

Asian Land Forum
5 September 2016
Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria
Ortigas Center, Quezon City
Philippines

The Quezon City Declaration on Food Sovereignty

We, the 52 representatives of grassroots organizations, peoples' movements and CSOs from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand, gathered in Quezon City, Philippines, on 5 September 2016, during the Asia Land Forum convened by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), the International Land Coalition (ILC) and the Philippine Development Forum-Working Group on Sustainable Rural Development Forum (PDF-SRD).

With the theme "Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals: Defending Land Rights of Communities to Achieve Food Sovereignty in the Region," the forum presented and discussed food security priorities of international organizations and selected Asian countries and sustainable development goals in the context of hunger and land rights.

Asia is home to more than half of the world's population, about 75% of the world's farming households, with about 80% of these are small-scale farmers and producers.

By 2050, the global population is expected to rise to nine billion. Food production needs to increase by 70% to feed the extra two billion persons 40 years from now. Meanwhile, competition for land, water, and energy is increasing amidst worsening effects of climate change. With almost a billion people hungry, an unstable climate and seasonable differences affecting food production, and the volatility of food prices, agriculture is ironically back on the international agenda. For civil society organizations (CSOs) and rural communities in Asia who have clamored for changes and decried injustice in this sector, this renewed attention is a welcome development and to increase the investment to rural agriculture.

Many small food producers have neither ownership nor access to land and resources needed to improve land productivity. Where security of tenure is weak in general, livelihoods are constrained. Many of the resource-poor farmers remain isolated and unorganized, detached from centers of power and government. Gender imbalances in land ownership exist, as traditional and customary practices preventing women from gaining access to land and resources prevail. At the same time, farmers are ageing, with more women taking over farming, while men and the youth continue to migrate to towns and cities in search of better employment. Farming communities also take a hit from calamities and political upheavals, to add

to their dire situation.

Women are key player in all subsistence form of livelihood, which are crucial for food security and nutrition for their families. They do restless bone-breaking work which is important for economic development of States; however their work are undervalued nor unrecognized and they lack access to basic services, including no time or resources for market opportunities.

Presently, we put forward our questions: What kind of agriculture and what kind of support to agriculture are being promoted by international organizations and national governments? Why is it that hunger and malnutrition continue to plague the Asian region despite the pronouncements and programs introduced by various institutions?

The CSO participants of this Asia Land Forum believes that food insecurity stems primarily from unequal distribution of resources and the inequitable access to productive assets, prejudicing the rural poor. In most cases, the national economic development agendas set by national governments promote grants of land concessions, expansion of plantations, mining operations, joint venture agreements, corporate farming, and the establishment of special economic zones – all of which require that land be distributed to the landless poor.

In order to achieve food sovereignty, particularly at the household level in the Asian context, a paradigm shift is in order where:

- stewardship through community-based natural resource management;
- ecological and food security through the promotion of sustainable agriculture;
- equity through the promotion of community social enterprises;
- spirituality as the basis of the Asian community; and
- decentralization and democratization as the guiding principles towards redefining political accountability and security.

At the same time, as CSO members of the International Land Coalition (ILC) in Asia, we have committed ourselves in pursuing the People Center Land Governance as our guiding framework in developing our programs. Towards this end, the CSO participants to the Asian Land Forum 2016, strongly call upon concerned States, institutions and corporations to respect and adhere to the following principles:

1. Respect, protect and strengthen the land rights of women and men living in poverty, ensuring that no one is deprived of the use and control of the land on which their well-being and human dignity depend on;
2. Ensure equitable land distribution and public investment that supports small-scale farming systems. Geo-spatial specificity of Agricultural Products (specially food crops) must be promoted through policies, plans and practices. Incentives

to young people interested in small-scale food producing activities should be provided.

3. Recognize and protect the diverse tenure and production systems upon which people's livelihoods depend, including the communal and customary tenure systems of smallholders and indigenous peoples;
4. Recognize women as farmers and workers and ensure that there is no discrimination in women's access, ownership, use, control and management including decision-making power of productive resources and its outputs including land, water, forests, livestock, credit, energy, technology, knowledge, education, skills and rights over other resources;
5. Recognize, promote and protect rural women's right to livelihoods and make effective measures to reduce and redistribute their unpaid work;
6. Respect and protect the inherent land and territorial rights of the indigenous peoples, as set out in ILO Convention 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
7. Enable the role of the local land users in territorial and ecosystem management, recognizing that sustainable development and the stewardship of ecosystems are best achieved through participatory decision-making; and management at the territorial level;
8. Ensure that processes of decision-making over land are inclusive, so that policies, laws, procedures, and decisions concerning land adequately reflect the rights, needs, and aspirations of individuals and communities who will be affected by them;
9. Ensure transparency and accountability, through unhindered and timely public access to all information that may contribute to informed public debate and decision-making on land issues at all stages;
10. Prevent and remedy land grabbing, respecting traditional land use rights and local livelihoods, and ensuring that all large-scale initiatives that involve the use of land, water, and other natural resources comply with human rights, specifically socio-economic human rights, and environmental obligations;
11. Environmental impacts of the development projects are quantified and measured to encourage sustainable resource use while minimizing the risk of negative impacts for local livelihoods; and
12. Respect and protect the civil and political rights of human rights defenders working on land issues.

Global support for land rights needs to be optimized. Thus, the CSO members of ILC will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders and decision-makers in constructive policy dialogue. We vow to explore other modalities of cooperation in enhancing household food security and furthering the rights and empowerment of small food producers in Asia. ###

Signed

ANGOC, ABHIYAN, AIPP, ALRD, AFA, ARBAN, BJSa, CDA, CDS, COLARP, CSRC, EP, FES, FNN, IESD, JKS, KAFLU, JASIL, JKPP, KF, KPA, MARAG, MLM, MODE-Nepal, NLRf, NGO Forum, PRAYATNA, PWESCR, RDF, RMI, SAINS, SARRA, SCOPE, SDDPA, SDF, SK, SWADHINA, UWUA, VSK, XSF