

Press-Release:

UN General Assembly adopts the Declaration of Peasant Rights and People living in Rural Areas

On 17th December 2018, the 73 Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 73) in New York adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. Now is the declaration is an international legal instrument for the implementation in all countries all over the world since “Peasants Rights are Part of Human Rights”!

The final vote on 17th December in New York represents the culmination of a historic process for rural societies. With 121 votes in favour, 8 votes against and 54 abstentions, the forum of UNGA representing 193 Member States, ushered in a new promising chapter in the struggle for the rights of peasants and other rural communities throughout the world. The long term process, initiated by the international peasant movement La Via Campesina, supported by numerous social movements and allied organizations, such as FIAN, CETIM and especially Farmers Association of Schwäbisch Hall, Germany, who conducted the International Peasants Rights Congress in March 2017, has been a great source of inspiration and has strengthened the peasant communities in all regions of the globe.

2018 was decisive for the process of the Declaration:

- **Geneva:** in April, after 6 years of negotiations, the 5th Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group of the Human Rights Council (HRC) concluded the debates on the content, finalizing the text. In September, the HRC (39th Session) adopted the Declaration by a majority vote.
- **Rome:** in October, during the 45th Forum of the Global Committee for Food Security, La Via Campesina together with the Civil Society Mechanism and with the support of several countries and UN institutions, organized a political event promoting the Declaration under the framework of the Decade for Family Farming.
- **New York:** in November the Declaration reached the process of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). On November 19th, the Declaration was voted and approved with a large majority by the Third Committee of UNGA, responsible for social, humanitarian and cultural matters. Lastly, UNGA’s plenary vote from today concluded the adoption process.

- ”This declaration is an important tool which should guarantee and realize the rights of the peasants and other working people in rural areas. We urge all states to implement the declaration in a *conscientiousness* and transparent manner, guaranteeing peasants and rural communities the access to and control over land, peasant’s seeds, water and other natural resources. As peasants we need the protection and the respect for our values and our role in society to achieve food sovereignty,” said Elizabeth Mpofu, a peasant farmer from Zimbabwe and La Via Campesina General Coordinator.
- “This is a historic achievement for all Small-Scale Farmers and Peasants as they are the victims and losers of the global industrial economies. We have joint successfully for struggling towards a UN-Declaration upon our fundamental rights in terms of land grabbing, genetic grabbing, indigenous knowledge grabbing and the fair share for our agricultural products along the value chains. The struggle will continue till all oppressed peasants and rural societies all over the world, in the south as in the north will be recognized with their fundamental rights as part of the human rights.

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