

**Primer on  
People's Food Sovereignty**

**Framework for National Programme  
on Food Sovereignty**

**Draft People's Convention  
on Food Sovereignty**



**People's Food Sovereignty Network Asia Pacific  
Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific**

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# INTRODUCTION

## **Why a convention on food sovereignty**

Hunger and poverty is increasing instead of decreasing in many regions of the world. Corporate globalization has intensified the structural causes of hunger and poverty. In other words the control of transnational corporations over not only global but even national food and agriculture policies and production is eroding people's access to nutritious and safe food. The impact of this exploitative and profit motivated agricultural development and food production has been devastating on the life's of our food producers i.e. women and men peasants, fisherfolk, agricultural workers, pastoralists and indigenous peoples. This corporate dominance has been made possible by the globalization process through institutions such as WTO and multilateral financial institutions, and supported not only by the elites particularly in the G8 countries but also those from the South.

These processes have systematically removed restrictions and support mechanisms that have served to protect traditional small scale farming and fishing in the South as well as in the industrialised countries. The dumping of artificially priced subsidized food and agricultural products by corporate monopoly traders has bankrupted the small fishers and peasants of our countries. Other WTO agreements such as TRIPS and SPS strengthen corporate control and further displace the peasant sectors. The farmers are rapidly losing control over seeds and other genetic resources while the corporations are increasingly consolidating their hold over these resources through patenting, biopiracy and genetic engineering. Human health and the environment are being destroyed by the slow poisons produced and marketed by these TNCS.

While the rich prosper, the poor suffer economic and physical displacement. An estimated 20 million people are being affected by this process which Vandana Shiva, author and activists calls the “ethnic cleansing” of the poor, the marginalized and the hungry.

But today there is a growing resistance to corporate globalisation. The poor, the marginalized and hungry are resisting! The movements of peasants, rural women, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples and agricultural workers are resisting and they are uniting into strong movements demanding the dismantling of the WTO and WB/IMF, WTO out of food and agriculture and exploitative TNCS to get out of their countries. These people’s movements are working to build alternative visions, solutions and the solutions to eradicate hunger and poverty and for equity and justice.

To eradicate hunger and malnutrition and to guarantee lasting and sustainable food security for all peoples, peasant movements, rural women’s movements and hundreds of NGOs/CSOs believe food sovereignty is the means to achieve this. The People’s Food Sovereignty is a rights-based approach to achieving food security and safety and to solving the problems of hunger and malnutrition. Food sovereignty is the people’s and communities rights to decide on their food and agricultural policies. It includes the right to produce sustainably and ecologically to ensure the right to food of every woman, man and child in the planet. It calls for the right to productive resources including land, water, seeds and technology and credit of our food producers.

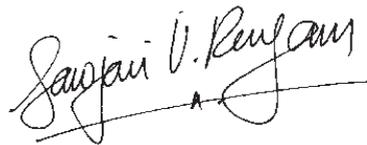
Food sovereignty is the freedom and capacity to exercise and realise these rights. It assumes the recognition and empowerment of people and communities to realise their economic, social, cultural, and political rights and needs regarding choice of food, access to food and food production.

A concrete, practical and workable strategy to address the people’s demand for food sovereignty is to enshrine these rights into a People’s

Convention on Food Sovereignty. The proposal for a People's Convention on Food Sovereignty will present the aspirations of the people's movements and a rights-based framework for food and agriculture policies. The People's Convention, we hope will challenge governments and international intergovernmental organizations to give precedence to human rights and food sovereignty. It is also a moral and political challenge to governments to uphold their obligations to the people.

The People's Convention presented in this booklet by the People's Food Sovereignty Network in Asia, is an attempt to embody these rights and is open for comments, improvements and suggestions. The Primer on Food Sovereignty we hope will help provide further information on the concepts and issues raised in the People's Convention document and aid in a better understanding of the convention. And finally the framework for a national policy outlines the practical measures and regulations that need to be put in place to achieve people's food sovereignty at the national level.

It is hoped that the final draft will be adopted by the people's movements everywhere to challenge and demand these rights at the national and international arena. Meanwhile we hope that the People's Convention will be an advocacy tool for the people's movements for concerted efforts to demand from governments that they not only define but also implement policies that ensures and assures their people's food sovereignty.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sarojeni V. Rengam". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath.

Sarojeni V. Rengam  
Executive Director  
PAN Asia and the Pacific



# PRIMER ON PEOPLE'S FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

## Introduction

During the past five years, the progressive peasant movement and other social movements throughout the world have upheld the call for “People’s Food Sovereignty” or people’s control of food and agriculture as a general aspiration of the people on the issue of food and agriculture. This call was carried out not only by social movements but also by various sectoral organizations, NGOs/CSOs, and other groups that support them as was reflected at the conclusions of the World Food Summit in Rome in 2002.

The call for a people’s food sovereignty on food and agriculture was popularized and gathered support as the people’s alternative against corporate control in agriculture as well as in the production of food in general. With the worsening control and exploitation of neoliberal globalization, this call also went hand in hand with the people’s demand of “Take World Trade Organization (WTO) Out of Food and Agriculture!” And at the WFS, in 2002, the social movements rejected all agreements under corporate globalization that would further result in an increase in world hunger and impoverishment.

Since then, Food Sovereignty became widely accepted by various social movements, organisations and institutions in Asia and other regions. Recently, even the United Nations, (in the report-recommendation of

the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food) encouraged all governments to consider food sovereignty “as an alternative model for agriculture and agricultural trade in order to meet State obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food”.

The objective of this primer is to explain the basic concepts and issues of food sovereignty and how this will be used in the anti-corporate globalisation struggle of the farmers and the people.

## **What is then, food sovereignty?**

The problem of hunger is worsening throughout the world today. The challenges and danger faced by the farmers and other food producers<sup>1</sup> are continuously mounting as a result of intensifying economic crisis, the imposition of globalisation and accompanying conditions by WTO, the lack of political will by governments to implement programmes on food production, and many more. On the other hand, there is an over production by developed countries in the North as a result of their all-out support for the monopoly agri-business corporations and the use of highly industrialised modes of farming.

In the face of this crisis, it is apparent that a single and narrow approach in how to address the problems in agriculture is not enough. A more comprehensive resistance against corporate domination in agriculture and food production is needed. Part of this struggle is to present a counter policy on food and agriculture that is pro-people. Food sovereignty creates a reality where the food producer, the farmer is in control over land and has access to resources to ensure food production. It is also a state where rights of agricultural workers are respected and promoted. And it is also a state where, access to safe and nutritious food is made available for all people in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Food Producers include men and women peasants, fisher folks, agricultural workers, forest dwellers, indigenous people, Dalits, landless labour, livestock farmers, herders, gatherers and allied workers involved directly and indirectly with the process of producing food.

This is the objective of food sovereignty, which has been successfully popularised by the social movements around the globe, making it well accepted as an important counter policy on food and agriculture at international assemblies.

*Food Sovereignty* is the people's and communities' fundamental right to determine their food and agricultural policies. It is the right to access and control of their means of production. It is the right to safe, culturally appropriate foods and sustainable food production

The first principle therefore is to ensure food security.

## **1. What is food security? What is the responsibility of society and the government to ensure food security?**

With advancement in technology in agriculture and food production more people should get food and not be hungry. But especially in the Third world, the numbers of underprivileged and people starving and dying of hunger are increasing with starvation becoming an emerging global concern.

Current figures show that there are 800 million in the world who suffer chronic hunger, of which 500 million are in Asia-Pacific. Women and children are the most affected by hunger and poverty. For women, it is largely a result of gender inequality and lack of economic and political rights. According to the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the right to food, girls are twice as likely to die from malnutrition and preventable childhood diseases as boys, and it is estimated that almost twice as many women suffer from malnutrition as men.

This kind of situation where there is a lack of access to food and the lack of adequate nutrition is called loss of security in food or food insecurity. Food security is the primary responsibility of the government, a basic task that has direct relation to the welfare and quality of life of the people.

It is the duty of the government to outline and implement an effective food production programme, which is premised on the development of production of the farmers and other food producers. This is achieved primarily through effective implementation of genuine agrarian reform programme, which ensures that productive resources and capital for farming and food production are in the hands of food producers.

It is the government's obligation to ensure that people have access to adequate food that is culture based and meets their nutritional needs. At the minimum, the government must study what basic foods meet the basic nutritional needs of the people (like protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, etc.). It should ensure that there is sufficient food supply for the whole country and people are able to buy these at affordable prices. This principle requires governments to ensure workers and its people have sufficient wage or income to be able to buy food. Included in its responsibility is to ensure food security for the parts of the country that are affected by disasters, as well as for the poor sections of society that do not have the basic means to buy enough food.

## **2. What is the government's role to ensure food security?**

The World Bank's statistics reveal that almost half of the people of the world or 2.8 billion people are living on less than the minimum of US\$ 2 per day. This not only shows the lack of food security but also the lack of accountability of governments. What is alarming is that the situation is becoming worse year by year with sharpening inequalities. 105 countries which comprise the majority of 149 backward countries in the Third World are net food importers. These countries do not have their own means to produce their own food and rely heavily on imported foods.

These two key factors when put together, create serious food insecurity. But governments still continue to meet the needs of rich, big landlords and corporations within and foreign where profit is the sole motive and not upholding and prioritising the people's right to food.

The reality that emerges is that food security is not even the minimum responsibility of governments. The responsibility of governments to protect life and welfare of people seems to lose weight. Consequently we have ruthless governments that violate rights with impunity for profit accumulation.

Meanwhile, governments who claim to be democratic must go beyond basic welfare of people. Development must have a rights based approach. The human rights of people are the foundation in upholding the people's well-being. This is reflected in the "democratic" Constitutions of countries form the basis of the government operations and policies. On the issue of food and agriculture, modern governments should uphold food security based on the recognition of the fundamental rights to food.

The human right to food is a basic right that is directly linked to the right to life as food is essential to be able to live. Therefore the right to food is a basic human right that is immediately related to the right to life. Because food is needed for each person to be able to live productively, the right to food is the basis for a person to fulfil his or her other rights.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), everyone is guaranteed the right to food, shelter, livelihood, and adequate health care. It means that hunger and homelessness is a violation of human rights because each person has a right to live with dignity. It is also the right of every person to have livelihood and all that is needed to able to meet his/her potential as a human being.

The UDHR has been translated into legally binding laws by various Conventions and Covenants. The International Covenant that clearly addresses the right to food is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).

According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, “the right to food means that each person has the right to have regular, permanent and unobstructed 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 from anxiety”.

In short, the right to food means that everyone has the right to adequate food, quantitative and qualitative, that is affordable and accessible in his or her community. Further, it means it is the right to have income from harvest or income to be able to buy food.

### **3. If there are international standards and rights established, why do many people still die from hunger?**

The right to food is widely set aside and violated by many governments as landlords and foreign corporations control food and agriculture to gain more money from rent and profit. In reality, the human rights of the people are not genuinely recognised, upheld, fulfilled and defended. Governments eager to develop their economies rapidly through export oriented market forces, rely more and more on the local elite, landlords and foreign corporations. Consequently our societies become dominated and controlled by the ruling and exploitative classes of landlords and foreign corporations. People and communities are exploited and all efforts are made gain more profits from agriculture and other forms of food production.

There are many ways that the right to food is violated: - a) businessmen and foreign corporations raise the price of basic food commodities that exceed the income of the people while the price of the farmers’ produce is depressed b) this kind of exploitation results in worsening poverty conditions of farmer and other food producers. And they are not able to buy or earn enough for food. Hunger and impoverishment are

violations of their right to food. It is therefore the responsibility of any society or government to have food reserve, that ordinary people have enough income to buy food at affordable prices.

In special cases where people are in extreme poverty, it is the government's responsibility to provide food at low prices or for free if necessary. In times of disaster or calamity, it is also the responsibility of the government to provide food aid to the affected communities.

In many semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries, land grabbing by big landlords and exploitation of other resources in agriculture and aquaculture in the form of rent, interest in usury or share-tenancy in the harvest of food produce is continuing. This is the reason for widespread backward production, poverty and hunger in the countryside as well as in urban areas.

Currently, the privatization of our resources, construction of large dams and development of large plantations, aquaculture and new forms of corporate agriculture strategies destroy our land, water, community forests and other resources. Land is also diminishing for food production. The farmer loses control over land and resources. Consequently, the poor become poorer. Food is imported and becomes costly, culturally inappropriate and unsafe. Hunger and malnutrition set in.

#### **4. Why is the right to food related to the right to produce food?**

The ultimate recognition of people's right to food is the acceptance of the right of each person to have and/or to produce food. More importantly, it is related to the right of each producer like farmers, fisher folks, farm workers and other sectors to have access and control of resources in order to produce food.

The people's collective power to claim their rights to food even if it meant claiming food stored in government's warehouses which it refused to distribute to the hungry people or to claim back the land grabbed by the big landlords through land occupation, are some of the ultimate expressions of sovereignty in food. This is a genuine assurance that the right to food is not only recognised and upheld, but it is genuinely benefiting the people. This is the essence of food sovereignty or the people's control of food.

The farmers and other food producers have long been struggling to retain and reclaim these rights so that they will be free from the shackles of globalisation, oppression and exploitation. Only through this, will human rights be upheld the right to food and to produce food recognized and the right to life guaranteed.

## **5. Why should marginalised people and other sectors fight for food sovereignty instead of food security?**

Food security only refers to the sufficiency of the food needs of a society or people. While it is said that it upholds food security, it does not mean that people's rights to food and food production is guaranteed and recognised by the government.

The right to food that guarantees food security is an objective of the government. But this role of the government to ensure that people have enough food is not truly recognised by the ruling class, and foreign corporations. As long as the landlords, their local collaborators and foreign corporations put pressure on the farmers and other small food producers, the programs launched by the government for the 'production and distribution' of food does not even resolve the needs of the people in nutrition and food. It does not recognise the right of the people to till and to fish in order to have food.

Instead, the government promotes the globalist view that food security can be guaranteed if it will rely on market economy and further liberalisation. According to them, the dollar earnings from production

for export and liberalisation will provide purchasing power to buy imported basic commodities like rice, which are being dumped into our countries. With this arrangement, they say that it is not necessary to rely on our own small, backward farming.

The big agribusiness corporations that continue to monopolise farmlands and make agriculture a semi-industry are further strengthened by this globalist strategy in food security. On the other hand, the small production in food and agriculture is further depressed and the aim of self-sufficient food production is being set aside.

The liberating concept and principles of food sovereignty when implemented, genuinely responds to the interests and aspirations of the people. In the concept of food sovereignty, it does not only ensure that the people have food but it guarantees that food producers have productive resources to achieve genuine food security. Food sovereignty asserts the power of the people to achieve their self-determination and to rely on their own initiative and strength to produce food.

## **6. What then are the immediate demands and issues in the program of food sovereignty that the peoples' social movements assert?**

It is explained above that the concept of food sovereignty responds to the broad and long-term objectives of the people in building democratic power in food and agriculture production. Food sovereignty embodies the general principles and demands of the people in regards to food and food production.

However, the struggle to attain food sovereignty is long-term. This struggle to attain food sovereignty means that there must be recognition of the people's rights especially right to food and to produce it. But to move forward, the movement must ensure particular policies, issues and programs regarding food and food production that affects our daily lives be set in place.

Food sovereignty should be the guiding principle that dictates the societies' policies on food and agriculture. This is based on the recognition of the rights and freedom of the people in food and food production.

There are many societal issues that are covered by food sovereignty as a guiding principle in food and agriculture policies.

First, there should be an assurance that everyone has enough food that is nutritious, safe and culture based. There should also be a guarantee that there is enough stored food within the community that ordinary citizens are able to purchase at affordable prices through an effective programme on food.

Second, for each family to have food, the government should ensure that each family has sufficient earnings so are able to buy food. It should also ensure that food products are available at affordable prices, for example through a price control law, wherein the price of basic food such rice, meat, vegetables, fish, eggs, milk, etc. cannot be raised beyond the allowed price. The community and the government should also be prepared to distribute basic food at very low prices or for free to the poorest sections of society.

Third, aside from the assurance that there is stored food on reserve for a society and that it is readily accessible to each person, it is also the responsibility of the community, society and the government in general to ensure that there is enough food for everyone during times of disaster – whether natural or otherwise.

Fourth, there should be recognition of the initiative and right of each citizen to produce food including farming, fishing and other productive activities. There should be food production programmes that mobilise people who wish to participate. The focus of such programmes must be towards self-reliance in food production and not for export production.

Fifth, one of the main aspects of the self-reliance program in food production is the strengthening of small food producers who comprise the majority of the population. A genuine and pro-people agrarian and fisheries reform should be implemented in order to ensure that the men and women farmers, fisher folk and other small food producers have access and control over the basic production resources.

Sixth, it is the responsibility of the government to develop and implement a programme on appropriate technology in food production that is suitable to the needs and capabilities of the small producer. It is also government's responsibility to promote and propagate appropriate technology as well as capital resource to small food producers.

Seventh, policies on trade and capital, whether local or international, should serve and support the food production and food distribution programmes mentioned above. These policies should provide various forms of subsidy, support and protection. These should not be set aside by any agreement on trade and capital. Therefore, agreements like the World Trade Organisation's and such impositions of the International Monetary Fund MF and the World Bank on structural adjustment that blindly opens trade and investment to big foreign transnational corporations should be stopped.

Eight, it is the responsibility of the government to adopt agricultural production systems that are ecologically sustainable. There should be food and agriculture programmes that ensure the health of the people and protect consumers and the environment. There should be food and agriculture programmes based on precautionary principles with regard to pesticides, food irradiation, and genetically engineered food and crops. Precautionary principles state that even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically, scientific evaluation indicates that there are reasonable grounds for concern. If there are grounds for concern, these products should not be commercialised and used.

## **7. What are the policies and programmes to be fulfilled by a society and government in order to serve and fulfil the right to food?**

### **Nutrition**

To ensure that the people have proper nutrition and have access to foods that are appropriate to their preference and culture, a society should have effective policies and programmes on food. A comprehensive study on the people's basic needs in food and nutrition should be conducted by the government. This would determine what the basic food needs of a family are and how much minimum income it should have to be able to buy enough food.

### **Inexpensive food to buy**

The government should ensure that basic food prices are affordable. To be able to do this, in some countries, they establish government agencies, which are responsible to buy basic food products from the food producers and have these distributed in the market at a lowest price. There must be legislative laws and regulations that set the selling price of basic food commodities. This prevents traders to mark-up more than the allowed prices.

It is usual for the people to blame government agencies that manage food and agriculture. A country that is burdened with foreign debt is forced by the IMF-World Bank to privatise agencies such as mentioned above. With privatisation, local and foreign capitalists are completely free in their business dealings that bring them super profits.

Globalists are also against the price control laws. They argue that such price control does not encourage investment. This is the reason why deregulation of prices of commodities is a part of the prescription of structural adjustment programmes. Corporate globalisation destroys government's policies and programmes that strive to maintain the low prices of food.

### **Income, wage and poverty**

The assurance that the ordinary citizen has enough income to purchase his/her basic food needs is critical. This is the reason behind why governments determine poverty line or the level of poverty. It measures which percentage of the society has the capacity to buy food.

It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that people have livelihoods and sufficient income so they are able to feed their children and that they will not die of hunger or grow-up malnourished.

Poverty line is used to measure the standard in ensuring that a family has enough food and other basic necessities. But this standard is extremely low due to the imposition of the World Bank to further remove government's services and programmes fighting poverty. Therefore poverty indicators must be honest, transparent and reflect the actual realities that impair right to food and to produce food.

### **Food Support Programme**

Each country should be prepared to support its local communities and other countries that are on the verge of starvation or are already starving because of poverty, economic dislocation, and natural disasters or otherwise. Government should have food distribution programmes for the poor. Moreover, there should be food distribution programmes in times of emergency and disaster like typhoon, earthquake, drought, flooding, evacuations due to military operations, and many more.

Such responsibility is being undertaken at the international level by rich countries or countries which have the ability to support poor countries ravaged by famine. This is called food aid. Food aid is sent regularly to many countries in Africa, which are facing continuous problems in food production and civil war. Food aid is usually the bulk of emergency support sent to places that are damaged by disasters, natural or otherwise.

In a critical analysis, it is very clear that governments neglect to support the food needs of the poor and victims of disaster. Oftentimes, food aid is also given without recognition of culture and food preference of the people.

Due to the vulnerability of their situation, the rights of the poor countries or communities and victims of disasters who rely on food aid are not respected. Donor countries or States think that people in vulnerable situations, whether local or elsewhere, have no right to choose their food nor is the right to choose necessary at all. Even worse, rich countries use food aid as a way to change the food preference of poor countries and force them to import food products from them. For example, corn or maize used to be a staple food in some countries in Africa. However, due to influx of rice as food aid from rich countries, they are now used to importing rice.

The issue of forced dumping of rich countries to poor counties of their excess food, which often is no longer fit for human consumption or are genetically modified products (GMOs), have surfaced recently. Food aid should not be limited to a particular product that the donor country wishes to give. If necessary, aid in the form of financial support should be given instead.

## **8. How can the right to food production be upheld and ensured?**

The concept of food sovereignty recognises that the people's right to food and right to produce food are interdependent. The living right of each person to food along with enough income to be able to buy or produce food should be upheld. Whoever seriously wishes to farm should be given the opportunity to farm.

This issue is especially important for low technology subsistence based agricultural countries where the majority of the people are in agriculture and fisheries as small farmers or fisher folks. Even more, they comprise

the largest percentage of food producers. Food sovereignty primarily addresses these sectors and their right to resources such as land and tools for the production so that they can produce food for themselves and their society.

On the other hand, it is very clear that food security and the right to food are meaningless if the rights of farmers and other food producers, which comprise the majority of the population of poor countries, to produce food is not recognised. Even in developed countries where there are anti-people and pro-agribusiness corporation policies, which are destroying the livelihood of small farmers, there are still some support being given by the State to them.

### **Genuine Land and Aquatic Reform**

A very crucial policy and program in a society that supports the right to produce food is the implementation of the genuine land reform that is premised on the principle of land to the men and women peasants. There are many fake land reforms that have been implemented in most countries in Asia. However, the real land reform is the one that distributes land to the peasants and agricultural workers for free. Any other versions that fall short of the free distribution of land are bogus.

### **Effective and Genuine Agrarian Reform**

Capital and technology support in farming are important components of agrarian reform. It is the responsibility of the government to provide support to food producers in the form of tools, farm inputs, research and development, information on food production, and other resources.

In most cases, support in farming and the production of food is neglected and only passes through meaningless showcase projects in the fulfilment of agrarian reforms. On the other hand, there was the promise of Green Revolution technology that apparently would strengthen the sovereignty and capacity of the farmers in food production. However, the promise

of the Green Revolution led to the dependency of farmers on hazardous pesticides and fertilizers and high yielding varieties. Needless to say, the true winners of Green Revolution are the agribusiness corporations.

Years after the Green Revolution, now comes the Gene Revolution that introduces genetic engineering technology and further consolidate the control of agribusiness corporations on agricultural lands and the farmers.

### **Programme on Food Production in the Country and Community**

It is the responsibility of the community, society and the government to outline and implement policies and programmes to develop food production in various parts of the country. These types of programmes should support the people involved in food production whether in agricultural lands, fisheries or from home and in cottage industry to the factories or processing centres.

Programmes as such should uphold the basic principles of supporting the small food producers to produce food through safe and ecological production. There are various agroecological or sustainable ways of farming that yield high productivity and this should be the main framework of a national programme in food production.

The government should promote backyard gardening whether in the urban areas or in the countryside as this helps in the expansion of the food production.

There are various agroecological methods of food production, which are based on holistic and scientific approach that integrates local and indigenous knowledge and which meets the overall need of the food producers. However, these programmes rarely receive serious funding support from the government; thus, agroecology remains limited and small. On the other hand, governments provide so much support and incentives to big corporations involved in food production and services. This is the reason why local and small medium enterprises (SMEs) are losing their business because they cannot compete with the big corporations and TNCs.

## **Food Sovereignty Over Trade and Investment**

It is government's responsibility to ensure proper management and development of trade to keep the prices of agricultural products affordable to the consumer and the products of the food producers are bought at a reasonable price.

Economic technocrats argue that farmers ask for too many incentives with regard to price support for their produce. This is apparently the reason for the high cost of food. This is not true. The traders who are also the landlords ensure that prices of farm inputs are high and the prices of agricultural produce very low.

Traders control the market so they can raise the prices of foods, which are sold in the urban areas. This is the reason why there should be a mechanism to regulate the market in terms of supply and pricing of food products. However, mechanisms such as this are being dismantled by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

This kind of exploitation of farmers and other food producers are being perpetuated by transnational agribusiness corporations by dumping cheap imported food products which results in farmers losing their income. Even traditional plantation owners are losing business because of the increasing costs of production.

World Bank's impositions and WTO agreements on trade liberalisation are being used by traders to remove trade barriers and protection of the local market and local products. Restrictions in importation that were used to protect local food producers have been removed. As a result, there has been flooding of cheap imported corn, rice, vegetables, coffee, sugar and many other food products.

## **Ensuring the rights of agricultural workers**

It is also the responsibility of the government to protect and recognise the rights of agricultural workers— farm workers in the small villages

and plantations as well as the workers in factories and food processing enterprises.

Like the farmers, farm workers and workers in food factories are also being exploited by suppressing their rights. The farm workers are in the worst situation as compared to other workers. Their wages are the lowest; they have no job security, their rights as workers are not recognised; they are not allowed to organise themselves and many more. They are in fact landless labourers. Today, this sector is termed as the informal economy and thus gets marginalized in the economic planning of the country. Since many of them work in industrialised farms, they suffer from exposure to the harmful effects of pesticides and other chemicals.

## **9. Why is food sovereignty important to other sectors of society?**

It is clear that the support and realisation of food sovereignty of all the people in a country is important. Food sovereignty also has a particular and leading significance to the farmers, fisher folk, farm workers, workers and urban poor who represent the majority of food producers. There are also a few sectors, which have a particular role and importance in food sovereignty like women, indigenous people, food and agriculture scientists and the consumer movements.

### **Women**

Women are an integral and crucial part of the agriculture economy and food production. However, they remain invisible, unrecognized and not integrated into development strategies. But within our capitalistic, patriarchal societies, the women's role is defined as the one who has to ensure that food is on the table. Then since she is a mother as well, the family and community see her as carer of health of the family. Thus, the woman who cannot ensure food for the family is blamed even abused and sometimes faces violence in the hands of the husband. In this context, women then make sure the male and the children get food first

and she the last. In a poverty situation, it is again the women who create survival mechanisms at the expense of their own health and well being. Thus, food security and food sovereignty are crucial concerns for women.

Generally, women have played crucial and important roles in agriculture. They keep and store the seeds. They had control over the seed banks. The women were and are still responsible for animal husbandry and vegetable growing. All these have contributed to the food security of the family. But women have remained invisible

In developing countries, the majority of small farmers are women. Women are the main producers of staple food – rice, maize, and wheat. Across the developing world, women produce 60 to 80 per cent of staple food crops. In South East Asia, women provide up to 90 per cent of labour for rice cultivation, a staple crop. For secondary crop productions such as legumes and vegetables – their contribution is even greater.

They work longer hours than men in producing food – on average women work 13 hours more than men each week in Asia and Africa.

Women are central to the selection, breeding, cultivation, preparation and harvesting food – they possess detailed knowledge of many crops – they know how the different parts of a plant can be used for food, medicine and animal feed. They play a key role in protecting and saving seeds and breeding the stock that provide the genetic resources to producing food. For example, women collect and store seeds in seed banks in which their food production depends upon. Their specialised knowledge about genetic resources makes them custodians of biodiversity.

Peasant women sow, weed, apply fertilisers and pesticides, harvest and thresh the crops, perform post harvesting activities. Women are also responsible for storing, handling, stocking, processing and marketing the crops. In the livestock sector, women feed and milk, raise poultry,

small animals, Women possess unique knowledge of the fisheries sector; they do most of inland fishing and handle the work associated with fish farming.

Therefore, food sovereignty can only be realised if women are recognised as equal in agriculture. Food sovereignty recognises the rights of women, their responsibilities and needs in production and preparation of food for the family. In upholding food sovereignty and whatever programme in food and agriculture production, there must be an equal recognition of women's rights. This means that the struggle towards food sovereignty must include breaking down patriarchal norms, values, practices and structures in our communities.

### **Indigenous People**

Indigenous people have a particular role in upholding and practicing of food sovereignty in the context of their struggle for self-determination as a nation or community. The various aspects of food sovereignty have direct significance to indigenous people's framework of their rights as a nation or community. It is linked to their rights to ancestral domain, their inherited ancestral territory including the land, mountains, water and others.

First and foremost, food sovereignty is the right of the indigenous people as a nation or community to define their rights to food and agriculture, including the use and management of land and water, culture and system in the production of food and agriculture, and culture in food itself.

### **Scientists in Food and Agriculture**

Scientists in food and agriculture such as technologists in agriculture, animal husbandry and aquaculture, nutritionists, food technologists, and many others have a particular role in planning and implementation of programmes in food and food production of a country or community.

They have a particular responsibility in further developing technology and production to be able to ensure food security and that it recognises the people's rights in food production.

Progressive and pro-people scientists and technologists support and uphold science as a collective knowledge of the people. They have the responsibility to develop suitable technology that will strengthen food sovereignty of a country. They support agroecological systems of producing food using appropriate technology.

Progressive and pro-people scientists and technologists are opposing the so-called modern technology, which is owned, designed and being peddled by transnational agriculture corporations such as genetic engineering that creates genetically modified products. This kind of technology puts human's health and the environment in danger, as there is no scientific evidence to date about the safety of GMOs.

### **Consumer Movement**

The consumer movement has a particular interest in food sovereignty because it ensures their right to safe, appropriate and affordable food. They embody particular demands of the people to the government to fulfil its responsibility as regards to food, such as sufficient supply of food, ensuring people's right to fair prices of food products, that food corporations adhere to certain food standards, and others. They are also involved in the struggle against GMO foods, the proliferation of toxic chemicals in food such as pesticides and others.

## **10. How do we realise food sovereignty in our country or community?**

Governments must recognize their responsibility to uphold people's rights to food, food security and food sovereignty. But food sovereignty can only be realised with the effective participation of people at all levels. Thus the democratic rights of people must form the core factor for food sovereignty. A country that is committed to food sovereignty must be democratic, practice good governance and transparency.

Therefore, the fundamental meaning of sovereignty in food is people's sovereignty or people power.

a) The foundation of whatever policy adopted for food and food production are the rights of the people. The laws, policies and programmes are not just simply support but also ensure that people realise their rights to food and production of food. This is based on the implementation of genuine agrarian reform that primarily serves the interest of the majority of small food producers.

b) People are not passive and just waiting to be given their rights. If it is government's responsibility to recognise and uphold human rights, it is the people's responsibility to claim, practice and realise those rights. People must be actively involved in implementing their policies in food and production of food even at the association and community level and push the State to support their interests.

c) Laws, policies and programmes of a State on the issue of food and the production of food should be outlined and planned in a democratic and participatory manner. People's involvement in this process should be ensured. Its primary objective is to ensure support for small food producers and consumers and not for the big businessmen, corporations or landlords.

The people's sovereignty in food or people power in food is a platform or programme where people from various sectors come together in ensuring that their rights to food and resources to produce food are completely fulfilled by society. In most societies today, this platform is becoming a platform in the struggle against corporate globalisation that has been ignoring and violating people's political, civil, social, cultural and economic rights.

The policies and programs should provide services and support to the food producers in ways such as support in tools and capital, and in selling of their products. This should go hand in hand with regulations that protect small food producers and consumers. Such regulations may

include prohibition in the importation of rice, wheat, corn or vegetable products, which are grown by local small food producers.

### **11. Why should we oppose transnational corporations and the neoliberal policies carried by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization? Why should WTO be taken out of food and agriculture?**

The policies and programmes in food and the production of food should be protected and developed by the economic policies of a country. The policies in trade and investment should ensure that sovereignty in food is not set aside by the entry and domination of foreign trade and investment.

This is the reason why sovereignty in food is not being upheld by globalisation policies. Liberalisation in trade, investment and finance has resulted in TNCs violation of rights of the people. Programmes that protect food and food production are being set-aside in the name of “free-trade”. Privatisation destroys various public institutions, which support and fulfil programmes in food and food production. Meanwhile, deregulation results in high prices of basic food products and paves the way for TNCs domination in food and agriculture.

A responsible State that represents and serves the people strongly supports human rights to food and upholds people’s sovereignty in food. With this, the State and country realise and practice its sovereignty in food that is based on the people’s power. The issue of food sovereignty for a State is not just simply being able to claim its sovereignty in order to define policies in food and agriculture. The essence and spirit of sovereignty in food is in the realisation of human rights – the right of the people to food and the right of anyone, especially the farmers and other food producers to all resources such as land in order to feed themselves and the whole society.

The position of a country and government towards structural adjustment programmes of the IMF and World Bank that pushes globalisation should be in accordance with and placed under the sovereignty in food and other basic policies. It is only just and rightful for a responsible government to oppose the imposition of the IMF and World Bank.

At the same time, a country and its government should not allow the destruction of its sovereignty in food as a result of investment by transnational corporations and the trade policies and agreements. Policies and agreements of “free trade” through the World Trade Organization, regional and bilateral trade agreements that threaten sovereignty in food should be opposed by the State that upholds food sovereignty.

WTO’s framework of “free trade” destroys food sovereignty, thus, the call of the peasant movements and other mass movements to take WTO out of food and agriculture. This means that various agreements of the WTO referring to food and agriculture like the Agreement on Agriculture, Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards and Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights should be disregarded.

## **12. What is the People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty? How does it oppose neoliberal programmes of globalisation and how does it uphold people’s sovereignty in food?**

The alternative platform against neoliberal globalisation on the issue of food and agriculture are the principles and policies of the People’s Sovereignty in food. This can be achieved through a Convention or agreement that upholds and support human rights. This is a legally binding instrument or agreement of the governments that represents their unanimity on the principle of people’s sovereignty in food and the tasks and responsibilities towards its realisation.

The proposal for a People’s Convention on Food Sovereignty has a long term and tactical value for the people. It is long term as it puts forward

concept, principles and demands for people's rights and power over food and agriculture. Its objective is tactical as an immediate argument on how the WTO will be taken out from food and agriculture, as it is being put forward by the progressive peasant movements and their allies. This is also a tactical response to various issues in food and agriculture related to globalisation, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the IMF-World Bank, free trade agreements and others.

However, it is difficult to rely and put our hopes on our pro-globalisation governments, which are being held by the neck by corporate globalisation through its various instruments and agencies such as the IMF, World Bank and the WTO. These governments will never easily sign and endorse a legally binding instrument on food sovereignty.

The mass movements involved in people's food sovereignty have three important clarifications and methods with regard to the People's Convention on Food Sovereignty.

First, we popularise the proposals of the Convention as a way to and disseminate the concept of food sovereignty as a guiding principle in food and agriculture and as a unifying call for mass movements particularly the peasants.

Second, this is an important instrument for the tactical struggle at the national and international level against various instruments and schemes of neoliberal globalisation. Thus, it validates our campaign and tactics on many issues.

Third, this is an important instrument particularly for the peasants and other food producers to broaden their network and forge alliances with different democratic sectors of the society working on food and agriculture issues like pesticides, GMOs and more. In addition, the call for sovereignty in food and the Convention paved the way for tactical alliances with some parts of the government as well as with allied small-scale enterprises.

### **13. Why are we calling for a People's Convention and not for an official convention of the government?**

Although our proposal is for a legal Convention that is officially agreed upon by governments, our more important objective is to mobilise all the sectors to uphold and further put forward our call for people's sovereignty at the national and international level. The People's Convention is an alternative way to gather and forge unities amongst representatives of the people's movement and progressive elements of the government who believe in the principles, programmes and proposals of the Convention.

In this way, the peasants and other people's movements who uphold food sovereignty are not bounded to go after the government for their demands. While on the other hand, they are already practicing the spirit and process of people's food sovereignty in their daily struggle. People's democracy is based on the people and the realisation of human rights relies on how we assert and challenge the State and not on the illusion that this will be given to the people by the State.

Therefore, the essence and spirit of the Convention on Food sovereignty will be advanced and achieved successfully through a progressive People's Convention that pushes but is not limited to the question of whether the government will uphold it or not. On the other hand, the people's food sovereignty has been recognised by various governments and official international institutions like the United Nations and European Parliament. Indeed, this is good news; it further strengthens the importance of the People's Conventions that clearly supports and upholds the people's food sovereignty.

# FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL PROGRAMME ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

## Preamble

- a. The need to end hunger and assure food security for the people and the nation
- b. The people's right to food and the corollary rights of self-determination and sovereignty regarding access to food and to produce food
- c. Food sovereignty as the people's right to define and to implement/realize an equitable (e.g. land to the landless), appropriate (e.g. appropriate to the country), democratic (it upholds the rights of everyone) food policy and program.
- d. The State's responsibility to end hunger and malnutrition, uphold and ensure the realization of people's rights and goals of food sovereignty through a democratic, egalitarian (for the well-being of everyone)

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\* This is a framework draft to serve as a guide and only contains key concerns or modalities of the components of a National Program for Food Sovereignty should address. This must then be redefined/particularized and fleshed out according to national conditions and concerns.

\* This National Program must be construed principally as a political platform for national advocacy campaigning on a national food policy/program and alliance work for supporters or agrarian advocates rather than as a draft proposal for legislation.

## Proposed Common Framework Draft\*

food policy and program. The formulation and implementation of this program should always be based on the peasants (including fishers, folk, IPs, pastoralists, Dalits and other small producers) participation and their voice must be heard at all times.

e. The State's responsibility to ensure the realization of food sovereignty through the reallocation of resources and instituting effective policies and program including legislation of enabling laws if necessary,

f. The people will resolutely carry forward this program e.g. develop agriculture to achieve Sustainable Agriculture, food for all, etc.

1. Implement a genuine land reform program founded on free distribution of arable land to the landless, equitable reallocation of agricultural resources including water, fruit, pasture lands, coastal areas, eliminate discriminatory property and tax policies, ensure the equal rights of women and recognition of indigenous and community rights of ancestral domain.

2. Ensure democratic, responsive agrarian/aquatic/pasture land reform programs covering such areas as credit & finance for food and agriculture production, inputs & other capital resources.

3. Institute a participatory national food production program that is founded on the promotion and protection of small production units which comprise the majority of the people involved in food and agriculture production, and reallocate and prioritise land and food and production.

4. Promote agroecological development in food production instead of an intensive industrial agriculture that promotes unsafe, pesticide based pest management strategies and GMOs. Revise research and development programs including centers of academic study and technological training for food and agricultural production.

## Proposed Common Framework Draft\*

5. Institute a participatory and responsive national food distribution program that ensures food security to all parts of the country, food subsidies to the poor and food aid in times of emergency.
6. Institute appropriate trade policies and regulations that promote and protect domestic food production programs
7. Enact appropriate laws and implementing regulations for genetic resources conservation and biodiversity promotion, institute regulations to genetic engineering with people's interest and concerns are paramount consideration
8. Institute proper regulations that ensure that TNC investments and operations support food production and distribution programs and do not endanger the People's Food Sovereignty.
9. Ensure access to food by assuring a basic income and wage policy that supports minimum costs of living on one hand and accessible prices for basic food products on the other. Assure consumer concerns in food quality, safety and labelling.
10. Ensure the promotion of rights and well being of all working people in food, fisheries and agriculture.
11. Institute a national education and cultural program so that people are informed, understand and grasp their rights and avenues for action in food and agriculture policy.
12. Promote mutual understanding, cooperation and networking among the various sectors of the people in defining and realizing food and food production program and policy.
13. Repeal all laws and remove all regulations that are contrary to the spirit and contrary to the spirit and contents of the program.

## Proposed Common Framework Draft\*

14. Rescind all international agreements such as loans and grants conditionality, structural adjustment and other similar development programmes, international cooperation and trade agreements that run counter to the spirit and contents of this programme.

# PEOPLE'S CONVENTION ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

## 1. Preamble

1.1 We, the signatory representatives of the People of our respective countries, hereby resolve that this Convention on food sovereignty which carries with it the right and the mandate of all our people, to state and ensure food sovereignty to all our people, without distinction. We also endeavor to ensure food sovereignty and security at all times and in accordance to preferences based on the cultural, habitual and nutritional needs of each community in any geographical area, irrespective of a country's political boundary.

1.2 By this Convention, Food Sovereignty becomes the right of people and communities to decide and implement their agricultural and food policies and strategies for sustainable production and distribution of food. It is the right to adequate, safe, nutritional and culturally appropriate food and to produce food sustainably and ecologically. It is the right to access of productive resources such as land, water, seeds and biodiversity for sustainable utilisation.

1.3 This Convention is and will remain as one that has been enshrined and is enforceable by mandate and international law, in the arena of rights of people at all times, even if there are other such conventions and amendments made in time to come.

## DRAFT - July 8, 2004

1.4 This Convention is paramount and must be understood and applied in conjunction with all other Rights from the perspective of the basic and the paramount 'Right to Life' of all people.

1.5 All nations of the world which endorse this Convention thereby make this enforceable by law, in their own countries.

## 2. Objectives

2.1 To arrest the growing numbers of hungry people, eliminate hunger from the world permanently and make it mandatory for all nations to ensure the availability of safe and nutritious food to its people at all times.

2.2 To make certain that at all times to come, the issue of hunger is not sacrificed on the anvil of trade policies, negotiations and all such instruments that threaten people of their Food Sovereignty.

2.3 To address the circumstances in which the masses of people have been intentionally or otherwise victimised by the plans and programmes of any agencies and exploitative members of society which perpetuate disparities and increase impoverishment.

2.4 To build awareness and to ensure that every section of society is motivated to not just raise a clarion call in favour of such a Convention but to ensure that it ultimately leads to every human being able to live in dignity.

2.5 To ensure that people's right to the choice of their own food is respected at all times and that they do not have to live on food aid which historically is non-culture based and undignified.

2.6 To ensure that over production and subsidies in some countries do not lead to dumping of food and agricultural produce in other countries.

2.7. To ensure that people at all time have access to safe, healthy, locally produced and culturally appropriate food.

### **3. Scope of the Convention**

3.1 Recognition of people's and communities' right to food and food production in its entire scope of production, consumption, distribution and trade.

3.2 Promotion of people's right to access to food through adequate incomes and sustainable livelihoods.

3.3 Upholding people's right to food relief in keeping with the 'Sphere Standards'<sup>1</sup> recognised and accepted internationally as a basic human right for disaster survivors.

3.4 Recognition of the right of food producers<sup>2</sup> access to the means of production such as land, water, seeds, bio-diversity and appropriate technology.

3.5 Protection of the food producers to have adequate income from food production.

3.6 Promotion of agro-ecological agriculture for safe, healthy and locally produced food.

3.7 Recognition of the role and contribution of women in the production of food and agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> Sphere Standards are standards set up by the United Nations and other official bodies on the minimum standards that do not deprive people of basic human dignity even when receiving relief in times of disasters and situations of deprivation.

<sup>2</sup> Food Producers include men and women peasants, fisher folks, agricultural workers, forest dwellers, indigenous people, Dalits, landless labour, livestock farmers, herders, gatherers and allied workers involved directly and indirectly with the process of producing food.

#### **4. Right to Food and Food Policies**

4.1 The people of each and every nation must have the right and ability to decide their food needs and ensure means to produce and provide adequate supply of food.

4.2 The State shall guarantee the right of the people to participate in the decision making process with regard to formulating, implementing and monitoring of food and agricultural policies and programmes.

4.3 This Convention shall ensure that the means of production and productive resources including seeds and water remain in the hands of food producers.

*4.4 Each Nation irrespective of size and economic standing shall have the full independent right to participate in the decision making and assertion on policies with regard to food in realising and implementing Food Sovereignty.*

4.5 This Convention supports developments and improvement on local food economies to ensure the availability and access to foods that are locally produced and processed for local markets.

#### **5. Access to Food**

5.1 The concept and implementation of the Convention, brings with it the right of the people to earn fair and equal wages in order to access adequate food.

5.2 This Convention makes it mandatory for all nations to ensure that there are fair and equal wages given at all times. Any deviation in payment of fair and equal wages will call for the immediate payment of arrears and adequate compensation.

5.3 In the event that fair and equal wages are denied, all bodies, person, or persons irrespective of the individual law of nations shall be liable for exemplary penalty, thereby ascertaining minimal chances of repeating such injustice.

## **6. Genuine Agrarian Reforms**

6.1 This Convention brings with it the State's responsibility to immediately implement a genuine land reform programme. Such a programme will be founded on free distribution of arable land to the landless peasants and other food producers and equitable access of agricultural resources including water, pasture lands, coastal and mangrove areas.

6.2 In the interim period, before the implementation of genuine agrarian reforms, the tenancy rights of food producers shall be protected.

6.3 This Convention shall ensure democratic and responsive agrarian, fishery, pasture land reform programmes, covering such areas as credit and finance, progressive taxation, inputs, infrastructure, technology, marketing and other capital resources for food and agriculture production.

6.4 This Convention shall recognise, protect and enforce the indigenous people's rights to their ancestral domains and their right to self-determination.

## **7. Sustainable Utilisation of Resources**

7.1 The Convention shall recognise and enforce the people's right to make decisions on ecological agricultural production, sustainable utilisation and conservation of resources including land and water.

7.2 This Convention shall recognise and enforce the rights of food producers to make decisions on all stages of ecological agricultural production and productive resources including technology, training and financial resources.

7.3 This Convention recognises not only the right of the people to access and utilise resources but also the obligation to protect, conserve and renew productive resources.

7.4 This Convention shall make it imperative in ecologically sustainable terms, to protect, and conserve the environment for the present and future generations.

## **8. Food Production Programmes**

8.1 This Convention reaffirms that all food production programmes shall follow the issue of sustainability of the smallest units catering to the food requirements of children, men and women members of the community and then the other food needs of the society at large.

8.2 All food production programmes shall first and foremost fulfil the food needs of the community, the Nations and only then address the needs of trade.

8.3 All national food plans shall include plans for food producers or community managed reserves and build such reserves from local production and knowledge of communities.

8.4. Priority must be placed by all Governments on the production of food primarily by the food producers, for domestic needs and to ensure health, quality and cultural appropriateness.

## **9. Rights and Well-being of Food Producers**

9.1 The Convention shall make it binding that domestic production, especially with regard to those coming from food producers, indigenous people's and fisher folk shall be provided with price support mechanisms in order to assure fair prices for agricultural products. All governments shall dismantle private trading monopolies that threaten the rights and well being of food producers.

9.2 This Convention brings into its fold the rights of workers to organise, unionise and to strike on any issue that might directly or indirectly challenge their right to life, well-being and safety.

9.3 The Convention on Food Sovereignty encompasses the right of food producers to have an environmentally protected work place that is non-hazardous to their health and well-being.

## **10. Food Distribution Programmes-Food Aid (State Obligations in Exceptional Situations)**

10.1 Governments must ensure the right to food through equitable public distribution systems in the interim period until poverty, hunger and malnutrition is eradicated. All such programmes and policies should be planned and implemented systematically, ensuring that the people are nourished without compromising on any aspect of adequacy, safety, nutrition and cultural appropriateness.

10.2 To ensure that there is adequate food available, the nations shall consciously build food reserves that will be available in the face of any local or national crisis.

10.3 In the event of disasters both natural and otherwise, emergency food relief programmes should be instituted through consultation with the affected people. These consultations shall include the leaders of people's movements.

10.4 The Convention shall ensure that people's right to the choice of their own food is retained. This is particularly relevant with regard to food relief programmes which historically have been non-culture based and undignified. The Convention upholds the dignity of people and when and if faced with indignity, food aid shall be replaced by financial support.

10.5 This Convention shall under no circumstances and conditionality use food embargo as a weapon to create conditions of suppression.

10.6 This Convention also reiterates that food amongst other elements shall not be a subject to be used as an instrument of bio-warfare.

## **11. Sustainable Agriculture Production**

11.1 This Convention wishes to determine that food producers to adopt systems that are ecologically sustainable.

11.2 With the acceptance of this Convention, Nations shall support and develop sustainable agricultural production systems as a foundation for a national food production programme.

11.3 All nations shall provide resource support for research and development for food producers converting to sustainable agricultural practices. Research and extension programmes shall be designed and endorsed by food producers to reflect their priorities.

11.4 The Convention shall bring with it, for all Nations, support and incentives for on-farm conservation and development of biodiversity, which naturally ensures that there is a free exchange of plant and animal genetic resources amongst food producers.

11.5 The Convention shall recognise, protect and build on local resources and indigenous knowledge for sustainable agriculture.

11.6 With regard to food production, food producers shall have the right to know the policies, plans, inventions and discoveries of any kind and all such information shall be freely available.

## **12. Food Safety and Nutritious Food**

12.1 The Convention hereby states that all issues of food safety, nutrition and quality of food are ensured.

12.2 To ensure food safety there shall be effective policies and programmes based on the precautionary principles<sup>3</sup> as regards to pesticide, food irradiation and genetically engineered food and crops.

12.3 This Convention shall ensure people's participation in determining policies and programmes ensuring food safety and nutrition.

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<sup>3</sup> Precautionary Principles: Even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically, scientific evaluation indicates that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

### **13. National Food Sovereignty as a Guiding Principle in Trade and Investment**

13.1 This Convention shall ensure that all agricultural trade policies must be guided by the principle of food sovereignty.

13.2 By this Convention such trade policies may identify sectors where tariff protection may be instituted.

13.3 In doing so, protection would be ensured for the quantitative restrictions in order to protect against and prevent dumping.

13.4 The Convention must ensure economic protection of food producers from exploitative activities by trading monopoly and agribusiness concerns.

13.5 With the coming into effect of this Convention, States shall have the right and the responsibility to define investment policies that shall promote and protect national food production.

13.6 It is imperative that there are mechanisms whereby trading between communities and people takes into account the freedom to prioritise and determine food sovereignty.

13.7 This Convention shall regulate international pricing monopolies in order that the prices of food and agricultural commodities in the international market are not artificially depressed.

### **14. Responsibilities of International Organisations**

14.1 This Convention shall take precedence over existing and future trade and investment agreements.

14.2 All UN agencies must abide and support the implementation of the provisions of this Food Sovereignty Convention, and all other existing

UN Conventions to protect the rights of peoples to food, resources, shelter, livelihoods, fair wages, and safe working conditions.

14.3 The Convention entails that all loans and grants provided to Nations are given on an unconditional basis at all times with the objective that all Nations uphold, protect, promote and achieve food sovereignty.

14.4 All international grants and projects that promote and implement development of Nations should in no way, displace or affect the issue of food sovereignty in any detrimental way.

14.5. Ensuring that no international grant or developmental project threatens resources that in turn detrimentally affect food sovereignty.

## **15. Promoting Peoples Participation and Responsibilities of Peoples Organisations**

15.1 This Convention in its scope also states that all matters related to the issues of food sovereignty should have peoples' participation right from the initial stages of planning, implementation and monitoring.

15.2 While it is the right of people to information, it is also the responsibility of people's organisations to provide information to the government on the impact and appropriateness of various food production policies and programmes.

15.3 The adoption of the Convention shall make it mandatory to ensure protection and support for the development of independent democratic organisation/s of people.

15.4 With the acceptance and enforcement of this Convention all Nations guarantee a mechanism whereby people and their representatives are made integral parts of the decision making process with regard to food sovereignty.

## **16. Monitoring the Obligations**

16.1 With the acceptance of this Convention there shall be what is commonly understood to be the international reporting mechanisms that shall ensure all the doctrines enshrined in this Convention are abided by without exception.

16.2 The Convention shall ensure that a mechanism is consciously formulated and is enforceable so that there are no deviations that will adversely affect the people.

16.3 By this Convention all national policies, laws, regulations, codes and other instruments shall be in compliance with the spirit of the Convention on Food Sovereignty.

16.4 A Commission shall be instituted comprising of peoples' representative who shall monitor the rights, duties and responsibilities of all parties.

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## **Pesticide Action Network (PAN)**

**Asia and the Pacific** is one of the regional centers for PAN International – a global coalition of citizen's groups and individuals who are working to promote sustainable agriculture, and oppose the use of pesticides. PAN Asia and the Pacific is dedicated to ensuring the empowerment of people, especially women, agricultural workers, peasant and indigenous farmers. We are specially committed to protect the safety and health of people, and the environment, from pesticides use and genetic engineering in food and agriculture.

PAN AP prescribes to the following development principles; a participatory holistic approach; a commitment to gender equity and genuine partnership; the need to confront social injustice and global inequities; the value of biodiversity, appropriate traditional and indigenous knowledge system; and the recognition that our earth is one interdependent living system.



**The People's Food Sovereignty Network Asia Pacific** is a regional coalition of peasant-farmer organizations and support NGOs, working on a platform of food sovereignty in food and agriculture policy.

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