
16 October: World Food Sovereignty Day

The economic development model promoted by global power has already clearly shown that it leads to social and environmental disaster, both on a local and on a global scale. Climate change is the clearest example regarding the environment, while increasing food scarcity suffered by millions of people, proves this at the social level.

Global policies do nothing to solve problems; they only make them more serious. This is not out of ignorance but according to plan. The result is the appropriation of more and more resources by increasingly larger and more powerful transnational corporations. Seeds, water, soil, biodiversity, all become the property of these companies and the local inhabitants are stripped of the resources ensuring their survival. What follow are but a few examples of the above:

- Family farming, producing a wide variety of food, is destroyed to give place to industrial production of a single product, generally not intended for human consumption and normally for export.

- Enormous areas of farmland are given over to the production of pulpwood (eucalyptus and pine trees), or for agrofuels (corn, oil palm, sugar cane, jatropha).

Mangroves – a source of life for thousands of local inhabitants – are destroyed to give place to industrial shrimp production for export.

- Commercial logging not only affects the availability of food and other resources on which local inhabitants depend, but is also the spearhead for the replacement of the forest by export-oriented monoculture plantations (soybean, oil palm, rubber).

- Oil production and mining contaminate water, air and the resources used as food by the local inhabitants (fishing, hunting, gathering).

- Large hydroelectric dams evict entire populations and destroy the food resources on which thousands of people who live in the affected area depend.

None of this happens by chance. Decisions are taken in full awareness of the impacts involved. Under cover of the “sustainable development” discourse, large-scale destruction is going on, affecting nature and all the resources that until then had ensured the local inhabitants’ food sovereignty.

The divorce between the needs of the great majority of people and global policies is increasingly wider. While people clamour for food, sufficient in quantity and appropriate in quality, the governments open the doors to foreign investment, strengthening the process of appropriation and destruction of resources. As a result, the inhabitants of countries rich in natural resources are stripped of them, thus becoming poorer and suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

To top it all, even the most serious problems – such as climate change – are perceived from the

standpoint of the economic powers as “business opportunities” and are treated as such. It is thus that a scientifically absurd, but economically profitable “carbon market” has been developed, where destructive monoculture tree plantations are advertised as positive “carbon sinks” where the conservation or destruction of forests are negotiated for dollars, where strongly questioned agrofuels are promoted as humanity’s lifebuoy, where the impossible becomes possible: that burning of fossil fuels can be “compensated for” and people and companies can become “carbon neutral” through a simple payment of money to skilful carbon market entrepreneurs.

Faced by this scenario, many struggles have arisen seeking real alternatives to face the growing social and environmental catastrophe that large corporations have imposed on humanity. Many of them are joining together under the banner of food sovereignty, which appeals to the good sense of devoting land to satisfy peoples’ need for food, promoting family and cooperative farming as the basis for the production of food, encouraging locally-based trade, promoting resource conservation through appropriate farming and forest-use practices. Which appeals, in sum, to social justice based on the responsible use of nature.

On this 16 October we are therefore making a joint appeal to everyone so that this date may serve to further unify struggles to defend and promote peoples’ Food Sovereignty.

Via Campesina - World Rainforest Movement