



*2 April 2016 - Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain*

## WORKSHOP 13: STRENGTHENING RURAL, PASTORAL, INDIGENOUS, AND FISHING ORGANISATIONS. BROADENING ALLIANCES ACROSS SOCIETY

Translated from French by Becky, Translators Without Borders (TWB)

### EVALUATION

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Every day, more and more family/small holder users of land and natural resources find themselves made more insecure, deprived of their resources and evicted from their land. This affects peasants, nomadic herders, livestock farmers, fishermen and fisherwomen, forest dwellers ... (Workshops 1, 2, 3, 5). This change is a dramatic one, affecting the whole of humanity. The direct human consequences of this change affect the vast majority of rural residents, who carry out the essential work of food production and contribute to maintaining ecological balance. This change causes significant economic, socio-cultural and environmental problems which affect towns as much as the countryside and penalise future generations (workshops 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).

This change is the consequence of a wider current political direction which promotes capitalist exploitation of land and natural resources on a large scale. This exploitation is coming into ever more direct competition with the activities of the majority of the rural population.

For many years, voices have been raised, strategies have been formulated and actions carried out by civil society. There have been some successes, such as Ekta Parishad in India, the Margaridas Women's March organised by CONTAG in Brazil and the West African Caravan project organised as part of the 'Global Convergence of Land and Water Struggles' led by La Via Campesina (International Peasants' Movement).

However, to reverse this global trend, a vast worldwide alliance against rural evictions and the expansion of the large-scale capitalist exploitation of natural resources is critical. This alliance can only come about around demands which are agreed on collectively by all those wanting to reverse this trend. The demands should be based on the particular requirements of actual local battles and actions and should also take into account everyone's point of view, whether they live in the towns or the countryside.

### PROPOSITIONS

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#### **What alliance?**

In order to counter-balance the power of the private lobbyists and the states defending their own interests, we will have to overcome our own divisions: between urban and rural, between peasants, livestock farmers, herders, fishermen and women and indigenous peoples, between social movements, researchers and politicians. All those who want to be part of this alliance, need to join forces to make the change happen.

- Peasants, livestock farmers, herders, fishermen and women, indigenous peoples and pastoral groups: They produce 70% of the agricultural products consumed in the world. They contribute to the life of rural areas, slowing the rural exodus. They have shown their ability to preserve ecosystems whilst creating significant job opportunities and economic and cultural wealth.
- Women: In many areas of the world, women carry out more of the agricultural work than men. Very often, women are the true guarantors of a family's well-being. However, women are not recognised as such and are often under-represented in decision making bodies and social movements, including rural movements.
- Young people: they are the future and the present. On their shoulders rests the generational renewal necessary for maintaining peasant farming and other forms of family/small holder use of natural resources.
- Researchers and experts: they can bring scientific arguments to support the practices and proposals of the farmers, livestock farmers, herders, indigenous and pastoral communities.

- Elected local representatives, local authorities and members of government: some of these are sympathetic to the problems encountered by rural communities and to solutions proposed by rural organisations. Their support would allow the implementation of favourable local policies to the small-scale producers or allow more comprehensive and effective policies to be drawn up.
- The urban population: they now make up half of the human race and their food supply and therefore their life depends directly on the rural population. Many of them know from their own experience the serious problems faced by the rural sector; many of them have only recently left the countryside themselves. They are victims of the mass unemployment which is a consequence of the rural exodus. Their choices as consumers can influence the food products on offer but above all, their voices are indispensable to putting as much pressure as possible on policies.

The workshop participants called on everyone to put aside their differences and draw up a list of agreed demands in order to face this challenge together. They underlined that it was essential, above all, to all try and bring in organisations in civil society to the rural cause; most politicians only change when under considerable popular pressure. They also stressed that this alliance must place considerable emphasis on the most vulnerable members of the population: women in rural areas and indigenous and native communities.

### **Organisation, operation and aims of the alliance**

The workshop participants called for support to be given to local organisations and movements and for them to be put in contact with each other at the national, regional and international level. Sharing demands and experiences is essential in order to draw up proposals that will: address real problems; carry the greatest political weight possible from the citizen's perspective; and will protect and support all agro-ecological users of land and natural resources (both family and users). We call on all the actors listed above to get involved in the democratic drawing up of the common demands at every level - local, national, regional and international.

### **Supporting local movements**

Organisations of family and community users of natural resources who are resisting the threats targeting them and are developing their agro-ecological practices must be supported. Where these organisations do not yet exist, help must be provided to build new organisations. Training can be useful in this kind of situation, particular around: the different structures possible (union, association etc); methods of organising and advocacy but also in legal matters in build knowledge of everyone's rights.

### **Supporting or establishing national platforms**

Forums which are open to all members of society, where family and community users of natural resources can showcase their plans for living on and organizing their land, must be supported. If such forums don't already exist, then they must be created. As well as rural people, these forums must bring together representatives of the other actors mentioned above. The aim must be to build together precise political proposals aimed at supporting the fights and actions of organisations, to promote these policies and get them implemented.

These forums must be a place where strong backing is given to local fights against the grabbing of land and natural resources and where policies supporting land projects by local organisations are formulated and promoted. The workshop participants also cited, amongst other examples, initiatives from ordinary people and /or from elected officials who succeeded in getting local producers to supply restaurants in local institutions (schools, retirement homes, public buildings, etc.) or who are working towards this. One of the challenges for the national forums is to discuss experiences and consider together the right political measures at provincial, federal state or national levels, so they can be encouraged and multiply.

### **Establishment or support of regional and international platforms**

Throughout the forum, the participants highlighted the global aspect of the policies which promote large scale capitalist exploitation of natural resources and the transnational nature of the companies which do it. At this level, a change of direction and viable alternatives are absolutely vital.

Representatives of local organisations from different sectors of the alliance and who are participating in the work of national platforms, as well as representatives of their regional federations (eg. Central American Association of Forest Peoples, AMPB, Network of Rural and Producers' Organisations of West Africa) should come together and draw up an agreed list of preferred responses at this level.

The idea that all these platforms feed data bases with the aim of sharing experiences and campaigns was launched: a first comprising the experiences of real-life alternatives to using natural resources; a second,

listing the on-going fights and the tools which are available (legal, sit-ins, demonstrations, armed struggle etc). The site [www.porlatierra.org](http://www.porlatierra.org) was given as an example. The platforms could in this way call for widespread support for a local issue. There was a reminder that the support of the international community had led to some progress in forest exploitation in Cambodia, for example, which is now officially under moratorium.

The idea of organising regional tribunals against land-grabbing was also put forward. The aim would be to bring to the widest possible audience those who have violated the rights of access to land and natural resources and other fundamental rights, where the legal system proper refuses or fails to deal with them.

In the spirit of global co-operation, the participants in FMAT suggested creating a coordinating committee, charged with linking all the forums (national, regional and international) where proposals and alternatives will be worked on. The committee would also organise a World Forum in Africa in 2 years' time, to allow the participating parties to review their progress. This committee should consist of several organisations directly concerned with or supporting organisations fighting against land-grabbing. It was suggested that a communal budget be established (eg. 0.2% of the budget of each organisation wanting to be involved) in order to endow the International Organising Committee of FMAT with the necessary means for action.

The participants looked at upcoming international deadlines, and designated three events where the interests of family and community users of land and natural resources must be firmly defended. They invite all those who wish to join them in being present during:

- the signature of the COP21 Paris agreement in New York. The movement must make its demands heard when the Paris agreement is signed.
- COP13 on Cancun's biodiversity.
- COP22, which will be held in Marrakesh in 2016. The Association of Mountain Peoples of the World (APMM) has called for a large scale march and days of action to be organised during this event.

Organisations must be armed and ready with proposals re management of these spaces so that it is no longer left to governments, politicians and experts to decide instead of the local communities concerned.

## **INTERVENTIONS**

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*The following list is not exhaustive. We apologise to those contributors and participants at the workshop whose name is not listed below. Please do contact us at the address below so that any updated versions of this overview can include a complete list of names: [secretariat@landaccessforum.org](mailto:secretariat@landaccessforum.org)*

Introductory interventions:

BAUTISTA DURAN, Ruth, Institute for the Rural Development of South America (IPDRS), Bolivia  
BOURLIAUD, Jean, World Mountain People Association (APMM), France  
LUNAS COSTA, Alessandra, Brazil National Federation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG), Brazil  
OEUR, Il, Executive Director, Cambodia Analysing Development Issue Center (ADIC), Cambodia  
SANCHEZ, Gustavo, Mexican Campesino Forest Producers Network (Red MOCAF), Mexico

Interventions from participants:

BAYLAC, Michel, President of the European Association for Rural Development Association, France  
ED DAOUDI, Mohamed, World Mountain People Association, (APMM), Morocco  
HUAYHUA, Margarita, Sociocultural anthropologist, Rutgers University (United States of America), Quechuan community of Pampamarca, Peru  
KAMEL, Said, President of the World Mountain People Association (APMM), Morocco  
KARIYAWASAM MAJUWANA GAMAGE, Thilak, Sri Lanka Nature Group, Sri Lanka  
LERAS, Gérard, Former dairy farmer, former elected regional representative and Land Policy Special Councillor at Region Rhône Alpes, France  
OETTLE, Laurel, Director, Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), South Africa  
SOW, Elhadji Samba, Group for the Protection of Ndiel (CODEN), Senegal  
TZI, Ernesto, Guatemalan Association for Well-Being in Action (APROBA-SANK), Guatemala  
YAYO ABA'AMI, Sanaya, herders, Ramidus - Afardacarsitoh Egla, Ethiopia (comments translated by Mohamed KADAMY, teacher, Afar Forum), Ethiopia

Moderator:

PALEBELE, Kolyang, National Council for the Concertation of Rural Producers of Chad (CNCPR), Vice-President of the Sub-Regional Platform of Peasant Organizations of Central Africa, (PROPAC), Chad

Rapporteur:

KONÉ, Massa, Secretary for External Relations of the Union of Associations and Co-ordination of Association for the Defence of the Rights of the Disadvantaged (UACDDD), Spokesperson for the Mali Coalition against Land Grabbing (CMAT) and NoVox Afrik, Mali