes a historical analysis of their current situation. The local elite, including the feudal landlords, industrialists, elitist political parties and the military, control the wealth and resources of the people. They work hand in hand with the capitalists in the Global North, which include multinational corporations, the political leadership of the world’s industrialized countries and their militaries. Agricultural land is owned by feudal landlords who gain immense profits by leasing/selling land to large foreign agribusinesses like Monsanto, Bayer and Syngenta to name a few which promote monoculture, use of high-yielding varieties (HYVs) of seeds and intense use of chemical fertilizers. Governments, on the other hand, are instrumental in crafting and implementing policies which would provide rich powerful nations and corporations with easy ways to buy/lease land in Third World countries. For instance, the numerous agricultural trade agreements through World Trade Organization (WTO) and other Foreign Trade Agreements (FTAs) have been serving only the interests large agribusinesses in the North while putting those in the South at the losing end. Powerful military forces use might against peoples’ movements fighting
for various rights including land rights. In Pakistan, Okara peasants contested the military’s intent to evict them from working in their illegally-owned military farms. Amidst military attacks and abuses faced by the peasants, they remained strong in asserting their right to land ownership.

Economic Aspects

The elite in our countries with help from the advanced industrialized nations maintain their control over the natural resources needed for agricultural and industrial production. Control over land has its roots from previous centuries, intensifying during the colonial period. Today other inputs and natural resources such as seed, water and livestock, among others, are controlled by agro-chemical corporations and other elite sectors including landlords. This has resulted in acute crisis in livelihood security and food sovereignty.

Agriculture production is being shifted to corporate agriculture that is export-oriented and import-dependent. Peasant farmers in South East Asia were forced to leave their rice farming and to shift to export commodities such as rubber, coffee, cacao, cut flowers and trees, among other cash crops.

The self-reliant traditional system of saving seeds for the next season has also been eroded, making farmers highly dependent on the corporate seed sector. In addition, agro-chemical farming is totally dependent on external inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides which has increased the cost of production to such an extent that small and landless farmers are unable to eke out a living for themselves from agriculture.

Farmers are unable to overcome the debt spiral they enter in order to obtain the expensive agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, high-yielding varieties of seeds and pesticides. The result is that they lead a hand-to-mouth existence. Millions across the three continents, especially so in Asia have been migrating from rural to urban areas in search of decent work. The spiral of migration has extended to migrating not only to urban centres but also overseas where they face even greater levels of exploitation and oppression.

Land grabbing not only by local elites but also by transnational corporations and foreign governments has intensified in recent years in Asia, Latin America and the African regions following the rising trend of speculation on food and agriculture. It compromises food supply not only of communities, but also of whole countries.

(The facilitator can pose a question prior to the next topic of what they think are the social aspects related to poverty and its causes.)

Social Aspects

The shift to and intensification of corporate farming in many countries has displaced peasant and indigenous communities not only from their livelihood and properties but from their way of life. With the intensification of corporate agriculture, the landless and small farmers are being alienated from their centuries old traditional livelihood systems and are being deprived of the social structures which dignify their existence. The social fabric of community life is in tatters as the encroaching values of capitalist production emphasizes individualism and weakens cooperative models existing in agrarian economies. Today, communities are torn, with traditional means of survival taken away and no new secure, sustainable economic and social models for daily existence provided.
The environment also suffers from this. Aside from the depletion of natural resources, the intense use of chemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers in agricultural production has resulted in the poisoning of land, air and water resources, thereby affecting the health of the people in the immediate and outlying communities. A number of diseases sprang, stretching the already minimal earnings of the people to look after health issues.

Women, who bear the brunt of poverty and hunger, are facing increased burden of not only producing food but also of providing food at the household level. With the concept of common lands declining and more and more agricultural land lost to privatization, women have less access to food crops and other home-grown food products, including fruits, fish, milk, butter milk, butter and oil, and thus unable to provide nourishing food to their families.

The Colonial/Historical Context of Current Rural Conditions

The current situation of deprivation, exploitation and oppression has its roots in the colonial history of our continents. The colonial period which mostly fell in the period of 1500-1900, was an era of imperialism and plunder. The 15th century saw the developments in trade in Europe and thereby in explorations for new lands. They came to Africa, Asia and South America, in search for sources of raw materials and later on for cheap labour and market to dump their surplus products. Colonizers confiscated lands, dislocating and dispossessing local inhabitants, of their land and sources of livelihood, turning them into workers and wage earners.

In the earliest wave, Latin America was conquered by the Spanish and then subsequent invaders from Europe. The Spanish invaders introduced a land tenure system known as *latifundios*, which allowed huge land grants to the colonizers. For instance, a Spanish colonizer Hernan Cortes was awarded a royal grant of 25,000 square miles of farmland in 1529. Along with the land he was also granted 100,000 slaves of Latin American origin.

In Asia, the various European colonizers had not acted differently from the rest of the colonized world. They created a new class of feudal landlords, giving them thousands of acres of land. These landlords were used to implement the oppressive land taxation systems forced on the people protecting the interest of the colonizers.

In Africa, the British Rule had created an exploitative mechanism through which local land was distributed to the white settlers. This mechanism created a new oppressive “gentry” or elites who own acres of land, in East Africa. Called “crown lands”, these lands were used for hunting by the white colonizers. Later, after the white settlers had destroyed the local wild life and resources through overexploitation, they blamed the African for the depletion of resources. At this point an American model of national parks was adopted by the British Rule in East Africa especially in Kenya and Tanzania. The local communities were not allowed to access this land and violations were met with punishment.

One of the main features of colonization common to former colonies was slave labour and this was seen rampant in Africa. Locals were used for the construction of railroads and roads, as well as plantation labour. Nearly 399,000 slaves had been imported to British North America, 1.5 million to Spanish America, 3.7 million to Caribbean Islands (British, French, Dutch, and Danish) and 3.6 million to Brazil. In totality, nearly 9.3 million African slaves were brought to the various European colonies in the Americas in 1451-1870.
Struggles and Resistance to Colonizers

The colonial period resounds with the struggles and resistances of the people against the colonial masters. Africa’s history is rich with the critical role of peasants in resisting colonials. For instance:

“In the 1905 Maji Maji uprising in Tanganyika (Tanzania), where German conquest and colonization between 1895 and 1900 provoked a massive uprising when African peasants objected to the taxes, forced labour, and harsh working conditions that came with German colonialism. Although it failed to dislodge German colonialism, the Maji Maji mass uprising forced the German colonial authorities to reform their administration and practices.”

“Similarly, in Namibia, German colonial rule also provoked armed resistance from the Herero and the Nama between 1904 and 1907. Here, too, colonialism brought with it massive land alienation, loss of sovereignty, loss of cattle to incoming German settlers, numerous taxes, openly racist policies and practices that marginalized Africans, corporal punishment, and other ills associated with European colonialism in Africa. In January 1904, the Herero rose up against German rule. In late 1904, the Nama began a three-year guerrilla campaign against German rule that was only crushed by German forces in 1907.”

In the Indian sub-continent in Asia, there are many stories of peasant-led resistances against the British. For instance, on his return from South Africa to India, the first movement led by Mahatma Gandhi was the farmers’ protest against indigo farming which had been imposed on the small farmers. This protest set the tone for the freedom struggle in India. Another is the one led by Vasudeo Balwant Phadke, who is considered the “father of armed struggle” in India. He believed “it was the right of all men to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government when its tyranny or inefficiency was great and unendurable.” The starvation death and famines of India were a major impetus for his revolutionary approach to the colonial powers, forming a secret organization to force out the colonizers. Although he failed and was eventually imprisoned, he remained a source of inspiration to liberation struggles.

Latin America experienced different waves of colonialism, the foremost being the Spanish conquests, which according to literature were consistently fought by the indigenous people. In the Caribbean, the indigenous peoples led armed struggles against the Spanish colonizers, among them one Hatuey, a cacique (chief) of western Hispaniola.

“Hatuey had fled with a number of followers and settled in Cuba the year before the Spanish conquest, apparently establishing a significant cacicazo or lands ruled by a cacique. According to Las Casas, Hatuey, alerted to the Spaniards’ expedition by his informants, rallied the Cuban Taino to resist the conquistadors. Resist they did. In contrast to the relatively warm reception experienced in Hispaniola by Columbus in 1492, Velázquez’s 1511 expedition in Cuba encountered resistance almost immediately upon landing. Having learned the lessons of the Taino in Hispaniola, Cuban Taino were considerably more well-informed, and therefore generally more hostile to the first Spanish attempts to conquer Cuba. The four-month struggle that followed eventually found indigenous forces retreating into the mountains, and the cacique Hatuey captured by the Spaniards. As is well-known in Cuba and elsewhere, Hatuey was sentenced to be burned at the stake.”

There is no doubt that the death of colonialism would have been possible without the thousands of militant and other civil disobedience movements which marked colonial history. Although the colonial period ended
at varying stages for the three Third World continents, however, the relations of oppression of the people to their colonial masters were more than ‘mimicked’ by our national elites who were the ones to take over power, once bloody battles of independence were finished and the colonies gained independence.

Independence in former colonies has been nominal and true and total independence from colonial masters has not really happened. Former colonies are in such relationship as their former masters that can only be described as semi-colonial, with the former master continuously meddling with the affairs of the former colony, and the former colony being subservient to the former master’s dictates.

The Post War Developments and Actors

The post-colonial era ended with the Second World War. Important historical changes, however, occurred during this time, defining the semi-colonialism. The end of the war saw the creation of the bipolar world, in which the United States and Western Europe came to be known as the Capitalist Block (the First World), while the Soviet Union and its allies became the Socialist Block (the second world). The newly independent colonies maintained a neutral position and were known as the non-aligned countries (the Third World).

The ruling elite of the Third World countries has maintained their ties with the First World nations through a number of venues, the most prominent being the trade patterns between the two worlds. The control over natural resources in the Third World remain in the hands of the transnational corporations from the First World, much strengthened through the military pacts and agreements controlled by the United States and Western Europe.

The collusion of the leaders in First World and Third World allowed the semi-feudal system to prevail. Public administration governance structures, especially legal ownership patterns over private property as well as educational institutions have by and large remained the same as left by the colonizers, helping maintain control over agricultural and industrial production systems, and allowing the elite of the Third World to accumulate wealth by developing trade and business partnerships with the elite in the First World. Agricultural land ownership patterns, for instance, have gone through negligible change from the colonial period allowing wealth concentration in the hand of a minor ruling class in the Third World.

Landlessness and Land Reform

One of legacies of the colonial powers to its colonies is the system of land ownership and existence of structures and institutions that perpetuates the unfair and unequal relationships between the rich minority and poor majority in a Third World, as well as between Third Worlds and First Worlds.

In the late 1950s it was estimated that in Venezuela, 3% of the land holders owned 90% of the land; in Chile, 2% owned 52%; just 2% of the people owned half of Brazil. Currently, Brazil has 350 million arable hectares. However, 500 million farmers have no land. On the other hand 0.5 million estates averaging 600 hectares each, occupy three quarters of Brazil’s arable land.

“According to the Institute for Colonization and Land Reforms (INCRA), between 1992 and 1998, the area occupied by estates larger than 2,000 hectares grew 56 million hectares—an area three times the rate
Similar land ownership patterns exist for all the three continents. The root of titled land ownership in favour of the elite has come from our colonial past. A good example of colonization-based land distribution and presence of feudal land ownership is of Pakistan in Asia. According to the government of Pakistan, 7% of feudal class owned 56% of the total land, and top 1% feudal elites owned 30% of land.

The Philippines has gone through various waves of colonization, the foremost being led by Spaniards (1521-1898) who imposed a feudal form of land management known as encomienda based on which land was tilled by Philippine labour but land titles were held by the Spanish elite. Later, land ownership was changed to hacienda system, which was basically large land holdings producing cash crops for world trade. The hacienda system was later adopted by the Americans who were handed control over the Philippines. Under American colonization, the Philippine 1902 Bill allowed 1,024 hectares of land for corporations, giving American agri-corporations control over massive tracts of land. Even after supposedly gaining independence in July 1946, land reforms have not resulted equitable land distribution. The Philippines has one of the most militant peasant movements in Asia, where the landless continue to fight for the right over land.

**Green Revolution**

In the 1950s, the United States developed and introduced the Green Revolution as an agricultural model promoted as a means of increasing food production and for economic development in the Third World. It was implemented mostly in Asia and Latin America.

The basic promise of Green Revolution was to increase food production for the ever increasing world population, especially in Third World countries. One of the major elements of this model was the introduction of new kind of seeds known as high yielding varieties (HYVs), which were often referred to as 'miracle seeds'. They were supposed to yield much higher crop volume per acre compared to those produced by using traditional seeds.

The Green Revolution, however, was one of the reasons for the continued poverty, hunger and inequality among the rural populations, especially of peasants today. It brought about a dramatic change in the traditional and self-reliant agricultural production system and promoted dependence on external inputs being produced by profit-oriented companies whose intentions were not geared towards the needs and rights of farmers but creating a market for their products in order to generate super profits.

The HYVs popularized during the Green Revolution, for instance, were not like the seeds the farmers had saved from previous harvests. Rather they were produced from a narrow genetic base which allows them only 2-3 years life, their fertility decreasing rapidly with second sowing. In addition, the HYVs are unable to provide a healthy yield without inputs such as chemical fertilizers, excess water (dependant on modern irrigation systems such as canal systems, tube wells), tractors, threshers and highly toxic chemical pesticides. The narrow genetic base of HYV creates uniformity in the crops, making them susceptible to a wide range of diseases and pests.

The inputs which are a must for HYVs were not needed in traditional farming methods, which use oxen for ploughing, traditional seeds and organic manure. Crops grown by traditional farming were not as prone
to pest attacks as the HYVs, and hence extensive dependency on pesticides was not a feature of traditional farming methods.

Green Revolution, therefore is sort of a ‘backdoor recolonization’ of former colonies, through the domination and control of local Third World markets. Green Revolution had been successful in doing so, especially with the post-colonial backdrop of impoverished countries, food production systems geared towards global trade, large scale food shortages and famines. Green Revolution methods of production were widely accepted in Asia, especially in the sub-continent and the Philippines.

According to reports, by 1969-70, 55% of 35 million acres of wheat in Pakistan, and 35% of India’s 35 million acres of wheat were sown using the Mexi-Pak seed variety. Further, that “by the 1990s, almost 75% of Asian rice areas were sown with these new varieties. The same was true for almost half of the wheat planted in Africa and more than half of that in Latin America and Asia, and about 70% of the world’s corn as well. Overall, it was estimated that 40% of all farmers in the Third World were using Green Revolution seeds, with the greatest use found in Asia, followed by Latin America.”

Green Revolution is also seen as a technical rebuttal to the agricultural production system introduced in China in the 1940-50s under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, which was gaining popularity in the region. This system is the opposite of the profit-driven and market-based capitalism being advocated by the United States and the Western Europe, as it aimed to do away with feudal ownership and introduced collective production units. All the people, not just the elite, are guaranteed social and economic rights.

Most economies of the Third World were based on an agricultural production, hence the fear that China's influence would spread those parts of the world. Such a system was a direct threat to capitalism as the powerful elite could lose their wealth such as agricultural land, industries and other resources. To assuage the demands of the peasantry in the Third World, a technical 'solution' was provided in the form of the Green Revolution.

**Green Revolution: Actors**

The role of two prominent U.S. organizations, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation, is critical in promoting green revolution technologies.

In 1940s, the Rockefeller Foundation invested in agricultural research based on the interest of the vice president of the United States, Henry Wallace, whose family was known for their interest in agriculture. The Wallace family was the founder of the hybrid seed company, Pioneer Hi-Breed. The foundation, using the services of scientist Norman Borlaug (who then later came to be closely associated with Green Revolution technologies) promoted plant-breeding programs in Mexico. This was the first of the many research initiatives which would later comprise a vast network of research institutions yielding the various high yielding seed varieties introduced through the Green Revolution.

The Rockefeller Foundation and the Mexican government were responsible for the formation of the International Maize & Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) set up in 1956, which produced the HYVs of wheat. The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines on the other hand, successfully introduced the HYV of rice. In a 20-year period (1960-1980), three agencies from the private and government sector in the United States were responsible for 57.7% of IRRI finances: the Ford Foundation contributing
23.9 million USD (18.8%); the Rockefeller Foundation contributing 20.46 million USD (16.1%), and the United States Aid for International Development (USAID) contributing 28.98 million USD (22.8%).

In 1971, a group of 28 governments, organizations, and observers, through the initiative of the World Bank, established the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), as the umbrella organization of research institutes worldwide. Headquartered in the World Bank, CGIAR has been instrumental in pushing for the interests of the corporate sector in the US with strong support from the Rockefeller and the Ford Foundations.

**Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)**

The Green Revolution was implemented in the 1960s. By the 1970s, governments of the Third World have accumulated massive debts. While the global crisis resulting in the unprecedented increase in global oil prices can be considered as a major cause, there is no doubt, however, that the debt burden at this point had its roots in a number of factors.

Among the factors is the unfair trade relations between the first and Third World countries, the foundations of which were laid during the colonial times. This, together with the lack of proper agrarian reform and industrialization in the Third World countries, has resulted in the dependency of Third World on exporting primary commodities rather than high value industrial goods. At the same time, Third World countries are dependent on importing expensive goods and services from the First World which resulted in the deterioration of their balance of trade.

For example, one of the poorest African nations, Uganda in the 1990s had a debt burden of $2.46 billion. Two-thirds of Uganda’s exports were coffee, the world market price for which had fallen to half as compared to earlier prices. In 1993, Uganda’s debt payment amounted to $173 million, or 80% of its total exports. Similarly, Philippines’ debt amounted to $31.9 billion in 1991, most of which were accumulated by the dictator administration of Ferdinand Marcos until 1986.

Another reason for the incurred debt is the lifestyle of the elite in Third World countries. The export of consumer goods such as luxury cars, air conditioners and other electric and electronic goods also has negative impact on the trade balance resulting from the reckless lending of IFIs and unjustifiable spending of governments mostly under dictatorial rule.

Finally, the need of dictatorial elite regimes in the Third World continents to retain power over their people through force results in the imports of weapons and other warfare equipment. It was this type of a debt profile which in the aftermath of the oil crisis exploded (due to sudden imposition of high interest rates by the United States and other financial institutions) in the 1970s. Third World countries were borrowing more money to pay back debt service and to cover import bills. For example, from 1970 to 1988, the debt of Third World countries increased from US$54 billion to US$706 billion.

It was at this time that two important actors of the post-war era had a major impact on Third World economies, namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, also known as the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) or the Bretton Woods Institutions. These institutions were formed in 1944, to perform different functions: the IMF to provide short-term loan for trade; and the World Bank
to provide funds for post-war reconstruction and development of Europe. Later their energies were put to implementation of development policies such as the Green Revolution.

The IMF and the World Bank have been in close collaboration with each other: membership from one requires membership to another. They work together to ensure that all countries that take monetary assistance follow the rules set by them which are in the interests of the northern elites including their transnational corporations. In addition, an ‘international seal of good housekeeping’ from the IMF-WB also provided debtor countries the guarantee to the international community and other funding windows.

In exchange for loans, the IMF and the World Bank imposed certain conditionalities on Third World countries, more formally known as structural adjustments programs (SAPs) in the 1980s. The three critical components of SAPs are (i) deregulation (ii) privatization, and (iii) trade liberalization.

Deregulation policies ensured that governments limited or stopped public expenditure in the social sector including health, education, transport and other public utilities. Massive downsizing schemes were implemented resulting in millions of people losing their jobs in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Subsidies provided to agricultural inputs, food, health services and medicines were decreased or stopped. In addition to removal of subsidies, governments control over prices of essential commodities and services were removed. These policies are the major reason for the extremely high increase in the basic necessity items.

Under privatization, the public sector industries including social services were owned by private corporations or entities, allowing the corporate sector to expand. The massive privatization of water, transport, education, banking services which began in the 1970s to this day is a major policy condition imposed by the IMF and the World Bank. These IFIs, which hastily lend money, used this conditionality which have weakened social services of health and education, made public utilities inaccessible and further made underdeveloped countries more indebted to them.

Trade liberalization policies under SAPs emphasized the decrease in import tariffs allowing entry of foreign goods at cheaper prices. The major impetus of SAPs in agriculture had been to increase production of export-based cash crops. Both factors have had a very negative impact on agricultural production in Third World countries. The reduction in subsidies on agricultural inputs has led to high cost of agricultural production. Most cash crops are dependent on chemical farming methods resulting in increased cost of production which were unable to compete with the imported highly subsidized agricultural production of the First World corporate farming sector.

The SAPs policies are carried into the new millenium through the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

**Impacts**

The decrease or removal of subsidies on agriculture inputs as well as on utilities has had a devastating impact on rural communities. For instance in Pakistan, diesel price has gone up by 129% from 1999 to 2004, a direct result of the conditionalities imposed by the IMF under SAPs.

Green Revolution HYV seeds need excess amounts of water, making farmers dependent on tube well to irrigate their fields which are either run on diesel or electricity. Before SAPs, the government subsidized these inputs heavily. The removal of subsidies has increased the price for running tube wells extensively. Similarly,
tractors, seed drills, threshers and other machinery are essential in the modern agricultural production system. Now with increased cost of diesel the use of these machinery is expensive and beyond the means of the small farmers and the peasantry.

The extremely high cost of production has forced small farmers to either leave or lease their land. Hence as result of farmers losing their land, the number of farm workers has increased immensely. With the increase in numbers of labour, more and more peasantry is forced to work as daily labour on negligible wages. Women comprise a huge bulk of this daily wage labour. In Pakistan, these wages could be as low as 20 cents a day.

In Kenya, SAPs has enforced a cost sharing program between parents and the state, based on which parents have to provide cash for school infrastructure, as well as their children's tuition, books and uniform. The burden has been borne largely by women who have had to look for various forms of income generating methods to augment their income. In some cases, the choice has been between either sending children to school or continue tilling their land. Many have given up their production rather than letting children leave school.

A general impact has been increased migration from rural areas even for women. The situation has also forced women in many countries such as Bangladesh, the Philippines and Indonesia to migrate to either the urban areas or leave the country for overseas employment. In many countries, women due to shortage of work and the burden of taking care of their children and other family members are forced to enter prostitution. Sex trafficking is now a horrendous phenomenon seen in many parts of Asia.

**Neoliberalization, Globalization and the Current Crisis**

The Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the 1980s was the first step towards introducing the neoliberal paradigm which is generally known as globalization. The basic drive behind globalization has been to intensify the implementation of capitalist policies which allow the proliferation of market-based economy or in other words a free trade economy. A basic reason for the globalization process was to overcome the overproduction crisis being faced by the First World nations in their own economies. In order to find markets for their goods and services, as well as access and control to raw materials, a ‘new order’ had to be defined and implemented.

The neoliberal policy framework - premised on the three policies of deregulation, privatization and trade liberalization - allowed for imperialist control over the markets in the Third World forcing them to accept the absorption of the goods and services from the First World. At the same time, the neoliberal policy framework also enforced control over raw materials.

This initiative was spearheaded by the United States and other G7 economies (Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Canada and Japan, and with the induction of Russia, the G7 is now G8). The IMF and the World Bank, through SAPs, had already played a critical role in decreasing state intervention and increasing the role of market in Third World economies. The creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995 concretized the changes in national and international policies governing global trade in favour of privatization, deregulating and trade liberalization, the basic tenets of globalization.

For every policy instrument developed under the aegis of globalization, the powerful states of North America and Europe, led by the G7 states, have pushed two basic agenda: First, to open markets for their corporations for both industrial and agriculture products, as well as services; second, to control raw materials and natural
resources of the Third World for their production needs. It is based on the new colonial methods developed for controlling Third World economies that globalization has also been referred to as neo-colonization.

With neoliberal globalization, the global financial crisis has spiralled to impact the poorest and most vulnerable populations of the Third World, particularly the peasants. High cost of agricultural production has forced many small and landless farmers to be pushed deeper into poverty and debt, as they were unable to buy needed inputs for production.

**Implementing Framework of Neoliberalism**

*World Trade Organization & Bilateral Agreements*

Created in 1995, the major impetus of the WTO was to create a universal set of global trade regulations. The various agreements in the WTO such as Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), and the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). In every agreement within the WTO, the emphasis has been on opening Third World country markets to foreign goods and services, provided by transnational corporations of the G7 economies. It has been criticized and opposed for the heavy bias favouring transnational corporations, all of which are based in the First World and predominantly coming from the G7 economies.

A major driving force for globalization are the transnational corporations (TNCs) which have been responsible for the creation of the many of the most exploitative agreements within the WTO, such as the influential role of Cargill and Monsanto in the development of AoA and TRIPs.

For the G7 economies, the WTO has not been able to provide as much as space as they had hoped for in dictating market-led reforms. After the failure of Seattle Ministerial and Doha Negotiations, the option of bilateral trade had been pursued by the advanced countries especially the U.S.

What the U.S. has not been able to push through the WTO, it has pushed especially on Third World countries to accept through bilateral agreements. Generally, these agreements go further than the WTO agreements in their liberalization agreements. For instance, in the Thai-U.S. free trade agreement, Thailand has been asked to enforce a 25-year patent protection for U.S.-made pharmaceutical drugs, which is tougher than WTO rules that offer only 20 years. Such a regime will effectively restrict public access to cheap generic drugs in Thailand which has one of the Asia's highest rates of HIV patients.

It is clear that market supremacy that the TNCs had wanted from the implementation of the neoliberal policies has been achieved. For example, the implementation of many of the neoliberal policies has resulted in the liberalization of the agriculture sector, and has brought world's leading agro-chemical super profits.

In 2006, Monsanto, Dupont and Syngenta accounted for 39% of the commercial seed market while Bayer, Syngenta and BASF account for 46% of the pesticide market. Monsanto alone controls 41% of the global seed market for corn; 25% of soybeans; 31% for beans; 38% for sweet pepper 23% for tomatoes; and 25% for onions.

The overwhelming hegemony of world agri-business giants had proved that current economic policies guided by the WTO and IFIs are pushing most of the world population to hunger and misery. On one hand,
they become dependent on these companies’ seeds and on the other they are not getting anything from this new trend of agriculture practices.

Synthesis

The current mode of production under the guidance of the WTO, IFIs and transnational corporations is highly exploitative for a large number of the world population. These tendencies hidden in current economic policies have resulted in massive poverty in most of the Third World communities.

The miserable condition of people proved that the current approach is benefitting only the elite of the North and the South. The extreme upward spiral of food prices in the 2007-2008 period manifests the negative impacts of the free trade regime. In the early part of the decade, nearly 900 million people were suffering from hunger. The current escalation in food prices will increase these numbers in further millions.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) acknowledges that the food crisis has been the result of a number of neoliberal policies. For instance, IMF’s agenda of privatization led national governments to sell their food storage warehouses and decrease their storage capacity for food stocks. In addition, the fossil fuel dependency on industrial production was a two-edged sword which on one hand led to extreme oil price hike to a high of USD 140/barrel that massively increased the overall cost of agricultural production. On the other hand, the need to substitute oil, led to massive agricultural land use for the production of ethanol, thereby using food and fodder crops such as maize for agro-fuel production rather than food.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION THEMES AND ACTIVITIES

Discussion points

- Peasants are the world food producers yet account as the poorest sector across the globe. Chronic hunger and poverty remain high despite the claims of poverty reduction in the regions.

- Inequalities and the causes of poverty are rooted in the historical/colonial context of the rural conditions. Slave labour has become one common and main feature of colonization in all parts of the world.

- Land reform, corporatization of agriculture, green revolution and structural adjustment programmes including deregulation, privatization and trade liberalization have become instrumental for the “former” colonizers to dominate and control the local markets of the developing countries.
Activity 2: Workshop

Break the participants into 4 or 5 groups to discuss the level of receptiveness among the group. The following questions can be asked:

1. Are hunger and poverty still evident and prevalent in global regions today? What are your indicators?

2. How is hunger related to poverty? Can you name some of the factors in your region/subregion/country that aggravate hunger?

3. Identify current policies that directly affect agriculture in your region/subregion/country and describe their impacts in the food system.

4. What are the government, CSOs and other development actors’ roles in ensuring food security as a response to global chronic hunger?

The conclusions drawn from the discussion should give participants of different groups significant insights and introduction to food security and food sovereignty that will be elaborated further in the succeeding Module.
Objectives:

The participants will be able to do the following:
1. Understand the concept and principles of food sovereignty including the need for it in the midst of the continuing crisis;
2. Explain the origin and development of the concept of food sovereignty;
3. Come up with plans on conducting local-campaigns on food sovereignty and resisting implementation of neoliberal policies.

The Context: Why Food Sovereignty?

Destruction of Sustainable Agriculture, Food Production, People’s Livelihood and Health

Dependence on Corporate-controlled Resources

The 2006-2008 period saw sharp upward swings in the general cost of living. The most gravely affected, however, was the most basic of human needs: food. This triggered one of the worst food crises in contemporary times.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the food price increase in the first three months of 2008 is the highest in the last 30 years. In a span of one year, prices of essential food items such as vegetable oil has gone up by 97%; grains by 87%; dairy by 58%, and; rice by 46%.

The result: hunger-related riots in many countries. In Haiti, for instance, where nearly 75% of the people live on U.S. $2 a day, a 50% increase in food prices resulted in violent food and hunger riots all over the country. A Roman Catholic priest described the situation as “near-famine.”

According to the State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013 jointly released by FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP), “842 million people in 2011-2013, or around one in eight people in the world, were estimated to be suffering from chronic hunger, regularly not getting enough food to conduct an active life.” Of these, 98% live in the developing countries of
the Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa. Seventy percent of the world’s poorest people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and related activities for their livelihood.

**Corporate Agriculture and Neoliberal Policies**

The current food crisis is based on a number of factors, all of which are related to various policy decisions favouring the monopolistic control of agro-based transnational corporations (TNCs) of agricultural production resources and processes.

Market forces and profit, not food availability, are the main markers for these TNCs in defining agricultural production. The increasing conversion of food crops to agro-fuels in the past years is a clear case in point for understanding the profit-seeking mindset of corporate agriculture. Agro-fuels are made from sugar, maize, cassava, oil seed and palm oil, some of which are major food staples. Agro-fuel production increases not only the prices of these crops but also their prices.

Aside from causing the continued skyrocketing of prices of basic food items, the corporate model of production is also displacing and dislocating millions of peasant and indigenous communities from their homes, livelihoods and traditional way of life as more and more agricultural lands are being converted and cultivated for these prized crops.

Displacement is a regular phenomenon in Third World countries. For example, in Mexico, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other liberalization policies in Mexican agriculture have already led to the mass exodus of small farmers to urban centers in search of a livelihood. The food crisis these past few years is just a harbinger of other incoming disasters resulting in the takeover of traditional, sustainable, people-centered agricultural production systems.

The greed for profit leads TNCs to grow export-oriented products. In Mexico, the agriculture sector, controlled by agribusiness, is focused on the export of fresh vegetables, flowers and forest products. The result is the neglect of the production of basic cereals, most of which are now being imported.

Trade liberalization policies also push toward food importation. A majority of the Third World countries are net importing countries; of 148 countries, 105 (71%) are net food importers. According to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, the import bill of low-income food deficit countries is expected to reach U.S. $169 billion in 2008, a 40% increase from 2007.

The issue of food exports versus imports is of critical concern to small and landless farmers, as well as to other vulnerable groups in Third World countries. Developed countries such as the G8 members provide multi-billion dollar subsidies to their local agricultural production as well as their agriculture export sector. This basically means that their food and agriculture exports come into Third World countries at cheap prices, wiping out the livelihood of millions of poor farmers in the Third World, and wrecking national budgets due to high food import bills.

Market speculation in agriculture makes the immense fault line in the neoliberal framework glaringly visible. Instead of looking for solutions to the problems accosting small farmers and agricultural production, the sector is viewed as a cash cow for minting super profits, and its vulnerability exploited as a cause for market speculation.
For example, Schroders, a global asset management firm, is advocating investment in agriculture for its potentially lucrative returns. Reasons cited include rising population which means increased demand for food while supply is constrained due to climate change and weather uncertainties. This capitalist view of agriculture is considered a key reason for the current food crisis.

**International Financial Institutions, United Nations Agencies and Private Corporate Foundations**

International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank have consistently forced Third World countries to reduce their public grain storage facilities and to implement neoliberal policies in agriculture. The decline of public food storage facilities is an important factor in the sharply rising food prices in the past few years.

United Nations agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), among others, have also played a pivotal role in developing trade liberalization policies which resulted in havoc in agricultural and other food producing communities.

Foundations also played a critical role in furthering the neoliberal framework agenda in Third World countries. Take for example, the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). Currently chaired by the former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, AGRA is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to further green revolution policies which blatantly give agricultural production control to agri-TNCs, unleashing tremendous environmental harm as well as having immensely harmful impacts on the health of the people, especially the farming communities.

**World Trade Organization and Free Trade Agreements**

Apart from using the IFIs for policy reforms, a huge thrust towards applying a neoliberal framework to agricultural production is being pushed by organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO and bilateral free trade agreements are the reason millions of farmers, indigenous people and other poor and marginalized sectors in the Third World are being evicted from their lands and facing hunger and forced migration. They have created the legal foundations to ensure that neoliberal policies are imposed on the people of the Third World through the collaboration of their governments.

Policies which do not allow precautionary measures to be applied are being used in free trade agreements with Third World countries. Among these are the use by Third World farmers of genetically modified seeds such as Bt Rice, Bt Corn and Bt Cotton, usurping farmers’ critical rights of saving and exchanging seeds, and causing massive ecological damage.

Free trade agreements are also forcing wide scale dumping of cheap food imports on Third World countries. Such was the case of corn imports in Mexico, which helped the U.S. agribusiness sector tremendously.

With the WTO, a particularly problematic agreement is the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) which allows TNCs to hold patent rights over seeds and even life forms (i.e. genetically modified organisms). Using the TRIPs agreement, a critical element of corporate agriculture control has been the monopoly of the seed sector through hybrid and genetically modified seeds. The corporate agribusiness
The biotech sector, for instance, is promoting the use of GM seeds for combating hunger and climate change disasters. However, according to the ETC Group, after ten years of GM seeds:

- Only four industrial GE (genetically engineered) crops commercialized (maize, soybean, canola, cotton);
- Only four countries (Canada, US, Argentina, Brazil) account for over 90% of the global GE crop area worldwide;
- Only two GE traits are commercialized, i.e. pesticide tolerance and insect resistance;
- Monsanto’s GE crop seed and genetic traits account for almost 90% of the total area devoted to GE crops in 2005.

Farmers across the world refuse to accept the monopolistic control of TNCs over seeds and genetic material, which they believe is the collective property of farmers who have nurtured, developed and preserved them over many millennia.

The Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) is another highly biased agreement which has allowed the United States and other European nations to continue providing very high subsidies to their farmers for agricultural production, while farmers from the Third World face a situation where their national governments are barred from providing them with subsidies and other production-related support.

As a result of the many discriminatory regulations and policies embedded in the WTO, farmers across the world have refused to accept it, and have held a consistent position of demanding “WTO Out of Agriculture.”

**Corporate Agriculture and Climate Change**

Neoliberal policies created not only the current food crisis, but also aggravated climate change, a phenomenon now wreaking havoc in the lives of rural communities. It is the result of the unsustainable industrial production systems of the profit-based corporate sector in First World countries. Land degradation, carbon gas emissions, acid rains and other man-made disasters are furthering the loss of livelihoods, food crises, hunger, and enforced migration of millions of people worldwide.

Neoliberal policies and free trade agreements were created to protect and enlarge the profit-oriented stranglehold of agri-business corporate sector in the Third World countries. The agri-business sector now not only controls agricultural production, but also marketing, distribution and retail trade in agriculture, fisheries, dairy and livestock, among others. Such a narrow base of agricultural production cannot look after the food, nutrition, health, biodiversity or livelihood of the vast majority of the people. There is an urgent need, therefore, to push the food sovereignty model of production not only to save the livelihoods of millions of small food producers but also to stave off the acute food crisis that affects the majority of the world’s poor and hungry.
SUGGESTED THEMES AND DISCUSSIONS

Discussion Points:

- The 2008 World Food Crisis is the result of the various policy decisions favouring the monopolistic control of agro-based transnational corporations (TNCs) of agricultural production resources and processes.

- Control in food production is in the hands of a few, results to large-scale agricultural investments in developing countries that lead to displacements of peasant and indigenous communities worsening hunger and rural poverty, and even aggravated climate change.

- Influenced by the neoliberal policies of the IMF-WB-WTO, national governments implement liberalization, privatization and deregulation of basic social services including subsidy to agriculture.

Activity 2: Impacts of Neoliberal Policies in our Communities

Participants will be divided into groups of four or five (4 or 5) members and discuss at least one to three (1 to 3) programs being implemented by IMF-WB-WTO in their communities and its impacts to their livelihood and environment.

The participants will then be asked to share to the plenary the outcome of their group discussions.

(The next topic will be helpful as transition from Activity 2 on strengthening campaigns in the grassroots level by understanding the concept of food sovereignty)

Supporting the People’s Democratic Aspirations for Food Sovereignty

Right to Food, Agriculture and Food Production, Decent Livelihood, and Health

Food sovereignty provides the framework for redressing the exploitative imbalance experienced by peasants and other marginalized sectors all over the world in terms of agriculture and food. It is based on a democratic framework which demands that control of agricultural productive resources be in the hands of the people. Instead of mono-cropping systems of production which are based on use of destructive green revolution varieties, genetically modified seeds, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides, food sovereignty implements people-centered, ecologically-based, sustainable and self-reliant methods of farming.

In addition, food sovereignty translates the right to food into a more comprehensive demand for production of nutritious, culturally acceptable, and organically produced foods which are safe not only to human health but to ecological systems as well.
Demanding State Responsibility in Implementing Food Sovereignty: Upholding the Right to Food, Livelihood and Health

Democratic systems are governed by government structures and institutions. The authority embodied in these governance structures come from the power of the people. Food sovereignty demands that governments develop policies for food and agriculture production and distribution at all levels of governance, from municipal to national. These policies and programs would ensure the availability and access to food, productive resources, transportation, storing and marketing mechanisms for small food producers.

Industrial methods of farming rely heavily on pesticides, with genetically modified crops now being pushed more extensively by TNCs. The devastating impacts of this type of agricultural production are untenable for the health and livelihood of millions of small farmers. Food sovereignty demands that states take responsibility for providing a model of production which builds on chemically-free, safe, environmentally friendly methods of sustainable farming and provide food policies to which would allow attainment of scientifically sound health and nutrition standards for the people.

What is Food Sovereignty?

Food sovereignty as defined in the People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty, “The right of peoples, communities and countries to determine their own production systems, related to agricultural labor, fishing, food and land and associated policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances.”

“Food sovereignty is the power of people and their communities to assert and realize the right to food and produce food and fight the power of corporations and other forces that destroy the people’s food production systems and deny them food and life” (Preamble, The People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty).

These definitions capture and build upon the struggle of the people’s and farmers’ movements around the globe, the result of two decades of suffering from the onslaught of the trade liberalization in general, and agricultural liberalization in particular. Food sovereignty, in short, is the name coined for a vast variety of policy options and demands focused on farmers’ and small-scale food producers’ rights.

Development of the Food Sovereignty Concept

The concept of food sovereignty sprang in resistance to liberalization and corporatization of the agriculture sector and its brutal impacts, especially upon Third World countries. The concept was floated for the first time in the 1990s, becoming the main theme of the people’s parallel event held at the World Food Summit +5, 2002 in Rome.

It was the immense increase in poverty and hunger, especially in the rural communities of all Third World countries, which led to many mass and peoples’ organizations demanding a sustainable, farmer-centered agricultural production system which kept food and livelihood as central spring-board for policy making and implementation.

The national and international level policy orientation emphasis is on cash crop production with a view to connecting national agricultural production to international agriculture markets. The players in these
large-scale industrial production systems are the agri-business corporations at the international level and big feudal lords at the national level. The small farmers are pushed out of the production cycle due to their inability to pursue the crippling expensive methods of chemical farming. They end up losing their land and ultimately their livelihood to corporate agriculture. The loss of livelihood as well as the inability of small farmers to grow food crops has resulted in deteriorating food security at the household, community and national levels in a vast majority of countries in the Third World.

The responses from institutions under the umbrella of the United Nations have focused on the issue of food rights using the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One significant response was the assignment of a Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food in 2000.

The Special Rapporteur Right to Food summarized the right to food concept, as articulated by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as “the right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear.”

International government agencies working on social and humanitarian issues face a paradox. Ostensibly, they are meant to serve the interest of the people. However, globalization policies have dictated that they forward the corporate agenda rather than that of people’s and farmers’ rights. So, although the rhetoric focuses on hunger and malnutrition, they opt for policies which do not address the structural foundations of rural poverty and hunger. Their emphasis is on policy development and implementation which increases market-based interventions. In this regard, a particular policy line has focused on food security.

FAO defines food security as a “situation that exists when all people, at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

Food security has been critiqued for looking at it within the myopic frame of “access to food.” The word “access” hides multiple issues such as where the food will originate; who will be the food producers (primarily the Third World small and landless farmers, indigenous communities, fisherfolk or the mega agribusiness corporates); who will be responsible for distribution; and what methods of production as well as health and safety standards will be employed during production, among others.

It can be said that FAO’s use of the concept of food security abets rather than hinders the free trade agenda of the WTO, IMF and the World Bank. By holding true to the promises of food security – as well in the recognition of the Article XI of the Convenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights whereby “everyone has the right to adequate food and a fundamental right to be free from hunger.”

This reconceptualization of food security ultimately benefits powerful countries and corporations involved in food and agribusiness trade and investment. These neoliberal trade policies posit that importing cheap food is a better way for poor countries to achieve food security rather than producing it themselves. The World Bank even asserts that free trade is essential to food security because it makes the most efficient use of world resources.
Levels and Context of Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty is a term which provides a very broad framework for action in agricultural production and distribution. First, food sovereignty provides a platform for policy advocacy. Policy makers working at the municipality, provincial, national or international governance levels can make use of the vision embodied in food sovereignty to address the economic and social needs of small and landless farmers, peasants, fisher folk, indigenous people, women, pastoralists and all other small food producers and communities.

Second, food sovereignty also provides a clear line of action for small food producer communities, various people's movements and activists to mobilize themselves for advancing and achieving a new vision of self-reliant, sustainable, economically productive and healthy agricultural production and distribution systems.

Food sovereignty, under the policy advocacy umbrella provides space for:

- a policy framework or platform for food and agriculture policy debate/formulation;
- a set of specific policy goals;
- a package of social programs.

Food sovereignty, at the same time, inherently contains a number of democratic principles which have been largely accepted as foundations for universal human rights and national and people's sovereignty. Therefore, food sovereignty:

- engages in the context of the human rights principle;
- strengthens the international, national and people's democratic framework;
- strengthens national and peoples sovereignty;
- challenges and refutes imperialist frameworks;
- forwards sustainable and cooperative versus unsustainable competitive frameworks;
- forwards a framework for solidarity and alliance.

The basic principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights acknowledge the right to food, land and livelihood. Food sovereignty expands these basic principles, as it encapsulates not only individual rights (as advocated by human right principles) but also collective rights of the people. Human society does not exist only as separate individuals; hence many of political, social and economic rights have to be determined collectively. Food sovereignty recognizes and advances this right, thereby going further than the human rights principles.

A highly sought after value and code of conduct for societies and nations is democracy. A democratic society is dependent on consensus, equal voice, and social justice for all the people, irrespective of class, caste, race, religion and sex. Food sovereignty demands genuine democracy in determining agricultural production and distribution.
By focusing on the economic and social needs of the small producer it includes the voice of a vast majority of the Third World communities, which are being marginalized in the globalized corporate agriculture production. With people’s voices and demands resonating at the centre of decision making and implementation, food sovereignty stands out as the truly people-powered democratic approach. Making use of democratic principles at all levels of decision making, the food sovereignty approach works by strengthening democratic institutions from the local to the international level.

By requiring genuine democracy and people’s representation at individual and collective platforms, food sovereignty is actually demanding people’s sovereignty. Using the concept of sovereignty, food sovereignty is the right of the people to demand and assert their rights. It challenges and revokes the imperialist framework being used in the trade liberalization agenda of globalization and highlights the sharp contrast between people’s economic and social rights and the unjust encroachment of the corporate agriculture propelled by the powerful actors of the free market economy.

The current coercive, corrosive agricultural development framework is standing on industrialized, highly toxic chemical-dependent methods of production. The principal values of this production system are to generate super profits by consolidating TNCs monopolistic control over land, seed and other natural resources including labour. Food sovereignty, while exposing the exploitative and oppressive development model of neoliberal production systems, offers a holistic model by passing control over decision making and implementation to the hands of the people, using sustainable, ecologically sound, self-reliant models of production paramount for generating food and livelihood, rather than profits.

This food sovereignty development framework lends itself to alliance and solidarity work amongst people’s movements, and across sectors and national boundaries, uniting the needs of all communities whether they be urban or rural. The inalienable right of people to food also includes the right to access safe, chemical-free, nutritious healthy food. These rights have been well captured in the food sovereignty framework and provide a strong bond for alliance amongst indigenous people, women, landless farmers and peasants, fisher folk, pastoralists, consumer groups, scientists and the many peoples’ movements struggling toward social and economic justice.

In addition, the food sovereignty framework provides ample space for policy advocacy. The level for advocacy can be at various levels starting from advocating for a national food sovereignty policy framework, to the level of individual programs for a sector or specific vulnerable groups.

A majority of Third World countries are agrarian economies. Development goals invariably focus on rural and agriculture development. The food sovereignty model caters to the agriculture-based economic and social development needs of the whole country, encompassing not only rural populations, but also the food distribution needs of the urban sector.

The advocacy at the level of small-scale food-producing communities is the most important. The deteriorating socio-economic condition of landless and small farmers as well as other food producers is a consistent focus of national policy and legislation. Policy goals for specific sectors such as small farmers, fisherfolk, and women producers can be translated to particular national, provincial or municipal level legislation to address their livelihood, health and nutrition requirements.

Finally, the food sovereignty framework should also be used as for advocating specialized food and agricultural programs for special sectors. For instance, these could include food distribution programs for children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people in conflict zones. The rising impact of climate change and
global warming, resulting in many communities becoming vulnerable to and suffering from natural and man-made disasters, can be specifically included in program and policy framework of food sovereignty.

SUGGESTED THEMES AND DISCUSSIONS

**Discussion Points:**

- Food sovereignty is the power of people and their communities to assert and realize the right to food and produce food and fight the power of corporations and other forces that destroy the people's food production systems and deny them food and life.

- Existing national and international policies are controlled and influenced by large-scale agro-industrial corporations disempowering small farmers in policy and decision-making.

- The grassroots voices with food sovereignty as the framework should be the priority in policy and decision-making and should be translated to particular national, provincial or municipal level legislation to genuinely address the issues of landlessness and food security.

**Activity 4: Food Sovereignty as a Framework**

Triad - Ask the participants to identify five or more specific problems in agriculture and food (e.g., expensive seeds) and list them down on the board. Divide the participants into groups of three (3). Assign each of the groups one listed problem and ask them to discuss among themselves how food sovereignty addresses the problem. Ask the groups to present the result of their discussion. They may also present it creatively if there is enough time.

(This activity will synthesize the contents of this module and will be a transition to the next module on “Food Sovereignty as a basis for rural food and agriculture campaigning, policy and program”)


Objectives:

This module shall enable participants to:

1. Explain food sovereignty as a rural populace platform for campaigning and policy advocacy; and
2. Describe the components of the food sovereignty program.

Food Sovereignty as a Platform for Alliance-building and Campaigning

The concept of food sovereignty took root and evolved from the struggles of peasant movements in various nations and on a global scale.

Food sovereignty is about the right of peoples to determine their own food policies and systems of production. It is about people before profits – the small producers such as fisherfolk, landless peasants, and urban poor people who produce, distribute and consume food that are at the core of food policy systems and decisions, instead of international market demand and transnational corporations that currently dominate the global food system.

Food sovereignty demands that the means of production such as land, seed, water, and other resources, as well as markets for their produce, should be in the hands of small producers. Hence, small and landless farmers can organize and mobilise on a single platform to demand land reform from their provincial and national governments. Similarly, other food production communities can demand national policies which would accord them rights to free/subsidized food, ensuring their right to adequate food and nutrition.

Groups and organizations of small producers such as fisherfolk, landless peasants, urban poor, rural women, indigenous people, and environment advocates can come together to press for universal demands such as the right to food. Hence, people-centred demands can be collectively asserted through a food sovereignty platform by developing alliances amongst various sectors.
Food sovereignty lends itself to various forms of struggle, including policy advocacy and movement building. The strength of food sovereignty lies in the formation and expansion of farmers’ and peoples’ rights movements in rural communities and in other food producing sectors in nations and regions. These various movements for food sovereignty can link up with each other on a broad international scale.

The demands of small farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, indigenous people and other small producers are based on self-reliance and self-sufficiency in food production. It is in pursuit of better lives and livelihood that enables communities to live productively by being able to attain their basic needs while maintaining human dignity.

Food sovereignty cuts across all aspects of human life. Since food is the basic force behind human life at all levels from the household to the community, food sovereignty encompasses social, economic and political spheres. However, food production and distribution are economic activities which under neoliberal policies have become more and more inaccessible to poor communities. In order to attain the right to produce and consume food, people and communities have to organize themselves to attain political visibility and strength.

Key Principles of Food Sovereignty Campaigns and Policy Framework

*Public advocacy, the struggle for justice, liberation and economic democracy*

Food sovereignty is interconnected to a number of platforms. It is informed by people’s movements and advocates the changes demanded by the people in public governance structures. Therefore, the key aspirations of the masses – economic and social justice, freedom from exploitation and oppression, and genuine democracy – are the pillars of food sovereignty.

The key elements of an economic democracy encompass people’s control and access over agriculture productive sources and the right to decent livelihood. Genuine agrarian reform has been one of the key demands of mass movements across countries and continents. The struggle for agrarian reform and other liberation movements have been based on direct action and have gone beyond public advocacy. Food sovereignty supports these movements and provides other instruments for advocating the demands of the people.

*On food sovereignty and rights*

The Universal Human Rights Charter has outlined a number of basic human rights. These, and collective rights that have a strong foundation in rural communities, are some of the basic tenets of food sovereignty.

In other words, food sovereignty emphasises the communities’ right to development. The right to development embodies internationally accepted principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability, independence and initiative as a guide to our efforts to confront contemporary peoples’ issues and challenges.
The right to development is about people empowerment. This includes the empowerment of the marginalized, as well as the enabling of policy environments to address widening poverty gaps, rising food shortages, climate change, economic crises, and other pressing challenges confronting the world’s peoples.

The current mode of production which is based on privatization, deregulation and liberalization does not provide the basic principles needed for a holistic development paradigm. With little or no support from governments, the poorest and most marginalized segments of society (which comprise the majority in quantitative terms) are unable to access the most basic services such as health, education, nutrition, sanitary services, among others. This leads to a vicious circle of poverty where lack of adequate nutrition leads to barriers to educational attainment which in turn leads to low economic returns. In addition, the so-called modern paradigm of development emphasises dependency on external actors and factors promoting models of neoliberalism and imperialism.

The concept of food sovereignty rests on a paradigm for development which privileges cooperation and internal sustainability over competitiveness and external dependencies. Food sovereignty is based on the communities’ right to define a pro-people development. Such a framework builds on the foundations of people’s right to self-determination and self-reliance. Under this paradigm, the right to decent livelihood is respected, and people are allowed access to and control over resources, which is the essence of food sovereignty.

The basic demands include the right to livelihood as well as the right to safe, nutritious, and culturally-acceptable foods. In this context, the right to ecologically sound and sustainable agricultural production systems is a key demand of food sovereignty.

These rights extend not only to food producers but also to consumers. For example, food labelling rights are important elements of consumer rights, which ensure the consumption of safe, non-hazardous food. Others include the right to say no to genetically modified food, and food produced with the use of chemicals and other toxins harmful to human health and ecology.

This paradigm also emphasises the rights of future generations to access earth’s resources. Sustainability is only possible through principles of cooperation, conservation and regeneration of resources. Food sovereignty discards the cycle of surplus accumulation of profits from the exploitation of our planet’s resources.

**Food sovereignty as a people-power based approach to policy advocacy**

Democracy means the full participation of people in policy formulation and implementation. In the current neoliberal environment, the control of policy development and implementation is in the hands of elite governance structures while people are left to face the negative brunt of these policies. Food sovereignty advocates the right of the people to be the central force in decision making as well as implementation.

People-centred decision making for policy development is juxtaposed to a neoliberal framework which is in essence an imperialist framework. The corporate control of agricultural production and distribution is a commercial activity. Much of this activity in the globalization era is made possible by international laws passed through bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, and through the coercive mechanisms of imperialist globalization. Food sovereignty rejects this oppressive framework and puts a people-powered democratic system for advocating a new set of rules for food and agricultural production and distribution.
Activity 5: Food Sovereignty Campaign

Participants shall be grouped in dyads or triads to select a campaign theme, specify the community/sectors which could organise to carry out the campaign, and indicate the campaign period with a theme on food sovereignty as a framework for policy and campaign in the local, national, regional or international level. A particular slogan for the campaign may also be defined.

Key Elements of Food Sovereignty Campaigns:

Organizing and Mobilization for Food Sovereignty Campaigns

Organizing and mobilizing rural communities based on key principles of food sovereignty

Policy advocacy can only have strength if the masses of the country are willing to demand and fight for their rights, welfare and aspirations. Therefore, an essential component of an effective campaign platform is to organise and mobilise rural communities to press for its demands and genuine reforms based on the principles of food sovereignty.

A key principle of food sovereignty is freedom from oppression. Hunger is one of the worst forms of oppression. Rural communities are the worst victims of hunger and poverty, as noted by the UN. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, a majority of the people suffering from hunger are from rural areas, predominantly women and children. The latest UN Human Development Report estimates that the number of malnourished people has increased from 850 million in 1980 to about 1 billion worldwide today. This is despite close to 40 years of technological progress and the ever-increasing exploitation of the planet’s natural resources.

Similarly, agricultural workers face extreme exploitation, and are paid the lowest wages amongst various sectors of the labour force. In addition, many countries still refuse to give agricultural labour formal status or include them in the minimum wage laws. This makes the sector especially vulnerable to massive levels of exploitation.

The onslaught of agricultural liberalization has put oppressed communities in a state of chaos, intensifying the hardship of their daily life and pushing them deeper into debt and poverty. The unjust imposition of the imperialist globalization framework on agriculture has led peasant alliances to develop the concept of food sovereignty. However, further sensitization, politicization and mobilizing of small and landless farmers, pastoralists, rural women and others from the basic masses is critical for meeting the aspirations of food sovereignty.

Organizing and mobilizing to address the collective needs of rural communities for food sovereignty programs

The key principles of food sovereignty translate into specific policies and programs. For instance, labour rights for agricultural workers can be used to mobilise them by developing immediate specific programs around which they could rally. For example, a specific demand for raising and standardising daily wages in the agricultural sector would allow all wage labour across caste, religion and gender to unify.
Addressing such critical collective needs of rural communities would provide an umbrella for broadening and strengthening peasant alliances, as well alliances among other food producing communities. A collective demand for subsidized staple food items for rural and urban working classes could provide the basis for a very broad alliance for food sovereignty. An example of a program for subsidized food system could be a specific nutrition program for expecting and feeding mothers in the rural areas.

Some key food sovereignty based policies that can be conceptualised and pursued are:

- Policy Framework for providing Agricultural Workers Formal Labour Status
- Policy Framework for Progressive Wages for Regular and Seasonal Farm Workers
- Policy Framework for Sustainable Agriculture Production
- Policy Framework for Land Reforms

Some key food sovereignty programs can be drawn up are:

- Community-based Free Food Distribution Program for Children and the Elderly
- Decent Livelihood Schemes for Small Producers
- Internal Input Subsidy Program for Food Crops
- Biodiversity-based Pest Control System
- Distribution of Traditional Seed Varieties for Food Crops

**Key Components of Food Sovereignty Policy Advocacy**

Food sovereignty addresses the most basic sectors of food and agricultural production. These include the critical economic and social spheres of production, distribution, health and nutrition, and food relief.

**People’s Food Production System**

**Critique of the Current Food Production Systems**

Previous modules have already provided a detailed analysis of the current chaos and misery of small food producers. Paramount among the issues includes the inability of small and landless farmers, fisherfolk, women producers and indigenous people among others to eke out a decent living from their centuries-old ancestral livelihood.

The introduction of green revolution technologies took away self-reliance from agricultural production, leaving peasants heavily dependent on external inputs such as HYV seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Neoliberal policies using instruments such as the WTO’s Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property
Rights (TRIPS) and the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), along with other bilateral and multilateral agreements, have wrenched control and access over land, seeds, water and other natural resources away from small farmers and other food producers.

The trade liberalization environment, where global markets have come to play a dominant role in agricultural production, has forced producers to grow more and more cash crops on land formerly devoted to food production.

Privatization has increased the cost of production to an extent that peasants have entered a vicious cycle of debt and poverty, forcing them away from their lands and livelihood, seeking low-paid work for daily existence. Millions in the Third World are living in constant flux, migrating to other rural communities in search of work and food, while others have gone to a miserable existence in urban slums, and many more have left their countries as migrant workers facing the onslaught of racism, exploitation and other forms of physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

**Key Principles of Food Production**

Food sovereignty provides a framework for policy advocacy as well as mobilizing rural communities to campaign for a critical structural change in food and agricultural production. The key principles for production are self-reliance and self-sufficiency, emphasizing local food production.

Drawing from the knowledge systems of the peasant and indigenous people, food sovereignty advocates biodiversity-based, ecologically sound, sustainable methods of production which rely on collective methods.

The sustainable agriculture framework holds central the principle of economic democracy, ensuring that rural communities have access to their inalienable rights to decent livelihood, food, health, shelter and other basic necessities of life.

The people-centred food sovereignty production model solidly refutes the neoliberal framework that is based on (1) chemical-intensive, large-scale industrial farming, and (2) the promotion of patenting life-forms and genetic resources controlled by an elite sector of feudal landlords and agro-chemical TNCs.

**Key Components of People’s Food Production Systems**

The food sovereignty public platform advocates a number of policy initiatives which would work towards attaining a food sovereignty policy paradigm. The most critical among them are genuine agrarian and aquatic reforms. Genuine agrarian reform would ensure the creation of people’s land collectives that would allow marginalized and vulnerable groups to access land for food and agricultural production. The primary beneficiaries among small producers would be women, indigenous people, fisherfolk and landless peasants.

However, any self-reliant and self-sufficient food production system cannot be successful without the people’s access to productive resources such as seed, land, water, livestock and energy sources. Hence, the people’s access to productive sources needs to be a key element of such a system.

The most basic premise of the people’s food production system is to ensure a decent livelihood for the marginalized sectors (who comprise nearly the whole of the rural communities of the Third World). Therefore, the key components advocated is the promotion of workers’ rights, dignity and welfare as well
as the eradication of usury, bonded labour and exploitation of child labour, eradication of other forms of oppression against various sectors of labour including the landless peasants and migrant workers.

The past generations of farmers and small producers, spreading over numerous millennia, were the guardians of invaluable knowledge of natural resources, ecological systems and sustainable food production. It was through their continued effort in learning and nurturing from the ecological system that a wealth of knowledge has been passed on to present generations.

Modern industrial for-profit agriculture has done immense harm to the indigenous and local people's knowledge systems. The food sovereignty platform lays critical importance on preserving, building and spreading indigenous and local knowledge systems and other appropriate technologies.

Indigenous cultures were self-sufficient in foods by using their knowledge of uncultivated plants as rich food and medicinal sources, nurturing and preserving genetic resources as well as nature-based food production such as honey, milk and milk products. The self-reliant production model emphasises the regeneration of ecological production systems, a rich base of traditional seeds, and livestock which would allow food and nutrition stability amongst the most vulnerable and marginalized communities. At the same time, this food production system repudiates the reductionist corporate-controlled industrial production system that is dependent on chemical nutrients, pest-infested narrow germplasm/genetically modified seeds, and the increasing usage of water and toxic pesticides.

The food sovereignty model promotes and advocates the generation of appropriate technologies that would leave the control and benefits of value addition to food production in the hands of rural food producing communities. As part of self-reliance, food sovereignty demands a policy shift where credit is made available to small producers rather than to corporate plantation-owners and feudal landlords. The small producer would have access to capital, and be the central decision-maker-implementer in development of food processing and preservation technologies.

A critical aspect of a sustainable and self-sufficient food agriculture production system is developing and maintaining a biodiversity-based ecological system which would provide a decent livelihood for small and landless farmers and build a base for the production and supply of nutritious and safe food systems. This is contrary to the corporate-based agro-chemical food systems that heavily use chemicals and other toxic substances.

For instance, the rich diversity in livestock can be used not only as a productive tool, but also as an invaluable source of diet and nutrition, and even the manure that is necessary in pest-controlled organic farming systems. An ecologically balanced agricultural production system would be incomplete without integrating fodder production systems, which is advocated as a major component of food sovereignty.

Instead of the liberalized and corporate-controlled agribusiness model, food sovereignty builds on cooperative models that promote trade and investment between regional and international small producer communities that adhere to the principle of self-reliance in domestic production.

For example, the people's production model involves the setting up of seed banks to re-establish genetic resource banks amongst farmers from similar ecological and geographical zones. The appropriate technologies for water conservation, energy production and other people-friendly technologies are shared for increasing productivity as well as safeguarding local ecological systems.
People’s Food Distribution System

Critique of Current Food Distribution

The lack of people’s control over the current food production system is starkly apparent. Even though small farmers, fisherfolk and other food producers toil in the production of food and agriculture in the Third World countries, they do not have access to what they grow. Small farmers and the landless peasants are not even able to ensure household food security for 3-4 months of the year. The pricing mechanisms are based on market supply and demand of food which is beyond the income range of poor rural and urban populations. At the same time, the finished, high-end value food chains as well as imported food are now changing food culture and do not answer the food security, health and nutrition needs of the communities.

The right to food is currently not a basic criterion for food distribution systems. Food distribution is totally dependent on market mechanisms. Public food storage systems have been dismantled under the conditions set by the IFIs (and through Structural Adjustment Programs). Such policy mechanisms have drastically reduced national food reserves, leaving communities as well as nation-states dependent on the global market for procuring staple foods. The deregulation and privatization policies of the neoliberal framework have left the most vulnerable sectors — including women, children and the elderly — without access to free/subsidized food distribution systems. A particular example is the deliberate weakening of the Public Distribution System in India.

Food aid is further harming the availability and access to local food. Instead of our governments being responsible for meeting the food needs of the people, they pass on the responsibility and control to the transnational agribusiness sector.

Infants and children are special targets of corporate food and infant milk industries, where they are made vulnerable to unsafe, unhygienic infant milk formulas and food, resulting in vicious cycles of malnutrition and diarrhea.

Survivors of man-made and natural calamities face another kind of exploitation. The current climate change phenomenon has substantially increased the incidence of such disasters. Many Third World countries face more than one incidence per year. This has resulted in acute food shortages, loss of agricultural food production land and reduced livestock. Rural populations have become especially vulnerable since they are forced to accept whatever form of food and water aid is supplied. The agribusiness sector has used disasters to promote the use of their seeds and fertilizers as well as distribution of genetically modified seeds and food in the name of rehabilitation aid, creating new forms of dependencies on corporate agriculture.

Key Principles of Food Distribution

The people’s food distribution paradigm rests on certain key principles. These include self-governance in food distribution with emphasis on community level, local and national food procurement systems. Economic democracy remains crucial in food distribution programs which means that food prices have to be controlled to allow all income groups, especially the landless and other marginalized sectors of the economy, including the urban working class, to have access to food, especially the basic food basket comprising of staples and other culturally relevant essential ingredients.
Food distribution systems and policies have to be determined through complete participation of the marginalized sectors of society. This means that the voices and needs of landless peasants, women, indigenous people, religious and caste-based minorities are given primacy in decision making and policy implementation.

All food distribution policies have to be premised on the principle of the absolute right to food which encompasses indicators for nutritional quality, health, food safety and cultural determination of food needs.

**Key Components of People’s Food Distribution Systems**

Community food systems must be based on local procurement that is supported by national food programs. Planning and decision making for food security have to be developed at the community level and then taken to higher levels of governance, such as the district, provincial, state, and national or federal level.

Food procurement, storage and distribution have to be developed and proactively implemented. These also have to be ready for disasters and/or emergency situations. Pro-people and proactive local food distribution systems prioritize food subsidy programs for the vulnerable and marginalized sectors that include lactating mothers, children, elderly, disaster survivors, and the special dietary needs of those suffering from particular diseases.

The people-centred food procurement and distribution system emphasizes food storage and reserve mechanisms so that, all year round, food security for the people is ensured. Food distribution policies under a food sovereignty umbrella ensure a production cycle that does not create dependence on foreign food procurement systems or corporate-controlled finished food items.

For example, the Deccan Development Society promoted community-based grain banks managed by women farmers. The basic concept was to promote culturally acceptable food grains in the community and ensuring that the most vulnerable families would get the locally produced grains at subsidised rates. So even though the government of India was providing subsidised rice, these women wanted sorghum to be available, as it had higher nutrition and was culturally part of their diet. The system for grain production, storage and distribution was planned, implemented and maintained by women at the community level.

*People’s Health and Nutrition*

**Key Principles of Health and Nutrition**

The key principles on health, nutrition and food safety address food production, distribution and potable drinking water systems. Pro-people and proactive methods for determining and implementing health, nutrition, sanitation and hygiene standards must be maintained by ensuring complete information dissemination to communities.

The people’s food production and distribution system has to be based on environment-friendly and ecologically safe standards. This system should be free from chemical and biological hazards and follow the cultural parameters of food acceptance.
Key Components of Health and Nutrition

People-centred food production and distribution methods set health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation standards based on local or indigenous knowledge and scientific systems. The governance of safety standards for food and water must be based on methods determined and controlled by the communities, of which women must be key partners.

Community-oriented health education programs need to be developed based on participatory information sharing and setting up of scientific and community-accepted measures. Community health education programs need to be contextualised to address the needs of the people, especially lactating mothers, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and disaster survivors.

Breastfeeding has to be a key measure for ensuring the health and nutritional needs of infants. Special nutritional needs of lactating mothers have to be central to subsidized or free nutrition and food programs.

Proactive, pro-people food labelling systems are an important part of health and nutrition policies to ensure the total provision of information about the safety, nutritional value, and ingredient content of food.

People’s Food Relief and Rehabilitation System

Key Principles of Food Relief and Rehabilitation

Disaster survivors’ basic right to food is the primary tenet of the food relief and rehabilitation program developed under the food sovereignty framework. The delivery of this right is based on the principle of proactive organizing and equitable distribution. The pro-people food relief distribution efforts must have survivors as key members in decision making and implementation of food relief and rehabilitation programs. Critical importance should be given to meeting the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable survivors. These include pregnant women and lactating mothers, widows, children (especially orphans), the elderly, those suffering from physical and mental disabilities, religious and caste-based minorities, and indigenous peoples.

The distribution of food and water relief should be anchored on food and water aid primarily procured from local, domestic sources. Food and water aid from the international community must not be used as an instrument of war or to further market-based profit-oriented policies. This will make communities dependent on imported food supplies.

In addition, food aid cannot be used as a tool to provide TNCs control of the domestic market, as has often been seen in the neoliberal framework guiding international relief programs. The principles of full disclosure on food sources, labelling, food safety and nutrition have to be the centre of any foreign food aid. Using the precautionary principle, disaster survivors and communities have the right to refuse food, medicines or any other aid in case it violates the principles of food sovereignty.

All food sovereignty rehabilitation efforts for the survivors must be proactive and people-centred. It must be developed on the principles of self-sufficiency and self-reliance, the revival of the pre-disaster food sovereignty situation, and the restoration of community-based or community-owned agriculture, livestock and fodder production.
Key Components of Food Relief and Rehabilitation

Food relief should be pro-people and proactive. It should not be used to further any political and economic agenda, but to genuinely help distressed areas and institute proactive mechanisms especially in poverty-stricken communities and disaster-prone localities. Food must not be used as an instrument of domination or of war.

Breast feeding has to be a critical component, and in cases where there are orphaned infants, community-based milk provisions have to be sought without relying on infant milk formula distribution.

Domestic food procurement and distribution systems developed for disasters have to be implemented. In the rehabilitation stages, rejuvenation programs for indigenous and local methods of food production have to be initiated using local traditional seeds to ensure that corporate controlled as well as genetically modified seeds are not distributed as part of rehabilitation aid programs.

All food aid received must meet food safety, health and nutrition standards. Food labelling is a basic requirement for all food aid to be received. Food aid can be refused if it is being used for dumping of spoilt food or/and medicines, genetically modified food or culturally unacceptable foods on survivor communities.

SUGGESTED THEMES AND DISCUSSIONS

Discussion Points:

- Food sovereignty lends itself to various forms of struggle, including policy advocacy and movement building which makes it a powerful tool to assert people-centred demands;

- The current mode of production which is based on privatization, deregulation and liberalization does not provide the basic principles needed for a holistic development paradigm;

- An effective campaign platform is to organise and mobilise rural communities to press for its demands and genuine reforms based on the principles of food sovereignty;

- Food sovereignty addresses the most basic sectors of food and agricultural production. These include the critical economic and social spheres of production, distribution, health and nutrition, and food relief.
Activity 6: Current Policy Framework versus Food Sovereignty Framework

Food programs: Flaws and gaps. Dissect the existing key government food programs. From this collective analysis, formulate at least five urgent and doable policy recommendations based on the food sovereignty framework.

Below is a matrix in which facilitator/s and participants can jot down the contrasting nature of the prevailing policy framework in food and agriculture and the food sovereignty framework. This activity is meant to highlight the policy leap that needs to be achieved. The facilitator can also add more issues in the first column. The first row has been filled up to get the activity started.

Current Policy Framework versus Food Sovereignty Framework

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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Current Policy Framework</th>
<th>Food Sovereignty Framework</th>
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<tr>
<td>Production priority</td>
<td>Cash-crops for exports</td>
<td>Food for domestic consumption, geared towards self-sufficiency</td>
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<td>Agrarian reform</td>
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<td>Crop prices</td>
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<td>Food aid</td>
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Objectives:

The participants will be able to:

1. Promote the collective strength of farmers and other food producing sectors to mobilize and campaign on food sovereignty policies and programs in the local, national and international arenas; and

2. Use food sovereignty as a central focus for the formation of farmers’ and other small food producers’ mass-based platforms/organizations/collectives.

Food Sovereignty as a platform for Mass Organizations, Mobilizations and Campaigns

The concept of food sovereignty is the result of peasant movements resisting the onslaught of neoliberal imperialist globalization. It is imperative to increase the mass-based strength of peasant groups advocating food sovereignty to heighten the political struggle against the ongoing agribusiness takeover of food and agriculture.

For this purpose, mass organizing and campaigning are needed so that the majority of small and landless farmers and producers across national and international boundaries are able to cohesively demand the rights pertinent to their livelihood, food and health. Vibrant campaigns around these issues would not only increase the pressure on local, national and international government structures, but also be of critical strategic value in politicizing and sensitizing peasants to join the food sovereignty platform.

People’s Mass Organizations

The food sovereignty platform challenges the current political framework of agricultural trade and production controlled by hegemonic corporate forces that have immense international political and economic strength.

The people’s power opposing them must be built, consolidated, and strengthened through vast mass organizations of peasants, agricultural workers, women, fisherfolk and urban poor among others.
To achieve food sovereignty goals, it is critical to increase the momentum in organizing small producers to include peasants, fisherfolk, women, pastoral communities and other sectors to enable them to articulate their demands based on their collective rights to livelihood, food, health and nutrition.

**Levels of Mass Organizing**

An important element of mobilizing and campaigning for food sovereignty is that all small food producers, especially in the Third World countries, have to organize by sector.

First, small and landless farmers, agricultural workers, women peasants and pastoralists, among others, need to articulate their needs so that they can further mobilize a mass base to campaign for mechanisms needed to ensure their right to decent livelihood, food and health.

It is of course understood that each sector will demand the right to decent livelihood; however the concrete demands will be different for each sector. It is important to note that in using the food sovereignty principles to organize and mobilize, each food producing sector has its particular needs and demands.

For the fisherfolk sector, food sovereignty demands shall focus on the absolute right to their coastal waters, without monopolization of their fishing areas by international trawlers operated by powerful corporate interests. The fishing and storage capacity of these trawlers is far greater than that of small fishers. This means the huge fish catches made by trawlers severely diminish small fishers’ ability to catch enough fish to sustain their daily lives.

The trawlers not only wipe out the livelihood of the small fisher folk, they have a disastrous impact on the sustainability of intergenerational marine resources. In addition, fisherfolk are the worst hit by vast environmentally disastrous recreation resorts being pushed under various international trade agreements for “coastal tourism.”

These are in direct contrast to the experience of past generations that had bountiful fish catches without encroachment from other powerful sectors.

Second, in the tremendous struggle for food sovereignty, each sector has to organize its ranks and develop alliances with other sectors so that they can strengthen each other. There is no doubt that the right to decent livelihood and the right to safe nutritious food are unifying factors across all sectors.

For example, urban poor communities may not be food producing sectors, but the right to safe nutritious food is the bridge which connects all sectors of a society. It is by identifying rights shared across sectors that inter-sectoral and multi-sectoral alliances are formed. For instance, women’s right to land collectives and decent livelihood are arenas for unifying all food producing and urban communities.

Third, the impacts of global free market policies on small producers are very similar across national, regional and international boundaries. There is a critical need to spread and strengthen the struggles, alliances, networks and solidarity amongst all sectors regionally and internationally.

The mobilizations and campaigns on food sovereignty based on unified calls addressing the diverse issues and demands of small producers, landless peasants and other sectors will merit further attention at the regional and international levels.
For instance, all small producers in a national food sovereignty alliance could collectively demand the right to decent livelihood, with the right to control and access their productive resources such as seas and agricultural lands. Such alliance-building would engage sector-based collectives at various levels (rural, urban, village, district, regional, international) to push forward distinct demands based on the food sovereignty principles and programs.

Such campaigns would create space for people-powered democratic decision making and enable local communities to develop a national food sovereignty policy over corporate controlled agricultural production based on the free market doctrine.

Elements of Mass Organizations and Mobilizations

The key elements of mass organizations and mobilization of various sectors are rooted in awareness-raising and education programs using a food sovereignty framework.

Educational Programs

Mass-awareness programs need to be conducted for small producers including women, pastoralists, small, landless and indigenous farmers as well as other food producing sectors.

Education programs need to use an analytical framework which examines the socio economic conditions of the farmers and other food producing sectors, highlighting their oppression and exploitation, which are embedded in the current neoliberal framework. The programs need to include the colonial past and its impacts on the current conditions on the food producing communities.

Mass awareness programs have to incorporate food sovereignty principles and provide examples of particular programs wherein farmers and other small producers can be organized. Among the topics to include in educational program efforts are the development of agrarian, pastoral and aquatic reforms, ecologically sustainable food production, equity-based food distribution, nutritional level improvement, and food relief systems.

These educational efforts need to be conducted among food producing sectors, consumer groups, women’s rights groups, trade unions, human rights commissions, and urban professionals such as lawyers, to help in building a multi-sectoral campaign network for food sovereignty.

Campaigning

A key area for organizing and mobilizing communities is to increase the capacity of the rural masses to carry out campaigns at community, district, provincial, national and international levels.

The areas and details of campaign development such as timeline, key slogans/issues, sectors, and campaign targets need to be incorporated in the mass education programs. Key elements of campaign planning and implementation initiatives need to be done by the organised sectors to ensure success.

Examples of campaigns should be provided such as right over seeds, decent livelihood, and right to food among others. Other campaigns could include focus on women farmers’ rights to land collectives, with provision for free access to agricultural productive resources such as seeds and water.
Key Issues for Mass Organization and Mobilization Campaigns

Food sovereignty is an effective campaign platform to organise and mobilise working and oppressed peoples for socio-economic and political change in food and agriculture systems. Organising and mobilising farmers requires identification of key issues that impede their current ability to ensure decent sustainable livelihoods, to access to safe and nutritious food, and to sustain their lands, water and other resources for future generations.

Organized collectives representing various sectors have to engage in mass campaigns at the village, district, provincial, national and international levels. The key messages which small and marginalized farmers, fisherfolk, and other sectors must relay would be based on the key principles of food production and distribution. The underlying principle of these campaigns is the demand for self-reliance and self-sufficiency in food and agricultural production.

Mass organizations could build campaigns to assert collective rights over land, seeds, forests and other natural resources with a bias towards self-reliant food production and distribution systems. A critical campaign arena could be working for genuine land reform against land grabbing.

Another key area would be to hold mass mobilizations against genetically modified seeds and crops that are shifting the control over productive resources away from farmers. The precautionary principle of doing no harm is being eroded, allowing not only patents over life forms but also spreading risks of ecological contamination. Another area of mass action and mobilization includes the widespread land grabbing activity for agro-fuels which is impoverishing small and landless farmers and further aggravating the climate crisis. A key food crisis factor is the global escalation of agrofuel production over the production of staple food crops.

In order to attain self-reliance and self-sufficiency, the major agents and forces of imperialist globalization have to be challenged. These include policies such as privatization, deregulation and trade liberalization being forced by actors such as IFIs, the UN agencies, WTO, G8 states and agrochemical TNCs.

A subtle form of a pro-people and pro-farmer campaign is the mobilization of rural communities to demand biodiversity-based ecological agriculture and food production. The demand for traditional varieties of seeds and local inputs such as natural fertilizers, pesticides and indigenous water systems would ensure a decent livelihood for small and landless farmers and the production of safe, chemical-free food resulting in resilient healthy families.

Some neo-liberal policy institutions which have played a pivotal role in developing trade liberalization policies which have wreaked havoc in agricultural and other food producing communities are listed below. Campaigns to expose and discredit these institutions can have a major impact on pushing back the impact of anti-people policies and trade agreements.

International Financial Institutions (IFIs), United Nations (UN) Agencies and Private Corporate Foundations

Some key players who have pushed trade liberalization policies such as privatization, deregulation and agricultural liberalization are the IFIs including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Asian Development Bank. United Nations agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and United National Development Program (UNDP), among others, have been important players in furthering the policies dictated by the IFIs.
The structural adjustment programs (SAPs) of the 1980s and 1990s which were carried forward to the new millennium are responsible for the current free market regime. These SAPs were thrust on the Third World governments by IFIs. The SAPs were later termed as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Any system ensuring trade liberalization in the current period is a continuation of the SAPs policies that need to be totally rejected. It is in this regard that we should highlight further promotion and demands of food sovereignty policies in the UN processes.

Furthermore, so-called foundations play a critical role in furthering the neoliberal framework agenda in Third World countries. The Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), currently chaired by the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is a case in point. Supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, AGRA is advocating green revolution policies that blatantly give agricultural production control to agri-TNCs, unleash tremendous environmental harm, and negatively impact the health of the people, especially the farming communities.

**Free Trade Agreements and Mechanisms**

Apart from using the IFIs for policy reforms, the neoliberal framework is pushed by organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), and via free trade agreements. Together, these have created the international, bilateral and regional legal framework to ensure that imperialist globalization policies are imposed on the people of the Third World through the collaboration of their governments.

The success of mass mobilization campaigns against neoliberal globalization has led to a huge surge in regional and bilateral trade agreements. Despite continuing opposition and mobilization, the WTO still exists and is the baseline for all bilateral and regional free trade negotiations. Agreements such as the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) and General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATs) are the reasons why millions of farmers, indigenous people and others in the Third World are being evicted from their lands, and now facing hunger and forced migration.

In the past few years, free trade agreements – such as the KORUS, the free trade agreement between the United States and South Korea – have had negative results. KORUS, for instance, allowed unsafe beef to be exported to South Korea. Similar policies without the precautionary principle are being used by the US in free trade agreement negotiations with Third World countries that are much weaker than South Korea and Australia. Free trade bilateral agreements are being used to force Third World farmers to accept genetically modified seeds, such as Bt Rice, Bt Corn, and Bt Cotton. This results in massive ecological harm to farming communities and the usurpation of farmers’ critical rights of saving and exchanging seeds.

In addition, free trade agreements are forcing wide-scale dumping of cheap food imports on southern countries, such as the case of corn imports in Mexico, which tremendously helped the US agribusiness sector.
SUGGESTED THEMES AND DISCUSSIONS

Discussion Points:

- The people’s power and mass-based strength must be strengthened and consolidated through vast mass organizations of peasants, agricultural workers, women, fisherfolk and urban poor among others.

- Small-scale food producers need to organize themselves for mobilization and campaigning for food sovereignty.

- Mass organizations and mobilization of various sectors are rooted in awareness-raising and education programs using a food sovereignty framework as well as through capacity building in carrying out campaigns in national and international levels.

Activity 7: Reflections and Recommendations

This will be a plenary exercise. There will be a video showing of various mobilizations and campaigns by network partners in the local, national and regional levels. The participants will then be asked to give their reflections and reactions to the video prepared, as well as give recommendations based on the inputs from modules 1 to 4.
This training course on Food Sovereignty is a collaboration of IBON International, the People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty and partner organizations from Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. The modules are designed as tools for facilitators to assist them in organizing and conducting the training that includes issues on corporate globalization, conceptualizing food sovereignty and formulating campaigns and policy recommendations.

IBON International is a service institution with an international character and scope of work. Its defined service role encompasses a broad range of capacity development functions, and is directed towards social movements and civil society constituencies in all regions of the world especially in the global South. IBON International’s main focus is on knowledge-building and sharing through research, education, information, and on international networking and partnership for capacity development.

The People’s Coalition on Food Sovereignty is a global network of various grassroots groups of small food producers particularly of peasant-farmer organizations and their support NGOs, working towards a People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty. It was established first as an Asian component of the global agri-trade network on People’s Food Sovereignty in 2001 then eventually resulted in the collaboration of those involved in the People’s Caravan 2004 process and those who participated in the Asia Pacific People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty in Dhaka, Bangladesh in November 2004.