



Fourth session of the open-ended working group on a United Nations Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

Statement by Celso de Carvalho, Officer-in-Charge at the FAO Liaison Office to the United Nations in Geneva on behalf of José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO.

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Excellencies and Distinguished Members of the Open-Ended Working Group on a United Nations Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas;

1. It is an honour to address you again this year in the framework of the Fourth session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group.
2. First of all, I wish to congratulate you on the tremendous effort of the working group along the preparation of the Declaration.
3. By producing 70% of world's food, family farming, peasant agriculture and small-scale food production are of vital importance for food security worldwide and contribute to a fundamental extent to the economic, environmental and social sustainability of food systems.
4. In spite of their huge contribution to the fight against hunger, small-scale food producers face increasing levels of vulnerability to a variety of threats, which underlines the need for increased attention to and protection of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.
5. The International Year of Family Farming in 2014 paved the way for a global recognition of the role played by family farmers, peasants and all small food producers, and for their repositioning at the core of the ongoing national and international debates on food and agriculture.
6. The celebration of the IYFF-2014 significantly raised the profile of family farmers, peasants and all small food producers, which were included in the follow-up on the Zero Hunger Challenge launched by the United Nations Secretary General in 2012, in the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) in 2014 and in the preparation for the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda.

7. The SDGs make sure the role of small-scale food producers is recognized with a dedicated target to increase their productivity and income within Goal 2, 'End hunger and achieve food security'.
8. The recognition of their fundamental contribution is also evidenced by other different goals and targets, constituting an integrated, indivisible set of global priorities that address small-scale agriculture in all of its dimensions relevant to sustainable development, as well as its central importance in strengthening sustainable agriculture.
9. The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition proclaimed in 2016 addresses peasants, small-scale fishers and pastoralists, as key actors for sustainable and healthy food production, and the need for moving away from intensive farming systems to support small-scale production. The ongoing efforts undertaken by some countries in favour of the proclamation of a UN Decade on Family Farming is another element showing the increasing centrality that small-scale producers are gaining in the framework of present and future strategies for the achievement of sustainable and inclusive food systems.
10. The draft Declaration addresses some of the most relevant and established areas of work of FAO aimed to rapidly advance the achievement of Zero Hunger and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specific reference is made to the right to adequate food, land, water, pastoralism, cultural identity, agroecology, traditional knowledge and social protection for rural people, gender equality in rural areas.
11. The Declaration is strictly linked with the most relevant principles and guidelines adopted by the Committee on World Food Security and the FAO bodies, with a particular reference to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security; the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication; the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security; and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems", among others.
12. FAO has also been increasingly working with Indigenous Peoples, having the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the ILO C169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention as overarching frameworks.
13. In view of the foregoing, I am happy to reaffirm FAO's support to the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, which will help in reaching their potential and overcoming the challenges that they face in their everyday life. An agreed Declaration, approved by consensus, represents a significant added value for our Organizations, and I can reassure FAO's commitment to support its finalization.
14. I thank you for your attention and wish you a very productive and fruitful debate.