

Time for Food Sovereignty

Take part in the struggle against corporate control of our food, fish and agriculture. The time is overripe for food sovereignty – the alternative to the current neoliberal policies on food, fish and agriculture.

Food and agriculture are fundamental to all peoples, in terms of both production and availability of sufficient quantities of safe and healthy food, and as foundations of healthy lives, communities, cultures and environments. On the contrary, the consequences of the dominating neoliberal policies are hunger, poverty and environmental damage. The multinational companies are taking over the control while farmers and fisherfolks are marginalized, and consumers often receive unhealthy food. The breakdown of the negotiations in the WTO underlines the need for a total change in the policies for food, agriculture and fisheries. It is Time for Food Sovereignty.

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture policies; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant; to eliminate the dumping of products in their markets, and; to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources. Food sovereignty promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production. This system is a form of trade that goes far beyond the restrictive model that easily lends itself to corporate control.



Photo: Aksel Nærstad, the Development Fund, Norway

From Discussions to Actions

The fight for food sovereignty is not about academic discussions, but about the life and death of billions of people, a fight for democracy, for consumer rights and for preserving the environment for future generations. Farmers, fisherfolks, herders, indigenous peoples and other food producers are fighting every day to keep their dignity, livelihoods and preserve the environment. We must build strong alliances and develop concrete plans of action to advance food sovereignty.

Dynamic and living Debate

The concept of food sovereignty and the actualisation of it is continually being developed and deepened. New issues, challenges and needs for answers and policies are constantly evolving. Many organisations, groups and individuals are supporting the principles of food sovereignty, but many others are not familiar with the concept. We must spread information about food sovereignty and mobilise people and organisations around it. As food sovereignty has become more popular, some politicians, institutions and other entities are misusing the term. As a result, we must protect it from co-option.

Nyeléni an important step on the road

Nyeléni 2007 – the World Forum for Food Sovereignty - will be held in Mali in February 2007. Five hundred delegates representing farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, women's groups, workers, environmentalists, consumers, NGOs, youth groups, government representatives will meet to advance food sovereignty on all levels within all sectors.

During the forum, the right to food sovereignty will be reaffirmed; the economic, social and environmental implications of food sovereignty will be deliberated; and, the global movement for the recognition of the right to food sovereignty will be initiated. Overall, Nyeleni 2007 aims to define a global and collective strategy to guarantee the right of all peoples to food sovereignty, realized by all countries and guaranteed by the United Nations.

Nyeleni 2007 is only a part of the process to step up the struggle for food sovereignty, develop and actualise the concept, build alliances and develop plans of action in order to change the balance of power to favour food sovereignty worldwide. A wide range of input in the preparation of Nyéléni is essential to actualise food sovereignty. Many more organisations can take part in the preparation and follow up than in the forum itself. The fight for food sovereignty is a long-term fight where all people, organisations, governments and institutions who are positive to the concept, are essential.

What can you and your organisation do?

- Adopt the concept of food sovereignty.
- Organise discussions around the concept of food sovereignty within your organisation, locally and regionally with various sectors of society that the right to food impacts farmers, fisherfolks, environmentalists, consumers, indigenous peoples . . .
- Develop plans and actions for food sovereignty which address the following:
 - Development of new alliances.
 - How to combat transnational corporations, which threaten food sovereignty.
 - Protection of community access to natural resources.
 - How to maintain local economies where people and communities decide what and how they produce food.
 - To fight regional trade agreements and international lending institutions, as well as alternatives to those systems.
 - Alternative framework to the current World Trade Organisation in order to ensure that international trade does not undermine food sovereignty.
 - What current policies are in place that actualise food sovereignty?
- Sign up for information and input on an e-mail list.



Photo: Aksel Nærstad, the Development Fund, Norway

Contact information

There is an international steering committee for the Nyéléni 2007 [1], and regional committees for the preparation and follow up. To help organise local, national and regional processes in the lead up to Nyéléni 2007, contact the regional contact person below.

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[1] La Via Campesina, World Forum of Fish harvesters and Fish Workers (WFF), World Forum of Fisherpeople (WFFP), Friends of the Earth International (FOEI), World March of Women, Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ROPPA), the Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes (CNOP)-Mali, International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC), Food and Water Watch (USA), The Development Fund (Norway).

For more information: www.Nyeleni2007.org